**Steel Utility Pole Coalition**

**Wednesday, April 10, 2019 @ 1:00PM ET**

**Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort**

**Fort Myers, Florida**

**Call to Order**

* Welcome, Self-Introductions
  + Dan Snyder and Melissa Lindsley welcome everyone to the Kickoff meeting of the Steel Utility Pole Coalition. Lindsley advises every one of the anti-trust policy, and asks everyone to sign the document to abide by the rules. She then asks everyone to introduce themselves to the other participants.

**Participating Attendees (\*confirmed Coalition Member)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| \*Melissa Lindsley – American Galvanizers Association | \*Tom Langill – American Galvanizers Association | \*Mike Williams – Duncan Galvanizing |
| Bennett Lacey – HUB Industrial Supply | Tom Saxton – EBCO Metal Finishing | \*Rich Collins – Voigt & Schweitzer |
| \*Godfroy St. Pierre – Corbec, Inc. | \*Eric Levesque – Canam | \*Joe Langemeier – ZinkPower |
| Tommy Rose – Metalplate Galvanizing LP | Keith Lindemulder – Nucor | Andrew Gamble – Young Galvanizing |
| \*Robert Wills – Steel Market Development Institute | \*Tom Castle – AZZ Metal Coatings | \*Danny Lonergan – Valmont Utility |
| \*Taylor Lewis – Sherwin Williams | Ernie De Angelis – Supreme Galvanizing | \*Ben Kelly – Galvan Industries |
| \*Brian Lacoursiere – TAPP | \*David Hallan – Meyer Utility | \*Steve Wilkinson – International Zinc Association |
| Fredrick Rumery | \*Dan Bever – Duncan Galvanizing | Bobby Gregory – New Jersey Galvanizing |
| \*Mark Mellon – Valmont Coatings | Jody Foster – Steel Ventures | \*Dan Snyder – Steel Market Development Institute |

**New Business**

* Brief History of the Steel Utility Pole Task Group & Utility Market Overview
  + Snyder provides an overview of the utility market in North America and past progress of the former task group. Throughout the presentation, a number of questions and great discussion were brought up.
  + Tommy Rose wanted to know why utilities switch from wood to steel. Snyder said primarily to “strengthen” the line, often after a weather or other natural event. Also noted that many utilities will put a steel pole along a wood line to prevent cascading along a large area.
  + Tom Saxton wanted to know more about where wood poles are grown and the impact that has on the market. Brian Lacoursiere noted the majority are produced in the Pacific Northwest and Southeast. Snyder showed slides that summarized this and how it impacts the cost of the poles.
  + Eric Levesque wanted to discuss the length of life of steel poles to wood poles in comparison to cost – initial and life-cycle. Snyder addressed this as well and said steel poles on average last at least 20% longer than wood poles.
  + Joe Langemeier wanted to discuss more about the competition – weathering steel vs. galvanizing steel, and what other options are out there. Lacoursiere noted fiberglass poles are also making some headway, but Lonergan noted the cost of those poles is significantly higher than steel poles. There was discussion of how to account for the “total cost of ownership” for wood poles. Additional “hidden” costs noted were galvanized “sleeves” often added to the poles after 10+ years in service, installation costs, grounding costs, material costs, and disposal costs. There was a note that likely the disposal costs will increase as the ban of pentachlorophenol goes into effect and an overall heightened awareness of the chemicals used on wood poles.
  + There was further discussion on what perceptions exist in the marketplace – real or not – outside of cost that may impact a utility’s decision to convert from wood to steel. Lonergan noted the concern about grounding and understanding how to work with a steel pole. He also noted steel poles tend to weigh about ½ as much as wood (class-to-class). Lacoursiere noted the wood industry is currently hammering steel on fire resiliency and whether or not we can withstand a fire without damage. Not withstanding that wood poles are wood and oil – two “fuels” for fire.
* Steel Utility Pole Coalition Overview/Objectives/Expectations
  + Lindsley summarized the progress of the Coalition to date. She noted in addition to the three associations, there are currently 4 pole manufacturers, 7 galvanizers and 1 coater already committed to the Coalition. She said one of the primary objectives at this stage is to expand that participation to additional fabricators/pole manufacturers, coaters, and affiliates – those who have an interest in the market and produce ancillary items for the poles. Lindsley encouraged everyone to extend invitations to others they work with to join the Coalition and help us work collectively at converting wood to steel.
  + Lindsley also summarized the search for a leader of the Coalition, and noted we had invited our top candidate, Fredrick Rumery to come to the Kickoff meeting. She provided a little background on Rumery’s qualifications and asked him to share a little more about himself. Rumery noted he worked as a lineman for 8 years, and during that time completed a Bachelor’s Degree and MBA. He now oversees maintenance at his utility and has made some great networks within the utility industry.
* Question/Answer Session
  + Lindsley opened up the remainder of the time to any questions or further discussion.
    - There was discussion about the need for work procedures for how to convert to steel poles, and how to work on them. There is lineman training available through SMDI, but maybe actual “adoption” procedures for the utility would be an additional asset. Langemeier also brought up the idea of available inventory – wanted to know what the lead time is for getting a steel pole produced. If storms are a big point in prompting utilities to look for alternative solutions, likely time is a key factor in the decision. Rumery also noted there are utilities looking at burying lines as an alternative.

**Adjournment**

* Lindsley noted they would work to set up a meeting time/location TBD for late summer or early fall, and likely in conjunction with an event where members would attend.