



From President Paul Winistorfer

To WoodLINKS USA Supporters and Friends,

At our recent Board of Directors meeting in Chicago we decided to create a monthly e-news communication vehicle

specifically for our supporters and friends of WoodLINKS USA. Your past support has been critical to the progress of WoodLINKS USA over the past six years and we owe you responsible communication on our progress, challenges, needs and the most important 'Inside WoodLINKS USA News'. You have a vested interest in our success and our future and we desire to communicate with you in an organized way each month.

- First, thank you for your past support. Your financial contributions, equipment donations and philosophical support have been instrumental in Building our WoodLINKS USA foundation. Thank you for believing in the vision and supporting the cause. I know WoodLINKS is making a difference to the U.S. wood industry in many ways. We are more importantly changing young peoples' lives and their opportunities for career development. WoodLINKS USA is about people.
- Wilf Torunski, National Program Director has been actively directing WoodLINKS USA for the past five years while living in the U.S. on an H1-B Visa. This Visa expires in January 2007. As you know Wilf and Donna have relocated to Canada already. Wilf desires to retire and to make this transition in 2007. We'll have an appropriate venue to recognize Wilf and Donna for their hard work, devotion and successes with WoodLINKS and to thank them.
- I will work with the Board of Directors on a transition to a new National Program Director and will keep you informed monthly of our progress on this most important task. I have experience in managing such a transition, recently overseeing a very successful change in leadership for the Forest Products Society.

Your suggestions and comments about this process are welcome.

- We continue the challenge of raising funds to support WoodLINKS USA operations. We have no permanent source of revenue for WoodLINKS USA. This remains our biggest challenge. Association, trade show, equipment suppliers, and support of friends and believers have kept us in business for five years. We must continue to seek this support and to develop new funding mechanisms for our critical work of developing the human resource for the U.S. wood industry. Our competitiveness and future depend on developing our human resource capital. WoodLINKS USA is addressing the most critical need of the industry.
- We have crafted a strategic partnership with the Forest Products Society (www.forestprod.org). This partnership was supported by the FPS Board of Directors at their recent meeting. Details of benefits and attributes of our strategic partnership will be forthcoming in the next issue of WoodLINKS News, slated for December 2006. As Past President of the Forest Products Society I can attest to the strengths and opportunities at hand for both organizations. This will be a fruitful partnership.
- I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as President of WoodLINKS USA through the end of 2007. There is much work to do. Your continued support is critical to us maintaining and moving forward. On behalf of the students, teachers, and the WoodLINKS USA Board of Directors we thank you. I look forward to serving the WoodLINKS family and working with you to achieve our mutual goals.

Warmest regards,



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News From Wilf Torunski

WoodLINKS USA
National Program
Director

Managing WoodLINKS
USA on a National basis,

with a very limited staff, forces me to put out fires and pretend that everything is OK. Well it is - thanks to Paul Winistorfer and his staff at Virginia Tech and Steve Ehle, our WoodLINKS USA Wisconsin coordinator and Editor-in-Chief of Wood Digest. Why?

Because they are the leading forces in developing this new monthly Inside WoodLINKS USA News, and our quarterly newsletter. We intend to communicate monthly about 'internal' WoodLINKS USA issues, and quarterly on a broader topical scope.

Why so much information?

It is our conclusion that with so much positive happening with WoodLINKS USA that you—our supporting industries—should be much more aware of our activities and take advantage of the wonderful students that the program produces. You are vested in our success and challenges.

It is the mandate of WoodLINKS USA to produce SKILLED ENTRY LEVEL graduates for the wood industry and for the college and university programs. The WoodLINKS industry-education partnership WORKS well as long as we have the commitment from the wood industry to make it work.

After six years, our main conclusion is that the wood industry understands that we have challenges in developing, recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce for our industry — and we must commit ourselves to looking after our skilled worker needs for the future.

No one else — neither state nor federal education departments can or will do it for us if we sit back and watch.

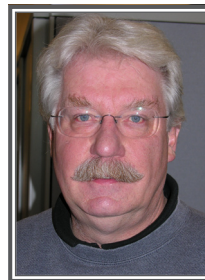
Together, with the “Power of One” we are and we can continue to lead the human resource needs of the U.S. wood industry. Thanks for your past and your continued support.



John Zinn Joins the WoodLINKS USA Effort

John Zinn has agreed to help WoodLINKS USA by serving in the capacity of Development Coordinator. John is

the former Senior Vice President of the International Woodworking Machinery and Supply Fair (IWF). John knows the people of the wood industry and brings exceptional knowledge and expertise to WoodLINKS USA to help us secure support for our programming. Having someone of John's caliber assisting WoodLINKS with our most challenging issue, raises the profile of our effort and brings an emerging sense of continued success to our effort. Welcome John—we are extremely pleased that you are working with us.



Industry Partnering More With WoodLINKS Schools

By Steve Ehle,
Wisconsin Coordinator

Many of us are aware of the apparent disconnect between private industry and the education sector. In many cases, it's like a clash of cultures.

The educators – and administrators – appear to be in their own world. They spend their working day within the confines of the school, as a passing parade of young people come and go. The world outside of the school is foreign to them in many instances.

Those people who are trying to make a buck or two turning out wood-based products – or any product or endeavor for that matter – are also confined to their own world – that being the manufacturing facility. What is going on in the school system is far from their daily focus, unless they happen to have children who are attending classes in their district or they are members of the school board or other local education support groups.



Inside WoodLINKS USA News

News for Our Supporters and Friends

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I sat in on a meeting at a northern Wisconsin high school recently where educators and woodworkers sat down to try to work out a plan where the WoodLINKS program would be added to the school. During the meeting, it became evident that the woodworkers and educators knew very little about what goes on in each camp.

