

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Save the Date: Urban Forestry Full Circle Conference & Networking Event**

The unique opportunities and benefits of developing and sustaining an urban wood marketplace will be thoroughly explored at “Bringing the Urban Forest Full Circle,” a conference and table top exhibition scheduled for Friday, March 18, 2016 at Hamburger University in Oak Brook, IL.

The event is being organized by the Illinois Wood Utilization Team (WUT), a broad-based group dedicated to promoting the harvest and best use of wood cultivated from urban and community trees. WUT members include representatives of state and municipal government agencies, arborists, land managers, sawyers, lumber distributors, architects, designers, woodworkers, green builders and academia.

The Bringing the Urban Forest Full Circle Conference will provide a vital forum for all urban forestry stakeholders to address the steps needed to create and sustain a viable value-added market for lumber salvaged from trees removed or harvested from urban forests which includes trees on private and public lands in and around cities of all sizes. Urban trees capable of being processed into quality lumber include those infested by the emerald ash borer, damaged by storms, removed by public utilities and other life-ending causes.

The conference will focus on industry best practices for urban tree removal and milling through wood product manufacturing and marketing.

Hamburger University, situated on McDonald’s heavily wooded, 80-acre corporate campus near several major expressways, is an ideal location for the Bringing the Urban Forest Full Circle Conference. McDonald’s has a long history of environmental stewardship of its campus forest and in recent years has lost hundreds of trees to the emerald ash borer.

The emerald ash borer is considered the most destructive pest to ever invade North American forests. The exotic beetle is blamed for killing tens of millions of trees in more than 20 states and several Canadian provinces. Up to now, the vast majority of these terminally infested trees upon removal have been expeditiously chipped or ground into mulch. Fact is the majority of these ash trees contain perfectly usable wood that can readily be turned into lumber for making furniture, cabinets, flooring and other secondary wood products. The end game of the Bringing the Urban Forest Full Circle Conference is to rally all stakeholders to take action and give these dying urban forest trees a second life as functional and decorative furnishings and objects.

"Reclaiming valuable wood products from felled tree landscape trees is just a smart idea," said Edith Makra, chairman of the Illinois Wood Utilization Team. "There are so many stakeholders - from arborists who must fell trees and industries who make wood products to consumers who find the story of urban compelling. The aim of our conference is to link these key players in the supply chain to spark an innovative, sustainable urban wood products industry in our region."

Additional information about the Bringing the Urban Forest Full Circle Conference, including registration, sponsorship and display table details, will be posted at [IllinoisUrbanWood.org](http://IllinoisUrbanWood.org) as they become available.

To learn more about attending, sponsoring or exhibiting at the conference, contact Rich Christianson, conference director, at [richsonmediapro@gmail.com](mailto:richsonmediapro@gmail.com), 773-822-6750.

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#### **About the Illinois Wood Utilization Team**

Founded in 2007, the Illinois Wood Utilization Team is a network of land managers, professionals in the wood products industry, natural resource and green building experts and artisans dedicated to promoting and developing a sustainable market place for achieving the best possible use of trees felled in the urban forest. The Illinois WUT is part of a four-state grant project funded through the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area. Other grant partners include the Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and the Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development Council and Recycle Ann Arbor; the Missouri Department of Conservation; and the Sustainable Resources Institute Inc. and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.