

# **BWA Recognizes Hon. Minister Bill Mauro, MNRF, for Supporting BWA Cluster! BWA Now Expanding Cluster Region to include Southwestern Ontario!**

Based on the Upper Austria Clusterland Model, the BWA continues to evolve toward sustainability over time with the increase in membership and development of other revenue streams. Since the inception of the BWA in 2011, the accomplishments and the reach of the BWA continue to accrue with earnest!

If not for the initial support of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Wood Promotions Branch, the BWA would not have been able to facilitate any of the collaborative projects that have benefited wood product manufacturing companies in southwestern Ontario. These companies would otherwise not have access to these opportunities. Examples include:

- Export development projects introducing members to new markets, such as the Index show in Dubai, UAE, and the High Point Market in High Point, North Carolina
- Recent OMAFRA RED project funding to help companies adopt new technologies and initiate process improvement projects. \$500,000 in funding leveraged over \$3 million in member project investment over the past 2 years!
- Monthly Plant Tour Focus groups where members learn from each other's challenges, solutions, best practices, and adoption of lean principles
- Learning events where members have access to subject matter experts through a shared cost model, making expertise affordable and accessible
- Quarterly Networking Events leveraging the supply chain members for expertise and technology transfer
- Participate on Program Advisory Committees for Community Colleges to connect industry needs with workforce development stakeholders
- Sponsorship of 20 high schools in southwestern Ontario to adopt the Woodlinks curriculum
- Facilitate a bottom-up driven organization where industry dictates the agenda
- Most recently, the BWA has expanded the cluster region to include the whole of southwestern Ontario!
- Recently hit a milestone of 80 members
- Membership is dominated by manufacturers, with an 80/20 ratio manufacturers to suppliers

The BWA wanted to recognize and thank the Hon Minister Bill Mauro and the MNRF for supporting its operations. The successes of the BWA are also successes of the MNRF!

A solid maple plaque was created, and presented to the Hon Minister in Queens Park on Dec 3, 2015 by BWA Executive Director, Michael Baker.

The Hon Minister Mauro was very grateful and appreciative of the BWA's efforts, noting that the BWA is an "Important good news story for the industry".

As the meeting rapped up, the minister made it very clear: "Keep it growing Mike, and keep up the great work".

Growing we are! And our members are succeeding!

And so we move forward into the New Year with great momentum!

If you want more information on the BWA and its activities, contact BWA Executive Director, Mike Baker at: [manager@bluewaterwoodalliance.com](mailto:manager@bluewaterwoodalliance.com)