

# Virginia Urban Wood Group

## News & Updates

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March 14, 2023 | Issue-17

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### *"It just keeps rolling....."*

The title of this section are the exact words of a local urban wood business owner to my always-asked question "How's business?" In fact that is the same answer I get from almost every local-urban wood business that I visit. Despite occasional ripples in the economy the orders for locally made wood products just keep "rolling in".

Most of the makers are booked with orders 3-6 months in advance and that trend has stayed steady for the past 4-5 years! Realize that these days there are more urban/local wood businesses than ever before. But as Bill St. Pierre, of St. Pierre's Sawmill & Woodworking once told me, "There's always room for more people in this business". Bill realized a long time ago that there was no way he could ever keep up with the demand for local wood products even though he has one of the larger companies in this business sector.

The same has been true for our land management service providers. Business has been good, people are interested in managing their properties to meet their objectives and also to improve its environmental condition. Because of good outreach and education, people have become more aware of the presence and debilitating environmental effects of invasive species and they have come to hate their presence. They do not want invasive plant species on their property contributing to the spread of these unwanted plants to their neighbor's land, the neighborhood, or even miles away due to an avian carrier and disseminator of invasive plant seeds.

But just like the slogan on "The Price is Right" - *we aren't done yet!* No indeed, for there is a movement afoot to amp up the urban wood economy to heights never imagined in years past. Urban wood will never rival nor even threaten the large, production timber mills, but there is a lot of room for the urban/local wood economy to grow and expand far beyond its present state. Bottom line....there are still too many good trees becoming mulch and firewood.

We hope that the first quarter of 2023 has been good to you and welcome to the **seventeenth** edition of the Virginia Urban Wood Group's newsletter!

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Urban Wood Program Coordinator  
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**Upcoming Events**

**Aiming Higher:**

# Urban Wood Reuse Webinar

**Date: March 15, 2023**  
**Time: 2:00pm (Eastern)**

**Sponsored by:**  
PlanIT Geo  
Urban Wood Network

*Learn about:*

- How to jointly communicate the economic, social, and environmental benefits of urban wood
- How to leverage the triple benefits of urban wood into a scalable impact model
- The Urban Wood Network

[Click here for more details & registration](#)

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## **Memphis Project:** **The Works and the Urban Wood Economy** **Webinar**

**Date: March 16, 2023**  
**Time: Noon (Eastern)**

**Sponsored by:**  
Tennessee Urban Forestry Council  
UT Residential & Community  
Forestry Workgroup

**Speaker:** Jeff Carroll, CEO  
Urban Wood Economy

Approved for 1-CEU ISA  
Certified Arborist

[Click here for more details & registration](#)

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## **Northeast Forest Products** **Equipment Expo** **Bangor, Maine**

**May 19-20, 2023**



## **Virginia Urban Wood Group** **News**

### **The Merry Tree Project**

Over the past year and a half, the Virginia Dept. of Forestry, in cooperation with Virginia Tech University, have been collaborating on the Merry Tree Project.

The Merry Tree was a large, historic, white oak that once stood on the Smithfield Plantation property upon which some of the VA Tech campus is built. This historic oak tree, which was severely damaged by a storm in 2020, had meaning and value to the Fraction family, descendants of the enslaved peoples of Smithfield. The VDOF has assisted with the planning, processing and documentation of this project. Other partners on the project include Bill St. Pierre owner of [St. Pierre Woodworking & Sawmill Sawmilling](#) and Floyd County Artist [Charlie Brouwer](#) who created the Merry Tree sculpture. The sculpture, which represents the many layers of Virginia Tech's history and the land it is built upon, has been erected on campus and is located near the Duck Pond.

The project will continue in 2023 with the production of a video about the creation of the sculpture and locally crafted items from the remaining wood



Looking for a late spring vacation? Head north and check-out the Northeast Forest Products Equipment Expo in Bangor, Maine! This would be a great opportunity to see some unique equipment, most likely including machines designed for small woodlot management.

