

# Western Pallet



Magazine for WPA Members  
March 2018

Magazine



**CHEP to Make Major Investment in Repair Automation**

**Introducing 48forty Solutions**

**New NWPCA Video: Wood Packaging Supports Healthy  
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Softwood prices listed as of March  
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offered in additional languages.

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short courses to be held in May and  
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# **PRE-OWNED MACHINERY FROM PRS**

**"PRS Group's used machinery division has been a great resource for us, we've acquired several pre-owned machines at bargain prices, and cashed in idle surplus machines that we had no further use for."**

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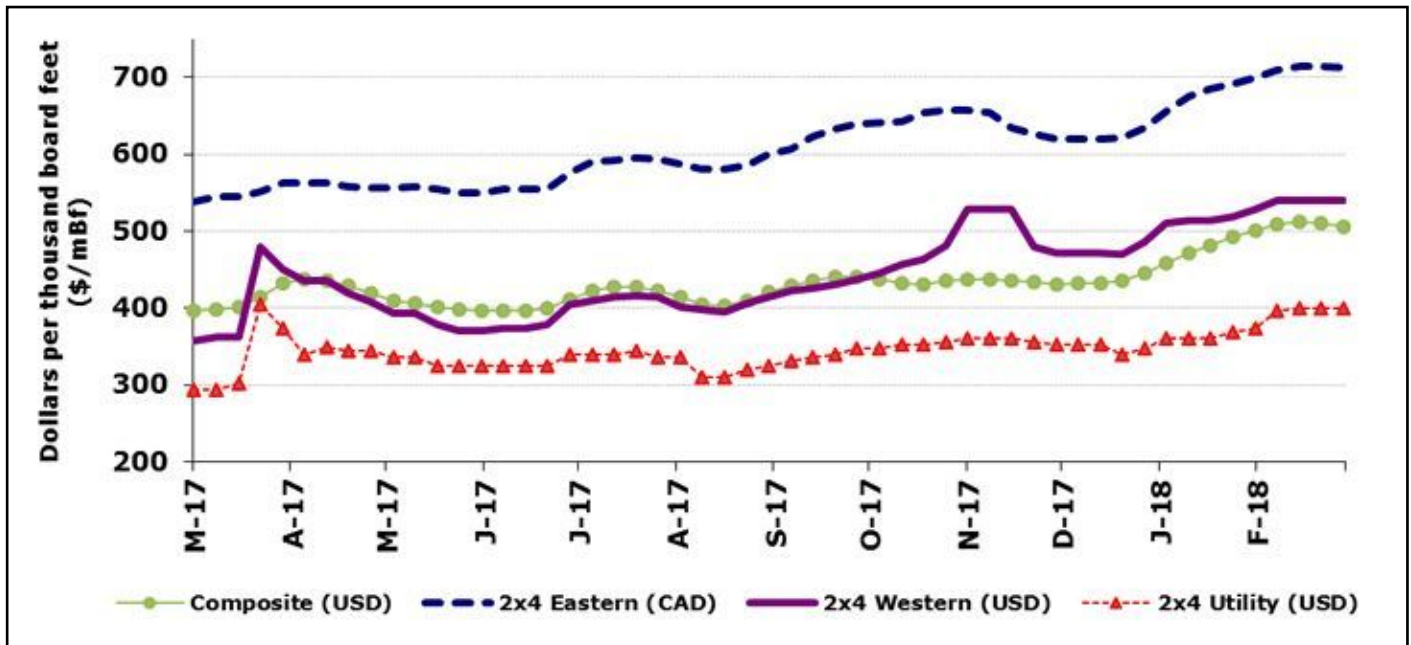
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# North American Softwood Prices

Weekly softwood lumber prices to March 20, 2018 are shown below, sourced at <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/industry/13309>.



## WPA New Members

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The National Wooden Pallet and Container Association (NWPCA) has released an updated version of the Pallet Design System™, PDS v.5.4©, that generates pallet specifications and analysis results in the following languages: English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish.

