



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

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

ARGENTINA-DOLORES

Mayor Cleans The Streets Of His Town

After garbage collectors went on strike recently, the mayor of the town of Dolores, Camilo Etchevarren, decided to go clean the streets of his district in response and he claims the town is now cleaner than ever before. Etchevarren claims that despite the fact municipal employees received a salary increase of 20 percent, which was paid 10 percent in November and another 10 percent in January, the collectors went on strike for more wage increases. A team of people has been hired to clean the streets during the strike and Etchevarren rides with them at night to assist.

AUSTRALIA-QUEENSLAND

Companies Careless With Customer Data

According to security company, Symantec, a survey of 200 businesses with more than 100 employees has revealed almost 80 percent of Australian companies are aware that they have either lost information on themselves or on their customers. Forty percent of those who responded indicated they had lost data up to 20 times in the prior year with eight percent claiming over 100 instances. In one case, a company was hit with \$8 million due to data losses. Most of the data breaches occurred as the result of lost laptops and mobile phones.

BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

Euro Area GDP Falls

Eurostat reports that GDP in the EU Area declined by 0.2 percent during the third quarter of 2008, from the second quarter. In the second quarter of 2008, growth rates were -0.2 percent. During the third quarter of 2007, GDP grew by 0.6 percent and by 1.4 percent in the second quarter of 2007. Slovakia, at 1.5 percent, had the highest GDP in the third quarter of 2008, followed by Ireland and Poland. While household consumption expenditure stayed the same, investments fell by 0.6 percent.

BRAZIL - SAO PAULO

Sector Evaluates Crisis, Seeks Comment

The Brazilian Central Sector Services (Cebrasse) conducted a survey of members on the impact of the global economic crisis on their operations. The Cebrasse membership accounts for 40 percent of Brazilian GDP and is comprised of approximately 960,000 companies, which employ more than 37.7 million workers. According to the survey, there has been some stability in the sector in the initial period of the crisis. In addition, at a December meeting to discuss the development of the National Policy on Trade and Services, which will be presented to President Lula in March, Cebrasse is asking its members to submit their suggestions to the government for the promotion of activities. The suggestions should be sent to the Ministry of Development by the end of January 2009 for analysis.

CANADA-ONTARIO

One-Woman Campaign To Recycle Succeeds

After one woman initiated a campaign to get Brita, the water-purification company to recycle, the company recently published a press release stating that as of January, consumers across North America would be able to recycle their old filters. Those wishing to recycle can do so either by dropping them off at participating Whole Foods locations or mailing them directly. (recycline.com/gimme5). Eventually, the filters will be turned into new plastic products. The woman, a 43-year-old accountant used emails, blogs, phone calls and a petition with 16,000 signatures to get Brita, a subsidiary of Clorox, to begin a filter recycling program. Previously filters could only be recycled in Europe. Clorox had already been working on improving its environmental image by partnering with the Sierra Club to develop a line of natural cleaning products.

FRANCE-PARIS

French Economy Holds On-Barely

While most of the world is falling into a recession, the French economy grew by 0.14% in the third quarter of 2008. Experts point to the French savings rate, which is on average more than 10 percent of GDP and the French government's determined measures to encourage spending by France's thrifty consumers. In comparison, the British savings rate is at zero percent, the lowest they have ever been since figures were first collected.

GERMANY-BERLIN

Survey Shows Many Hire Domestic Help Illegally

A survey of 2,091 people recently published by opinion research center TNS Emnid, shows that 18 percent or almost one-fifth of 40 million German households have paid domestic help under the table at least once. 27 percent believed they could save money by avoiding taxes and paying the help in cash however, according to the head of the job center of the German pension insurance fund, the monthly registration fee is minimal

and almost 20 percent of expenses related to hiring household help can be deducted. Nevertheless 79 percent said they didn't feel guilty about illegally hiring domestic help.

JAPAN-TOKYO

Corporate Bankruptcies Increase Dramatically

Corporate bankruptcies rose to 15,646, which was 11 percent over 2007, the first double-digit increase since 2000 and the first time bankruptcies numbered more than 15,000 in over five years. 108 of the bankruptcies had liabilities of over 10 billion yen. Nine of the ten industrial sectors had increases in the number of bankruptcies, with the real estate sector showing an increase of over 24 percent. Over 152,500 workers were affected by the bankruptcies, an increase of 24.6 percent.

NEW ZEALAND-AUCKLAND

Auckland Cleaning Products Soon To Be In US

Auckland-based Ecostore, which sells plant-based, chemical-free household cleaning and baby-care products, is expanding with an in-store campaign distribution at more than 180 supermarket stores in the United States. The company will begin trials at the Meijer Supermarket chain in Ohio, Michigan and Illinois and has met with Wal-Mart. If all goes well, the company will investigate developing a US factory in the future. Currently Ecostore manufactures its products in a South Auckland factory and distributes its products through supermarkets and health food stores in Australia and New Zealand and online in various other countries including the US and Britain. The company aims to increase sales from \$10 million-\$20 million to \$50 million-\$100 million within five years.

SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

Large Number Of Workers Unpaid

The global economic crisis has led to an increase in unpaid wages representing 33 percent more workers, or about 242,000 people, with \$674.6 million in wages overdue in 2008 versus 2007.

Thirty-four percent of those workers were employed in the manufacturing sector and 86.7 percent worked for companies with less than 100 employees. The Labor Ministry has a number of initiatives in place to support those affected including low-interest loans, where employees can borrow up to 7 million won per person at 2.4-3.4 percent interest. The Ministry will also send out inspection teams nationwide to encourage the delinquent companies to clear their overdue wages by January 23rd.

SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

Toilet Association Founder Dies

Sim Jae-Duck, who was born in a restroom and who lived in a house shaped like a toilet died of prostate cancer at age 69. Sim had a life-long commitment to transform toilets into clean and beautiful places and to improve worldwide sanitation. He designed and built a \$1.6-million house - a 419-square-metre concrete and glass structure - created in the shape of a toilet. It was billed as the only toilet house in the world and was named Haewoojae, which means a place of sanctuary where one can solve one's worries. Sim, also known as Mayor Toilet, launched the Korea Toilet Association in 1999 and he was in the process of launching a World Toilet Association when he died.

TAIWAN-TAIPEI

Multiple-Use Electronic Cash Cards Approved

The Taiwan government passed the Act on Issuance and Management of Electronic Monetary Cards, which will allow consumers to use one card for multiple purchases at major convenience stores, fast food chains, coffee shops, gas stations and bakeries and for services and government fees. Currently a number of companies offer their own version of a cash card, which can be used only for purchases at the given company. The cards can be disposable or reusable and can also be used for foreign purchases. The Act calls for a NT\$10,000 ceiling to be stored at any given time on the card, and gives the Financial Supervisory Commission (FSC) authority to approve or reject applications to issue cards. The companies qualified to issue electronic monetary cards would be liable for keeping customers' personal information confidential and are banned from provid-

ing the information to others for marketing purposes. There will be strong penalties in the form of fines and prison for fraudulent use of the cards. EasyCard, a provider of electronic cash cards, said it will make expanded use of its cards available as early as June 2009.

THE NETHERLANDS-AMSTERDAM

Number Of Teleworkers Increases

Statistics Netherlands reports that almost half of companies that employ ten or more workers, had teleworkers at the end of 2007, double the number in 2003. The trend is popular with larger firms and in sectors such as public utilities, business services and financial institutions as these sectors tend to have many large firms. Nine out of ten companies employing 250 or more allowed teleworking on a regular basis. Of smaller firms with 50 or less employees only 43 percent allowed teleworking. Teleworking is rare in sectors such as construction and hotels and restaurants because of the nature of their organizational activities.

UK-LONDON

BQF And CSSA Strive To Improve Sector

The British Quality Foundation (BQF) is delighted to be working in partnership with the Cleaning & Support Services Association (CSSA) to promote and deliver performance improvement in the sector via the EFQM Levels of Excellence Program.

The Levels of Excellence Program is aimed at organizations that want to:

- receive a distinctive and prestigious international recognition based on the most widely used management framework in Europe (EFQM Excellence Model)
- demonstrate to their stakeholders a commitment to Excellence
- Instill a culture of continuous improvement in their organization

Committed to Excellence (C2E)

C2E is the first level, aimed at organizations starting out on their Excellence journey, and smaller organizations that may not have the resources to devote to Recognized for Excellence. It is a practical and rela-

tively straight forward way to focus improvement activity within your business. Companies should apply for C2E if they want to:

- Receive constructive feedback from an independent external source
- Be more structured and rigorous in the way they prioritize and implement improvement activities
- Learn how to identify improvement areas in a simple and practical way

Recognized for Excellence (R4E)

R4E is the second level and is aimed at organizations with experience in implementing Excellence concepts and management frameworks. Applicants will undergo an onsite assessment by a team of assessors against the Excellence Model framework, which is scored out of 1000 points. Companies should apply for R4E if they want to:

- Receive a comprehensive written feedback report identifying key strengths and areas for improvement
- Benchmark against other organizations using the same framework
- Demonstrate in tenders a commitment to continuous improvement

US-NEW YORK

Clorox Dominates Market Share

Clorox Company has announced that its line of natural cleaning products, made with coconut oil, corn, and lemon - and without bleach, has 42 percent of the total market share for eco-friendly cleaners. The Greenworks line was launched in December 2007. The market is estimated to generate more than \$200 million in revenue annually. Clorox used mass distribution - the line can be found in stores such as Wal-Mart - and low prices to achieve its top market share.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

Ecolab

Ecolab Inc. announced that it plans to undertake restructuring and other cost-saving actions as it streamlines and improves its global business. These anticipated actions will result in significant annual cost savings as well as a more efficient organization.

Restructuring and One-Time Actions

Ecolab plans to make changes to optimize its workforce, facilities, product lines and business portfolios in order to adjust to the current economy while positioning to leverage future growth. Changes include:

- A reduction of the company's global workforce by approximately 1,000 positions, or 4 percent. Those whose jobs are eliminated will be offered severance and outplacement as appropriate.
- An acceleration of product line initiatives reducing finished goods' SKU's by 40% and optimizing formulations to reduce environmental and cost impact.
- The further optimization of the company's supply chain including the planned reduction of plant and distribution center locations.
- The closure of two small non-strategic healthcare businesses and the write down of investments in an energy management business.

Ecolab expects to record a Special Charge in the fourth quarter of 2008 that will include a pretax charge of approximately \$19 million (\$18 million after tax) related to the write-down and exiting of the businesses mentioned above. In 2009, Ecolab expects to incur a pretax restructuring Special Charge of \$65 million - \$75 million (\$42 million - \$49 million after tax) as a result of these actions. These actions are expected to provide annualized pretax savings of approximately \$70 million - \$80 million (\$45 million - \$50 million after tax, or approximately \$0.20 per share), with pretax savings of approximately \$50 million (or about \$0.13 per share) to be realized in 2009.

UPCOMING EVENTS

18th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors

Auckland, New Zealand
November 2-8, 2010

Congress updates will be available from March 2009
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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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