

# NEW KID ON CAMPUS: Eco-Friendly Particleboard

Engineered wood producers have been providing viable eco-friendly choices to end users for decades. Composite panel products are produced almost exclusively from residual wood from sawmills and wood processing plants — allowing more than 95 percent of a harvested tree to be used. In contrast, only about 63 percent of the tree can be used to make solid lumber, according to a study done by the USDA Forest Service.

Now composite panel producers may choose to have the source of their products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), further assuring end-users of the products' environmental benefits. FSC, founded in 1993, is an independent, non-governmental, international organization that accredits third-party certifiers and promotes an international set of forest stewardship standards. The FSC logo on a product tells buyers their purchase supports forestry that meets the highest standards for environmentally and socially responsible forest management.

Recently, Collins Products LLC in Klamath Falls, Oregon, introduced an FSC-certified particleboard manufactured with residuals from Collins' self-sustaining forests.

The new product has already graduated to the college level. Approximately 35,000 square feet of Collins' particleboard are currently being milled for the interior of Middlebury College's Bicentennial Hall, the largest academic project of its kind in the

country to use certified wood products in its construction, according to Wade Mosby, vice president of marketing for Collins Companies.

"The use of certified wood in this building is one way that our institutional commitment to both protect the environment and conserve natural resources is translated into action," said David Ginevan, Middlebury College treasurer. The \$47 million science facility is scheduled to open on the Vermont campus this fall (1999).

Particleboard will be used on shelving in all the offices as well as on casework in the hallways, making up over 60 percent of the building's interior board, according to Tony Nigro, project manager for the Anthony Galluzzo Corporation, Architecture Millwork, the 25-year-old New Hampshire company executing the new building's interior.

"We're working with the product for the first time and the reaction is that it provides an extremely workable core, with very good consistency and integrity," Nigro says. "There's very little variation in the thickness of the material, which is critical in the fabrication of the end component, and it has excellent screw-holding ability and overall cohesiveness."

Worldwide awareness of ecological issues is proving to be the mother of invention for environmentally friendly products available from composite panel manufacturers throughout North America.

## The Composite Panel Association<sup>SM</sup>

The Composite Panel Association (CPA) brings together 34 North American producers of particleboard, medium density fiberboard and other compatible products, representing 85 percent of U.S./Canadian production capacity.

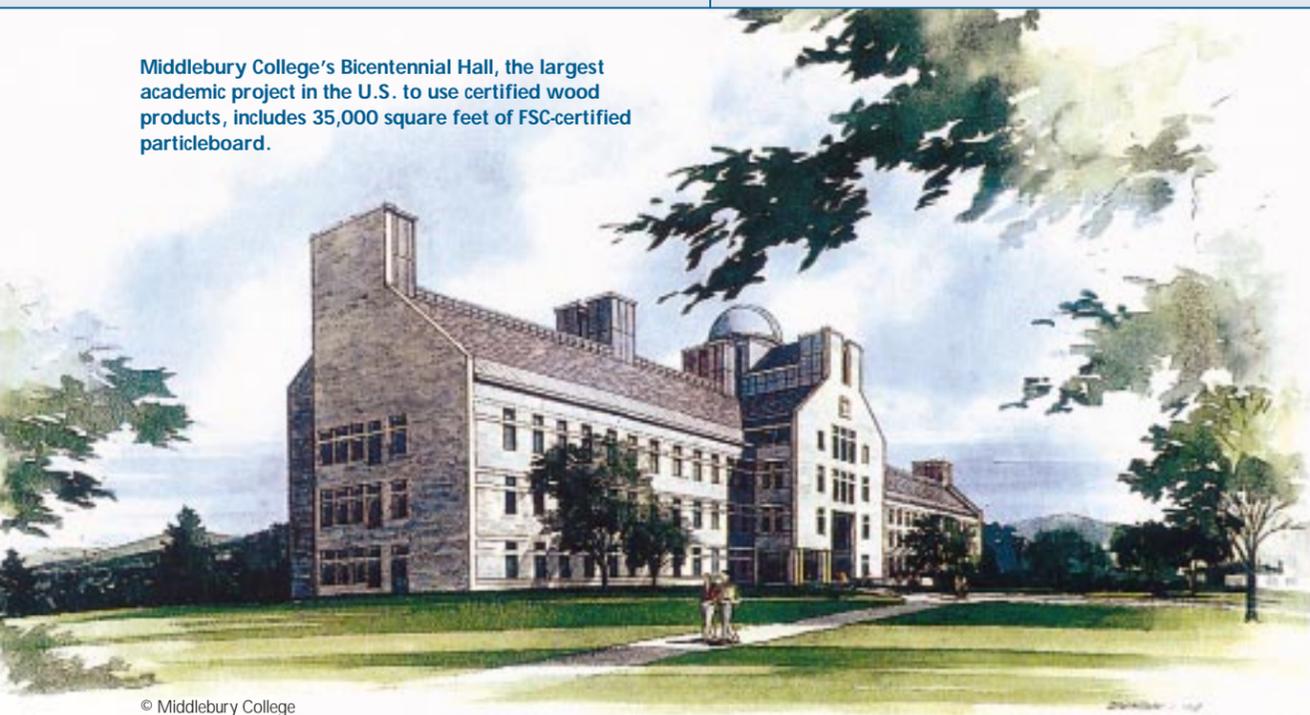
Serving as both industry beacon and advocate, the CPA represents the composite panel/engineered wood industry on technical, environmental, quality assurance and product acceptance issues.

