



News, Views & Comments from the World of Building Service Contracting

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## ARGENTINA-BUENOS AIRES

### Growth Rate Is Slowing

According to the Indec Statistics Bureau, the rate of growth, which had been above seven percent since 2003, has slowed to 2.6 percent. The Indec Monthly Economic Activity Index (EMAE) showed GDP only grew 0.4 percent in February over January and was 2.4 percent for the first two months of the year. Economists blame lower domestic consumption and reduced industrial output for the decline.

## AUSTRALIA-MELBOURNE

### Consolidated Now Accredited To ISO 14001

Consolidated Property Services reports it is now accredited to ISO 14001 and it has successfully integrated the internationally recognized environmental standard with its existing Quality (ISO 9001) and Safety (AS/NZS 4801), one of a select group of Australian cleaning contractors to do so. As part of its Green initiative, the company has implemented environmental practices both internally and externally at clients. The Head Office measures waste reduction, water and energy savings and builds responsibility for green improvements into job descriptions. The company shares the weekly measurements with staff to help them see their impact. Clients have been very receptive.

## BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

### Hazards In Workplace Increase Health Risk

A recent report, The Expert Forecast on Emerging Chemical Risks, published by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) shows exposure to chemicals and other hazardous materials in the workplace is putting the health of employees throughout Europe at risk. The report, by 49 experts from 21 European countries, noted particular concern with workers in the waste management, construction and service - such as cleaning or home nursing, industries. The study found about 15 percent of European workers report handling chemical products for a quarter of the time they spend at work, while 10 percent report inhaling vapors and 19 percent report breathing in dust, fumes and smoke in their workplaces. Exposures can lead to a wide range of illnesses such as allergies, asthma, infertility and cancer. It is estimated that chemicals are responsible for 80-90 percent of skin diseases, which rank second (13.6 percent) on the scale of occupational diseases, following musculoskeletal disorders. Jukka Takala, Director of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work estimates that ten times more people die from dangerous substances than from workplace accidents. The experts indicated that nanotechnology, used in the Information Technology industry is a rising threat, especially as the demand for the technology grows. EU-OSHA will be undertaking a larger-scale foresight study later in 2009, which will focus on workplace risks posed by new technologies over the next ten years.

## BRAZIL-SAO PAULO

### HIGIEXPO 2009 Set For August

**T**he Brazilian Association of Market Cleanliness Training (Abralimp) is promoting HIGIEXPO 2009 - Fair of Products and Services for Hygiene, Cleanness and Ambient Conservation – which will be held August 5th through 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in the Green Pavilion of the Expo Center North, in São Paulo. The theme of the show, recognized as the biggest show for the professional cleaning industry in Latin America is “20 years of innovation”. New this year will be the “Interactive Space of Professional Cleanness”, where the exhibitors and attendees will be able to interact, participate in an Island of Demonstration of Services, Chemicals, Machines, Accessories and Services as well as see a Parade of Uniforms. Over 60 exhibitors and 13 thousand attendees are expected according to Abralimp President Brezzi Ernest. Exhibitors will include manufacturers of chemical products, machines, equipment accessories, sanitary products, papers and uniforms. For more information contact Rosana Rodrigues at (11) 3079-2003 or [rosana@abralimp.org.br](mailto:rosana@abralimp.org.br).

## CANADA-OTTAWA

### Standard Of Living Falls

**A**n economic expert claims the Canadian standard of living will drop 3.5 percent in 2009 and income levels will fall below 2007 numbers. Dale Orr, head of Dale Orr Economic Insight, predicts when it is all over by 2013, Canadians will have lost a year’s worth of income. He points to a number of factors in the dismal projections from declining productivity and rising unemployment to population growth. Mr. Orr estimates GDP will be between 1.5 to 2.5 percent in 2010 and won’t rise to 3 percent or more until 2011 or 2012.

