



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

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

ARGENTINA-BUENOS AIRES

WFBC 17th Congress Promoted In Four Regions

More than 150 colleagues are ready to take part in this world congress, the theme of which is Sustainability: Breaking New Frontiers, Enhancing New Business.

Spanning three days, the lectures will have three main topics: Corporate Social Responsibility (as a commitment with the environment, the people and the business), Quality management, hygiene, security and environment (how to integrate them) and Technical advances and cases studies.

The congress has been promoted in Asia (ABMA Congress – November 28-29, 2007), South America (ENEAC - the National meeting of building services contractors in Brazil, promoted and organized by FEBRAC, April 10-13, 2008), North America (BSCAI 2008 Convention at Tampa, April 25-28, 2008) and Europe (Pulire Trade Show in Madrid, March 11-13 and ISSA INTERCLEAN in Amsterdam, May 6-, 2008). Many interested people visited the congress booth and new companies contacted congress organizers for further information on exhibition opportunities. Norberto Peluso attended industry meetings during those events and visited the booths of the main sponsors and other important companies, inviting them to participate in the WFBC 2008.

The 17th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors is just around the corner. If you have not completed your registration process yet, you would be one of the few people in the industry that could miss the "event" of the year. For further information access www.wfbcs2008.com.ar or write to wfbcs2008@congresosint.com.ar.

AUSTRALIA-CANBERRA

Bird Flu Vaccine Approved

According to Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon, Australia has developed a human vaccine for the Bird Flu and the vaccine has been granted approval for use in the event of an avian influenza outbreak. The vaccine, developed by CSL, would protect humans against the H5N1 strain of influenza. The safety of the vaccine had been tested for adults aged 18-64 and those aged over 65 and would be used only once an influenza pandemic had been officially declared by the World Health Organization. The government has funded over \$160 million this year in its budget to replenish the country's vaccine stockpile.

AUSTRIA-VIENNA

Euro 2008 Cleaning Crew Goes To Work

With the Euro 2008 games in full swing, the City of Vienna's environmental office dispatches cleaners daily from midnight to 5:00 am to the 100,000-square-meter area in Vienna's old town to clean debris left during the Euro 2008 matches. "Old pros", the city's "elite troops" sweep in with their machines each night to make the area sparkle the next day. Since June 7, over 200.9 tons of rubbish have been collected in the area of the fan mile, with 74.2 tons coming just from the ground.

BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

New Risk Assessment Campaign Launched

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has released a Europe-wide information campaign on risk assessment. The campaign, "Healthy Workplaces. Good for you. Good for business." focuses on high-risk sectors such as construction, healthcare and agriculture, as well as on the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and will run over two years (2008-09). Under EU law all employers in the EU are required to carry out risk assessments. According to EUROSTAT, 5,720 people die of work related accidents in the EU annually and according to the International Labor Organization, 159,500 workers in the EU die annually from occupational diseases. When taken together, the result is somebody in the EU dies from work-related causes every three-and-a-half minutes. The campaign highlights the necessity for risk assessment in line with the Community Strategy for Health and Safety at Work (2007–2012), which aims to cut work-related accidents by a quarter across the EU by 2012.

BRAZIL - SAO PAULO

Government Prepared To Act To Stem Inflation

Brazilian Central Bank President Henrique Meirelles is looking to keep a lid on inflation by cooling consumer spending with interest rate hikes. Rising food costs spurred the fastest climb in the inflation rate since January 2006 when the inflation rate came in at 5.58 percent in May. It is predicted that the Central Bank will institute a third half-a-percentage-point increase in July to reign in prices. According to Meirelles, the bank target for inflation is 4.5 percent and should aim for a target that is lower than 4 percent in the future. Brazil's economy grew 5.8 percent in the first quarter of 2008 and experienced the fastest growth in three years at the end of 2007 when it posted a gain of 6.2 percent.

CANADA-BRITISH COLUMBIA

Carpet Cleaner Scam Targets Elderly

Police have reported three separate recent incidents in June where two men posing as carpet cleaners steal from elderly victims. The suspects, described as white men between the ages of 30

to 40, convinced elderly residents ranging in age from 80 to 95, to let them come in to provide a free estimate on carpet cleaning. Once inside, the thieves would distract the residents and steal their wallets and other valuables. To date, no arrests have been made.

FRANCE-PARIS

France To Lift Restrictions

France, one of only a few countries to still uphold restrictions against workers from the eastern countries, will lift all restrictions to workers from eastern European states that joined the EU prior to 2005 in the second half of 2008, almost a year earlier than planned. However, the new offer contains a clause which stipulates France may re-impose the restrictions for eastern and central European workers should the French labor market worsen drastically. In comparison, almost none of the 15 "old" EU member states have fully opened up to workers from Bulgaria and Romania, and the new offer does not apply as well since the two countries joined the EU in January 2007. This is despite studies that have shown the "wave" of eastern Europeans that was feared by many never happened and those who went to work in the UK in 2004—among the first "old" EU states to open its labor market—have already returned home.

GERMANY-BERLIN

Small Companies Have Risky Online Behavior

A study by Trend Micro, which surveyed usage habits of 1,600 corporate end users in the US, UK, Germany and Japan, recently reported that employees in small companies took more online risks while on the company network compared to their counterparts in larger organizations. Risky activities included browsing Web sites unrelated to work, making online purchases, visiting social networking sites, downloading executable files and checking personal Web-based e-mail and were more likely to take place in small businesses. In Germany, 70 percent of small-business employees checked personal email compared with 59 percent at large companies and in the UK, 32 percent of small business employees admitted to downloading executable files that could potentially lead to virus attacks. Only about 50 percent or fewer end users within small companies said they had an IT department, which may explain why spam, phishing and

spyware were more commonly reported within these companies compared to larger ones.

