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Gov. Edwards, LaSalle Lumber Dedicate \$115 Million Sawmill Facility

Located in Urania, Central Louisiana site employs 115 people following 2019 opening

URANIA, La. — Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards and leaders from Ruston-based Hunt Forest Products LLC and Tolko Industries Ltd. of Canada dedicated the new \$115 million LaSalle Lumber Company LLC sawmill in the Central Louisiana community of Urania.

The sawmill project is a joint venture of Hunt Forest Products and British Columbia-based Tolko Industries. LaSalle Parish played a significant historical role in establishing the modern-era Louisiana forest products industry in the 19th century. The new LaSalle Lumber project led to construction of the mill during 2018 and to the creation of 115 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$46,000, plus benefits. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project also will result in 307 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 400 new jobs in Central Louisiana and surrounding regions.

LaSalle Lumber Company also is supplying residual wood waste from its lumber operations to LaSalle BioEnergy, a renewable energy manufacturing plant operated by Drax BioMass and located next-door to the sawmill in Urania. That biomass site produces wood pellets that are shipped to the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, then to export markets in the U.K., where they fuel electric power generation.

“LaSalle Lumber Company, which complements the LaSalle BioEnergy plant, represents the resurgence of a great forest products manufacturing center for which this region of our state is well-known,” Gov. Edwards said. “We congratulate Hunt Forest Products and its Canadian partner, Tolko Industries, for their wise investment in a technologically sophisticated sawmill that draws on the great forestry resources of this region’s timber landowners and dedicated workforce. We view this project as a great next-generation investment in our sustainable forest products industry.”

LaSalle Lumber Company produced its first commercial shipment of lumber in March 2019 and began ramping up to full operation of two 10-hour shifts, four days a week. The sawmill will source approximately 850,000 tons of wood per year to produce about 200 million board feet of lumber annually.

“With more than 100 years of family history in the Louisiana forestry industry, we are thrilled to continue that tradition and bring this state-of-the-art sawmill, and more than 100 skilled jobs, to Central Louisiana,” said Trott Hunt, co-owner and chairman of the Hunt Forest Products Board of Directors. “There is a massive inventory of southern yellow pine in this region, and we are proud to provide an outlet for local timber suppliers.”

“We are proud to be here today with our partners, Hunt Forest Products, to officially welcome this world-class facility to the family,” said Tolko Industries President and CEO Brad Thorlakson said. “We want to thank our employees who have completed a successful startup of the mill, the people of LaSalle Parish for their gracious welcome and support, and the State of Louisiana for working with us to make today possible. The Hunt family shares our values and commitment to safety, and we’re excited about what we can accomplish together.”

LaSalle Lumber is located on approximately 125 acres of the 285-acre former Louisiana Pacific sawmill site. Drax Biomass occupies the other 160 acres of the site, and procures residuals and wood fiber from LaSalle Lumber for use in manufacturing wood pellets.

“We are so happy that Urania is home to LaSalle Lumber Company, and we welcome them to our little town,” Urania Mayor Terri Corley said. “The very heart of Urania is the lumber industry and we are proud that LaSalle Lumber Company continues our legacy begun by Henry Hardtner in 1898.”

“LaSalle Lumber is an important new addition to the Central Louisiana economy, both in jobs and capital investment,” said President and CEO Jim Clinton of the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance. “CLEDA is honored to welcome them to the growing number of great Central Louisiana manufacturers.”

About LaSalle Lumber Company

LaSalle Lumber Company LLC is a joint venture of Hunt Forest Products of Ruston, Louisiana, and Tolko Industries Ltd. of British Columbia, Canada. Hunt Forest Products is a family-owned, full-service wood products company founded in 1978, with corporate offices in Ruston and facilities in Olla and Pollock, Louisiana. Tolko is a 60-year-old, family-owned forestry industry company that produces a wide range of forest products for customers around the world. For more information, visit LaSalleLumber.com.