

WRENCH & WOOD

Wood, Pulp and Paper Workers News



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Rock-Tenn and MeadWestvaco to Merge

In January 2015 Rock-Tenn and MeadWestvaco entered into a definitive merger agreement. This is touted to be one of the major deals in the paper packaging industry as it will create the second-largest U.S. packaging company, trailing only to the International Paper Company.

The deal is the latest in a string for Rock-Tenn, which has completed \$7 billion worth of acquisitions in the past decade, including its \$3.5 billion purchase of Smurfit-Stone Container in 2011 that helped catapult its market share of corrugated packaging to about 20%. And, in March 2014 Rock Tenn signed an agreement to acquire the Simpson Tacoma Kraft paper mill in Tacoma, Washington.

As of March 11, 2015 the 30-day waiting period under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976 (HSR Act) for their impending merger has come to an end. This clears the initial hurdle and brings the company's a step closer to the formation of a global giant of consumer and corrugated packaging. The merger is still subject to other customary closing conditions and regulatory approvals.

The IAM Woodworkers Department's main concerns will be in protecting our members at Rock Tenn with secure contracts and providing them with information about the impact of this merger on their benefits, seniority, retirement and job security.

Walls Appointed to Grand Lodge Staff



IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger has announced that, effective May 1, 2015, Robert D. Walls has been appointed to the Grand Lodge staff as a Special Representative for the Woodworkers Department.

Walls has been an IAM member since the Woodworkers affiliated with the IAM in 1994 and served as a shop steward and business representative in his hometown Local W33 in International Falls, MN. He was appointed District W3 Business Representative in February 2000 and has served as the district's Assistant Directing Business Representative since 2009.

"Brother Walls brings valuable experience to our staff," said President Buffenbarger. "His understanding of the woodworking industry and the importance of solid representation make him a great addition to our team."

History of the IAM Woodworkers Department

In May of 1994 the International Woodworkers of America, U.S. (IWA), merged with the IAMAW forming the Woodworkers Department we know today.

The International Woodworkers of America was originally formed in 1937 by members and locals who pulled away from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in the United States and Canada. The IWA prospered for many years, reaching membership as high as 115,000.

The IWA was a proud union that represented its members well. Turmoil created during the Reagan years by massive mergers, consolidations, anti-union sentiment and the willingness of some corporations to go to any lengths to get rid of unions, saw IWA's ranks severely reduced. The 1980's also saw the final damage by the extreme environmental movement that, through specious lawsuits, denied the mills access to raw material supplies to operate. Tens of thousands of woodworkers and IWA members lost their jobs to a little bird called a spotted owl.

In 1987, due to internal problems, the IWA split along national lines with the membership in the United States and Canada, each forming their own national union. By 1994, the IWA, U.S. was down to barely 20,000 members.

With the membership numbers so low, the IWA, U.S. officers felt that IWA could no longer provide the services their membership needed and deserved. The proposal to affiliate with the IAM was presented to the membership for ratification and passed by over a 90% margin. The proud IWA, U.S. became a proud part of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers on May 1, 1994.



IAM INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE

HEADED TO CHICAGO



The IAM Industrial Conference is upon us—it will be held in Chicago, IL on June 15th-19th, 2015. This conference promises to prepare IAM representatives and members in several key economic sectors to better meet the challenges of organizing and bargaining in today's fast-paced economic environment.

This will be a unique opportunity for members to share experiences and develop strategies for successful bargaining and organizing in all industrial sectors.

The conference will hold general sessions and the wood, pulp and paper industry sector will hold sessions in the Energy, Natural Resources, Wood Products & Agriculture Sector Breakout on Wednesday, June 17th and Thursday June 18th.

We encourage your lodge's participation and look forward to seeing you there.

Woodworkers Take a Double Hit in Shelton, WA

IAM woodworkers and the town of Shelton, WA took a double hit recently when it was announced that mills from 2 different companies would be closing.