## FRANCE-PARIS

### Companies Paid To Hire Youth

**F**rench President Nicolas Sarkozy has announced a program to encourage businesses to hire France’s unemployed youth by providing a number of incentives. Incentives include

exempting companies who hire a qualified applicant between June 2009 and June 2010 from having to pay social security contributions, a large expense for many employers. Other incentives include a payment of 1,800 Euros to any company with less than 50 employees, a payment of 1,000 Euros for hiring someone under the age of 26 and a payment of 2,000 Euros for hiring someone under the age of 26 without a college degree. To encourage giving interns full-time employment, Sarkozy promised a payment of 3,000 Euros to businesses that give interns a regular full-time contract before September 2009. The 1.3 billion Euro program aims to have 500,000 young people in training or employed by June 2010.

## GERMANY-BERLIN

### Parents Can Get More Family Leave

**T**he German government is allowing parents to take longer family leave by allowing parents to work part-time. By working half days, parents can now take a combined period of 28 months of leave over the current 14 months. Currently, parental leave benefits, called Elterngeld, pay new mothers or fathers 67 percent of their net salary if they decide take time off or reduce their weekly schedules to a maximum of 30 hours per week. Couples can receive anywhere from €300 to €1,800, for up to 14 months as long as both parents share the child care during that time. If only one parent takes Elterngeld, the period for leave compensation is 12 months. Single parents get the full 14 months of compensation.

## JAPAN-TOKYO

### Pensioners To Get Extra Pay

**O**ver 2.6 million pensioners will receive up to 16,000 yen annually under a new law passed by the Japanese Government. Over 50 million pension accounts were short-changed due to a record-keeping error. The error became a major political issue in the 2007 election. The scheme will cost about 56 billion yen in the initial year.

## NEW ZEALAND-WELLINGTON

### WFBSC Mourns John Garlick

**I**N CLEAN Magazine reports New Zealand building service contractor executive, John Garlick (51), passed away on Saturday April 18th after a short, courageous fight, against cancer. John was a founding director and shareholder of ToTal Property Services and served as a past president of the BSCNZ. John attended many WFBSC Congresses over the years and was respected and liked by all. He leaves behind his wife Robyn and three children.

## SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

### Slight Growth But Still Concerns

**T**he Bank of Korea reported that increases in spending on construction and services and a reduction in the decline of manufacturing output allowed the economy to grow 0.1 percent in the first quarter of 2009. As the fourth quarter of 2008 had a 5.1 decrease in growth, the country avoided the technical definition of a recession, which is two consecutive quarters of negative growth. Still economists are saying that the economy has not bottomed out. While manufacturing only declined 3.2 percent in the first quarter of 2009 as compared with a decline of 11.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008 and construction spending and services increased 5.3 percent and 0.3 respectively, GDP fell 4.3 percent in the first quarter of 2009 over the same period in the prior year, private spending decreased 4.6 percent over the prior year, and facility investment plunged 22.1 percent from 2008, the worst numbers since the fourth quarter of 1998. As a result, the government hopes to spend three percent of GDP or 28.9 trillion won in 2009, the largest ever extra allocation in efforts improve the economy.

## TAIWAN-TAIPEI

### Weekday Construction Will Impact Traffic

**T**he Taipei City Government's Smooth Road Project, which aims to improve 36 major roads in the city and numerous others by 2014, has proposed adding weekdays to the resurfacing

schedule after inclement weather and limited construction hours during the weekends led to delays. Sections of the first major road to be resurfaced under the project, Zhongxiao E Road, have been partly closed to cars on weekends since March. Delays have caused the work, originally scheduled to be completed at the end of May, to last until August. Seventy-seven roads are scheduled to have resurfacing work completed in 2009. Major roads scheduled for improvements include Chengde, Zhonghua, Linsen, Nangang, Dunhua N, Dunhua S, Changan W, Changan E, Shipai, Xinhai and Minquan E roads. Numerous transportation officials have expressed concerns about the impact of weekday construction on traffic, which is already heavy and are opposed to allowing resurfacing work outside of weekends.

