

Ridge Administration Announces Hardwoods Grants

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)
— On behalf of Gov. Tom Ridge, Agriculture Secretary Samuel E. Hayes Jr. announced that the Pennsylvania Hardwoods Development Council has awarded \$129,790 in grants to support the commonwealth's hardwood industry.

"These grants will help develop a wood-based technical curriculum, technical support framework for workforce training, public education initiatives, and economic impact research," said Hayes. "Pennsylvania leads the nation in hardwoods. The Ridge Administration will continue to support this important industry and the nearly 100,000 Pennsylvanians it employs."

The Hardwoods Development Council seeks to raise public knowledge and understanding of the role of the forest industry and its products. The council promotes economic development and expansion of Pennsylvania's hardwood industry in cooperation with industry representatives, regional economic development groups, education institutions, and other state agencies. The partnership is working to expand value-added manufacturing in the state, support development of domestic and international markets for Pennsylvania forest products, and promote access to timber resources on private and public lands.

Including the recent awards, a total of \$387,164 in grants has been approved by the council this year.

Pennsylvania has 17 million acres of forestland, a majority of

which is owned by more than 500,000 private landowners. More than 2,500 firms in Pennsylvania employ nearly 90,000 individuals to process approximately 1 billion board feet of hardwood timber annually and produce more than \$2 billion in value-added and finished products each year. Pennsylvania leads the nation in hardwood timber volume, with more than 11.9 billion cubic feet of growing stock.

The following grants were approved:

- The Pennsylvania State University, State College, Centre County, \$29,790 to examine the economic impact of the hardwood industry in the state, with a focus on a five-county region in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

- Northwest Pennsylvania

Industrial Resource Center, Erie, \$45,000 to help develop a wood-products technical training curriculum for secondary school students in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

- Pennsylvania Lumber Museum Associates, Galeton, Potter County, \$40,000 to support development of promotional materials for the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum by including displays and information on the state's modern forest products industry and contemporary forestry issues.

- MANTEC Inc., York, \$15,000 to support development of a workforce-training database management tool and support the secondary wood products industry in southcentral and southeastern Pennsylvania.





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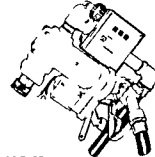
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