



Media Contact: Kim Drew, APR
404.790.6823
kimdrewpr@gmail.com

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NELMA Launches Final Online-Learning Grading Series

(Cumberland, ME) – The Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (NELMA) has launched the final and most challenging element of the NELMA Grader Academy™ online learning opportunity with the 400 Series.

“When we launched the NELMA Grader Academy six years ago, our hope was that the industry would embrace the opportunity to learn more about lumber grading in a fun format,” said Jeff Easterling, president of NELMA. “The goal was to take what was previously a laborious learning process and offer educational opportunities in a multi-faceted, online, visual education program. We’ve done that, and the number of industry members taking the classes shows how much it was needed.”

Until recently, three series of classes have been offered for Eastern White Pine: Level 100 – Characteristics (5 courses); Level 200 – Grade Application (6 courses); and Level 300 – General Definitions & Instructions (7 courses). For the National Grading Rule that dictates SPF grades, Levels 100 and 200 are available for training.

Level 400 takes information learned previously and moves it forward to the real world. A hybrid of instructional and game, the level challenges the user to create a specific lumber grade using a blank board and a template of defects.

“We affectionately refer to Level 400 as the Build-A-Board level,” commented Easterling.

How it works: a 1x8x8 clear piece of Eastern White Pine appears on the screen. Below, a palette of different sized knots, checks, splits, and wane appear. The user is challenged to create the requested board using the maximum options provided, calling upon their knowledge gained from the previous series. A time limit increases the difficulty,

and each board must be completed correctly before the user is allowed to move on to the next board.

Free from the beginning, the NELMA Grader Academy provides needed grading information in a visual, easy-to-follow format accessible to mill employees, dealers, and anyone interested in learning more about lumber grading. Located at www.graderacademy.org, the program is accessible 24/7/365.

Founded in 1933, NELMA (Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association) is the rules writing agency for Eastern White Pine lumber and the grading authority for other commercially important Northeastern and Great Lakes softwood lumber species that includes Eastern Spruce, Norway Spruce, Balsam Fir, and Red Pine. In addition, NELMA is a leading agency for export wood packaging certification and the marketing voice for its lumber manufacturing members. For more information, please visit the family of NELMA websites: www.nelma.org, www.easternwhitepine.org, www.sprucepinefir.org, www.graderacademy.org, and www.sustainableversatility.org. Find NELMA on Facebook at [NELMA \(Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association\)](#) and on twitter @inelma.

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