## THE NETHERLANDS-AMSTERDAM

### Business Services Providers Pessimistic

**S**tatistics Netherlands reports that business service providers have become increasingly pessimistic with 27 percent of providers expecting to generate a lower turnover over the next three months, versus 11 percent in March. This is the lowest level since the start of the time series in 1992. In addition, thirty-four percent expected to have to cut back on staff in the next three months, as compared with twenty-seven percent in March. The percentage of business services providers who felt hampered in their activities because of slow demand also rose from 32 to 38 percent. On the other hand, only 5 percent indicated that staff shortages constituted an obstacle to their activities, as against 16 percent in January. The negative mood about the economic climate over the past three months continued. Business service providers indicated that turnover and number of employees had declined in the past three months.

## UK-LONDON

### CSSA Publishes Driver Safety Factsheet

**T**he CSSA has published a new health and safety factsheet aimed at improving the safety of drivers in the cleaning and support services sector. Overall, driving a vehicle is almost certainly the most dangerous thing that a cleaning employee will

do in his or her working life. To put things into perspective, work related driving incidents account for over 20 deaths and 250 serious injuries every week. Every year there are over 3000 fatalities on the road in the UK. Of these, around 600 deaths are due to drivers falling asleep at the wheel. Put another way, if you drive over 30,000 miles per year, you have a one in 200 chance of having a serious accident. Driver safety is therefore an extremely serious issue for all businesses that use vehicles. That means it is a serious issue for all cleaning companies.

## US-DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

### Bird Flu Rapid Testing Approved

The FDA has approved the AVantage A/H5N1 Flu Test, a test which takes less than 40 minutes to detect the presence of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in humans. Previous tests took three to four hours to yield results. The test detects the deadly strain of bird flu by using throat or nose swabs from people with flu-like symptoms. The World Health Organization has recorded 412 confirmed cases of human infection with H5N1, mostly in Asia and Northern Africa.

## US-DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

### New Online Chemical Database Available

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has made available to the public a new online database, with information on more than 500,000 man-made chemicals from over 200 public sources. The Aggregated Computational Toxicology Resource (ACToR), which is located at <http://actor.epa.gov/actor>, allows access to hundreds of data sources in one place. ACToR was used to analyze toxicity information on almost 10,000 chemicals regulated by EPA and to identify data gaps, which will greatly help the agency prioritize future testing of chemicals. Key findings are that while acute toxicity data is available for 59 percent of the surveyed chemicals, detailed testing information is much more limited. Twenty-six percent of the 10,000 chemicals have carcinogenicity testing data, 29 percent have developmental toxicity testing data, and 11 percent have complete reproductive toxicity test results.

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

### Ecolab Earns Title For Third Year

Ecolab, Inc. announced it has been named to the "2009 World's Most Ethical Companies" list by the Ethisphere Institute. This is the third consecutive year Ecolab has earned a spot on the list. Ethisphere Institute is a think-tank dedicated to the creation, advancement and sharing of best practices in business ethics, corporate social responsibility, anti-corruption and sustainability. It is the third year the Institute has published its rankings, which appear in Ethisphere magazine's Q1 issue. The extensive research process included reviewing over 10,000 of the world's leading companies on six continents. Ethisphere analysts reviewed codes of ethics, litigation and regulatory infraction histories; evaluated investment in innovation and sustainable business practices; looked at companies' activities to improve corporate citizenship; studied nominations from senior executives, industry peers, suppliers and customers; and worked with consumer action groups for feedback and rating. For more details, visit [www.ethisphere.com](http://www.ethisphere.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

18th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors  
Auckland, New Zealand

Congress updates will be available from March 2009  
BSCNZ PO Box 31-067, Lower Hutt 5040  
EMAIL: [info@bsc.org.nz](mailto:info@bsc.org.nz)  
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19th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors  
Curitiba, Brazil  
2012



ALL BUILDING SERVICE CONTRACTING COMPANIES THAT ARE MEMBERS OF ONE OF THE ASSOCIATIONS THAT IS A WFBC MEMBER, ARE AUTOMATICALLY MEMBERS OF THE WFBC.

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