

Secchia Faces Mandatory Retirement

September 5, 2001

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Sept. 5 /PRNewswire/ -- Universal Forest Products, Inc. (Nasdaq: UFPI) today announced its Chairman, Ambassador Peter F. Secchia, who is facing mandatory retirement, has prepared a plan to sell and transfer a significant portion of his family holdings in UFPI. He plans to sell, gift and/or transfer these shares over the next five years in a manner that reflects his strong commitment to protecting the market. Secchia intends to seek approval of this exit plan at the Board of Directors meeting in October 2001.

To comply with Universal Forest Products' policy, Secchia must retire from active employment at the end of the fiscal year in which he turns 65. He will continue his 40 years of service to the Company as a non-employee Chairman of the Board. In the interim, Secchia has entered into a 10b5-1 sales plan for this fiscal quarter under which he is eligible to sell up to 198,000 shares in open market transactions.

"I wrote the mandatory retirement policy for age 65 because I thought it would allow for a more continuous regeneration of management," said Secchia, also Ambassador to Italy under former President George Bush, from 1989 to 1993. "It has proven to be one of the ingredients to our success. Our UFP executive team is fresh, energetic, and is known for setting standards in the industries we serve.

"I love the people of Universal and I respect the management's long-term objectives. Unfortunately, my ride is just about over," continued Secchia. "It's been great, but after 40 years, it's time for me to move on. I intend to do so in a careful manner that creates opportunity for new investors and that creates no harm for long-term investors, employees and other stakeholders."

"Peter is an enormous presence, and we'll miss his regular participation around here," said William G. Currie, UFPI's vice chairman and chief executive officer. "But, he made the rules that we're all living by, including the retirement age of 65. I'm grateful to Peter and his advisors for a meticulously crafted exit plan. And I'm pleased that new investors will be able to share in the exciting future and success of Universal. I also am pleased that Peter will continue to provide his leadership to us as a non-employee Board Chairman."

Secchia's financial advisors have been urging him for years to diversify his portfolio. The planned sale of Secchia's "beneficial holdings" may include a number of components, including private placements, sales to the Company and its employees, charitable gifting and limited sales on the open market.

One of Secchia's unique proposals is the creation of a new stock fund for the children and grandchildren of the Company's management team. Selected managers would also be able to purchase shares and make "interest-only" payments on personal loans from Secchia for several years.

"Peter has always been known for his desire to increase management's equity in the Company through creative stock programs," said Michael B. Glenn, UFPI's president and chief operating officer. "My family has obtained our equity position in UFPI as a result of his encouragement and creative generosity."

In addition, the Secchia family intends to maintain significant UFPI holdings. "My family has the utmost confidence in the outstanding management team that remains at UFPI," said Ambassador Secchia. "We know that our remaining investment will continue to grow and provide good returns for years to come."

"The sale of Peter's stock is planned in compliance with rule 144, and we are fortunate that he is committed to trading his shares in a responsible, market-friendly manner," said Matthew J. Missad, Universal's executive vice president, who oversees the Company's stock trading policy. "It is structured in a way so as to offer him the diversification he needs while offering new investors opportunities to buy an interest in the Company. We believe that the sale of shares by the Secchia family will create greater liquidity in UFPI shares, which in turn will make the Company more attractive to institutional investors."

Robert P. Bernecker, first vice president and sales manager for the West Michigan Merrill Lynch complex, said, "Peter and his UFPI team have carefully created a plan that allows him to achieve his long-term financial goals while offering investment opportunities for others. This planned sale will be rolled out in a manner so as not to materially affect the markets. It's a well-structured plan and we believe it will achieve all it is intended to."

Universal Forest Products markets, manufactures, and engineers products for D-I-Y retail home centers, structural lumber products for the manufactured housing industry, engineered wood components for the site-built construction market and specialty wood packaging for various industries.

Secchia joined the Company in 1962 when UFPI had sales of \$1 million. When he bought control of the Company in 1971, sales were \$11 million. The Company's "Performance 2002" goals call for sales of \$2 billion by the end of 2002.

Over the years, Universal has become the nation's largest manufacturer of engineered components for both the manufactured housing and the site-built construction markets, and a major supplier to the D-I-Y market. The Company is based in Grand Rapids, Michigan and with the announced acquisition of P&R Truss Company, Inc. will have 89 manufacturing facilities in 77 locations throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico with over 7,000 employees.

For information about Universal Forest Products on the Internet, please contact the Company's web site at www.ufpi.com , or call 1-888-Buy-UFPI.

Included in this report are certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Such forward-looking statements are based on the beliefs of the Company's management as well as on assumptions made by and information currently available to the Company at the time such statements were made. Actual results could differ materially from those included in such forward-looking statements. Investors are cautioned that all forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainty. Among the factors that could cause actual results to differ materially are the following: Adverse lumber market trends, competitive activity, negative economic trends, government regulations, and weather. These risk factors and additional information are included in the Company's reports on Form 10K and 10Q on file with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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