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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LaSalle Lumber Company Ships First Load of Lumber from New Sawmill**

URANIA, LA – LaSalle Lumber Company has shipped the first truckload of lumber from its new state-of-the-art sawmill in Urania, LA. The mill began start-up operations in December and is expected to reach full operation by the end of March.

“We’re very happy with how the start-up process has gone to date,” said LaSalle Lumber Plant Manager Nick Landi. “With the first shipment of 21,000 board feet of 2x6 pine lumber last Thursday, we believe we are right on track to achieve full operation by the end of this month, and we hope to expand to two full shifts by May.”

Landi said the first truckload was sold to Hixson Lumber Sales, a large multi-state supplier of wood products.

The new, highly-automated sawmill took less than one year to build, and currently employs 100 people. At full operation, running two 10-hour shifts, four days per week, it will employ approximately 115 people. The mill will require approximately 850,000 tons of wood annually to produce approximately 200,000,000 board feet of lumber, according to Landi.

The mill is a joint venture between Hunt Forest Products of Ruston, La., and Tolko Industries, Ltd., a family-owned Canadian company that produces a wide range of forest products for customers around the world. Tolko, based in Vernon, British Columbia, owns a 50 percent share in the LaSalle Lumber mill.

During recent test runs, Landi said it took approximately 11 minutes for a log fresh off a logging truck to be converted into green lumber ready for the kilns.

“We’ve got an optimized log in-feed system that runs at 550 to 600 feet per minute, and a trimmer that can handle 140 pieces of lumber per minute, so we should be producing about 500,000 board feet of lumber a day by the end of March, and double that beginning in May” Landi said.

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He also noted that LaSalle Lumber employees Marty Abels and Larry Bush were instrumental in getting the first lumber shipment sent.

“Marty and Larry run our planer operations, and they’ve been working tirelessly to get that part of the system running properly,” Landi said. “We produce finished lumber, and the planer is the last step in the process, so we’re grateful to Marty and Larry for their efforts in getting this first truckload planed and out the door.”

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

### **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/>

### **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 (OSB), 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://www.tolko.com/>

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