



TRUE NORTH WOODS® UPDATE

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North Woods Workshop Series 2006. The 28 bottom-line marketing and sales workshops were an overwhelming success. Seven high-impact workshops were presented in four northern Minnesota locations by energetic and experienced guest speakers. The topics included Guerrilla Marketing, Marketing on the Web, Salesmanship is Personal, Reaching Architects, Trade Shows & More, Branding & Promotion, and Specialty Harvesting. *The workshop series will be presented again in the fall of 2007, and your suggestions for topics will be appreciated.* The series was sponsored by the Minnesota Wood Education Project and MWC with major support from the USDA Forest Service, IRR, and Blandin Foundation and additional support from Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation, Andersen Corporation, Minnesota Power, and Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership.

Goods from the Woods 2006. The annual Up North Marketplace and GFTW educational program were once again a major event with approximately 5,000 visitors in attendance at the Marketplace. *The 5th Annual 2007 Marketplace will be held on September 15-16 in Grand Rapids, so mark your calendars and plan to participate in 2007.* GFTW was sponsored by the Minnesota Wood Education Project with major support from the Blandin Foundation and the participating vendors.

True North Woods® Certification Brand. During the past year, 23 Campaign members were approved to use the certification brand on their products produced from northern Minnesota forest materials. *We invite you to renew or sign up for use of the True North Woods® certification brand on your products in 2007.* The brand was highly promoted in the Twin Cities area and northern Minnesota in 2006, and new developments in the design and remodeling industries are expected to significantly increase demand for locally produced True North Woods® branded products in 2007. Please review the enclosed application form and send in your application for the coming year. Branded member benefits include use of the True North Woods® certification brand on your products utilizing northern Minnesota forest materials; participation in trade shows/events; a premium web site listing; premium sales lead notices; interactive workshops and one-on-one technical assistance; and other membership services.

AIA Minnesota Product Expo. The MWC's booth at the architect show this fall produced solid sales leads for the booth sponsors – Aitkin Hardwoods and Rajala Lumber & Millworks Company. *We hope you will build participation in the True North Woods® exhibit at the AIA show into your promotional plans for 2007.* The Campaign's past work with architects and designers – booth at the 2005 AIA show, distribution of True North Woods® species cards to all AIA firms, and delivery of True North Woods® species kits to selected AIA firms – has developed a keen awareness of the certification brand and a growing preference for northern Minnesota wood products.

Minneapolis Farmers Market 2006. The farmers market generated new sales for several of the MWC's members during the past year. *If you are interested in participating in the farmers market in 2007, please contact us within the next month.* Members who participated in the market on a regular basis (e.g., every third week) had the best results since customers who were considering purchasing a product could plan to come back at a later date and make the purchase. Watch for a membership survey so that we can determine your interest in 2007 initiatives.

Renew Membership for 2007. Your participation is needed requested in 2007 in order to assist you promote your products to a wider and higher-quality customer, keep the MWC growing, and better meet the needs of customers seeking to purchase northern Minnesota and True North Woods® products. *Please complete the enclosed form to renew or sign up for membership in 2007.* Membership benefits include participation in the MWC's web site, lead notice program, and interactive workshops as well as membership meetings, newsletter, marketing information, and information exchange.

True North Woods® Marketing Plan & Strategies 2007. The MWC's board of directors is in the process of finalizing the marketing plans for the coming year. The tentative show/event activities where the True North Woods® brand plans to be promoted in 2007 include the Lake Home & Cabin Show (April), Goods from the Woods (September), and AIA Minnesota Product Expo (November). *Please contact us with your recommendations.* Other shows/events under consideration include the Minneapolis Farmers Market, a regional outdoor lifestyle show, MWC-sponsored buyer's marts in the Twin Cities, non-metro home and garden shows, and National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) show (September). Members planning to participate in these events as part of the True North Woods exhibit/booth will be requested to sign up earlier than in past years.

MWC Board of Directors. At the annual meeting, the following members were elected as officer and directors. President, John Rajala (Deer River). Treasurer, Mike Hughes (Bovey). Recorder, John McCoy (Effie). Directors: Ron Hanson (Bigfork), John Krantz (Deer River), Rich Peterson (Aitkin), Jerry Seppala (Bovey), Darren Romans (Deer River). Ex Officio Directors: Allen Raushel (McGregor), Judi Carlson (Holyoke).

Thank You. Thank you to our Members and Branded Members for supporting the MWC and in promoting the True North Woods® brand to our targeted geographic and customer market segments in 2006. Happy Holidays, and looking forward to helping you to achieve an even bigger and better year in 2007.

International Falls Daily Journal endorses the True North Woods brand. "...we believe the Minnesota Wood Campaign and the True North Woods brand is important to embrace...The campaign and brand can help get the word out that Minnesota knows its forests, takes good care of them, and will have wood to offer for a variety of uses into the future." - November 28, 2006 (Watch for more media interest as we fully roll out our True North Woods publicity campaign in early 2007.)