Global demand for the most efficient, cost-effective, and safe pallet is drawing pallet manufacturers and pallet users to PDS, leading NWPCA to incorporate additional languages and further solidify PDS as the global standard for unit load pallet design. NWPCA President and CEO Brent McClendon states, "Adding new languages to PDS not only supports our rapid global expansion, but also provides a significant value to our diverse user-profile in North America."

Shane Thompson, NWPCA's Board Chair added, "These specific language selections fit seamlessly with our international membership, and the international flow of pallets. NWPCA and

The Pallet Foundation investments in PDS, totaling nearly \$1.5 million over the next two years, further solidify PDS as the international language for pallet design."

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## CONTACT

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Director of Science & Technology  
Integration  
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# Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design Announces Pallet Design and Unit Load Design Short Courses



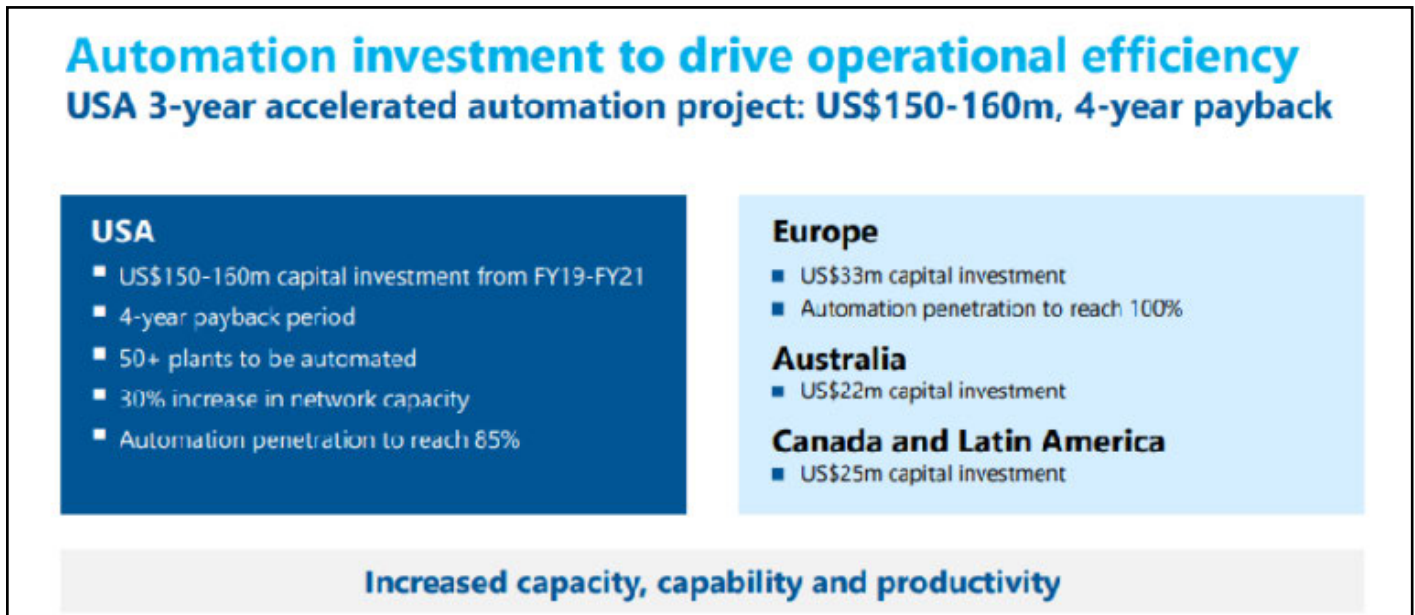
The Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design at Virginia Tech has announced two upcoming short courses. Offered May 1-3, 2018 is the Unit Load Design short course, "How to Design Pallets Differently." A second short course, Wood Pallet Design and Performance, is subtitled "Pallet Design in the 21st Century." It will be held August 21-23, 2018. These courses will be of interest to wood pallet suppliers and sales professionals, professionals responsible

for pallet purchases, packaging engineers, material handling equipment decision makers and pallet specifiers.