[Click here for details >>](#)

### [N.E. Forest Products Equipment Expo](#)

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## **VA Urban & Small Woodlot Forestry Business Directory**

This listing of service providers includes portable sawmillers, crafters, forestry mulchers, small parcel timber harvesters & resource managers, furniture builders and many more.

**Know of a company that should be a part of this ever-growing family? Sign-up is easy and takes only a few minutes of time >>**

[Directory Link >>](#)

### [Additional Information](#)

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*News from:*

## **The North Carolina Urban Wood Group**

***Latest Newsletter Link >>***

### [March 2023 Wood Chip](#)

***Website >>***

### [NC Urban Wood Group](#)

for the Fraction family.



*Merry Tree sculpture  
on the VaTech campus*

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## **Worth the Click!**

### **Repurpose Savannah**

An integral part of the urban wood story is deconstruction in which older buildings are dismantled and all of the usable materials are repurposed. Most of the time this would involve the lumber and bricks in the structure. This repurposed material is then cleaned and made ready for sale and use in new construction projects.

Repurpose Savannah is now an all-female company which includes the incredibly talented deconstruction crew. The professional development goals of Repurpose Savannah include providing a portal for females interested in entering the construction industry and teaching them the skills to succeed! Additional goals include decreasing the demolition waste stream entering landfills, maintaining the carbon storage characteristics of the wood, and honoring the historic values of the wood, some of which is



longleaf pine which is on the threatened species list over much of its former home range.

A recent article in the Christian Science Monitor highlights the story of Repurpose Savannah and includes an awesome video which is definitely worth the click:

[Repurpose Savannah Video](#)



Member

**URBAN WOOD  
NETWORK**

The Virginia Urban Wood Group is an affiliate member of the Urban Wood Network.

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Have something to share? Use [#UWN](#)  
[#urbanwood](#) [#urbanwoodnetwork](#)  
[#urbanwoodmovement](#) to connect with us and to share your posts with us.

**Additional info >>**

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**UWN's latest newsletter >>**

[UWN News](#)

## Feature Stories

### Women Entrepreneurs

As the Virginia urban wood economy continues to expand so do the number of women-led companies. From sawmillers to wood turners to musical instrument makers, women are making a huge, positive impact on the local wood scene, showing off creativity, talents and a business savvy that would impress any Fortune-500 CEO!

Women-led businesses are frequently more creative with their product lines and more willing to take risks than some of their male counterparts. A female owner and good friend of mine from the Richmond area has really stretched the creativity bubble by using concrete as an element in many of her locally crafted wood products. The concrete follows that "industrial theme" that many artisans attained by the use of steel legs on their creations. Yet concrete adds a totally different visual and tactile experience when combined with the beauty of natural wood.



Female-led companies inspire all of us with their successes, creativity and talents that they contribute to the urban wood economy. As we continue with our feature stories of women entrepreneurs, we want to leave you with some inspirational thoughts from some of the most successful women business owners in the country:

**“No one is going to believe in you like you do”**

-Latasha McRae, owner of **Peeks Cosmetics**, shared this vital piece of advice: you need to be your own biggest cheerleader.

**“Don’t be apologetic for charging premium rates.”**

- Nicole Feliciano, founder and owner of momtrepreneur trend blog and influencer network **MomTrends**

**“Join women’s entrepreneur groups”**

-Karen Leonard runs a marketing agency called **Innovative Global Vision**.

**Source: 9 Successful Women Entrepreneurs Share Their Best Business Advice for Women**

Constant Contact, Aaron; Last Modified: January 31, 2023

## Mallory Yoder

Store Manager

Norfolk Wood Shop

Norfolk, VA



I began my interest in woodworking in 2012 when I lived in Seattle, Washington where I worked as a cabinetry apprenticeship for a summer. Since gaining that insight into woodworking, it's been something I dabbled in, making items like coffee tables and refinishing furniture. Since buying a fixer upper house here in Norfolk I've been doing more carpentry type woodworking projects around my home, including new stair treads, a wooden ceiling to replace old asbestos office tiling, and new pantry shelves. Since starting as manager of Norfolk Wood Shop, I've been teaching myself how to hand carve and that has been a really rewarding pursuit. My favorite part of this job is seeing all the unique and creative ways that people use wood.



