



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **EGGER Apprentices Engage with Business Leaders, Government Officials at European Embassies in Washington, D.C.**

*Apprentices Took Part in Critical Conversations About the Role of Apprenticeships in Developing a Skilled, Diverse Workforce*

**LEXINGTON, N.C. (NOVEMBER 18, 2022)** — Two [EGGER Wood Products](#) apprentices had the opportunity to meet with international business leaders and government officials to share their experiences as women in manufacturing and discuss the impact of apprenticeship on their career paths.

EGGER apprentices Rossana Najar and Laura Brown participated in panel sessions at the Swiss Embassy and at the Capitol Hill Senate Offices in Washington, D.C. as part a series of apprenticeship-focused events for National Apprenticeship Week (November 14-20). The pair fielded questions on strategies for success when working in a male-dominated industry and the role of mentorship in apprentice programs.

"As a woman, you don't want to feel like you need a man to help you because you feel weak," said Najar, second-year apprentice. "With the right confidence and the right mindset, you can go as far as you want to go."

Brown, a first-year apprentice, weighed in on the mentorship involved in the apprentice learning model. "We have a lot of support. We have all of our trainers, and they are all great," Brown said. "We also have the older apprentices, who have been in our shoes. They have stood there, and they know how you feel."

A familiar educational model in Europe, apprenticeship is attracting new interest in the U.S. Organized collaboratively by the Austrian and Swiss embassies, the week's events were intended to promote the apprenticeship model and serve as a learning opportunity for Swiss and Austrian companies interested in developing new apprenticeship programs or further developing existing programs.

Jonathon Stephens, plant manager for finance/administration, also represented EGGER for the panel sessions, relaying the company's experience launching its apprenticeship program in North Carolina, while simultaneously building its first U.S. manufacturing plant.

"It was interesting to hear about other companies' experiences with apprenticeships," said Stephens. "Although at EGGER we are very familiar with apprenticeships and have very highly regarded programs across the company, our program in the U.S. is of course quite new."

The company graduated its first class of six apprentices this past spring, with 34 apprentices currently in training. Stephens says the program will continue to grow.

This number will only increase as we start accepting applications for our next class in December," he said. "We know first-hand the real potential for apprenticeships and how important they are."

The trip was Najar and Brown's first time to Washington, D.C. For photos from the week, please click [here](#).

### **About EGGER**

Founded in 1961 in St. Johann in Tyrol, Austria, EGGER Group is a more than \$4.3 billion privately-held, family-owned company that employs more than 10,800 associates. EGGER is a global leader in the manufacturing of wood-based materials for the furniture and interior design, flooring and building products industries. The company's extensive, value-added product range includes thermally fused laminate (TFL), laminates, edge banding, raw particleboard, medium density fiberboard (MDF) and MDF Mouldings. With 20 production plants worldwide, EGGER Wood Products LLC is the company's first production facility in North America. The state-of-the-art particleboard manufacturing plant, with TFL lamination capacity, started production in September 2020. The total investment of the project, once completed, will be approximately \$700 million and will create an estimated 770 direct jobs.

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