Registration and Lodging Information:  
Virginia Tech Outreach Program  
Development at (540) 231-5182

Website: <http://unitload.vt.edu/>

# CHEP to Invest \$240 Million in Pallet Repair Automation



Wooden pallet repair has traditionally been a very labor intensive and manual enterprise. CHEP is not a newcomer to introducing automation to the repair process, and it intends to accelerate that process through strategic investment.

In fact, CHEP initiated its automation journey in Europe more than a decade ago, noted Carmelo Alonso-Bernaola, Senior VP, Global Supply Chain for Brambles. He was speaking at a recent Brambles presentation in London. Those first efforts focused on separating forklift and pedestrian traffic through integrating sorting and repair processes.

One of the challenges for repair automation has been the condition of damaged pallets. "Whenever pallets are

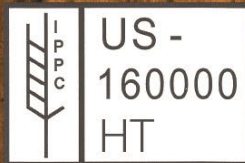
coming back to our plants they are broken," he said. "When they are broken they don't move as smoothly through any kind of automation."

The company succeeded in developing automation earlier in Europe than in the U.S. Alonso-Bernaola remarked that the different regions had separate challenges. In the U.S., he said, the urgency for automation did not exist. He pointed out that "back in 2010, the US economy dropped down and unemployment rates reached above 10% so there was easy access to labor, so they didn't invest in automation."

In Europe, however, CHEP continued to invest in high volume infeed lines, automated digital inspection



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technology, as well as in robotic repair. Now, a decade later, CHEP boasts a fully automated plant in South Ockendon.

CHEP has an 85% penetration in Europe in terms of its installation of integrated sort to repair lines and is adding a 75% penetration of robotics. In the U.S., the current comparable numbers are 25% and 10%. "So, it's clear where the opportunity is," he said.

As such, CHEP stated that it intends to move the US network at the same levels as in Europe. It has defined a three-year plan to invest between \$150 million to \$160 million. It anticipates a four-year payback return. The company intends to deploy more than 48 automatic digital inspections and more than 120 robotics repairs across more than 50 U.S. locations. The company intends to utilize its European expertise in the transformation

transformation of its U.S. network. Automation is anticipated to not only reduce labor requirements but also boost plant capacity by up to 30% to 40%.

Other related investments will be made in Europe (\$33 million), Australia (\$22 million) as well as Canada and Latin America (\$25 million).

Alonso-Bernaola stated that CHEP will continue European investment towards 100% penetration of automation, as well as upgrades in Australia, where its large plants have an average age of 20 to 30 years. The company has also recently opened a fully automated plant in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Featured automation equipment includes high-speed infeed lines, ADI booths and robotic repair.

After infeed, the automated process relies on ADI or automatic digital inspection. "This is a system using high definition cameras, and laser sensors that are checking the dimensions of the pallets and the structural damage on the pallet," he explained, "It compares pallets to a standard using algorithms. "What we are doing right now is thinking how we can introduce techniques like machine learning to improve efficiencies of these machines because one of the complexities we have whenever we are dealing with different type of platforms,

(is the) need to change the algorithms, and that takes a lot of effort. So, with machine learnings, we are hoping to speed up the process."

At present, CHEP operates 25 ADI units in Europe and 22 in the Americas.

Another piece of equipment being introduced by CHEP in its automated lines are robots for sorting and stacking, a practice it first introduced in South America. The company's initial intention was to reduce its cost of investment versus buying stackers and de-stackers. One robot can replace four or five stackers.

The company is also piloting robotic repair, including removal of damaged components and replacement. CHEP has partnered with Yaskawa MOTOMAN, based in Sweden. Initially used with Euro sized pallets, it has been developed to work on U.S. and UK footprint pallets. CHEP currently has about 40 repair robots working in Europe. In the U.S., there are four.

Alonso-Bernaola remarked in the question period that labor constitutes 40-50% of repair cost in non-automated plants and that automation has the potential to reduce repair cost by 15%. He also noted that the maintenance requirements for robots are negligible versus other equipment.







