

Design Value Forum Educates, Collects Input

A group of 54 participants gathered in Atlanta this week with a singular objective: to provide an opportunity for Southern Pine lumber producers, key customer groups and others to develop solutions to proposed design values for visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber. SFPA, in cooperation with the Structural Building Components Association (SBCA) and others hosted the *Southern Pine Design Value Forum*. "This is an historic meeting to address a single challenge," said Joe Patton of Westervelt Lumber and SFPA's immediate past chairman in his opening remarks. "SFPA is facilitating this industry meeting to help find a favorable course of action for Southern Pine producers and users," he added.



The first session was devoted to education – learning more about the various data sets, the science behind the data, options to consider, the approval and implementation process, impacts on users, plus a summary of Southern Pine producer capabilities. "Educating Southern Pine users was one of our primary objectives," said moderator Cathy Kaake, SFPA's senior director of engineered and framing markets. "All concerns were considered," she added.

Next, three mixed groups of lumber producers, component manufacturers, builders and technical experts broke out into smaller discussions, reporting their recommendations for moving forward to the entire group in a concluding session. The result was formation of three task groups. One group will summarize the forum findings, expressing concerns and recommendations in a unified statement to both the Southern Pine Inspection Bureau (SPIB) Board of Governors and the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) Board of Review. A second task group will review underlying statistics to assess whether design value changes may be deferred until after additional testing is completed, or whether safety concerns require more immediate action. The third task group will provide guidance about what the implementation process should be for current and future proposed changes to design values. "This forum was very productive. All stakeholders came together to make recommendations as a group," said SFPA president Adrian Blocker.

Complete information about SPIB's proposed design values for visually graded dimension lumber is available online at www.southernpine.com. For questions or comments about this information or the Atlanta forum, contact Cathy at 504/443-4464, ext. 213, or e-mail her at ckaake@sfpa.org.

All information related to SPIB's proposed design values is pending approval by the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) Board of Review. Prior to the ALSC Board of Review's next meeting – set for January 5, 2012 in Washington, DC – ALSC is soliciting written comments from all interested parties, to be received at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Direct comments to Tom Searles, ALSC President by fax to 301/540-8004, or by e-mail to alsc@alsc.org.