

**MEDIA EVENT ADVISORY**

*A brief web-based press event regarding this initiative will be held Thursday, May 13 at 11:30 a.m. EDT.*

*Email [GregCabral@originalmasstimber.com](mailto:GregCabral@originalmasstimber.com) for details and link information.*

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## **Market Development Program Hits Full Stride New hire positions Original Mass Timber Maine to launch effort expected to spur economic development in northern Maine**

Ashland, ME – Original Mass Timber Maine (OMT Maine), a fully funded market development program administered by the Town of Ashland, ME, has hired market development expert Greg Cabral to lead the initiative's effort to build markets for structural wood products derived from Maine's northern forests. The hire marks a key benchmark for the initiative, positioning it to implement a planned three-year effort to establish and grow markets for Structural Round Timber (SRT), a mass timber building product that complements mainstream mass timber products and competes favorably on both cost and sustainability with the products it might replace in a building's structural system. By proving the strength of burgeoning and significant markets for SRT throughout the Northeast, the initiative expects to entice Northern Maine's forest products companies to fabricate the product in both retrooled and new industrial facilities.

"We're involved in this initiative because we believe the new wood demand it will create, particularly for use in commercial building markets, will give forest industry stakeholders the confidence needed to invest in facilities to service that demand," said Dan LaMontagne, president of Seven Islands Land Company, a vertically integrated family of companies with operations in Ashland, Bangor, and Rangeley. LaMontagne heads OMT Maine's steering committee.

"Besides the promise of economic development," LaMontagne added, "this initiative highlights Maine's abundant forest resource and the excellent job our industry does to manage it sustainably. Wood is the only mainstream building product derived from a renewable resource and it also helps fight climate change. SRT represents another great opportunity to reinforce forests as a natural climate solution."

The initiative is funded by \$600,000 in grants awarded to the Town of Ashland by the Forest Opportunity Roadmap coalition (FOR/Maine), in partnership with the Maine Development Foundation (MDF), and the Future Forest Economy Initiative (FFEI), coordinated by the Northern Forest Center. The FFEI funding is provided in part by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, a foundation that funds forest-related rural economic development programs throughout the U.S.

"SRT has applications in commercial construction as columns, beams, and trusses, and is well-positioned to benefit from the growing awareness of mass timber products sweeping through the U.S. today," explained Amelia Baxter, whose company, WholeTrees Structures, helped pioneer the SRT industry. Baxter serves in a consulting role on the OMT Maine steering committee. "The earliest adopters are generally innovative owners and architects who are nature-oriented or driven by sustainability or biophilia—the effort to both subtly and overtly give nature a greater role in the built environment."

She said the key to SRT market development is two-fold: to educate and to inspire. This initiative will raise awareness among architects and others who drive decision making in the construction market that SRT products are viable, cost effective and a refreshing, regionally sourced alternative in conventional commercial construction.

That's where hiring Cabral comes in. With a background in both forestry and commercial building products sales, he has a unique understanding of both the forestry angle and the marketing angle. His job is to call on architects and others in the building products specification chain, teach them about SRT, and identify building projects up and down the eastern

seaboard where SRT is a good fit. Cabral will use precedent global examples of SRT in modern design to help inspire architects and others. As more projects incorporate SRT, companies such as Seven Islands will see tangible evidence of its promise, and communities like Ashland will benefit from the prospect of new fabrication facilities and the quality, well-paying jobs they provide.

“During my time selling Andersen Windows, I worked directly with architects every day. The relationships I’ve built with firms in cities like Portland, Boston and New York will serve me and this initiative well,” Cabral said. “Structural Round Timber has a lot to offer—it looks great, it can handle the necessary structural loads, and it has a fantastic sustainability story. I can’t wait to start telling the design community about it. Judging from how quickly interest in SRT is growing nationwide, I expect east coast markets will love it.”

“For Ashland to position itself as the hub of this effort was a no brainer,” said Ashland Town Manager Cyr Martin. “We’re at the gateway to the northern forest and we understand how important it is for us to develop our economy in a sustainable manner while utilizing the resources available to us. This initiative will do exactly that.”

#### **About Original Mass Timber Maine**

OMT Maine is a fully funded three-year initiative designed to help private sector entities in and around the Town of Ashland to realize the potential Structural Round Timber offers for supporting rural economic development. Its objective is to demonstrate meaningful interest in and demand for SRT products, support the long-standing history of sustainable management of the Northern Maine forest, and attract private investment in SRT fabrication. Funding for the initiative is provided by the Forest Opportunity Roadmap coalition (FOR/Maine), in partnership with the Maine Development Foundation (MDF), and the Future Forest Economy Initiative (FFEI), coordinated by the Northern Forest Center. The effort is administered by the City of Ashland and led by a steering committee of stakeholders representing private industry, Maine’s forest-related economic development efforts, funding partners, and the building design and construction sector. Its goal is to develop markets that will, by the end of year three, drive \$2 million in SRT sales for private sector producers located in and around Maine.

#### **Facts about Structural Round Timber (SRT)**

- SRT is 50% stronger than sawn heavy timber of the same diameter.
- SRT has structural applications as trusses, columns and beams in building projects of all types.
- Also known as the Original Mass Timber, SRT complements other mass timber products and competes favorably on both cost and sustainability with the products it might replace.
- SRT can be sourced regionally, with “Origin Stories” for SRT columns, beams and trusses connecting building users to specific forests and communities.
- SRT retains the natural form of whole trees, enhancing its contribution to biophilic aspects of the built environment.
- SRT is a renewable resource derived from sustainably managed forests; it requires minimal processing.
- 50% of the dry weight of wood is carbon sequestered from the atmosphere by trees as they grow. That carbon remains in the wood products used in construction. Because SRT requires minimal processing compared to milled or engineered wood products, less wood fiber is lost at the mill and a much higher percentage of the tree’s sequestered carbon is stored in buildings, helping to slow climate change.
- Wood products require less energy to manufacture and fabricate than building materials such as concrete and steel. Because of its minimal processing, SRT leads the pack in this regard.
- SRT looks great, can handle the necessary structural loads, and has a fantastic sustainability story.

#### **Additional Resources**

- [www.originalmasstimber.com](http://www.originalmasstimber.com) – OMT Maine’s web resource for building professionals
- <https://originalmasstimber.com/media-news-room/> – Press Releases and additional media resources
- <https://originalmasstimber.com/inspiration-gallery/> – Precedent global examples of SRT in modern design
- <https://northernforest.org/> - The Northern Forest Center
- <https://formaine.org/> - Focused on the future of Maine forest products
- <https://www.mdf.org/> - Maine Development Foundation
- <https://www.sevenislands.com/> - Seven Islands Land Company
- <https://wholotrees.com/> - WholeTrees Structures
- <https://redshift.autodesk.com/whole-trees/> - Video: Inspired Design Brings Trees a New Life

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