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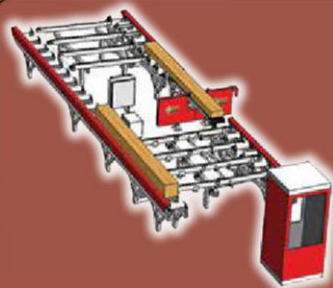


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# Brambles Discusses Lumber Supply and Alternative Materials

CHEP is diversifying its lumber supply, according to Carmelo Alonso-Bernaola, Senior VP, Global Supply Chain for Brambles. He spoke recently at a Brambles presentation in London. While the company has traditionally sourced lumber in regions where lumber was needed, he said that the practice left them heavily exposed to any market fluctuations within those regions.

"So, the first action we're putting in place is diversifying the supply of our lumber needs in the different regions," he said. "For example, in the U.S. we are today procuring significant volumes from Latin America. With inflation in the U.S. we are divesting more volumes towards Latin America and importing into the US market."

In Europe, the company is exploring Russia as a lumber source. Alonso-Bernaola stressed that the initiative is still in the early stages as no tall lumber coming from Russia is yet certified. Another challenge is sawmilling quality. However, they "partnering with local players there to develop them as a way to create alternatives for the European Market."

CHEP is also exploring opportunities for sawmilling in the U.S. He noted that the U.S. sawmill industry has been set up to produce standard cuts for the building

industry, not for packaging. In Europe, however, he said that most sawmills are producing 100% for packaging materials.

"That means in the U.S. there is quite a lot of rework," Alonso-Bernaola said. "We are right now starting a couple of pilots with a couple of partners in the US to translate the learnings of what we do in Europe into the U.S. to reduce the rework."

In addition, the company is looking at how to reduce its pallet lumber requirements through increased durability. Two U.S. pallet initiatives to promote durability have been to use clinched nails, as well as nail plates. They have seen the benefit of the clinched nails, but not yet for the plates, which are being introduced on new pallets only. The penetration rate, now at 20%, is still too low. CHEP also plans to use hardwood in Europe, and is changing the nail patterns with the Australian pallet.

The company is also exploring hybrid composite block materials, such as sawdust and plastics to produce more durable blocks, as well as ones which eliminate the issue of flaking, which can be a customer concern.



# Wood Packaging Supports Healthy Forests and Strong Communities



The National Wooden Pallet and Container Association (NWPCA) has released "Wood Packaging Supports Healthy Forests and Strong Communities" video that puts a spotlight on the vital role wood packaging plays in our communities.

NWPCA collaborated with leading forest conservation organizations to produce this video. Participating in this project were Tom Martin, President and CEO, The American Forest Foundation; Larry Selzer, President and CEO, The Conservation Fund; Jay Farrell, Executive Director, The National Association of State Foresters; Carlton Owen, President and CEO, U.S. Endowment for Forestry & Communities; and Vicki Christiansen, Interim Chief, U.S. Forest Service.

"We're proud of the work of our members in supporting the missions of these conservation organizations, providing economic and employment opportunities in rural communities, and improving the

health of our nation's forests," said Brent McClendon, CAE, National Wooden Pallet and Container Association (NWPCA) President and CEO.

"The wood packaging industry is a critical player in advancing the health of our forests because they use the small diameter wood for making pallets that cannot be used in higher end products," stated, Carlton Owen, President & CEO, U.S. Endowment for Forestry & Communities. "Without markets for that low value material, we can't move our forests to a healthier, more resilient condition."

The 3-minute video is a project of Nature's Packaging®, a North American initiative to promote the use of wood-based packaging to users seeking sustainable, responsible and economical packaging solutions. View the video on YouTube. Learn more about Nature's Packaging at [NaturesPackaging.org](http://NaturesPackaging.org).





# Relogistics takes step to help end hunger with donation to Second Harvest

WPA-member Relogistics Services, the leader in pallet and container management services, has announced their philanthropic efforts will support the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida with a \$10,000 financial donation. Second Harvest is an organization they have partnered with in various locations across the country in previous years.

