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GIBBS & SOELL'S HESSION TO PRESENT BRANDING CAMPAIGN AT GATHERING OF HARDWOOD INDUSTRY LEADERS

Key Messages:

- The Hardwood Plywood & Veneer Association, which represents the interests of the hardwood plywood, hardwood veneer, and engineered hardwood flooring industries, will hold its annual spring conference in Orlando, Fla. May 1-3, 2011.
- Audra Hession, Gibbs & Soell, will present a branding campaign developed for the Unified Hardwood Promotion, a coalition of hardwood industry leaders who have come together to create a single campaign to promote the use of American Hardwoods in products for the home and building.
- Gibbs & Soell is a global independent public relations agency proudly celebrating its 40th year in business.

NEW YORK, April 25, 2011 – Audra Hession, senior vice president and managing director at public relations firm **Gibbs & Soell**, will be a featured speaker at the annual spring convention of the Hardwood Plywood & Veneer Association (**HPVA**) to be held in Orlando, Fla., May 1-3, 2011. Hession will discuss how Gibbs & Soell has partnered with Unified Hardwood Promotion (UHP) to develop the American Hardwoods branding campaign, a detailed research-based brand identity initiative that aims to give the North American hardwood industry a recognizable brand and image in order to boost awareness and sales.

The branding campaign represents a creative business collaboration between Gibbs & Soell and the hardwood industry. UHP is a coalition of more than 20 hardwood trade associations and leading product manufacturers who have come together to give the industry a cohesive identity and tools to elevate American Hardwoods as the building material of choice in products ranging from cabinetry and furniture to flooring and millwork. Industry leaders have contributed to the program through hands-on involvement in consumer research and brand development, as well as support through financial contributions.

The HPVA convention brings together manufacturers of engineered hardwood flooring, hardwood plywood, and hardwood veneer, as well as distributors and suppliers to these industries. Session topics at the conference will include the latest trends in technology, how to use working capital and human resources more efficiently, the process of promoting products more effectively, and the latest in green building.

“I am honored to be speaking about the new American Hardwoods branding campaign at the HPVA spring convention,” said Hession. “Industry leaders will learn how this campaign will drive excitement and heighten the profile of American Hardwoods as an innovative choice for consumers seeking cabinetry, furniture and flooring products.”

Gibbs & Soell offers **communications expertise** to top-tier corporations, organizations and brands in advanced manufacturing and energy, agribusiness and food, consumer lifestyle, building solutions,

greentech and sustainability, professional services, and technology and general science. The firm's **portfolio of services** includes corporate communications, marketing communications, event marketing, digital and social media, leadership positioning, employee communications, communications training, and communications research and evaluation.

Gibbs & Soell is an **independent public relations agency** celebrating its 40th year in business. **Headquartered in New York**, G&S has full-service offices in Chicago, Raleigh, N.C., and Zurich, Switzerland. The **G&S global network** extends across nearly 40 countries through its membership with Public Relations Organisation International. For more information, please visit www.gibbs-soell.com.

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