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NALFA STRIVES TO ENSURE INDUSTRY STANDARDS AS THE ORGANIZATION
ENTERS INTO ITS TENTH YEAR

WASHINGTON- As the laminate flooring industry continues to expand and forecasts are calling for a 100 percent increase in the demand for laminate flooring from the reported 920 million in 2004 to 1.85 billion by 2009 (The Freedonia Group), the need for quality control in the industry grows more critical. On the eve of its tenth year serving the industry, the North American Laminate Flooring Association (NALFA) is reaching out to members and non-members to embrace the NALFA Seal of Certification as the symbol for quality in the laminate flooring industry.

“Although NALFA has been a presence in the industry for almost ten years, there remain manufacturers that are not promoting quality control in the industry, and as the number of products available continues to increase, the need for standards becomes more critical,” said Bill Dearing, president of NALFA. “We are urging members to proudly display the NALFA Seal of Certification on their product packaging and are asking non-members to step up to our standards.”

According to a recent study conducted by National Floor Trends, consumers are experiencing inconsistent quality among laminate flooring products, which could create a perception of the product as “cheap.” Quality measures are important to aide both customers and retailers in distinguishing between the vast number of products.

“It is the vision of NALFA to see its certification recognized across the industry by manufacturers, retailers and ultimately by the consumer as an instant sign of quality,” said Dearing.

The NALFA Seal of Certification on a product’s packaging will give that product an instant advantage. By promoting the NALFA Seal of Certification, manufacturers

producing certified products can be confident that retailers are going to recognize the quality of their product. According to the National Floor Trends Laminate Flooring Market Study, retailers have tremendous potential for influencing laminate purchases and the majority of this group attributes product reliability and quality as key factors in their decision to sell/promote a particular brand or manufacturer of laminate flooring. By displaying the NALFA Seal of Certification on certified products, retailers will know that it is a quality product and would be more likely promote it.

When laminate flooring was introduced to the United States in the early nineties the demand for the product was greater than any other flooring product had experienced in the U.S., and the industry continues to grow at a substantial rate. Currently the U.S.'s flooring market consists of approximately 61 percent carpet, 8 percent vinyl, 13 percent ceramic, 11 percent hardwood and 7 percent laminate.

According to a recent hard surface flooring study conducted by the Freedonia Group, the U.S. demand for laminate flooring is expected to overtake hardwood floors. U.S. shipments of laminate flooring are also expected to increase 100 percent, from the 575 million square feet reported in 2004, to 1.2 billion square feet in 2009, when it will draw even with hardwood flooring. By 2014, laminate flooring shipments will leap past hardwood shipments, to 1.9 billion square feet. This growth is expected to come at the expense of carpet and vinyl, and is attributed to consumers' desires for high-end, environmentally-responsible products in their homes.

NALFA created voluntary performance standards and a certification program for the laminate flooring producers in the North American Market in 2000. In 2001, these standards were approved by the American National Standards Institute. Performance requirements for NALFA products include, but are not limited to: static load, thickness swell, impact resistance, light resistance, cleanability/stain resistance, wear resistance, dimensional tolerances and castor chair resistance.

Formed in 1997, the North American Laminate Flooring Association is an organization of U.S. and Canadian manufacturers and importers of laminate flooring products. NALFA's mission is to encourage the establishment and maintenance of high standards in

laminated flooring in North America, to recognize those that meet these standards and to recognize Associate Members who provide products and services to the laminated flooring industry. For more information, visit www.nalfa.com.

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