



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

Submit your news for publication to Carol Dean at cdean@wfbsc.org

ARGENTINA-BUENOS AIRES

The Congress Will Soon Be Here

WFBSC President Norberto Peluso and his committee have been hard at work putting together an excellent program under the theme Sustainability: Breaking New Frontiers, Enhancing New Business. There will be sessions on Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility, Certification of Standards of Quality and Environment, Technical Advances and Balance Score Cards, among others. In addition, there will be a Roundtable session. Be sure to register for the Congress and reserve your hotel room now. The Congress will be held October 26-29, 2008 at the Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel and Convention Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For more information, please visit the Congress website at www.wfbsc2008.com.ar.

AUSTRALIA-MELBOURNE

Foster's Receives Largest Fine In History

Beer maker, Fosters was fined \$1.125 million after pleading guilty to failing to provide plant and systems of work that were safe and failing to provide adequate instruction and supervision to employees to ensure workplace safety. The charges stemmed from the death of a 58 year old worker who had his neck jammed between a handrail and the heavy steel doors of a depalletiser. The workplace culture at the plant incited machine operators to operate in an unsafe manner by chastising operators when machines were stopped for cleaning and maintenance and allowing workers to leave work early once machines were cleaned. The fine is the largest for a single workplace death in Victorian history.

BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

Savings Rate And Investment Down

A recent report by Eurostat shows downward trends in savings and investment in the European Union. The seasonally adjusted gross saving rate of households in the first quarter of 2008 was 13.7 percent, down from 13.8 percent at the end of 2007. Business investment rates were 22.9 percent in the euro area in the first quarter of 2008 down from 23.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007. Profit sharing of non-financial corporations remained the same over the fourth quarter of 2007 at 39.0 percent although in the EU27, it was down to 38.2 percent from 38.4 percent.

BRAZIL - SANTA CATARINA

ENEAC Cleaning Congress Summary

FEBRAC held the 2008 edition of the National Meeting of the Cleaning Companies called ENEAC from April 9-13, 2008 at a native beach and beautiful resort called Costao do Santinho, located in the Florianopolis Island, State of Santa Catarina, South of Brazil. The Congress had more than 650 attendees including representatives from 26 Brazilian States and proved to be one of the best events ever held in Brazil. Over 10 industry expert speakers made presentations, on topics such as motivation, politics and environmental issues. During the event, all the participants were able to network and also visit a great show room of cleaning industry exhibitors. The president of the FEBRAC, Laercio Oliveira, spoke on the history and the success of the ENEAC and explained about the growth of the event since 2002 (Porto Securo/BA) from 276 attendees,

through 2004, (Port of Galinhas/PE) 413, and 2006, (Rio de Janeiro/RJ) 543 to this year, with over 650. The FEBRAC president thanked the main sponsors for believing in the ENEAC and also thanked the ex-presidents of the Federation who were present, Aldo de Avila Junior, Juarez Garcia, Edson Schueler and Adonai Aires de Arruda and wished a great time and new good business for all the companies in attendance, noting that he hoped to see everyone again at the 17th Congress of the WFBSC in Buenos Aires, Argentina in October. The WFBSC President, Norberto Peluso, attended the Congress and promoted the 17th World Congress this October 26-29, 2008.

CANADA-OTTAWA

Building Permits Decline Sharply

Statistics Canada has reported that the value of building permits in Canada, a key indicator of construction activity, fell 5.3 percent to \$6.3 billion in June from May, the largest monthly change since November 2007. Ontario experienced the largest decline down by 7.9 percent to \$2.3 billion. Six provinces saw declines in their numbers. Nationally, the residential sector experienced a 4.4 percent drop to \$3.6 billion, and non-residential building, permits fell 6.6 percent to \$2.8 billion. Several cities posted double digit declines: Montreal (down 12.1 percent), Calgary (down 15.2 percent), and Vancouver (down 13.4 percent).