Historically, the Association has been a vital resource for both producers and users of industry products. The CPA, as an ANSI accredited standards developer, writes and publishes industry product standards. It also participates in the standards development work of ASTM and others, sponsors product acceptance activities and works with federal agencies and model building code bodies. In addition, it conducts product-testing and third-party certification programs and helps manufacturers create in-plant quality-control programs.

Outreach and education are also prime goals of the CPA. The association conducts seminars to assist specifiers, manufacturers and other users of composite panels. It produces technical bulletins on installation and usage of particleboard and MDF, and develops publications, videos and other materials to inform key audiences about the attributes of industry products. Current publications include *Particleboard From Start To Finish*, *MDF From Start To Finish*, *MDF Standards*, *Particleboard Standards*, a 1999 *Buyers and Specifiers Guide* and a series of *Technical Bulletins*.

The CPA also supports the Composite Wood Council, which includes in its membership furniture and cabinet manufacturers, equipment suppliers and CPA members. The mission of the 180-member council is to communicate the attributes of engineered wood products to a broader audience, which includes consumers.

Middlebury College's Bicentennial Hall, the largest academic project in the U.S. to use certified wood products, includes 35,000 square feet of FSC-certified particleboard.



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## A Greener Alternative: MDF Core Paneling

performance alternative to lauan substrate paneling," says Mark Atkins, group manager of sales and marketing for the Industrial Wood Products Division of Georgia-Pacific Corporation, a major producer of wall paneling and supplier of MDF paneling. The Atlanta-based company built a plant in Monticello, Georgia, in 1996 to manufacture the thin MDF product.

Though still popular in the marketplace, lauan wood is primarily harvested in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brazil and converted into veneer for plywood lay up. MDF paneling, on the other hand, is manufactured from residuals and converted into an engineered wood panel.

Lauan is also subject to swings in the import market, making its pricing difficult to predict and manage. Since MDF paneling is produced domestically, its supply is consistent, helping to make it a lower-cost, readily available alternative to lauan paneling.

MDF paneling also offers outstanding performance and consistent high quality, according to Atkins.

"The product provides excellent thickness control and its surface is tight and smooth, with no imperfections, core laps or voids, making it superior to lauan for printing or laminating," Atkins says. "MDF paneling also cuts, machines, grooves and paints better than lauan."



© Georgia-Pacific Corporation

MDF core paneling — a prefinished thin paneling substrate — is making its mark as an environmentally conscious product.

"The emergence of thin MDF production in North America has created the opportunity for an economical, ecologically sound, high-

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We welcome ideas from our readers and encourage you to contact us with information or leads regarding applications, installations and newsworthy uses of composite panel products by architects, builders and manufacturers. We also invite your queries for further information on any of the companies, products or processes mentioned in our articles. And we'd like to know of others in your company who would be interested in receiving this newsletter twice each year.

#### USA

Composite Panel Association  
18928 Premiere Court  
Gaithersburg, MD 20879  
Phone 301/670-0604  
Fax 301/840-1252

#### CANADA

Composite Panel Association  
Association des fabricants de panneaux de composites  
4612 rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest  
Westmount, Quebec H3Z 1S3  
Phone 514/989-1002  
Fax 514/989-9318

INTERNET WEB SITE  
[www.pbmdf.com](http://www.pbmdf.com)