



March 2026

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**



**C&C Smith Lumber Co**

C&C Smith Lumber Company is a family-focused wood products manufacturer based in Summerhill, Pennsylvania, with a rich history of serving the furniture and woodworking industry for over four decades. From its Appalachian Mountains sawmill, the company produces high-quality lumber products — including turning squares and dimension parts — that are essential components in furniture manufacturing and custom woodworking projects. What began as traditional lumber production has evolved into a diversified operation that now includes a growing cabinet division and export services, meeting the needs of both small artisans and major domestic furniture companies alike.

Committed to sustainability and operational efficiency, C&C Smith operates as a no-waste facility: bark is repurposed for landscaping or mushroom farming, sawdust fuels dry kilns or is turned into premium hardwood wood pellets, and all residuals are recycled into value-added products. This eco-minded approach underscores the company's dedication not just to quality craftsmanship, but to environmental responsibility as well. With a hands-on leadership style and a focus on long-term customer relationships, C&C Smith continues to deliver dependable wood products and innovative solutions across its markets.

<b>In this newsletter you can expect:</b>
In the Spotlight: C&C Smith Lumber Co
SAVE THE DATE
Industry Look ahead
HR Question of the Month
Skoler Abbott
Thoughts for the Month



# Save the Date

October 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> 2026

Don't miss out on this exciting event in sunny Orlando, FL!

**KEY NOTE SPEAKER:**

**SKOT WALDRON**

*Speaking on the Challenge of Change*



**AI IN MANUFACTURING BY:**

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  - ▶ **WPMA'S FAMOUS MYSTERY NIGHT**
- and more...*



## WPMA at IHLA – Strong Connections and Industry Momentum

The Wood Products Manufacturers Association was proud to participate in this year's IHLA Convention & Expo, where more than 1,300 industry professionals gathered to connect, learn, and do business.

We were especially pleased to see 32 WPMA member companies represented throughout the event. From exhibitors to attendees, our members were actively engaged—building relationships, exploring new opportunities, and strengthening partnerships across the hardwood supply chain.

IHLA continues to be an important venue for face-to-face networking and collaboration, and it was encouraging to see such strong participation from the WPMA community. Events like this reinforce the value of industry associations working together to support growth, innovation, and the promotion of natural hardwood products.

If we connected with you at IHLA and you'd like to learn more about WPMA membership, resources, or upcoming programs—including our new AI Integration initiative—we'd love to continue the conversation.

Thank you to all of our members who made the trip and represented WPMA so well.



## FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY LOOKAHEAD

Original Source: All4inc Amy MLizzie S. Article summary generated by AI

After several years of consolidation and restructuring — including the formation of Global Cellulose Fibers following strategic shifts by International Paper — the forest products industry enters 2026 facing both regulatory change and operational opportunity.

State-level extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws for packaging continue to expand, potentially favoring paper-based materials over plastics. However, inconsistent state requirements are creating a complex compliance landscape. While many companies maintain sustainability goals, large-scale carbon reduction projects in pulp and paper have yet to materialize, and federal priorities currently emphasize deregulation and permit streamlining

If mortgage rates decline in 2026, demand for wood building products could strengthen alongside residential construction. Combined with a more favorable permitting climate, this may be an ideal time for facilities to pursue capital improvements that enhance efficiency, modernize equipment, and reduce operating costs.

**Air Quality: Key Rulemakings to Watch**  
Despite broader deregulatory signals from the United States Environmental Protection

Agency (U.S. EPA), several air regulations remain in focus:

- Plywood and Composite Wood Products (PCWP MACT) NESHAP: A revised rule expected this summer will address hazardous air pollutant emissions across lumber, plywood, and composite wood product mills. Facilities may face new work practice standards and additional emissions limits.
- Industrial Boiler NESHAP: Court-ordered revisions could clarify compliance for multi-fuel boilers common in pulp and paper operations.
- Good Neighbor Plan (GNP): Proposed updates may affect nitrogen oxides (NOx) limits for certain fossil fuel boilers, though the rule is currently stayed.
- Regional Haze Rule: Anticipated changes ahead of the next planning period could reduce emissions control requirements in areas that have already achieved significant visibility improvements.

Together, these developments make proactive air compliance planning essential in 2026.



The RAHC seeks to inspire and educate consumers and professionals on the uses and benefits of real hardwood products.

Build Your World™. That's the name of the first-ever national advertising campaign promoting Real American Hardwood® products. The campaign launched about a month ago by the Real American Hardwood Coalition on the Magnolia Network, the lifestyle channel owned by household names Chip and Joanna Gaines and entertainment conglomerate Warner Bros., to promote Real American Hardwood® flooring, cabinetry, furniture, millwork, and more.

## Chemical and Water Regulatory Developments

Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), U.S. EPA has proposed revising its formaldehyde risk evaluation. The updated approach would remove the prior “unreasonable risk” determination for inhalation exposure among wood products manufacturing workers. If finalized, this would likely prevent additional inhalation-based risk management requirements for wood products mills.

