



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2018

Media Contact: John Kyte

318-243-4370

Hunt Forest Products Announces New Sawmill in Central Louisiana

RUSTON, LA – Hunt Forest Products today announced that it will build a \$115 million, state-of-the-art lumber mill in Urania, LA. Construction is expected to start in April, and the new facility will employ approximately 60 people when operations begin in January 2019. The sawmill will employ approximately 110 people when it is operating at full capacity.

“We are excited to be bringing a high-tech sawmill, and the skilled jobs it will provide, to central Louisiana, and to provide a local outlet for the massive inventory of southern yellow pine that exists in this region,” said James D. Hunt, co-owner and vice chairman of the Board of Directors of Hunt Forest Products.

For example, the mill will prioritize buying timber locally, and it is estimated that the mill will require approximately 850,000 tons of wood annually to produce approximately 200,000,000 board feet of lumber annually, Hunt said.

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards said the state strongly supports the project, and is particularly pleased that the facility will be in LaSalle Parish.

“This project is a great economic boost to the center of the state, in the heart of our historic timber industry, and it will help create hundreds of direct and indirect jobs across the forestry, industrial services, and retail sectors in Urania and LaSalle Parish,” Edwards said.

Edwards also said that the Louisiana Department of Economic Development will be using the state’s nationally recognized LED FastStart® workforce development program, in coordination with Central Louisiana Technical Community College, to build and train the local skilled workforce the new mill will need.

Operating under the name LaSalle Lumber Company LLC, the sawmill project is a joint venture between Hunt Forest Products and Tolko Industries, Ltd., a 60-year-old family-owned Canadian forestry industry company that produces a wide range of forest products for customers around the world. Tolko, based in Vernon, British Columbia, will own a 50 percent share in the mill, which will be managed and operated by Hunt on a day-to-day basis.

-more-

“This is our first venture into the United States,” said Brad Thorlakson, Tolko president and CEO, “and we are thrilled to be in Louisiana with Hunt Forest Products, a family-owned company like ours, and one that has played a vital, reliable role in this state’s forestry industry for more than a century.”

Urania Mayor Terri Corley said Hunt Forest Products is working with community officials to coordinate services for the new mill, and to identify and address potential infrastructure issues.

“The forestry industry is what led Henry Hardtner to establish the town of Urania almost 130 years ago, so we’re very pleased to be working with Hunt Forest Products and Tolko to bring LaSalle Lumber Company – a new economic engine - to our community,” Corley said.

Corley also noted that the new sawmill will generate revenue for Urania as a customer of its municipal water supply and wastewater treatment system.

The facility will be located on approximately 125 acres of the old 285-acre Louisiana Pacific sawmill site. Drax Biomass now occupies the other 160 acres of that site, and the new sawmill is planning to supply residuals and wood fiber to Drax for use in manufacturing wood pellets, Hunt said.

“We are excited about this partnership with Hunt Forest Products and being able to leverage the innovative approach of having a sawmill located next to our newest sustainable wood pellet facility, LaSalle Bioenergy,” said Pete Madden, president and CEO of Drax Biomass. “This makes perfect sense for our business model, lowers our carbon footprint, and is an incredibly efficient, cost-effective way to capitalize on wood residuals.”

Hunt also said that Entergy Louisiana will support the new facility as an economic development partner, supplying clean, reliable and low-cost electricity, adding yet another competitive advantage.

“We believe this is the right project, in the right place, at the right time,” Hunt said. “This will boost the local economy, bring a new generation of sawmill technology to our state, and provide a much-needed outlet for central Louisiana timber. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

About Hunt Forest Products

Hunt Forest Products L.L.C. is a full service wood products company founded in 1978 with the purpose of providing quality products and superior service. We manufacture a variety of plywood, lumber, and other specialty wood products, and whatever the specification, we can meet your needs. Hunt Forest Products is a family owned and operated company practicing sustainable forestry, and we are certified by the American Tree Farm System and APA – The Engineered Wood Association. For more information: <http://www.huntforpro.com/>

-more-

About Tolko

Tolko is a leading manufacturer of a wide range of forest products for customers around the world, including lumber, plywood and veneer oriented strand board co-products, biomass power and a growing number of specialty wood products. For more than 60 years, our family-owned company has delivered reliability, flexibility, efficiency and quality. We hold third-party certification on the forestlands we sustainably manage in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan and we play an active role in the communities where our employees live and work. For more information: <http://tolko.com/>

###