## About Second Harvest Food Pantry, Orlando Florida

The Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida is a private, non-profit organization that serves more than 550 feeding partners located in six Central Florida counties. Their motto is fight hunger, feeding hope; and this is exactly what they do. Last year, volunteers, donors, and a caring community distributed more than 56 million meals to struggling families, seniors, kids, veterans, and others. Statistics conclude that 1 in 6 people in Central Florida are food insecure and that approximately 498,000 people turn to Second Harvest food pantries to feed themselves and their families. According to Second Harvest Food Bank, every \$10 contributed provides forty meals for those in need.

Mike Hachtman, President, Relogistics Services stated, "We are fortunate enough

to run businesses in the state of Florida, and more specifically in the Orlando area. Supporting the residents of the area and families who need a helping hand is a critical component of our framework and something we feel extremely passionate about."

"While hunger in Central Florida remains a daunting challenge, we are able to keep closing the gap of need with generous support like the recent gift from Relogistics," said Dave Krepcho, President & CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida. "We are proud to be able to multiply the gift up to nine times in terms of the dollar value of food being provided for our neighbors in need," he added. The financial gift from Relogistics will allow Second Harvest to distribute approximately \$90,000 worth of groceries to those in need.

## About Relogistics Services

Headquartered in Houston, Texas, Relogistics is the leading provider of pallet and container management services. Relogistics supports customers at 58 locations, servicing more than 1,000 retail outlets and processes more than 325,000 trailers including 80 million pallets and 110 million reusable containers annually.



# Industry Leader CHEP Recycled Emerges from Spinoff as 48forty Solutions

*48forty Solutions is newest WPA member*



*Kyle Otting*

When Brambles Limited announced plans to divest itself of its North American recycled pallets business last August, it indicated that CHEP Recycled's growth outlook would improve under alternative ownership.

Less than five months later, Grey Mountain Partners, a Boulder, Colorado-based private equity firm, seized the

opportunity to purchase the spinoff and completed the acquisition of CHEP Recycled on February 14. The former CHEP Recycled is now executing a bold new name and brand image that positions it for growth while celebrating its position as the leader in one of the foundational businesses of the supply chain and logistics industry.



The new company is 48forty Solutions, the largest pallet management services company in North America. The name is as clever and quintessential as it is practical: a standard wooden pallet is 48 by 40 inches. The logotype also underscores the nature of 48forty's business: solid, authentic, and up to the task of managing 90 million pallets a year for 2,700 customers across a variety of industries.

Kyle Otting has been named Chief Executive Officer of 48forty Solutions. The 14-year veteran of CHEP Recycled will oversee the company's operations from its new headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

This includes more than 225 network facilities, of which 45 are company-owned and operated pallet recycling facilities, 30-plus onsite customer facilities, a fleet of 4,500 trailers, and nearly 300 power units. The company operations in Canada will continue to operate under the existing Paramount Pallet brand.

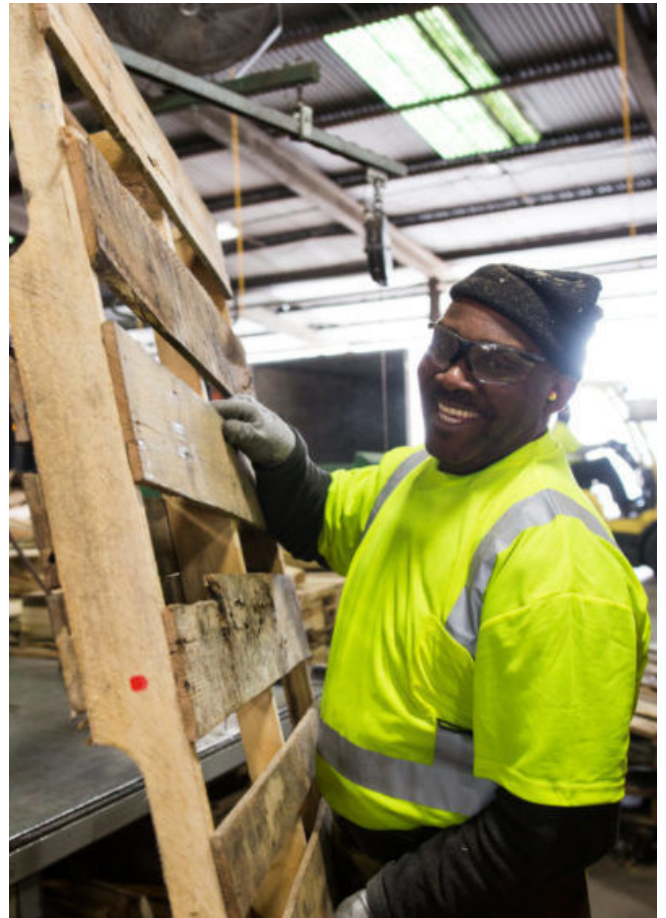
"We're excited about our new brand, but even more excited to get back to the basics of serving our customers," said Otting. "Our customers are at the heart of everything we do—from our technology to our plant network—everything we build is for them."



