

Survey Points To Health Of Wood Products Industry

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — A recent Penn State survey shows that Pennsylvania is one of the top three states for kitchen cabinet manufacturing — another indicator of growth in the state's wood products industry, which employs nearly 96,000 people and accounts for about 10 percent of the state's manufacturing income.

The manufacturers rely on Pennsylvania's abundant supply of valuable hardwoods such as red oak and cherry. The state leads the nation in hardwood timber volume.

"About 16,000 people are involved in manufacturing, engineering, and management and sales for the Pennsylvania kitchen cabinet industry," says Dr. Paul Blankenhorn, professor of wood technology in the School of Forest Resources. "Manufacturers use

\$220 million in raw minerals annually to create \$1.1 billion worth of products."

Penn State faculty and industry representatives will be on hand at Ag Progress Days to talk about the importance of the wood products industry in the state and national economy. Sponsored by the College of Agricultural Sciences, the event is held at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center in Rockspring.

A special exhibit including videos, live action, and hands-on displays will show the different steps needed to produce quality kitchen cabinets, from processing the raw material to packaging and shipping.

The exhibit also will feature information on the Pennsylvania food industry. "Improved methods for preserving and packaging food

have intensified the need for more storage space in kitchens," says Blankenhorn.

"People just can't get enough kitchen cabinet space," he says. "That's why home remodeling efforts usually begin in the kitchen."

A new set of cabinets can cost anywhere from \$12,000 to \$30,000 or more — a considerable investment that adds up to good business for manufacturers.

The Penn State survey found that more than half of the state's 239 kitchen cabinet firms are located in the rapidly developing southeast.

"Some of the state's small firms concentrate on serving local needs through custom-made products," says Blankenhorn. "But the majority of medium-sized and large firms serve the national market. They purchase about two-thirds of their raw materials within Pennsylvania and distribute the finished products across the country."

The survey to determine the size and distribution of the kitchen cabinet industry is part of Penn State's efforts to help Pennsylvania wood products manufacturers gain an edge over competitors from other states.

Since 1988, the university has been involved in the Hardwood Initiative, a state-sponsored economic development program that supports education, research and technical assistance for the forest products industry. A major goal of the initiative is to bring more value-added manufacturing to Penn-

sylvania. Penn State helps the wood products industry by sponsoring short courses in kiln drying, finishing and machinery. Faculty members also visit individual companies to recommend new manufacturing techniques or marketing strategies.

Kitchen cabinet making is just one facet of the wood products industry, says Blankenhorn. Manufacturers also create furniture, floors, doors, caskets, paper and numerous small products such as cutting boards and tool handles.

Rhodes Outstanding Senior

ALFRED, N.Y. — Terrance L. Rhodes Jr. of Lindley has won a top award as the outstanding senior horticulture student at Alfred State College of Technology.

The landscape development major was selected to receive the \$950 Norman A. Diedrich Award earmarked for the senior "who shows the most skill and promise in the area of bedding plant production," the donor stipulates.

The award is from a \$10,000 endowment established by Florence and Norman A. Diedrich of Fairport, who were in the greenhouse business for more than 60 years.

They set up the fund after witnessing the extraordinary work accomplished by Alfred State horticulture students at the 1987 International Bedding Plant, Inc., conference, a college source noted.

Rhodes is the son of Nancy Martin of Harpers Ferry, WV, and is a 1990 graduate of Corning-Painted Post High School. He received an associate's degree at Alfred State's commencement, and has accepted a position with Cortright's Village Florist, Corning.

The Lindley resident was recognized as an award winner at the college's 1992 Honors Convocation.

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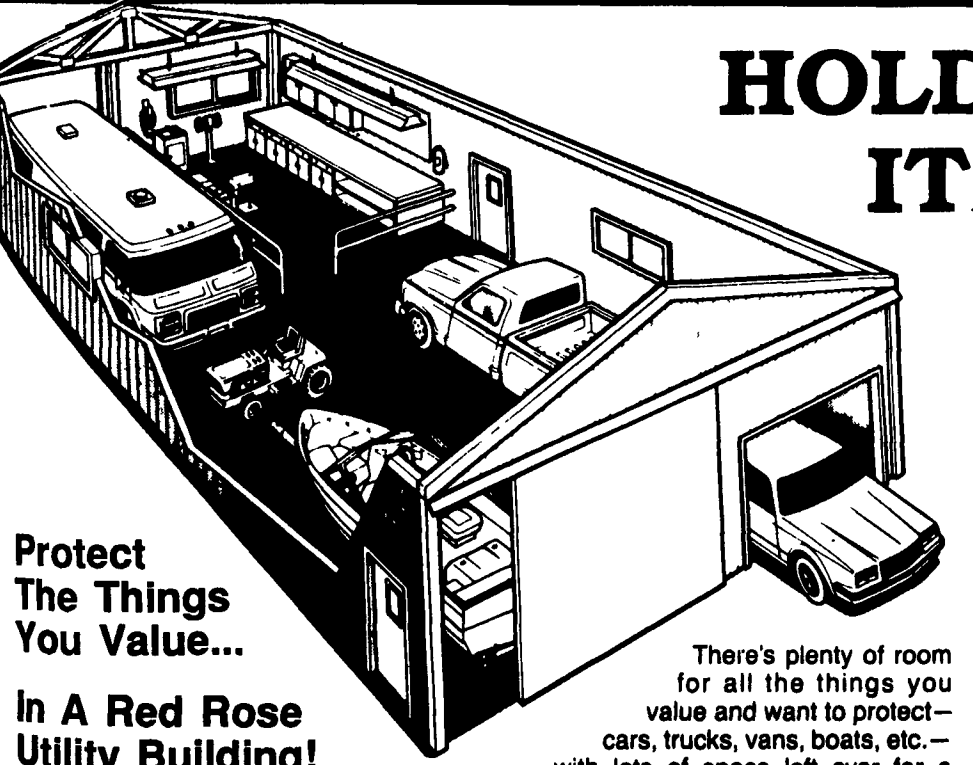
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