WRENCH&WOOD

Wood, Pulp and Paper Workers News

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Happy 31st Anniversary to All our Machinist Woodworkers!

The proposal to affiliate with the IAM was presented to the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) membership for ratification and passed by over a 90% margin. On May 1, 1994, the proud IWA, U.S., merged with the International Association of Machinists (IAMAW), forming the Woodworkers Department we know today. Congratulations to us all!

Chief of Staff, Bob Walls, Spotted in News Tribune Newspaper!

Statewide View: St. Paul must take action to avoid harming forest-products industry

Last year, Minnesota rushed to pass an extended producer responsibility (EPR) framework with the intent to improve recycling in the North Star state. Yet, in their haste, lawmakers inadvertently put good-paying manufacturing jobs tied to the production ant recycling of paper products at risk.

Woodworkers Chief of Staff, Bob Walls

Thankfully, lawmakers have an opportunity to change course and make alterations to the state's EPR law that will both improve recycling infrastructure and support a U.S. forest-products industry that is a significant driver of Minnesota's economy.

Forest products make up the fifth-largest industry in the state. Employing more than 68,000 Minnesotans like me in good-paying positions.

News Tribune, page 3

The Machinists Wood, Pulp and Paper Council's 6th Annual Chillin' & Grillin' Virtual BBQ Competition for Guide Dogs of America & Tender Loving Canines !

IT'S TIME—REGISTER NOW for our 6th Annual Machinists Wood, Pulp and Paper Council (MWPPC) Virtual Chillin' & Grillin' BBQ Competition being held on Saturday, August 16th!

The event will benefit the IAM's favorite charity, Guide Dogs of America | Tender Loving Canines (GDA/TLC.) All IAM members are welcome to compete for the title of best cooks!

Watch and share the promotional video here.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND REGISTER NOW FOR THE MWPPC CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN NIAGARA FALLS, NY SEPTEMBER 15-19,2025

A registration form and more information about the conference are enclosed in the conference call-letter. Please complete the form and return it to IAM Woodworkers Department, c/o Bailey Simonds at 9000 Machinists Place, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772, or email bsimonds@iamaw.org

Newly appointed MWPPPC President Matt Murdaugh will chair this meeting and direct the busy agenda. Council business will include Machinists Wood, Pulp & Paper Council Officer elections for Vice President and Conductor Sentinel, a host of great speakers, and a strong focus on organizing, educating, and empowering, Some of the highlights at the Conference will be a Guide Dogs of America/ Tender Loving Canines Fundraising Event. The conference registration fee will be $125 per delegate and $75 for each guest and can be paid upon arrival at the conference. This fee will help defray the cost of the Machinists Wood, Pulp & Paper Council Conference.

If you have any questions about this conference, please contact Woodworkers Department Chief of Staff Bob Walls at 301-967-4555.

News Tribune, from page 1

From operating logging equipment to working in paper mills, we are hardworking individuals who drive $16.8 billion in annual gross sales and $7.3 billion in economic benefit to Minesota.

With a total payroll of over $2.1 billion, the forest-products industry not only helps thousands of us afford better lives for our families, but the sector benefits everyone, generating over $205 million in the state and local taxes that can be reinvested into Minnesota communities, including into recycling infrastructure.

These tax dollars, along with involuntary investments by the paper industry, have helped make Minnesota's paper and paperboard recycling system a success. In 2023, recycling systems in Minnesota captured 68.3% of paper products, including materials like cardboard and office paper, a rate on par with the 65% to 69% of paper that is recycled every year across the country. And while paper-industry investments into our recycling system help underpin these high recycling rates, credit also goes to the thousands of Minnesota residents, business, and recycling-system workers who are committed to recycling every day.

Rather than sticking with EPR legislation that could upend these successful paper-recycling streams, and potentially the jobs supported, lawmakers must focus on products that are actually found "in the blue recycling bin." As currently written, Minnesota's EPR program risks targeting the raw materials used to make paper products, not the actual paper and paper packaging that we put in our recycling bins.

Additionally, the law should draw a clearer line between residential and commercial recycling. Commercial recycling streams—which include nonresidential recyclers like office buildings, schools, and big-box stores– are extremely efficient and successful at recycling paper products. Not only is including commercial recycling streams inefficient, it's unfair to our workers who have built this already successful manufacturing and recycling infrastructure over decades to be circular and cost-effective.

Legislators shouldn't punish the forest-products industry for planning ahead by forcing us to subsidize materials that are recycled at lower rates than paper.

In truth, the issue goes beyond paper. It is about how we value skilled labor, responsible industries, and common-sense policies. Minnesota's working families, like the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM union) members we represent across Minnesota in the wood, pulp, and paper industry, deserve a recycling policy that elevates success, not one that harms it.

Lawmakers have a chance to make it right. By focusing the EPR law on the actual residential recycling stream and protecting high-performing commercial systems, we can build a policy that works with workers, not against them.

Robert D. Walls of International Falls, Minesota, is the woodworkers' chief of staff for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (goiam.org). He advocates for its wood, pulp, and paper members, and he wrote this for the News Tribune.

BIO-CORNER

Jeff Wagner, District W24, Business Representative

Jeff Wagner began his career as a machinist in Cosmopolis, Washington, in March of 1988. That same year, he was hired by Weyerhaeuser as a choker setter, working under high leads towers and swing yarders. Over the years, Jeff held several positions in the woods before transitioning to log truck driving, a role he held for the past twenty years.

Jeff's involvement with the union began in 2008 when he served as a trustee for Local W2. Brother Wagner, later became the local lodge president, a position he continued to hold following the merger with Local W130. In 2017, Jeff was elected as a business representative for District W24.

In his personal time, he enjoys fishing, crabbing, and shrimping– anything that allows him to take the boat out. Jeff also takes pride in working around the house and spending quality time with his wife, Patty.

Rayonier Negotiation

Starting in May and continuing through Mid-June, Local 272 in Jesup, GA led negotiations for a new 4-year agreement with Rayonier Performance Fibers. The committee, chaired by D243 BR Kahira Black and Local 272 President Will Amerson, included VP Josh Runyon and IAM Woodworkers IR Billy Barnwell, alongside members from USW 7887. IBEW 1454, and UA Local 473.

If ratified in the July 18 vote, the agreement will provide 13% wage increases over 4 years, an additional week of vacation, improved healthcare cost coverage, and equity adjustments across several classifications.

Billy Barnwell noted, "These brothers from this small local fought hard for their members and worked very well with the other locals on the joint committee to bring back a tentative agreement that is a trend setter in the industry."

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www.goiam.org/index.php/headquarters/departments/woodworkers

Submit your wood, pulp & paper stories and photos to: bsimonds@iamaw.org for publication in our Wrench & Wood Newsletter.