On the water side, potential changes to the Clean Water Act (CWA) Hazardous Substances Facility Response Plan (FRP) rule could significantly impact facilities. U.S. EPA is expected to delay compliance deadlines — possibly by up to five years — and may raise chemical threshold quantities, potentially reducing the number of facilities subject to the rule.

Facilities that operate drinking water systems should also monitor ongoing litigation involving the American Water Works Association challenge to the 2024 Lead and Copper Rule Improvements, as well as evolving standards for PFAS, perchlorate, and fluoride.

Additionally, U.S. EPA’s Multisector General Permit (MSGP) for stormwater discharges expires in February 2026. While it directly applies to facilities in limited jurisdictions, many states model their permits on the federal version, making state-level renewals important to track.

## Modernization and Strategic Opportunity

Beyond compliance, 2026 may offer meaningful opportunities for modernization. Programs such as the U.S. Forest Service Community Wood Grant Program support thermal wood energy systems and innovative manufacturing projects. These initiatives can help facilities upgrade equipment, improve efficiency, expand wood energy markets, and reduce long-term costs.

Overall, 2026 presents a mixed but manageable outlook: regulatory adjustments in air, water, and chemical programs alongside potential permitting efficiencies and modernization incentives. Facilities that monitor developments closely and plan strategically will be best positioned to maintain compliance, control costs, and strengthen long-term competitiveness.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Upcoming Trade Show Events**

**NWFA Expo**

**April 21-23, 2026**

**Orange County Convention Center**

**Orlando, FL**

**nwfa expo**

**2026**

**ORLANDO**

**APRIL 21-23 | NWFAEXPO.ORG**

## HR CORNER

With the cold weather, we have had a lot of employees getting sick and using paid sick leave (PSL). We operate in multiple locations and are confused by all the state and local PSL laws. Exactly which law(s) are we required to follow?



With the proliferation of state and local PSL laws across the country, employers may find compliance challenging, particularly when employees are covered by both state and local laws. Oftentimes, the state and local laws of the location where an employee is physically working—and not necessarily where the employer is located or where the employee resides—will apply. Employers should review the definitions and/or applicability sections of any laws at issue to determine which laws cover their employees.

In situations in which more than one law applies (for example, both a state and a local law), but the laws differ with respect to their provisions, employers should generally apply the most generous employee standard. That is, employers should follow the provision that provides the greatest benefit to employees. For example, if a state PSL law allows employees to accrue up to 40 hours of PSL but a local PSL law allows employees to accrue up to 72 hours, the employer should allow employees to accrue up to 72 hours—the greater benefit.

When employers are subject to both state and local PSL laws, they must compare the laws and decide which provisions to follow. It is always best to consult with local counsel for specific legal advice and ensure compliance with all applicable laws. Failure to provide employees with all rights to which they are entitled can result in costly consequences for employers.



*The HR Question of the Month is provided by Zywave®, a company wholly independent from Federated Insurance. Federated provides its clients access to this information through the Federated Employment Practices Network with the understanding that neither Federated nor its employees provide legal or employment advice. As such, Federated does not warrant the accuracy, adequacy, or completeness of the information herein. This information may be subject to restrictions and regulation in your state. Consult with your own qualified legal counsel regarding your specific facts and circumstances.*

## FROM THE LEGAL DESK OF SKOLER ABBOTT

### **Broader Immigration Enforcement: Concerns for Employers**

In 2026, employers across the United States are expected to continue to face intensified and broadened immigration-enforcement efforts. Executive actions, regulatory shifts, agency-level mandates, and recent events reflect aggressive enforcement within and outside of the work environment. "ICE" (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) has become a household word. Unannounced visits to the workplace, expanded audits, and coordination between ICE and other enforcement agencies has strengthened.

In 2025, certain cities, states and industries were affected more than others when it came to the administration's efforts to enforce immigration policies. The focus was on agriculture and farming, food processing, construction, healthcare workers, and cleaning and maintenance services because they often employ immigrant workers.

In 2026, efforts have been and are expected to continue to expand to employers in all types of businesses, size, location or number of employees. All employers, regardless of industry, size or location must be prepared for ICE visits to the workplace as well as other potential enforcement actions, such as unanticipated Form I-9 Audits conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor. Importantly, employers must also be prepared for conflicts that may arise when employees or ICE agents engage in actions that may have unintended and serious consequences, such as personal injury.

### **ICE Visits to the Workplace**

Immigration agents may go to a workplace to conduct a Form I-9 audit, a raid, or to detain specific people. ICE doesn't always ring the bell before entering. ICE can enter the public areas of a business, such as the reception area, without permission. Still, ICE does not have the unrestrained authority to stop, question or arrest someone even if they are in a public area.

Rather, for access to the private areas of a business, ICE needs either company permission or a judicial warrant. A judicial warrant is from a court and is signed by a judge. Although some agents may present an administrative warrant, that type of warrant is insufficient. An administrative warrant usually says "Department of Homeland Security" or is from an immigration court, and it does not give ICE the right to enter private areas of your business without your permission.

