



## Greetings to all WoodLINKS USA Industry and Association Partners and the WoodLINKS Family of Teachers, Students and

### Supporters

By Mark Smith, WoodLINKS National Program Director

Many of you have known me as Shiloh High School's Industrial Technology/WoodLINKS USA teacher, but now I have the distinguished privilege of following in the footsteps of Wilf Torunski as the new National Program Director. I consider it an honor to assume this position and hope to continue the tradition of excellence that has been established by Wilf and others and to continue to build on our foundation.

Let's back up a moment and look at the not so distant past. I was born in Lafayette, Indiana in 1965 and shortly after that moved to Tuscola, Illinois. I went to high school in Tuscola and found my first passion, wood working. After high school I attended Eastern Illinois University where I found my second passion, teaching, and received my Bachelor of Science in Technology Education with Teacher Certification. After graduating from EIU I worked in a number of the trades to increase my skill set before teaching. One of the places I worked was the Upstairs Furniture Factory in Charleston, Illinois. Eventually I found my way to Shiloh High School and the WoodLINKS USA booth at the Industrial Strength Woodworking Show in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where I met Jerry Finch of Fox Valley College. After meeting Jerry I knew I had found the future of my Industrial Technology program.

WoodLINKS USA has been in the U.S. for now about 7 years and has reached a point which I would call "critical mass". We have enough schools and industry and association partners involved to show that WoodLINKS USA is doing what it has set out to do: generate a greater awareness of the wood industry, encourage bright students to enter the wood

working industry, provide industry-certified entry level employees, and provide schools with current resources and curricula. Though this can be seen all over the U.S., I observed it first hand at Shiloh school. During my last few years at Shiloh High School I saw students entering the work force, former students start their own woodworking companies, former students employed by different companies collaborating together on projects, and former students becoming industry supporters to the Shiloh program. First hand – I know our model of an industry-education partnership does work! Let's make it even better.

Let's look to the future of WoodLINKS USA. With an increasing need for our industry to be competitive in the global economy, WoodLINKS USA is positioned to address many of the needs that the wood industry is facing, starting with increasing the number of high school/industry partnerships all the way to the university/industry partnerships. But just as industry has to evaluate itself and look for strengths and weaknesses, so must WoodLINKS USA. We must closely examine our weaknesses and address these to remain accountable to our supporters, but also to simply improve the quality and relevance of this unique educational platform. We must reexamine our strengths along the way and be sure they are real, with merit, and on target. Over time, with your help, I hope to partner with you the industry and association supporters and the WoodLINKS USA teachers to scout out these strengths and weaknesses and continue to build an even stronger bond between industry and education that is relevant and worthy of our mutual interests and vision for the future of our industry.

Together we accomplish something none of us could do alone. Your past support is much appreciated; your future support is wanted and needed as we move WoodLINKS USA forward.

I look forward to seeing you at AWFS in Las Vegas.

*Mark Smith*

Mark Smith  
National Director  
WoodLINKS USA



## From President Paul Winistorfer

### To WoodLINKS USA Supporters and Friends,

I am personally pleased to have Mark Smith on board as our new National Director.

Mark brings passion, enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment to WoodLINKS USA. The sail is now set and here we go together moving our industry-education partnership forward. Please join me and the WoodLINKS Board of Directors in full support of Mark in his new role. Call him, introduce yourself and start building on the personal relationship that is so important in our endeavor. New leadership needs your input and ideas. We all have a mutual investment in our success — so let Mark know of your ideas and concerns.

Many of us will be at AWFS. I look forward to visiting with you there. Thanks to AWFS for their support of the WoodLINKS teachers and students. A special thanks to Dale Silverman for her leadership and support of WoodLINKS through her role at AWFS. Dale has clearly exceeded the expectation in demonstrating support of her organization for WoodLINKS USA. And we wish Dale the very best as she too transitions into retirement. Thanks Dale for all you have done for WoodLINKS.

We will be recognizing Wilf and Donna Torunski at the AWFS show on Wednesday July 18. Join us at 5:00 p.m. in room N117 for our annual press conference and awards ceremony. This promises to be a special hour as many of us have not seen Wilf for these past 6 months during his hospitalization.

