

Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Vancouver and the 31st annual meeting of the Canadian Wood Preservation Association. It's always a pleasure to be in Vancouver, as it is one of my favorite cities to visit in Canada. I'm very pleased to see such a good turnout.

As we sit here today it is easy to take for granted what we consider to be common place things in our everyday lives. But if we actually step back and think about why this is so, we might begin to realize that the little things we take for granted each day are not so simple really. Take for instance electricity, we can't see it but every electronic device we use requires electricity to function. We don't think about where it comes from when we plug in our big screen TV's and computers, or charge our cell phones and other devices. We just expect that when we plug in our little devices, they will work or be recharged through the magic of electricity. In fact, electricity is so common place now that we really don't think about it unless it's not there. We don't really even consider where it comes from or how it gets here. It's almost always just there thanks to a very complex electrical distribution network which is supported largely by wooden utility poles. Because air is the cheapest insulator, without those wooden utility poles, it would not be possible to distribute electricity economically so that everyone can use it. Their necessity and benefit to society goes without question. They are ubiquitous and almost indigenous in many ways. No one alive today can remember life in Canada without electricity or the sight of wooden utility poles along the road as we drive back and forth on the streets and highways in our beautiful country. They blend into the countryside and fade into the background truly becoming part of the landscape. In fact, wooden utility poles are so common place that we don't really even see them anymore, although there are actually millions of them installed in Canada, and hundreds of millions installed around the world.

Why then do we fail to acknowledge the importance of the wooden pole? The answer is simple; because they have been around so long and they do their job extremely well. The truth is, wooden utility poles are very dependable and provide on average, over 40 years of service. They form the "backbone" of the electrical distribution system in Canada, the United States and many other countries around the world. Wooden utility poles are extremely durable, strong, easy to handle, easy to install, renewable, recyclable, and also "climbable". In fact, because wooden poles can be climbed, they are ideal for installations where access with pole trucks is limited or impossible. They are also a poor conductor of electricity which is very important as well, especially during installation. Wooden poles also have very good impact resistance and often will not fail even when involved in motor vehicle accidents.

In order to extend the service life of poles, due to susceptibility to decay and insect attack they are normally treated with wood preservatives. These days the primary wood preservatives used are CCA and pentachlorophenol which can preserve the service life of a utility pole well beyond 60 years, which is about the time it takes to grow a red pine or lodgepole pine tree suitable for a utility pole. One important point which most people do not realize is that trees can help reduce the level of atmospheric carbon dioxide by capturing it and storing it. The normal process of photosynthesis in plants uses carbon dioxide and emits oxygen. When the tree is used to manufacture a pole, the carbon is held for a long time while the pole is in service. In this way, each individual pole functions like a small carbon sequestration mechanism whereby the production of green-house gas is offset. Compared to other utility pole options like concrete,

steel, and fiberglass, wooden poles have a much better carbon footprint and use a lot less energy to manufacture. In fact, wooden poles generate one-fifth the global warming potential of concrete and one-tenth that of steel. One of the additional benefits of the wooden pole is that they can be recycled or reused following their service life. In the event that the pole cannot be re-used or recycled in some way, wooden poles can be safely burned in co-generation facilities to generate electrical energy, which of course can be distributed again through a network of wooden poles; and the cycle continues.

Of course, wooden poles are just one example of the many different treated wood products that are used in Canada, often in critical infrastructure applications such as used in railways, bridges, mines, foundation piling, piers and wharfs, marine piling, highway guardrail, and wood foundation. Treated wood used in these applications has been proven to perform exceptionally well for very long periods of time. For instance, wooden railway ties have been used since the construction of the Canadian National Railway and are still used today because they offer excellent value and service. Wooden foundation piling has been used for many years to hold up some very large structures including much of the city of Venice, the Empire State Building, Chicago Post Office Building, and the Greater New Orleans Bridge, to name a few. In Ontario, at least 150 timber bridges are still in service and about two new bridges are constructed with wood each year. In addition, treated wood sign and guiderail posts are used in large quantities across the country. And of course, treated wood is used extensively in large saltwater pier and wharf projects on both of our coasts.

