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## ***Building Bridges from Here to France***



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Staff

**Elkins**

HEAR COMMENTS FROM JEAN PIERRE SCHWARTZ BY CLICKING "LIVE AUDIO" ICON ABOVE.

A four-day taste of West Virginia could result in a long-term international relationship between businesses that specialize in wood products.

Seven executives with French companies are returning home after their trade mission to West Virginia. The group saw how the state's wood products industry operates at businesses from Mingo County to Elkins.

Jean Pierre Schwartz works for the CAPEV economic development organization in France.

He says the French businessmen began some invaluable relationships with their West Virginia counterparts. "We've created connections and networks that should result in partnerships in the future." Schwartz says there could be future trade or investment in both directions.

Schwartz says the wood businesses in France are very sensitive to the environmental concerns. He says there may be some approaches the French have that may be beneficial to West Virginia companies.

The businessmen are from the Vosges region of France, which is similar to West Virginia.

Schwartz says more than 60 percent of the region is forestland. He says they came away very impressed with the size and diversity of the wood products industry in the state.

Schwartz says the trade mission was very much a first step toward a long-term relationship between both regions.