And build they have: late last year, the company introduced a state-of-the-art customer portal, Paltrax™, which offers customers complete account management and the ability to place orders right from their mobile device. In addition, the company has made significant investments in their industry-leading Quality Management System as well as implementing Lean Manufacturing processes throughout their network designed to create a safer environment while driving cost efficiencies for the customer.

The company's technology includes an electronic signature module. "All of our drivers have a tablet, a DOT requirement around electronic logs," explained Hillary Femal, Vice President Sales Marketing. "We were also able to include some of our own software. When a load of pallets is delivered, the customer can sign the tablet." She observed that while companies like Fedex and UPS have used such field technology for years, it is new for the pallet sector. "The nice thing about it is our customers can get access to that data and that signature in real time. We get access to it in real time."

Femal noted that delivery paperwork for consumables such as pallets too often gets lost. "It has really streamlined things, made things easier from a payables perspective because they can get the information they need much more quickly."



Added Otting, "We understand the complexity of our customers' supply chains, and we're here to make pallet management simple. We're committed to providing cost efficient pallet solutions, the consistent quality our customers require, and a better customer experience."

Otting also stressed that while 48forty is a new company in terms of its brand, the roots of its successful operations go back for more than 20 years to when PalEx established its network of pallet companies, and then broadened after it was purchased by IFCO in 2000. Otting first joined IFCO in 2003.

"We have 70 years experience on the leadership team," Otting said. The leadership team is experienced and tenured, and we have a tremendous amount of tenure operating our plants. We have the same infrastructure, and same transportation network. Our offering is well established. We are simply putting a fresh face on it, and now we are ready to run."

And as another positive, the cash generated by the business will no longer be diverted to support previous non-core activities such as RPC or pallet rental. Now, the company is totally centered on offering value to its customers. "Over the course of the last 15 years our purpose has been for the greater good of other entities," Otting said.

"This is the first time in many years we are able to get back to our roots to operate as a standalone recycler with our own purpose," Otting added, "of offering creative and unique cost efficient pallet management programs for the retailer and the manufacturer, operating without the constraints of the large global corporate."

48forty will continue to focus on end-to-end solutions, from pallet supply and retrieval to on-site retail services to custom sized pallets, growing its business by making pallet management as simple as possible.

## **EcoVadis: LPR is recognized once again for its commitment to CSR**

For the third year running, the European pallet-pooling specialist LPR-La Palette Rouge (a division of Euro Pool Group), has been rated "Gold" by EcoVadis for its Corporate Social Responsibility policy. With a score of 71/100, a 4 point improvement on 2016, LPR is once again in the top 1% of the companies assessed.

As a major player in the supply chain, LPR is fully aware of the importance of its contribution to "responsibility" and continues to pursue the goal of social responsibility across the whole range of

its activities, including with respect to its employees.

With this in mind, and with its customers' interests and satisfaction at the heart of the objective, in 2018 the pallet-pooling specialist will offer its partners the opportunity to partially offset their environmental impact by planting trees, whilst helping them calculate saved CO2.

LPR aims to pursue all of these objectives and reduce its own carbon footprint by 20% by 2025.