FRANCE-PARIS

Survey Shows Safest And Most Dangerous Towns

According to a recent survey by the police judiciaire of towns with populations exceeding 20,000, violence with petty theft is down by 10 percent and gratuitous violence by one person against another has increased by 3.8 percent. The survey shows the most violent provincial town in France is Auchel in the Pas-de-Calais, with 13.69 offenses per 1,000 residents. The safest town is Marly-le-Roi just to the north of Versailles. The other 10 safest towns are Wittenheim in Alsace, Conflans-en-Jarnisy (Meurthe-et-Moselle), Gerzat and Cournon d'Auvergne (Puy-de-Dôme), Saint-Jean-de-Luz (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), Saint Germain-en-Laye (Yvelines), Rodez (Aveyron), Carmaux (Tarn) and Decazeville (Aveyron). Generally, the north and east of the country show more violence given the high rates of unemployment and alcoholism.

GERMANY-BERLIN

Coalition Wants An Executive Salary Cap

The conservative German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is hoping to present a common proposal with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to cap the salaries of top business leaders in September. Among the initiatives already proposed is limiting tax deductions to \$1.56 million. The high salaries of top executives have been a controversial issue in Germany where there is not a general minimum wage. The highest paid executive in Germany is Wendelin Wiedeking, head of the car maker Porsche, who earned EU \$60 million in 2007.

JAPAN-TOKYO

Stimulus Package Revealed

The Japanese government recently proposed an outline of a stimulus package to reduce public concerns on inflation and to help stimulate the economy. Some measures being looked at include supporting temporary workers, funding schools to become earthquake-proof, reinforcing measures on food safety, supporting businesses to "adapt" to rising prices of oil and other materials and promoting energy efficiency. However, some economists feel that the package will not produce an immediate impact on the economy, does not provide aid to industries that have been greatly affected by huge oil costs and does not indicate how much money the package will provide or the sources for such money. In a separate proposal, the Liberal Democratic Party recommended slashing highway tolls as a way to help businesses and the economy, among other measures.

NEW ZEALAND-AUCKLAND

Gas Prices Affecting Hotels

A report by Statistics New Zealand showed that the number of nights spent in motels fell 14 percent in June 2008 to 96,000 from 1.7 million room nights in June 2007. According to the Motel Association, some regions experienced more of a decline than others but those regions near Auckland and Canterbury actually experienced increases. The association says high fuel and power prices were the main factors for the decline. However,

despite the monthly decline, for the year to date, room nights actually increased 2 percent over 2007. About 70 percent of people who stay at motels are actually from New Zealand.

SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

Chamber Names Top 1,000 Companies

The Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry has listed the top 1,000 companies in South Korea. The typical firm on the list has average annual revenue of \$1.25 billion, hires 1,468 employees and has been in business for 26 years. Manufacturers accounted for almost half of the list and more than half of the firms were based in Seoul. Average revenues and net profits rose 43 percent and 56.6 percent respectively over the past five years and the firms are hiring almost 10 percent more staff than they did five years ago. It took the companies an average of 15.8 years to make the list.

TAIWAN-TAIPEI

Government Employees Get Over 100 Days Off

Government employees will have a total of 110 days off in 2009 with holiday periods of three or more days including the Lunar New Year break between Jan. 24 and Feb. 1 and the Dragon Boat Festival from May 28 and May 31. In addition, if a holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday, the employees will be given either a Friday or Monday off in addition that week to provide a long weekend. However, the employees will have to make up the extra day off by working a Saturday prior to or after the long weekend. The 110 days off applies only to government employees.

THE NETHERLANDS-AMSTERDAM

Fuel Prices Up Dramatically

A recent report by Statistics Netherlands shows motor fuel prices have risen dramatically over the past twelve years with prices up 92 percent in June 2008 over January 1996. Diesel prices have risen even more with the price of diesel fuel up 124 percent since January 1996. The price of diesel has climbed steeply since June 2007 with prices rising by 32 percent.