Having a judicial warrant only gives ICE authority to enter the areas identified on the warrant to be searched. Be wary, however. While it is illegal for ICE to enter any private area without a judicial warrant, there have been many reports of ICE failing to adhere to legal standards when entering the workplace, and employees permitting ICE agents to do more than they would otherwise legally permitted to do.

Such actions give rise to one of the newer concerns being discussed among employers: whether the deadly results of community enforcement actions having turned violent spread to the workplace.

### **Access to Employees**

Attempts to arrest an employee may also lead to

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physical altercations between ICE agents, the employee at issue, or other employees who want to protect the employee who is being sought or employees who wish to aid ICE's efforts. The desire to assist ICE often derives from US citizens' concerns about losing employment opportunities to undocumented workers, regardless of whether an employer intentionally employs individuals who are not authorized to live and/or work in the US. There is a misconception that all employers who are employing an employee who does not have authorization to work or be present in the U.S., knowingly do so.

For Form I-9 purposes, employers are not required to be document review experts. If the document reasonably appears to be genuine and related to the employee it is sufficient. Therefore, some employers are shocked when ICE arrives with a judicial warrant to arrest someone who has been a hard-working and long-term employee and who presented what appeared to be genuine Form I-9 supporting documentation. If a judicial warrant is presented, employers must comply. If ICE has an administrative warrant identifying an employee, the employer does not have to bring the agent to the employee or even have to let the agent know if the employee is working that day. That is, if ICE enters the employer's property at all. It has become more common for immigration officials to stop employees before they pull into the employer's parking lot. Employers must consider whether they want to have a plan in place if such a circumstance arises.

### **Employers' Right to Legal Advice**

Human resource personnel, the company president, and all other employees can ask to speak to a specific attorney or ask the immigration officer for a list of pro bono lawyers before speaking to immigration authorities or answering any questions. It's not certain, however, that the request will be granted. Still, no one is required to speak at all. No one must state where they were born or whether they are in the US legally; sign anything; or group according to country of origin. Employees do not have to show identification or other papers to ICE agents. However, if someone does not cooperate, it is not out of the realm of possibility that ICE would claim that the person was "impeding" their efforts and arrest them. Employers should communicate to employees about their position on ICE cooperation, regardless of whether or not ICE's actions appear to be legally supported.

### **Difficult Choices**

Employers who violate immigration-related employment laws or lawful enforcement actions can be subject to fines, large penalties, the inability to work on government contracts, and even criminal liabilities. But in today's immigration landscape, there's been much contention that even lawful activities can be penalized. An even greater concern is increasing violence. If an ICE agent demands action that you believe to be illegal, what do you do? Efforts to assert an individual's rights in the face of an improper action may lead to unexpected—and even dangerous—situations. Most employers do not know what their employees will do; who will take offense to ICE's action, whether right or wrong; and also do not have action plans when circumstances begin to present a risk of harm to one or more people involved. Regardless of the position employers take on Minnesota's enforcement-related deaths, they must recognize that similar situations could occur in their workplaces and should consider having a plan in place to address them.

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*This column is not intended as legal advice related to individual situations. If your business is confronted with a specific legal problem, take advantage of your free hour of legal consulting from Skoler Abbott.*



Episode 4  
**AI for**  
**Manufacturing**



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## THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

I've decided March is a trial month, too. I'll sort my life out in April.

The best luck of all is the luck you make yourself.

A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything. - Irish Proverb

### Wood Products Manufacturers Association

#### Officers

George Melnyk, Jr. – *President, Premier Millwork & Lumber Company, Inc.*

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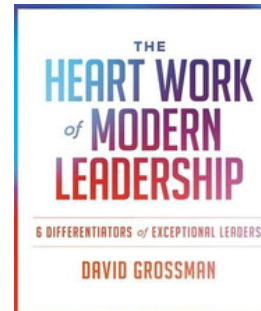
Scott Ferland,  
*Maine Woods Company*

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Heart Work of Modern Leadership: 6 Differentiators of Exceptional Leaders

By David Grossman

(Releasing March 24)



Grossman looked at how twenty-nine executives and founders have successfully navigated their jobs as leaders through the changes happening in our world. Not only does Grossman share what he calls the six defining behaviors, he delves into the choices and commitments each leader made to move forward and be the best they could be, in spite of the challenges they face. This book releases on March 24, and is available for pre-order now on Kindle and in paperback.

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

### FEATURED ASSOCIATION PROGRAM

When your company becomes a member of the WPMA, you are automatically entitled to take advantage of several programs that are available at no additional cost which means these programs are included in your annual dues. These programs and services have all been designed and created to help your company save money.

### One of the programs includes:

#### AI Integration That Works

- Eliminate document & contract bottlenecks
- Reduce compliance risk
- Improve Quality and Consistency
- Free your team for high volume work

That's where Ledge Inc. comes in. Their decades of systems, quality, and manufacturing experience, combined with in-depth solutions development, means they deploy AI as a practical tool that delivers real results.