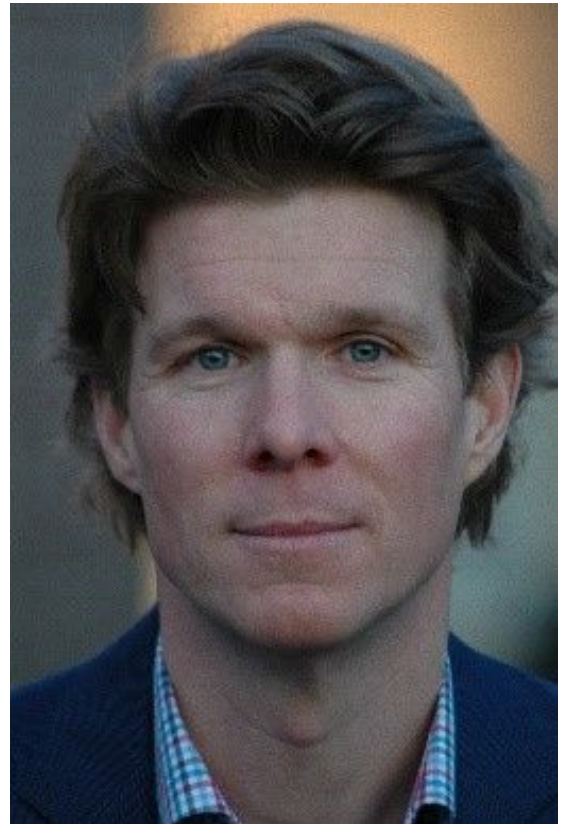
# Pooling Partners appoints Duncan Moser as new CEO Production Companies

Pooling Partners has appointed Duncan Moser as CEO Production Companies. Starting April 2, he will be committed to strengthening the international position of the production companies of Pooling Partners in The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France.

Moser brings with him extensive knowledge and experience in the field of operations and supply chain management. He started his career with Heineken more than 20 years ago. Since then, he has been responsible for operational improvement activities in Asia-Pacific and worked as Brewery Manager in Suriname. In recent years, Moser was in charge of packaging operations and supply chain optimization at Heineken Nederland Supply. He closely collaborated with suppliers to reduce costs and improve sustainability and innovation.

As the new CEO Production Companies, Moser will dedicate all of his knowledge, experience and time to the production companies of Pooling Partners. Developing a long-term vision and strategy are his main priorities.

"Pooling Partners is an incredible family business with a strong position in the European market," according to Moser.



"I look forward to contributing my knowledge and experience to the next stage in the development of Pooling Partners."

Ingrid Faber, CEO of Pooling Partners, is excited: "Duncan is another valuable addition to our organization. Duncan will focus entirely on the production companies and thanks to his extensive knowledge and experience, I have the utmost confidence that we will develop a clear, long-term strategy that arms us for the future."



# RM2 Extends Life into April, Will Focus on IoT Technology

After warning investors that it would run out of money in mid-March unless new support emerged, composite pallet company RM2 reported on March 9 that it has generated extra cash through selling a building, giving it enough cash to carry it into April. It said it continues to proactively transition the business to focus on IoT technology in pallet applications, "servicing its existing customers and developing new relationships with certain Fortune 500 companies."

As a part of that transition, RM2 will continue to reduce resources and investments in non-core, nonvalue-add activities so that it can increase its investment in service. Following the sale of a non-core office building in Switzerland and repayment of the related mortgage, it received net proceeds of approximately \$2 million and is, therefore, able to extend its cash resources to continue operating through mid-April based on information available to it at the time. The timeframe is dependent on the outcome of ongoing discussions with third parties, including manufacturing partners and sources of financing.

It stated that it is in advanced stages of

financing discussions with the support of its existing shareholders and will announce developments to the market at the earliest possible opportunity.

RM2 reported that trials of its ELIoT smart pallets are producing remarkable results for customers' supply chains in North America. The RM2 ELIoT proprietary tracking technology communicates the precise location of specific pallets, allowing misdirected or mishandled goods to be identified immediately, permitting customers to reduce loss, mishandling, spoilage, and theft, thereby creating significant cost savings and supply chain efficiencies.