Does it work...? We must move toward better accountability of WoodLINKS to our supporters. This is clearly in our sights for the coming months and we promise to be responsive to your needs for information about WoodLINKS and how your support is being used. I have been in discussions recently with a number of our association and industry supporters for more and better information on our accomplishments. Mark Smith and I and the WoodLINKS USA Board of Directors

are committed to developing some new methods of reporting back to you. Please call with your suggestions and watch over the coming months as we develop effective transparent mechanisms of accountability.

Does WoodLINKS USA work? There are many examples at the local level. Clearly, as Steve Ehle points out in his news from Wisconsin – WoodLINKS is running at full speed in his state. But click [here](#) to see one example of how a WoodLINKS student has taken his interest in wood, fostered by his involvement in his high school WoodLINKS program, and leveraged it into university study. We are proud to have Dan Roethle from Rubicon, Wisconsin studying in our wood science program at Virginia Tech. There are many pathways forward for our wood products industry – but common to all is having a platform that allows the greatest development of the human resource.

### Coming Up...

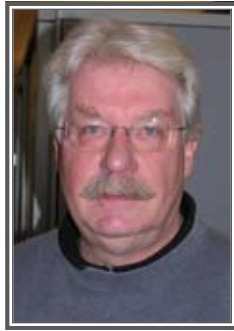
- WoodLINKS will be represented as an invited presentation at the AWI Top Executive Conference in Louisville, KY, next October 5th.

On behalf of the students, teachers, and the WoodLINKS USA Board of Directors we thank you for your support of WoodLINKS USA. We must work together on human resource development for our industry – we all have a role.

Warmest regards,



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## Non-profit Status Approved

By Steve Ehle,  
Wisconsin  
WoodLINKS  
Coordinator

After about two months of preparing the required documents and working with attorneys, WoodLINKS Wisconsin has attained 501c3 non-profit status.

To some extent, this brings further legitimacy and credibility to the WoodLINKS program in the state. It also means we'll be better armed to seek grant funding from foundations as well as funding from the state government.

On a national scale, we'll now be able to take the Wisconsin non-profit model and use it as a 501c3 template for other states. Essentially, all the other state organizations will have to do is change a few words and names in the documents and submit it to the powers that be along with the filing fee.

In securing the Wisconsin non-profit status, we also established a state board of directors. The board is made up of three individuals from the manufacturing/supplier sector – Jim Ruffolo of Burger Boat in Manitowoc, Steve Finnessy of Boehm-Madisen Lumber in Pewaukee and Lloyd Godell of Kretz Lumber, located in Antigo. The other members are from the academic sector – Patrick Molzahn of Madison Area Technical College and Jerry Finch, who recently retired from Fox Valley Technical College in Oshkosh and now acts as a consultant to the industry.

I feel we've established a great base to work with here in the Badger State. Our next step is to seek out those funding sources and make our pitch. The ultimate goal is to make WoodLINKS Wisconsin a self-sustaining entity where we no longer would rely on the direct support from WoodLINKS USA. And, ultimately, I would hope each state WoodLINKS program would do the same.

We all know that funding is a major key to our success. By not having to be constantly out in the industry "tin-cupping" for financial support would free up more time for what we really should be doing – bringing together the

education and manufacturing sectors and helping supply the industry with skilled, motivated entry level woodworkers.

On another front, WoodLINKS Wisconsin has begun a partnering arrangement with the John G. Weber Company, a woodworking machinery distributor located in Sheboygan. The company's owner, John Weber, is a strong supporter of WoodLINKS. He has graciously agreed to help bring our WoodLINKS teachers up to speed in terms of what is the latest in manufacturing technology in the industry.

John is member of the Stiles Machinery distributor group. He also sells a wide range of standard woodworking equipment. John's years of experience in the industry will be an invaluable asset to our state program. We plan to hold teacher in-service sessions at John's facility at various times during the year.

Finally, I'd like to express my deepest appreciation to Wilf Torunski, the out-going WoodLINKS National Program Director who is retiring. Besides being a good friend, Wilf has helped guide me through the process of bringing the education and manufacturing sectors together in Wisconsin. His dedication and enthusiasm for the program has been channeled through me. Good luck Wilf. We'll miss you and your lovely wife Donna.

Of course Wilf's departure doesn't mean WoodLINKS USA will lie fallow. Taking over the program is Mark Smith. I've known Mark for quite a few years. He has the many of the same qualities as Wilf and will do much, I'm sure, to carry on Wilf's ideals and goals. Good luck to you, Mark. I look forward to working with you.

All for now. Go Badgers!



# Contacting WoodLINKS USA Leadership

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