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Wood Industry Career Awareness Campaign Now Live *New Website Offers Resources for Students and Job Seekers*

Nashville, TN January 27, 2021 - The Wood Industry Resource Collaborative (WIRC) is excited to announce the launch of their industry-wide career awareness campaign, “You Wood.” Developed by several industry trade associations led by AWFS, WMIA, and WMMA, in partnership with Nashville-based INDUSTRIAL Strength Marketing, the WIRC campaign aims to communicate wood industry career pathways and attract new talent.

The “You Wood” campaign features a website with career resource information, including profiles of high-demand positions, career quizzes, links to educational resources like schools and scholarships, industry information, and an events calendar. The site will be continually updated, and features will be added, including industry pro spotlights, additional career pathway information, and custom video content.

“This campaign is the culmination of over three years of communication, research, and hard work,” says WMMA Chief Executive Officer Fred Stringfellow. “Companies in the industry are still struggling to find skilled workers as they grow to meet demand. We are excited to launch this campaign as a way to increase awareness; and to expand the pool of candidates for our future workforce.”

The campaign is geared towards two audiences: high school students and those in their mid-20s to late 30s who are seeking a career change, including military veterans. WIRC conducted a survey of these audiences in early 2020 and found that over 70% of all respondents had no awareness of wood industry careers; however, 23% would consider a career in the wood industry.

“We realize how critical it is to increase awareness of our industry and the career opportunities which exist for both students and those seeking a career change where they can utilize skills they’ve already developed in the workplace,” says WMIA President and CEO Larry Hoffer. “It is our objective that the You Wood website will serve as a portal for those unfamiliar with the wood industry to learn more and begin exploration of their wood industry-related career journey.”

Officially founded in 2018, the charter members of WIRC agreed to the following goals and identified those influencers who can effectively drive interest in the wood industry as a career path (e.g., parents, teachers, social media, and financial resources):

- **Attract Employees:** Increase student and career-seeker awareness of wood industry careers; increase parent awareness of wood industry careers; increase student engagement; and increase High School counselor awareness of wood industry careers.

- **Retain Employees:** Increase association memberships; improve association member engagement and satisfaction; and improve work culture at member companies.
- **Improve the Perception of the Industry:** Develop and communicate the stories of the industry; increase positive media coverage; increase engagement with legislative and educator communities; and involve more associations in WIRC initiatives.

“We hope that members of the wood industry will embrace this website and use it as their own,” says Adria Salvatore, AWFS Assistant Executive Director, Education. “This site is a step towards a sustainable skilled talent pipeline for our industry. We look forward to continuing the work and expanding opportunities and resources for employers and job seekers.”

Find the WIRC You Wood website here: <https://youwood.com/>

The campaign media will drive to these targeted landing pages based on audience:

- Teenage Audience: <https://youwood.com/wood-industry-passion/>
- Young Professional Audience: <https://youwood.com/wood-industry-right-job/>

Follow the WIRC campaign on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wood-Industry-Careers-102616575144662>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/woodindustrycareers>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/woodindustrycareers>

WIRC logos and campaign-related assets can be downloaded from this shared folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qzpQAwHmfRivXZTJ_p1fJITPzeaR1vq?usp=sharing

If a trade association would like to participate in the group, they are represented by its executive-level staff. Among the benefits of membership in the collaborative group: inclusion in the ongoing conversation about industry-wide topics, such as workforce development; and access to resources and information developed or shared by the group. For more information about WIRC and how to get involved, contact Larry Hoffer at lhoffer@wmia.org.

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About the Wood Industry Resource Collaborative (WIRC)

The collaborative group is a consortium of trade associations, all related to the woodworking or the wood products manufacturing industry. The group’s purpose is to provide a collection of tools and solutions for the wood industry to attract and retain employees, while improving the perception of the industry. This group exists to connect industry associations with one another and support and strengthen the woodworking industry and their associations’ members by sharing information and resources.

Conversations that led to the founding of WIRC began in November 2017 with 10 industry associations, many of which are still WIRC members. The main objective of the early meetings of the group was to develop a unified solution to the challenges related to future workforce.

Current WIRC member associations are: AWFS® (Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers); AWI (Architectural Woodwork Institute); AWIEF (Architectural Woodwork Institute Educational Foundation); CPA (Composite Panel Association), International Woodworking Fair (IWF); NBMDA (No. American Building Material Distribution Assn.); NWFA (National Wood Flooring Association); WCMA (Wood Component Manufacturers Association); WMA (World Millwork Alliance); WMIA (Woodworking Machinery Industry Association); and WMMA (Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America).