One teacher looked around the table and noted that he had met only one of the woodworkers before; that person being a cabinetmaker who happened to sit on the school board. It should be noted that the shops represented at the meeting where this school is located are about a Bret Favre deep pass away from the school's front entrance.

Another teacher noted that he had never heard of one company that was in attendance, even though that company employs a number of people who graduated from his high school.

Still, during the course of the evening, there evolved a welcome joint focus; that being that private industry and the education sector have many common interests, the major ones being the students and the continued success of the businesses. The other common interests involved the shortage of entry level young people to enter the woodworking sector, and the lack of local employment for graduates who don't go on to college or a trade school.

Every business person around the table said they were in dire need of workers. And, the educators noted that they needed the support of private industry to ensure that their technical education efforts don't go the way of the Edsel, and that their students have the opportunity to find good local employment.

In the end, the high school principal noted that the gap between education and the business sector is actually shrinking, primarily due to the lack of funding that school districts can budget for tech ed. "We need you more now than ever, he said. "By necessity, we have to work together. We need your support financially and otherwise.

By the end of the meeting, the consensus was that WoodLINKS could provide a bridge between these two groups. And, most woodworkers around the table pledged money to help get the WoodLINKS program established in the school.

But this is only one instance of where industry is reaching out to the schools. Recently, an Indianapolis cabinet manufacturer – The Corsi Cabinets - donated a Biesse Rover CNC machining center to Hamilton High School in Milwaukee.

Then there's Burger Boat and a number of other companies in northeast Wisconsin. This internationally-known yacht builder sponsored two high schools in the Manitowoc area for the WoodLINKS program. Three other companies in that region, Eggers Industries, Architectural Forest Products and Shoto Corp., also stepped to the table and provided financial support for the payment of the WoodLINKS license fee for area schools.

The reason why these companies jumped at the opportunity to partner with their local schools was that they, too, are desperately seeking entry level, trainable young people, who have the basic skills and the desire to make a contribution the first day they come to work.

So, we're seeing somewhat of a paradigm change in our industry. Let's keep it paradigmging ahead at a quickened pace.

Mesa, Arizona High School Tops WoodLINKS/IWF RTA Competition

All entrants come away with money and prizes at the Atlanta woodworking show

Mesa High School of Mesa, Arizona, was the winner of the first annual WoodLINKS/IWF RTA Showcase competition held during IWF in Atlanta.

Mesa's woven athletic chair was the top vote getter from both judges and show attendees' "People's Choice" voting. Mesa received \$1,000 as well as a Bosch table saw and Vortex router bit. The Wood Tech instructor at Mesa is Mark Roberts. The winning students were Conrad Pena, Alejandra Casteneda and Kaylar Pinion.

A total of \$7,000 in prize money, tools and equipment were awarded to five schools, which accounted for seven separate entries.

"We were extremely pleased with and proud of all the entries," said WoodLINKS USA National Program Director Wilf Torunski.



“The level of quality of the entries and the poise and maturity of the students really showed that the future of woodworking in this country is moving forward.”

The other winners, entries and their prizes were:

- **2nd place** — Alexander High School, Albany, Ohio; Civil War camp chair; teacher Greg Gilders, and students Andrew Ding, Jarred Bright, Joel Nichols and Bobby Sickels.

Prizes — \$750, Carter Inspecto Light, Vortex router bit;

- **3rd place** — Lincoln East High School, Lincoln, Neb.; fine hardwood table; teacher Jeff McCabe, and students Andrew Steck, Jeremy Kendle and Scott Vasey.

Prizes — \$500, Festool pad sander, Milwaukee Tool jig saw;

- **4th place** — North Salem High School, North Salem, Ore.; student desk; teacher Dave Anderson, and students Jessica Gibson, Jon Humphries and Josh Wimp.

Prizes — \$400, Franklin International glue kit, Milwaukee Tool jig saw;

- **5th, 6th and 7th places** — Cedar Ridge High School, Hillsborough, N.C.; nut table, makore wine rack, and triple illusion end table; teacher Keith Yow, and students Erin Rehm, Mary Van Dempsey, Meredith Smith, Nicholas Perry and Michael Smith.

Prizes — \$850, two Castle tool glue injection systems, Ridgid hammer drill and Bosch drill/driver.

All schools will receive a deep discount on a Carter Products Inspecto Light. Nearly 750 votes were cast in the People’s Choice balloting.

Judges included Duane Griffiths of Stiles Machinery, Lindy Thomsen of Pittsburg State University, Patrick Molzahn of Madison (Wis.) Area Technical College, and Jeff Ebel of Ebel Woodworking, Scandinavia, Wis. Microvellum was a major contributor to the cash prizes.

Besides the machinery and tool contributors, other sponsors included IWF, which donated

exhibit space and raised expense money for travel and lodging for the teachers and students. Those expense funds were raised primarily from 23 IWF exhibitors who contributed nearly \$10,000 to cover expenses.

WoodLINKS USA, which organized the competition, also contributed cash and other prizes. Other cash prizes were donated by individuals and exhibitors at the show. Torunski, Ken Hanson of Mount Wachusett Community College and Steve Ehle of Wood Digest and WoodLINKS Wisconsin organized the competition.

Quarterly WoodLINKS USA Newsletter is in the Works

Our quarterly WoodLINKS USA newsletter will be published in December and available for distribution by the end of the year. Past issues are posted to the Publications link on the Virginia Tech Department of Wood Science and Forest Products website www.woodscience.vt.edu until we are able to tackle a major website rebuild for WoodLINKS USA.

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