Transcript of Video – WOOD: A BETTER WAY TO BUILD

Announcer: Walking through a forest, what is it that you see? Look closer. When you look at a family forest, you see so much. You see a clean environment, sure. But you see part of a community. You see a home for the arts. Look deeper. You see jobs. You see some of the cleanest, greenest, most economical building materials on earth. You see a legacy for the future. And, you see the sweat and hard work of an American family tree farmer.

Todd Gartner: When many people think about the forests of the U.S., they think about Yellowstone and Yosemite. But in reality, nearly two-thirds of all forestland in the U.S. is held by private forest landowners. And most of those private forest landowners are actually the small guys, what we often call family forest owners, or non-industrial forest owners.

Tom Crowder: I’m Tom Crowder. I’m a third generation tree farmer from South Arkansas. Tree farms aren’t huge operations all the time. A tree farm can be just a small acreage that was handed down from generation after generation.

Todd Gartner: Many of these folks own reasonable small parcels – 60 or 80 acres – and it’s really difficult for it to be an economically viable reality to hang onto your forestland. So really what it takes is healthy markets for healthy forests.

Tom Crowder: Emerging markets are an exciting thing for family forest. It’s important for people to understand that the wood that comes off of these family forest is a green, sustainable product.

Michael Heeny: I think in many respects, wood is the ideal building material, when you’re talking about sustainable building, sustainable architecture. And that’s because it truly is a renewable resource. Especially if it’s harvested correctly.

Dr. Ann Bartuska: We’ve found that wood is the most sustainable building material. It has longevity. It has greenhouse gas management properties. But it also just feels good. It’s warm. It has a lot of aesthetic appeal. So if you put that together with the environmental footprint, you really do have very strong material that is sustainable for the long run. Another value of using wood is that it contributes to the livelihood of 11 million private forest landowners in this country. It helps us contribute to their livelihood and their ability to maintain healthy, rural communities that USDA really believes is important for this country.
Todd Gartner: These family forest owners are doing an amazing job making sure our forests are sustainably managed for all of the services and benefits that we care about as society. Clean air, clean water, habitat for wildlife, while also managing for sustainable wood products.

Michael Heeny: One of our first thoughts was to bring this idea of using heavy timber to Washington. My understanding is this is sort of the first heavy timber building in the city. And so what we wanted to do was we wanted to find a way of using timber in the most cost-effective way, and there are a couple of real advantages of it. But one of the great things about wood is that it’s beautiful, and so the structure acts as the finish.

Molly Smith: I think obviously if you look at this space, of Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, you’ll see a lot of natural elements. When we finally built this space, we really whittled it down to four different elements – glass, steel, cement and wood. And I think in some ways, the wood is the most important.

Dr. Ann Bartuska: Wood is also a smart material for commercial buildings. It not only has the value associated with the type of wood and the wood properties, but also the aesthetic appeal, and the instant connection people make when they walk into a public space and see that wood.

Molly Smith: Wood is incredibly warm. When you feel how this space is enveloped by wood, that warmth is something that emanates not just to the audience, but to the artists as well. There’s a feeling or a sensation about the space that allows people to be open to what the experience is. Is it the wood? Is it the shape? Is it a combination of all those things? I think it probably is. But I do think that using natural elements – like wood – within theater spaces, reminds us that we’re human beings.

Michael Heeny: The other advantage – or one of the things that was surprising to people in Washington – is that they thought, “Oh, it’s going to burn. It’s a very flammable material.” When in fact, heavy timber, it works better than steel in a lot of fire conditions. Because what happens is, when there is a fire, the outside of the wood chars, and that actually acts as an insulation. So if you have a catastrophic fire, in fact a wood column will last longer than a steel column.

Dr. Ann Bartuska: Wood is good. Wood actually has all those values that we really do care about. As consumers we want to be environmentally responsible. We want to have pleasurable aesthetic appeal. We also want to know we’re safe when we are in structures and I think that’s where wood sort of carries all of those pieces together.
Michael Heeny: We’re just embarking in the golden age of timber construction. We’re finding new ways of doing it, that there’s a real appreciation of the green aspects, the sustainable aspects, of timber construction.

Announcer: Across America, family forest owners are growing wood with love. Versatile, economical, sustainable, essential. Wood makes a building green.