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A Trip to Chicago with the Forest Products Society

Eric Ramsey
Iowa State University

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On October 8, 2000, a group of forest products students embarked on a trip to Chicago, Illinois, for the Midwest Section Forest Products Society annual fall meeting. The group, led by Dr. Douglas Stokke, included visiting scientist; Dr. Pu, forestry staff; Heath Gieselman, Yilan Bian, Graduate students; Mayuree Doungpet, Elif Semen, Undergraduate Students; Kevin Burds, Matt Curran, Aaron Kjeld, Tom Kitt, Ben Nurre, and Eric Ramsey. The theme for this fall’s meeting was “New Technology in the Forest Products Industry” and was led by Kevin Blau, a 1992 ISU forestry alum.

The trip to Chicago was approximately a 6 1/2 hour drive from Ames, seeming even longer when made in a fifteen passenger van. Nevertheless, the group was bound and determined to get to its destination. The time in the van was passed by reminiscing about old camp stories, discussing the meaning of life, and studying for upcoming tests (Ha! Ha!). Upon arrival in Chicago, the group made its way to O’Hare International Holiday Inn (the site of the meeting) where Dr. Stokke, Dr. Pu, Heath, Mayuree, Yilan, and Elif checked in. The rest of the group, being poor college students and always looking for a deal, proceeded to their hotel in what some people may call the “rough” part of town. After a long trip and some fast food from down the road, all went to bed anticipating the presentations of the upcoming day.

The next morning the group made its way back to O’Hare International Holiday Inn for the morning presentations. The morning presentations covered such topics as process development of powder coating medium density fiberboard products, new masonite products utilizing technology innovations, flexrite-heat transfer coatings for membrane pressing, and conveyor drying and exhaust abatement technology. The morning presentations were followed by a high quality, low-cost (free) lunch. The afternoon session then proceeded to discuss the topics of new international home building codes, decay and insect resistant composite lumber, engineered lumber adhesives, and composite panels from recycled plastics, paper, and kenaf fibers.

After a long day of presentations, it was time for the group to make its way back to their hotel rooms to discuss the ideas presented and to get a little rest and relaxation. That didn’t last long though, in order to make the most of their time in Chicago, the younger students (Kevin, Ben, Aaron, Tom, Matt, and Eric) decided to check out the night life of the Windy City. The group made a couple of stops at various Chicago icons, like Wrigley Field and the famous neighborhood that surrounds it. Even though the group could have spent a lot more time touring the area, it was time to go back to the hotel to get some much needed rest for the upcoming days activities.

The morning session was again full of interesting presentations covering the topics of developing wood/polymer composite products, current and future trends in wood-plastic composites, developing standards for artificial lumber, and testing of gypsum wet-process fiberboard. Once the presentations were completed, those wishing to take a tour of the U.S. Gypsum Research Center traveled to Libertyville, IL. On the tour, the group was able to observe the testing procedures and guidelines for gypsum fiberboard. Some of the tests that are conducted at the research center include fire and pest resistance, acoustical properties, strength properties, and thickness swell. The in-depth tour gave the group a good idea of the rigorous testing procedures that are being conducted on new wood products in order to make them the best they can be for the consumer.
When the tour ended, it was time for the group to pile into the van and make its way back to Ames. The long drive home gave the group a chance to discuss some of the ideas that had been presented and project how they may affect the wood products industry in the future. In all, the group was very pleased with the learning experience they had had on their trip to Chicago. The Forestry Department not only offers an excellent educational opportunity in the classroom, but outside the classroom as well.

2000 Club Officers

Arboriculture Club Officers: Vice President - Jeremy Christiansen, President - Mel Brandenburg, Secretary/Treasurer - Derek Chappas, Advisor - Jan Thompson.

Forestry Club Officers (Front) Ag Council Rep - Adam Luhman, Treasurer - Kerri Fulley, Vice President, Ag Council Rep - Stacy Weikman, President - Joshua Sterling. (Back) Advisor - Joe Cahill, Secretary - Karen Duey.

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