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**National Hardwood Lumber Association Awarded \$25,000 Educational Grant**

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE –National Hardwood Lumber Association was recently awarded a \$25,000 USDA Forest Service Grant to develop a new delivery method for the NHLA Inspector Training School thus reaching a larger audience and in turn meet the demand for trained lumber inspectors.

"It is our responsibility to ensure the relevance and sustainability of the NHLA Inspector Training School over the long term," said Mark Barford, NHLA Executive Director.

In 1948, NHLA established a vocational training school in Memphis to teach the rules and application of the NHLA grading system and help meet the industry's increasing demand for skilled lumber inspectors. Since its founding, the school has trained over 6,500 lumber inspectors. Based on data analysis of industry trends, NHLA recognizes that currently an inadequate supply of hardwood lumber inspectors exists to satisfy industry needs. The USDA Forest Service Grant will allow NHLA to develop a feasible alternative approach to generating a larger pool of qualified hardwood lumber inspectors.

The proposed project will evaluate the existing school curriculum for the purpose of converting the technical aspects to an electronic format. In addition, the project will develop alternative hands-on training options and establish a testing regime for trainees, equivalent to or exceeding the practical training and testing format currently employed at the school. Finally, the project will develop a prototype training model for one component of the technical curriculum for evaluation purposes.

In total, the USDA awarded more than \$1.5 million in grants to 23 competitively selected projects with the primary goal of the grants to keep local wood businesses globally competitive and sustainable. Grant recipients are required to match Federal funds, dollar for dollar.

To learn more about the NHLA Inspector Training School please contact Crystal Oldham, Director of Education at [c.oldham@nhla.com](mailto:c.oldham@nhla.com) or call 901.507.0312.

The world's largest and oldest hardwood industry association, NHLA represents 1,600 companies and individuals that produce, use and sell North American hardwood lumber, or provide equipment, supplies or services to the hardwood industry. It was founded in 1898 to establish a uniform system of grading rules for the measurement and inspection of hardwood lumber. Since 1980, its headquarters have been in Memphis. To learn more about NHLA, please visit [www.nhla.com](http://www.nhla.com).

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