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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HAMMOND LUMBER MILLS AGAIN ARE FIRST IN SAFETY

The Northeast Lumber Manufacturers Association (NeLMA) announced in June that it has given Hammond Lumber Company four awards for outstanding safety performance during 2016 at Hammond's sawmill and planer mill in Belgrade. The awards are given to mills operating in the New England states, plus New York and Pennsylvania.

A Maine family-owned business founded in 1953, Hammond finished first in Division 2 for the combined operations of both mills. Divisions are determined by the number of worker-hours logged during a calendar year. A Division 1 classification represents 1 to 25,000 hours, while Division 2 represents 25,000 to 50,000 hours.

The Maine family-owned business also earned first place in Division 1 for planer-mill safety, second place in Division 2 for sawmill safety, and a fourth honor for achieving an accident-free year in both mills.

Perhaps best known today as a building supplier operating 13 retail stores throughout Maine, Hammond Lumber began in 1953 as a three-man sawmill, which is still housed at its original location in Belgrade. In its 63 years of continuous operation, the Hammond mill has seldom had a lost-time accident and has won many safety awards.

According to safety director Bruce Pelletier, there has not been a lost-time accident in the sawmill since 2004, nor in the planer mill since 2001.

A safety committee established in 1985 continues to meet once a month to identify and correct potential safety hazards on the job as well as discuss ideas for keeping everyone in the company safe during their off-hours, too. The position of full-time safety director was created in 2005 and has been filled by Pelletier ever since.

There are currently 12 people working in the sawmill, and 7 in the planer mill, representing a total of 243 years of experience at Hammond. Gerald Manley has worked for the company for 37 years, Craig Dawes for 36, Cliff Elliott for 31, and Rob Higgins for 22. Richard Thyng, Alan Bickford and Travis Manley have all been on the job more than 15 years. Ron Albair has 12 years in.

Those with less than 10 years are Bruce Albair, Coyt Ingraham, Chris Hinkel, Frank Walker, Matt Dawes, Nate Hewitt, Josh Ladd, Kris Merrill, Miranda Bickford, Ray Ashland and Elijah Gagne.

Travis Manley is Gerald's son, Miranda Bickford is Alan's daughter and Matt Dawes is Craig Dawes' son. Craig's father, Ken, retired from Hammond in 2002 after 15 years with the company.

In addition to its safety record, the Hammond sawmill has been recognized for its "whole log" approach to milling. Nothing from the log goes to waste. The bark becomes mulch, and both

sawdust and shavings are used as bedding for farm animals. The ends of the boards are used for crafts, for kindling, and for fuel to run biomass generators. The “slabwood” pieces or “edgings” from the log are fed into a chipper, and the resulting chips are used to make paper. The core log may then be used for Maine Pine Log Homes, Hammond’s line of building packages, or it may be further milled into dimensional lumber.

“It’s important to us not to waste anything,” says Donald Hammond. “There are only so many trees, so we don’t want to use more than we need to. Selective cutting is practiced on most of the lots from which the company buys logs, and many of these lots are now in their third cutting. The result is sustained yield from the same acreage.

“In fact,” says Hammond, “even though the production volume of our mill has increased quite a bit over the years, the number of acres harvested has increased very little. You could say it’s as important to us to keep our resource safe as it is to keep our people safe. We depend on both.”

Further information about Hammond Lumber Company is available toll free in Maine at 1-866-HAMMOND, or online at www.hammondlumber.com.

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