

Conference on Character and Community, which showcased programs from around the country that are proving that sound values can be effectively taught.

By affirming the importance of good character in our society and encouraging all people to lead lives of virtuous purpose, we can prepare our Nation, and especially our Nation's children, for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Strengthening our national character will help secure greater opportunity, prosperity, and hope for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 20 through October 26, 2002, as National Character Counts Week. I call upon all public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7613 of October 18, 2002

National Forest Products Week, 2002

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

America's forests are one of our greatest natural resources. They offer majestic beauty and fabulous recreational opportunities for all Americans to enjoy. They also are an important source of materials that help our Nation's economy to grow and flourish. By observing National Forest Products Week, we recognize the countless ways in which forests enrich our lives, and we renew our commitment to preserving these natural assets for future generations.

Forests strengthen our economy by supplying us with renewable, energy-efficient, and environmentally friendly resources that are the source of good jobs and valuable products. The wood we get from forests is a prime construction and manufacturing product that is used to build our homes and many other essential structures. Wood is also recyclable, biodegradable, and serves as a raw material for many items we use and enjoy every day, including paper, tissue, furniture, packaging materials, musical instruments, and postage stamps. The use of wood for biomass energy generation derived from thinning projects conserves fossil fuels and strengthens rural economies.

In addition, our Nation's forests protect watersheds, preserve water quality, help keep our air clean, and provide habitat for our wildlife.

To protect these vital natural resources, we must take affirmative steps towards managing our forests better, and we must work together to safeguard the health of our forests. My Administration has developed the Healthy Forests Initiative, which seeks to restore the health of our

woodlands and prevent forest fires through a combination of thinning overgrowth and restoring fire-damaged areas. For the safety of our citizens, the good of our forests, and the prosperity of our economy, we must make forest health a national priority.

Recognizing the importance of our forests in ensuring our Nation's well-being, the Congress, by Public Law 86-753 (36 U.S.C. 123), as amended, has designated the week beginning on the third Sunday in October of each year as "National Forest Products Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 20 through October 26, 2002, as National Forest Products Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7614 of October 23, 2002

United Nations Day, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The United Nations was founded 57 years ago to improve our global community by strengthening the ties among member nations through improved communication, expanded understanding, and enhanced security. On United Nations Day, America joins the world in commemorating the founding of this important international organization and recognizing the profound impact it has had on our world and the role that it continues to play.

Since October 24, 1945, the United Nations Organization has grown to include 191 member states. Through its relief agencies, the U.N. aids and protects millions of refugees and displaced persons worldwide. For example, in 2001, the United Nations World Food Program provided aid to 77 million people in 82 countries and helped to avert a severe famine that threatened Afghanistan. The U.N. also seeks to improve living conditions around the globe by immunizing children, providing safe drinking water, and fighting disease.

The United States remains committed to helping the U.N. to advance human rights, healthcare, security, and education throughout the world; and we will continue to meet these and other commitments as we rejoin the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Our country continues to work with the U.N. in supplying aid for nations and peoples in need or distress, and in providing medical care and other essentials through U.N. agencies such as UNICEF.

As our world faces new challenges and opportunities, the efforts of the United Nations take on a renewed significance. The United States rec-