Last year the Federal Government in its Economic Stimulus Plan promised to spend \$30 billion over the next few years to stimulate economic growth in this country. This amount includes almost \$12 billion in new infrastructure stimulus funding for roads, bridges, broadband internet access, electronic health records, laboratories and border crossings across the country. Many of these projects included treated wood in some part of the project. In addition, provincial governments got into the action with major infrastructure upgrades ongoing or planned for the next few years. For example, around \$2.3 Billion will be spent by Hydro One on transmission and distribution projects over the next three years. The Canadian National Railway is spending \$300 million over the next 2 years to expand and upgrade tracks from Montreal to Toronto. The federal government is investing \$200 million over two years for over 260 projects to improve small craft harbours throughout Canada. These are just a few of the many infrastructure projects planned in Canada which will include treated wood.

In summary, these days it's almost impossible to imagine life without electricity, water, or a reliable transportation network. All of this is possible largely due to the successful use of treated wood products in major infrastructure. In many ways, treated wood helped build this country and its economic importance in the development of the Canadian society cannot be overlooked.

As you may have already guessed, this year the theme of our symposium is entitled "Industrial Uses of Treated Wood". Our program will feature a number of very informative presentations on the current use of wood preservatives in the industrial market in Canada and the United States. You will hear first hand from some of the most knowledgeable people in the industry, public, and private sectors on the use of treated wood in industrial applications. The second day of our program will feature many informative presentations addressing other current issues related to the use of treated wood.

Please feel free to ask the presenters questions after each presentation and don't hesitate to approach any of the speakers at coffee breaks or during lunch. We encourage your participation and value your opinions and suggestions, whether constructive or otherwise. But most importantly, we want you to enjoy yourself while you are here.

Please remember that the CWPA is your association and our primary goal is to transfer information about the successful use of treated wood products here in Canada.

Therefore, while I'm still on this theme, I'd like to introduce our keynote speaker; Dr. Paul Cooper.

Introduction of Dr. Paul Cooper

Dr. Cooper is currently Professor of Wood Science at the Faculty of Forestry at the University of Toronto. Paul obtained his BSc degree in Forestry and his PhD from the University of Toronto, and his Masters degree from Oregon State University. He also holds a teaching degree in Mathematics and Chemistry from the University of Toronto.

Paul Cooper is Professor and Chair of Value added wood and composite products in the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto. Prior employment experience included Research Scientist and Manager of the University of New Brunswick, Wood Science and Technology Centre in Fredericton, NB., Lecturer and Assistant Professor appointments at the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto (1978-1981, 1985-1995), Research Chemist with Iroquois Chemicals Ltd. (1981-1985), Wood Preservation Specialist with the Western Forest Products Laboratory (1969-1975). He has also worked as a consultant for a number of consulting firms, industry associations, government agencies and wood preservation companies.

Paul was also a founding member of the CWPA and has been an integral part of the association from the very beginning. He has held down many different positions within the organization including, President (1996/1997) and Treasurer (at least 10 years) and has been the eastern conference Program Chair for many of those years. Paul has presented over 25 individual and/or joint papers at CWPA over the years covering a range of topics in wood preservation. Some of the topics Paul has discussed over the years include; exterior fire retardants, termites, wood pole performance, fixation and leaching of CCA, recycling of treated wood, CCA PEG poles, performance of railway cross-ties, wood cement composites, thermal treatments, treated wood management, treatment of Canadian species, and corrosion of fasteners in treated wood. Paul's presentations are always very informative and interesting and have been a key component of the CWPA program for many years. It is for these reasons that we choose Paul to be our keynote speaker this year. This morning, Paul is going to provide us with some insight into the future of treated wood in industrial uses in Canada. With that being said, please join me in welcoming Dr. Paul Cooper.

Regards,

Craig A. Wilson
CWPA President