In The News

Stimulus Funds Finding their Way to the Timber Industry
This March, at the WCLA annual meeting, Michael Daughter of the USFS, spoke on how the timber industry plays into the stimulus package. Approximately $1.5 billion will be funneled toward the timber industry — 40% toward state and private projects, 60% toward national forests. These funds aren’t all specifically harvesting related, but include projects, like road building, as well.

Already there are signs that those much needed dollars are on their way.

March 10, the Union Democrat reported that area forest service programs would be among the first to receive money from the economic stimulus package. The funds would be used on road, trail and facilities maintenance and construction. The initial projects would create an estimated 1,500 jobs nationwide.

The Granite Sawlog/Biomass Removal project on California’s Stanislaus National Forest will receive $186,000 to complete road maintenance work — necessary for continued thinning.

In Idaho, ten timber-related jobs are expected to be created — thanks to federal stimulus money. The Northern Region of the Forest Service and the Idaho Department of Lands will receive $2 million to improve their programs to thin dead and dying trees and vegetation. Work is expected to being this spring on both state and private lands in four North Idaho counties.

In Helena, Mont., Gov. Brian Schweitzer inserted a provision into the stimulus spending bill, setting up a $10-million revolving loan fund to sustain the state’s wood products industry.

“This would allow mills and manufacturers in the state to borrow from this account to ease the financial pain that we’ve now been under for about three years,” Ellen Simpson, executive vice president of the Montana Wood Products Association, told a legislative panel, urging them to support the loan fund.

Weyerhaeuser Closes Two Washington Mills
Weyerhaeuser Company announced in late January that it was closing two mills in Washington due to weak market conditions — the Aberdeen sawmill with a capacity to produce 200 million board feet of lumber and the Pacific Veneer mill in Aberdeen.

“We fully understand the major effect of these changes for our employees, contractors, and the community, and we will work constructively in the weeks and months ahead to prepare for the transition,” said Tom Gideon, executive vice president, Forest Products. “Unfortunately, the current, extraordinarily weak market conditions require that we take decisive action.”

The closures affected approximately 196 hourly and 25 salaried positions. www.weyerhaeuser.com
Sweden’s ELMIA Wood Fair 2009
The 2009 ELMIA Wood Fair, the world’s largest forestry demo fair, will take place Wednesday through Saturday, June 3-6, near Jönköping, Sweden. The event will be preceded by an all-day Conference on forest residue and slash harvesting on June 2.

“In spite of the recession, which affects the prosperity of forestry and logging worldwide, ELMIA reports that exhibitor commitments are actually at a higher level now than they were at this point for the last Wood Fair, in 2005,” stated Neil Ward of the Forest Resources Association.

The 2005 ELMIA Wood Fair drew 50,050 visitors worldwide to view live harvesting demos and displays from 538 exhibitors on a 375-acre forested site. www.forestresources.org/elmiawood.html

Rim Woodchip Trade to Reach Record Level
In February, the RISI, a leading information provider for the global forest products industry, predicted that the Pacific Rim woodchip trade — already at record levels in 2008 — will expand by 12 percent, to more than 19 million BDMT by 2013. The forecast predicts that, due to the global economic crisis, woodchip imports (and prices) will decline sharply in 2009, but begin to rebound in 2010.

The 2009 International Pulpwood Trade Review is available now. You can find the complete prospectus at www.risiinfo.com/pulpwood.

The AX MEN Are Back
On March 2, the Ax Men returned to the History Channel for its second season. For those who didn’t catch the first season, the series looks at the life of Pacific Northwest timber cutters.

This season, AX MEN picks up with two of Oregon’s top logging companies from last year, J.M. Browning Logging of Astoria and Vernonia’s Pihl Logging. The show will be adding three newcomers — Rygaard Logging of Port Angeles, Wash., a father-son team; R&R Conner Aviation of Conner, Mont., which utilizes helicopters to maximize its output; and S&S Aqua Logging of Aberdeen, Wash., a team of diving loggers.

Over the course of twelve episodes, AX MEN will follow these five logging crews. For more information, visit www.history.com.

Canadian Government May Provide C$1.15 Billion to Forest Industry
The Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports has expressed concern that the Canadian Government’s plan to provide C$1.15 billion in new aid to Canada’s forest industry will likely result in further U.S. job losses and could represent the latest violation of the U.S.-Canada Softwood Lumber Trade Agreement.

The Coalition says that it is concerned about a seemingly endless array of initiatives to illegally reduce costs for their Canadian competitors. Hopes that the 2006 Softwood Lumber Agreement would help to level the playing field against subsidized Canadian lumber are being dashed by Canada’s systemic disregard of its commitments under the agreement. Canada’s Natural Resources Minister, Lisa Raitt, said the federal budget would contain three new initiatives to help the forestry and resource sector.
The Vancouver Sun reported that she expects the budget will contain a new community adjustment fund worth $1 billion to help rural areas adapt to the changing economic climate.

She also said the budget would set aside more than $100 million to invest in the development of emerging technologies for the forest sector, including forest biomass utilization and the development of next-generation forest products.