

# NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts: Tilla Fearn, Natural Resources, 919/513-4644 or  
tilla\_fearn@ncsu.edu  
Paul K. Mueller, News Services, 919/515-3470 or  
paul\_k\_mueller@ncsu.edu

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## **Weeklong Camp Will Link Students, Wood Products Program**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The wood products specialists in the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University are very well aware that wood, wood products, pulp and paper account for some 300,000 jobs – and billions of dollars a year – in North Carolina.

And, as land-grant educators and scientists, they know that the future of the wood-products industry, as with all industries, depends on the bright young students now sitting in high school and college classrooms.

That's why high school students from across the country will attend a weeklong WoodLINKS summer camp, from Monday, June 21, through Friday, June 25, at NC State, where university faculty and students will describe opportunities in the field, challenge the high-schoolers to complete woodworking projects, and educate them about the key role that wood products play in the state and national economies.

The summer camp is one benefit of the partnership between NC State and WoodLINKS USA, a nonprofit organization that promotes wood-related industry. NC State's Department of Wood and Paper Science oversees the partnership, which links industry, universities and high schools to advance the competitiveness and growth of wood-products businesses.

Wilf Torunski, director of WoodLINKS USA, sees the cooperation of high schools and universities as essential to the future competitiveness of the wood-products industries. "Only by attracting the best and brightest students will the industry be able to benefit from the latest advances in technology, material sciences and product design, and use them for the benefit of the industry and its people," Torunski said. "The summer camp shows the high school students how state-of-the-art technology is transforming the industry, as well as the many outstanding career opportunities available in the field."

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According to Dr. Michael Kocurek, head of the department, only 10 accredited universities in the nation offer a degree in wood science and, of those, NC State was the first to partner with WoodLINKS. “Our faculty and students serve as mentors to high school students and teachers nationwide,” he said. “The summer camp invites students already involved in the WoodLINKS program to immerse themselves in a weeklong program that’s fun, challenging, and informative – and they’ll tour wood-product facilities in New Bern, Beaufort, Liberty, Garner and elsewhere.”

Dr. Larry A. Nielsen, dean of NC State’s College of Natural Resources, said that both the industry-education partnership and the summer camp make sense. “As a land-grant institution, we’re charged with educating the state’s children, sustaining our natural resources, and encouraging economic development,” he said. “The WoodLINKS program, like many of our partnerships, helps accomplish those interrelated goals.”

The weeklong camp is free to the participating students, with expenses paid by the wood and paper science department. and travel covered by wood-products industries in their home communities. “Students are traveling to Raleigh from all over the nation,” says Lesley Grieco, the department’s student recruiter and an organizer of the camp. “The 17 students and two high school teachers will come from Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Texas, Arizona, North Carolina and elsewhere.” Students will stay in dorms on campus, with all meals provided and with access to most campus facilities.

Dr. Urs Buehlmann, assistant professor of wood products at NC State and one of the lecturers for the WoodLINKS camp, says that both high school and university students will find the experience rewarding. “Like all forward-looking industries, the wood-products industry knows that motivated, well-educated, innovative students are absolutely essential for future prosperity,” he said. “The bright young men and women here at NC State, as well as those in high school thinking about coming here, get a good step up with this kind of collaborative opportunity. The program truly is a link, and it connects a vital industry, a land-grant institution, and the young people who will lead them both.”

For more information about the summer camp, contact Lesley Grieco in the Department of Wood and Paper Science at 919/515-7709 or [lesley\\_grieco@ncsu.edu](mailto:lesley_grieco@ncsu.edu). For more information about the WoodLINKS USA program, visit [www.woodlinks.com](http://www.woodlinks.com).