On Tuesday, April 28, 2015 Simpson Lumber Company announced that the company will close two mills in Shelton. The closures are part of an asset sale agreement with Sierra Pacific Industries of Northern California. Official notice of the Federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) was given to Simpson workers in Shelton on April 27th.

Simpson has agreed to honor terms of our collective bargaining agreement and employees curtailed between now and the date of the closure will be placed on paid leave with wages and benefits continuing until their last day of employment, per the WARN Act.

Simpson's announcement followed on the heels of Olympic Panel Products' assets sale to the Swanson

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Simpson mill at Oakland Bay in Shelton, WA



BIO-CORNER

Local Lodge W98 President Paul Jay has been a woodworker and member of the Machinist Union most of his working career. He began at Simpson Pulp and Paper in 1986. In 1987 he went to work at Simpson Timber in Korbel, CA and became a member of the International Woodworkers Association (IWA) which later merged with the International Association of Machinists. Paul transferred to Simpson's woods logging division in 1989. This division later split off changing its name to Green Diamond Resource Company.

Brother Jay's working experience spans from mill lumber puller, to choker setter and running chainsaws in the woods. He has run heavy equipment, starting with skidders and bulldozers to operating yarders and finally the log loaders and shovel logging. Today Paul is the shovel sides hooktender and oversees the daily work activities and log truck scheduling for the 10 Green Diamond Company loaders and shovels.

Paul's union experience is varied, like his work experience. In 1998 he was elected Local Lodge W98 Shop Steward until 2005 when he became the local Trustee and member of the Woods Shop Committee. 2008 through 2012 he was on the Contract Bargaining Committee and 2009 was voted in as Vice President. Paul has held that position until last year when he was elected Local Lodge W98 President.

Paul studied business administration in college and is married with 3 daughters. When time allows, Paul loves to go ocean fishing along the northern California coast and to hunt. But, he makes time to take his family on their favorite vacation to Disneyland every year.

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Group Manufacturing on March 25, 2015. Olympic Panel Products will continue to run the operations at the Shelton, WA location until the plant is closed sometime next year. Swanson plans to relocate the Olympic Panel assets to a new facility to be built in Springfield, Oregon in 2016.

Olympic has assured us that they will be honoring our contract through this sale. District Lodge W24 Business Representative and Organizer Brandon Bryant, along with the Local Committee and assistance from District W24, will be handling any closure effects bargaining. Brother Bryant promises that, “we will do all we can to provide any assistance to our IAM Brothers and Sisters in this difficult time.”

WOODWORKERS - ON-THE-JOB

Wally Aust and Tracey Brown
Weyerhaeuser Sawmill in Raymond, WA

Submit your stories and photos, along with a brief description, of our wood, paper and pulp members *on-the-job* to:

mrose@iamaw.org or **tkenealy@iamaw.org** for our *Wrench & Wood* newsletter.

Building and Wood Worker's International Wants You to Know...



The Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI), reports that it is estimated that 30% of the world's area is covered by forests - around 4 billion ha, with around half of that area found in only 5 countries: Russia, Brazil, Canada, the USA and China. Forests are home to 300 million people, with 1.6 billion people depending in varying degrees for their livelihoods, in the form of fuel, medicines and forest foods.

Around 13 million people are employed in the formal forestry sector, producing goods and services worth around USD 350 billion to the formal global economy. However, the informal and subsistence economy is much larger.

BWI operates a global wood and forestry program which seeks to bring together trade unions representing workers in all aspects of the forestry industry, and which can provide a platform for them to increase their mutual solidarity and build an understanding of the global industry and develop policies which support increased sustainability. It also seeks to assist workers in the informal sectors to come together to collectively improve their situation. It works to strengthen the position of women both in their trade unions and communities.

BWI assists workers to develop a stronger voice so that they can play an active part in a dialogue with decision-makers, multinational and local employers and other stakeholders, and so that forestry and wood workers can enjoy a better working life, rewarded appropriately, and in a working environment which is safe and free from the risk of injury and industrial disease. ♦