

COUNCIL ON FORESTRY MEETING in ANTIGO

The May 16, 2023 meeting of the Wisconsin Council on Forestry (COF) was held in Antigo, Wisconsin at the DNR Regional Service Center. After our regular meeting members of COF had the opportunity to travel to the Northcentral Technical College to visit the Wood Technology Center of Excellence. Faculty member Logan Wells gave us a comprehensive tour of their programs.

They offer an associates' degree, a technical diploma and certificate programs in wood science. Classes cover all aspects of turning wood into products. The first graduating class in the program occurred in 2011. They have acquired an impressive array of state-of-the-art machinery that specialize in secondary lumber manufacturing. There are currently 7 students in the program from north-central Wisconsin. There are plans to construct a full functioning sawmill on campus to expand their program opportunities.



Council members then travelled to Kretz Lumber outside of Antigo. They were given a tour of the facility by company President Troy Brown. It is an impressive facility that has operated since 1929. For the past 23 years it has operated as an employee-owned company. This has benefitted all 170 employees and is certainly a rare occurrence in today's market economy.



Kretz works with 150 area woodlot owners in sustaining their demand of cutting 5,000 board feet of lumber an hour. Council members got a sneak peek of their new \$4 million boiler that Kretz installed that runs on a blend of bark and chips. The new boiler will take care of Kretz's heating needs in the winter and also supplement their electrical demands. Troy pointed out that this is

another example of how they are addressing their mission statement "of providing forest products and services while remaining at the forefront of environmental stewardship."