Significant opportunities with Fortune 500 companies are in final trial phases, RM2 reported, saying that the conversion of a subset of these opportunities, deployed and financed on schedule, is expected to result in RM2 generating positive EBITDA in 2019.

RM2 also noted that its ELIoT Pallet won the Material Handling Product News' 2017 Product of the Year award in the category of Packaging and Pallets.





# EPAL takes steps toward digitizing world's largest open pallet pool

Consider that the standard Euro pallet is the most important load carrier in the European logistics sector. Many systems encompassing conveyor and storage technology, handling and packaging are designed to work with EPAL Euro pallets. In Europe alone, the Association has over 500 million pallets in circulation. With this obvious opportunity at hand, EPAL has joined in a venture towards digitizing its pool.

"The logistics sector is based on the pallet. Making these intelligent means making the logistics sector intelligent. Intelligent pallet networks are a milestone on the way to the Internet of Things which can leverage the real data potential of the logistics sector", comments Professor Dr Michael ten Hompel, Managing Director of the Fraunhofer IML, a partner in the project.

The demand for load carriers that can be automatically traced and controlled is currently rapidly increasing thanks to Industry 4.0. The most important tool is a new interactive pallet, which not only serves as a load carrier but also as an information carrier. It is also in able use smart devices to communicate in a decentralized network. In an integrated total system of 500 million pallets, there is a business case, which includes a corresponding IT infrastructure as well as

the development of suitable apps for mobile end devices.

"Cooperation with the Fraunhofer IML gives us access to experts who have comprehensive know-how at their fingertips, both in technology development and drafting business cases. So the Institute for us, as operator of the world's largest pallet pool, is the ideal partner to help us reach the digital future", explains Robert Holliger, President of EPAL.

The application of communicating pallets shown at the recent LogiMAT show is based on the wireless technology "NarrowBand IoT". This solution has been developed as part of the joint research activities of the Fraunhofer IML and Deutsche Telekom (the German telecommunications company), at the recently founded "Telekom Open IoT Lab".

"It has become evident, that NarrowBand IoT is the perfect technology for implementing the Internet of Things in the logistics sector. The technology transfer at our Fraunhofer Lab Center was logical and impressively demonstrates the advantages of interdisciplinary research in one place," says ten Hompel.

EPAL first displayed this technology at the 2018 Logimat show in Germany.



# New Testing Shows ORBIS® Plastic Pallet Can Withstand Up To 200 Cycles



ORBIS® Corporation, an international leader in reusable packaging, learned its 40×48-inch RackoCell® plastic pallet has approximately 18 times the life span of a 40×48-inch whitewood stringer pallet, according to a recent study. Researchers from the Virginia Tech Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design used the center's FasTrack life-cycle analysis to compare relative durability.

The FasTrack life-cycle analysis included a 10-step handling sequence, which involved routine pallet handling activities, followed by inspections of the plastic and whitewood pallets. In testing, the RackoCell plastic pallet completed the sequence up to 200 times without

failure, while the wood pallet's average failure was after 11 cycles.

"We wanted to quantify the life and durability of plastic pallets to help companies understand the long-term cost savings associated with reusable plastic pallets," said Ryan Roessler, product manager at ORBIS. "The FasTrack life-cycle analysis confirms just one of the many advantages plastic pallets have over wood. More companies are transitioning to plastic for their dimensionally consistent design, cleanability and environmentally friendly characteristics."

# Connect with Western Pallet Association!



## Upcoming Events

4/4/2018 - 4/5/2018 Industrial Pack 2018, Atlanta, Georgia.  
[www.easyfairs.com](http://www.easyfairs.com).

4/9/2018 - 4/12/2017 MODEX 2018, Atlanta, Georgia.  
[www.modexshow.com](http://www.modexshow.com).

5/18/2018- 5/19/2018 Expo Richmond, Richmond, Virginia. [www.exporichmond.com](http://www.exporichmond.com).

9/18/2018 - 9/20/2018. INTERPAL, Minneapolis, Minnesota. [www.palletcentral.com](http://www.palletcentral.com).



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