

Council on Forestry March 23, 2022

BACKGROUND & PREPARATION FOR:

Forest Industry Efforts: 10:40 AM Breakout Session

At the Council's March 23 meeting, the Council will be breaking into small groups to facilitate a conversation and generate ideas on the following topics.

Background

The Council's listening sessions (May 2021) led to the development of initiatives originally envisioned to inform a potential Regional Economic Diversification Summit. Four initiatives were summarized and reviewed with the U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA) in January and then reviewed at our January Council meeting. The four initiatives were:

1. Engagement and Marketing
2. Product Innovation, Research and Development
3. Infrastructure and Facilities
4. Policy and Legislation

Following review with the EDA and considering the evolution of the *Wisconsin Forest Products Cluster: A Catalyst for Sustainable, Enduring Transformation to the United States Economic Development Administration's Phase 2 Build Back Better Regional Challenge*, Council on Forestry partners including Wisconsin Paper Council, UWSP, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources believe that efforts can and should proceed on two initiatives.

Initiatives

1. Comprehensive Brand and Industry Marketing

Identified the need to transform perceptions of a dying, legacy industry to one that is vibrant, making products that are sustainable and in-demand and that will underpin rural economies and communities as well as help mitigate climate change. The centerpiece should be an ongoing campaign to engage with and tell our stories of the quality, sustainability, social, economic, and environmental benefits, and the future of forest products to a broad audience including citizens, landowners, elected officials, tribes, business sectors, customers and potential customers. Inherent in the campaign will be elevating an awareness of the vast array of forest products manufactured in Wisconsin and used every day around the country and around the world.

2. Forest Industry Roadmap

The Council and our partners engaged in recent efforts have discussed and confirmed the value and need to create a strategic plan or "roadmap" for Wisconsin's forest products industry in the light of consequential changes occurring in our traditional markets, industry structure and workforce. A roadmap will provide the direction and path to vitalize, diversify and sustain our large, often fragmented industry by improved coordination, partnerships, and collaboration with

industry stakeholders and government. It will also identify the opportunities to effectively pivot, mobilize and compete in rapidly changing and new marketplaces that are developing regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Task

To move these initiatives off the start line, we'd like to get Council members and other's early thoughts and identify requirements and considerations to move forward.

We'll be working with our partners to review the outcomes of the March 23 discussion to determine the next logistical steps, which could include reaching out to additional stakeholders to develop working groups to tackle specific actionable items.

With this in mind, we'd like to hear your thoughts on the following for each of the initiatives:

1. What needs to be defined better in order to move these initiatives forward? (What is unclear?)
2. Who needs to be at the table?
3. What needs to be happen, be created, or otherwise established for a marketing campaign and road-mapping process to get started?
4. What role can the Council on Forestry play to get these two initiatives off the ground?