My favorite wood to work with is cherry. It's strong, durable, and beautiful. Also, it is readily available from local sources, which is an important factor for me. I've always been a supporter of shopping small, shopping as local as possible, and repurposing as much of any material as possible.

Check out the Norfolk Wood Shop's website, follow them on Instagram or stop by for a visit to see their inventory of wood, tools and ready-made local wood items:

[Norfolk Wood Shop](#)

## Women of Woodworking



Following the theme of this month's newsletter, we would be remiss if we did not feature the **Women of Woodworking** group. Founded in 2015 by Katie Thompson, The Women of Woodworking Project started as a written interview series on her website. Since then it has grown into an international community of women, trans, and non-binary woodworkers and includes a free monthly e-newsletter, original interviews and an Affinity Group. Women in Woodworking is a totally volunteer organization, whose mission is to highlight the stories and work of women and non-binary woodworkers.

Women of Woodworking refers to folks who engage in the project as "community members" but there is no official organizational membership. They encourage folks to join our partners at The Furniture Society, a non-profit organization that provides programming support for the project that keeps our events and affinity group free and as accessible as possible.

One of the best ways to keep up with news from Women of Working is to follow their Instagram account which will feature monthly livestreams this spring. The group is also planning an event/meet-up at The Furniture Society annual conference in New Orleans June 8-10, 2023.

More details can be found here >>

[The Furniture Society](#)

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## Thanks!

Many thanks to Trees Virginia (Virginia's Urban Forest Council) for hosting this newsletter and allowing access to their Constant Contact platform!

Check out their website >>>

[TreesVirginia](#)

## The Marketing Corner

### Location, Location, Location?

Over the years the phrase "Location, Location, Location!" has become one of the staples in determining where to locate a new business. In a nutshell, it means that if you are planning on having a retail place for your business then one of the very first considerations is to select a good location to help ensure success. Yet does that always hold true? The simple answer is resounding no and I will provide you with a great example.

A little more than a year ago in the small, northern Shenandoah Valley town that I call home, a BBQ place opened on Main Street which coincidentally is also U.S. Route 11. The small building in which it opened was in a prime location being right after the speed limit dropped to 25mph, meaning cars were slowing down and





The Virginia Urban Wood Program is supported by the Virginia Department of Forestry with grants from the U.S. Forest Service, Southern Region.



not just whizzing by. The BBQ place was in a converted gas station/convenience store which meant there was easy and adequate parking. The business was owned and operated by a veteran who had a wonderful, engaging personality and totally decent BBQ. Yet by the end of 2022, the business was gone and this prime location awaits the next entrepreneur.

So what happened? Well several things actually: inconsistent and insufficient operating hours, a lack of good signage, no social media presence, and a lack of any type of menu. People were uncertain of the days & hours of operation. It seemed as if the BBQer simply assumed "if you see smoke I'm open". There were no signs announcing what type of Q was available or when it would be ready. Signage doesn't have to be a basketball arena megatron, just something simple like a chalkboard easel with a readable message. Lastly, like it or not, some of the most successful local businesses have a social media presence. Be it Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or Twitter, simple, but consistent posts will bring business to your doors, and as previously noted, it is FREE advertising!

The takeaway from this sad event is that when launching a business take time to give attention to the obvious, easy, and cheap pathways towards a successful business. If you truly do not have the time to dedicate to these aspects of promoting your business ask a family member or find a friend who can help you out.

Virginia Urban Wood Group  
[www.vaurbanwood.org](http://www.vaurbanwood.org)



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