

PRESS RELEASE

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Photo Attached



Stacking Up Wood Against the Alternatives

(Honolulu, HI), February 26, 2015 – When it comes to building materials, there are pros and cons for selecting any of the usual products, which include wood, concrete, steel and brick. But as new advances in technology arise, it's becoming more clear that lumber products can meet structural demands and environmental soundness, while maintaining cost and time efficiency.

The use of lumber products for residential and low-rise commercial developments in Hawaii continues to be very popular for many reasons. Aesthetically, wood-framed homes fit many people's idea of "island living" and offers design options that flow into Hawaii's tropical setting.

Local homeowners are often concerned about the use of wood because of the possibility of mold and termites; however, the use of borate-treated lumber in construction has been successful for over two decades and is a requirement of the state's building code. Borate-treated lumber protects homes from fungal decay and pests, including carpenter ants, roaches and the highly destructive Formosan subterranean termite.

Wood-framed houses also offer homeowners the flexibility to easily and cost-consciously modify and expand their homes as needed. This is a major draw for local families who often have multiple generations living in a single home.

Engineered wood products are also helping to expand the use of wood from residential and low-rise structures to mid-rise developments as well. Cross-laminated timber (CLT) consists of layers of lumber melded together at right angles, allowing for more durable roofs, floors and walls. Similarly, glulam, or glued laminated timber, consists of layers of timber combined for increased strength as structural columns and beams. The prefabrication and light weight, in relation to load-bearing capacity, of engineered wood products help to manage the cost of labor and overall construction.

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Aside from the direct benefits to homeowners and business owners, using lumber products in construction fits in with the national trend of reducing carbon output and protecting the environment. A recently published study in the Journal of Sustainable Forestry, “Carbon, Fossil Fuel, and Biodiversity Mitigation With Wood and Forests,” concluded that using engineered wood equivalents in place of concrete, steel and brick would greatly reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and fossil fuel consumption.

Manufacturing, transporting and assembling concrete, steel and brick accounts for an estimated 20 to 30 percent of the world’s fossil fuel use. Most wood comes from sustainable forests, with only 20 percent, or 3.4 billion cubic meters, of new annual growth being harvested each year. The study found that increasing the harvest to 34 percent would decrease global fossil fuel consumption by 12 to 19 percent and decrease global CO2 emissions by 14 to 31 percent.

Wood has been the go-to material for construction and continues to grow in popularity due to new techniques and engineered products. Against the alternatives of concrete, steel and brick, wood offers comparable strength and durability at a lower cost for builders, homeowners and the environment.

The Hawaii Lumber Products Association is comprised of professionals representing the development and construction industry as well as building material producers and service companies. They are committed to the education and promotion of lumber products as the best choice for home construction in Hawaii. To find out more about using wood in home construction and HLPA, please visit www.hawaiilumber.com or find them on Facebook.

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