AF&PA and Agenda 2020 Collaborate to Transform the Forest Products Industry

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As the forest products industry has evolved over the past few decades, so has the need for increased advocacy support and expanded focus on technology research opportunities. Today, our industry has the benefit of two organizations whose complementary missions helps move the needle on many issues: the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) and the Agenda 2020 Technology Alliance.

In 1994, AF&PA worked with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to form what has become an indispensable industry partnership in Agenda 2020. An international alliance of companies, research institutions, and government partners promoting collaborative research and development projects, Agenda 2020 establishes the industry’s technology research priorities and advances the technology agenda by attracting government funds for breakthrough technology research for the forest products industry. It seeks to attract a larger share of available government research dollars for our nationally important industry.

In 2011, Agenda 2020 became an independent organization to advance industry-related, pre-competitive technology programs. Agenda 2020’s focus on industry transformation through innovation by collaborating on research in manufacturing processes complements AF&PA’s public and marketplace policy advocacy mission.

The Roadmap

As one of its primary mission elements, Agenda 2020 developed the Forest Products Industry Technology Roadmap with the DOE, the Institute of Paper Science and Technology at Georgia Tech, and AF&PA. Development of this roadmap incorporated the contributions of more than 100 industry experts from around the world who participated in two workshops: one to identify the critical issue areas and one to define the industry’s research and development (R&D) needs. By synthesizing and prioritizing the issues that industry representatives have designated as most crucial, the roadmap invites the research community to engage in research, development and demonstration programs that provide the foundation for deployment of new technology-driven solutions.

Agenda 2020’s work, guided by the roadmap, focuses on four platform areas:

- **Sustainable Manufacturing** - addresses new approaches for reducing water and energy demands and emissions of greenhouse gases that will make the industry’s production processes more sustainable and efficient.
- **Value from Biomass** - encourages new methods of getting value from wood, including biomass-to-energy, biofuel processing integrated with pulp mills, and high-value chemicals.
- **Novel Materials** - promotes the development of knowledge and techniques that can enable companies to develop new products and innovative features in existing products.
- **Sustainable Forest Productivity** - drives programs that assure forests will sustainably supply ample wood to meet the future demands for traditional paper and wood products as well as new demands for use in biofuels, energy, and bioproducts.

In September, Agenda 2020 also launched five industry-led teams to promote advanced manufacturing techniques with high potential to reduce energy and water demands in pulping and papermaking; transform the way wood is converted to fiber; and enable companies to more easily develop markets and uses for cellulose nanomaterials. Each team is tasked with delivering specific research plans in less than one year.

**Strategic Alliance Ensures Success**

AF&PA advocates in support of public and marketplace policies to advance the sustainability and competitiveness of paper and wood products manufacturers. Fact-based advocacy, grounded in solid policy research, helps AF&PA members achieve their policy goals. AF&PA works with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the administration, Congress, states, and other stakeholders to advocate for public policies that promote sustainable manufacturing in a cost-effective manner for the industry.

Whereas AF&PA is the recognized voice of the U.S. industry on policy and regulatory matters, Agenda 2020 develops the industry’s technology research agenda and collaborates with universities, government agencies, suppliers and a broad cross-section of paper and wood products manufacturers to ensure that future technologies meet changing business needs. Agenda 2020’s partnership with the research community is particularly important for the forest products industry because sustainable manufacturing of paper, pulp, and wood-based products requires a broad range of technology solutions.

AF&PA and Agenda 2020 collaborate and exchange information on objectives, efforts, initiatives and current issues on an ongoing basis. Staffs of both organizations participate actively in committees, work groups, and informal task teams for mutual benefit. AF&PA’s advocacy on policy topics such as renewable energy, carbon neutrality of woody biomass, energy and water use, and wood supply frequently takes into account Agenda 2020’s objectives, keeping the industry aligned.

Together, Agenda 2020 and AF&PA advance the technology and policy interests of the forest products industry to ensure continued, long-term growth and global competitiveness.