UK-LONDON

New Non-Executive Director For OCS

OCS, the £674 million international property support services group, has recently appointed Peter Goodliffe as a non-executive director of the Group Board. Peter joined OCS in 1976 and progressed through window cleaning, safety eyebolt fixing and office cleaning to the UK Board in 2007 where he is



responsible for shared services, embracing all back of house contract administration, ICT, data integrity, procurement, customer services and change management. "Change is vital to any modern business. This is a time of change for OCS which will enable us to adapt to and exceed our customers' expectations. I am delighted to be able to support this by helping the business with integrated and flexible business support systems to underpin our business strategy," Peter Goodliffe commented on his new role. "Our Group has seen substantial changes since we began trading over 100 years ago," said Chris Cracknell, OCS' chief executive. "We believe that property support services have a leading part to play in today's marketplace as the focus on energy performance and legislative compliance increases. We aim to demonstrate our industry's professionalism and establish OCS in this prominent role through innovation and integration."

UK-MANCHESTER

Pensioners Threatened Over Graffiti

Citing a section of the Town and Planning Act of 1990, a law normally used against major landowners who refuse to clean up their land, the Bury City Council warned residents they had 21 days to remove a mess of graffiti. Most of the residents are elderly pensioners who are physically unable to clean up the graffiti that had been sprayed on a fence, which runs along the back of their houses

and in an alley. The council threatened the residents with court action and a £1,000 fine. According to a council spokesperson, Graffiti attracts anti-social behavior and residents must take responsibility for their community.

US-GEORGIA

Potential Pandemic Strains Of Avian Flu Found

In a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, some North American avian influenza A H7 virus strains have properties that might enhance their potential to infect humans as well as their potential to spread from human to human. To date, most cases of avian influenza infection have come from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces. However, lead author of the study from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that the study points to the importance of continued influenza virus surveillance. In another study by the University of Maryland, researchers have discovered that the H9N2 avian flu strain has pandemic potential. Study results indicate that the H9 viruses have the potential to begin spreading among people with just minor mutations. H9 avian influenza is widespread among birds in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa and while it doesn't make birds sick, it has affected some humans with a mild illness.

US-VIRGINIA

US Cities Would Be Locked Down In Pandemic

In an effort to examine ways to limit the spread of pandemic flu, a study conducted by researchers from Virginia Tech used computer modelling to look at the hypothetical spread of flu in Chicago. The study showed that a vigorous early response could reduce the infection rate by 80 percent. Researchers indicated the federal government would need to confine infected people to their homes, and shut down schools and day-care centers as well as places of public gatherings like bars, restaurants and theatres. Offices and factories would remain open but would operate at reduced capacity due to quarantines and the containment measures would need to be in place for several months until a vaccine could be developed.

US-VIRGINIA

Cleaning Woman Cleans Up

Mirian Martinez, a 47-year-old cleaning lady who owned a cleaning company called Marian Cleaning Services, was charged with stealing thousands of dollars in jewelry and other items from her clients. Among the items taken was a \$42,000 dollar diamond ring. Martinez had been cleaning for most of the victims for several years. The investigation involved several Northern Virginia law enforcement agencies. Martinez is being held without bond at the Loudoun County jail.

OTHER NEWS

Global Harmonized Standard For Chemicals

The United Nations Globally Harmonized Standard for chemicals (GHS) is a matter of specific concern for the cleaning industry and many cleaning service providers are concerned the standard may lead to confusion about the real hazards of cleaning products, give rise to liability claims and lead to effective products being unnecessarily removed from the market. Andrew Large of the CSSA will be preparing a report for the October 2008 WFBSC Board meeting that will give a global perspective on GHS and suggest actions the WFBSC might take to mitigate the potential adverse impacts on the cleaning industry. Members with any background information about the implementation of GHS in their respective jurisdictions are asked to contact Andrew Large at alarge@Cleaningassoc.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

17th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors

Buenos Aires, Argentina
October 26-29, 2008

Visit www.wfbsc2008.com.ar
for more information.

18th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors

New Zealand - 2010



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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