JAPAN-TOKYO

Painless Death By Stinky Detergent Fumes

Japan is experiencing a rash of suicides, mostly among those aged 20-40, where a combination of common cleaning agents is used to produce a fatal dose of hydrogen sulphide. Almost 300 people have died via this method in 2008 with a peak of 50 dying in April alone. Tokyo is where the trend tends to be the most popular. However, in a society that has tolerated and even honored suicide, this new trend, which often sickens those nearby, is considered impolite as it affects those who are not interested in dying. The colorless gas is heavier than air and tends not to dissipate so it often drifts at near lethal concentrations. More than 100 neighbors had to be evacuated after they were sickened by the stinky fumes and 14 had to be hospitalized when a junior high school girl killed herself in April. As a result of the trend, police are requesting stores pull ingredients from shelves and recipes for cleaning chemical suicide cocktails on the Internet be purged.

NEW ZEALAND-AUCKLAND

Baby Dies From Bacterial Infection Outbreak

Alco-wipes have been installed at the NICU doors, and environmental cleaning has been increased and monitored after one of 21 babies infected by potentially lethal bacteria at Auckland City Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit died. The baby, who died in April, was one of three babies who suffered serious infections when the bacteria entered their bloodstream. Officials would not say if the bacteria were staphylococcus aureus bacteria. Despite the potentially devastating outbreak, only six babies were still carrying the bacteria and were not showing any symptoms.

SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

Forecasts Likely To Be Lowered

The Ministry of Strategy and Finance is considering revising the projections made earlier in 2008 in order to more accurately reflect the current environment. Growth, originally project-

ed to be 6 percent will be lowered to 5 percent although the Samsung Economic Research Institute lowered its projection to 4.7 percent, the LG Economic Research Institute lowered it to 4.9 percent, The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development lowered it to 4.3 percent and the Bank of Korea is projecting 4.5 percent. Inflation, originally projected at 3.3 percent will probably also be revised as consumer prices have increased by 4 percent through May. Finally, as jobs have not increased as projected, the employment projection will be lowered to about 300,000 from the original forecast of 350,000.

TAIWAN-TAIPEI

Taiwan Ranked Fifth

The Global Competitiveness Report 2007-2008 published by the World Economic Forum ranks Taiwan the fifth highest in the world in level of customer orientation, the best ranking held by the country since 2001. Austria, Japan, Switzerland and South Korea were the countries rated highest. Efforts of businesses to build long-term partnerships with customers and the ability to track the needs and lifestyles of consumers has led to Taiwan's success.

THE NETHERLANDS-AMSTERDAM

Fewer Debt Management Plans Filed in 2008

The Netherlands saw debt management plans drop by a third in the first quarter of 2008 over the first quarter of 2007. Of the 2,800 debt plans filed in the first quarter of 2008, 2,400 cases (down from 3,560 in the first quarter of 2007) were filed by private individuals and 431 (down from 578 in the first quarter of 2007) were filed by one-man businesses. And while the number of debt management plans in municipalities with more than 100 thousand inhabitants in the first quarter of 2008 was cut by half, the decrease was much smaller for smaller municipalities.

UK-LONDON

Scientists Warn Of Bird Flu Epidemic

Scientists have discovered a strain of bird flu that has come closer to developing the traits required to create an epidemic of the disease in humans. Researchers found that a strain of

the virus called H7N2 had adapted slightly better to living in mammals. The scientists it could be evolving toward the same strong sugar-binding properties of the three worldwide pandemics in 1918, 1957, and 1968.

UK-LONDON

Companies Are Shamed In Crackdown

Over 200 companies have been fined by the Home Office for hiring illegal labor and the names of companies and directors, as well as how many illegal immigrants the company was employing and how much it was fined are being published on the UK Border Agency website. As of May 2008, 137 prosecutions have been made, ten times more than in 2007 and double that of the previous decade, resulting in fines totaling £500,000 - almost £3,000 per firm. The Home Office is switching their focus from small-time illegal employers, to major organized criminal enterprises supplying illegal labor and will be targeting illegal working hotspots such as agriculture, construction and hospitality in an effort to crackdown on illegal workers.

UK-LONDON

CSSA Comments On BBC Program

The BBC1 Panorama Program, How Safe is your Hospital? broadcast in April 2008 examined the prevalence of clostridium difficile in the NHS and asked if the current measures in place are sufficient to arrest the increase in infections and deaths caused by c. diff. Following the program, the CSSA Director General Andrew Large said: "C. diff infections have already been responsible for too many tragedies. The BBC's research shows that extra investment in day to day cleaning and hygiene resources is required if hospital staff are to manage infected patients in a clean and dignified manner and prevent the further spread of disease." The BBC's research showed that many hospitals in the UK are battling c. difficile and while some are doing well in areas such as hand hygiene, patient isolation and bed occupancy - other are struggling. Andrew Large concluded: "Clostridium difficile has for too long been ignored, despite the fact that it infects and kills many more patients than MRSA. I call on the Government to increase its investment in research into c. difficile so that it can be combated more effectively. Recent events have also shown that front line staffing must be sufficient to provide for a sanitized and dignified

patient environment. The Government must provide the resources necessary for each NHS Trust to recruit more cleaning and nursing staff so that these conditions can be maintained throughout the Health Service."

US-COLORADO

MRSA Rates Underestimated

A survey of infection prevention and control professionals conducted by The Association of Professionals in Infection Control (APIC) revealed that MRSA rates are eight times higher than previously estimated. Today, MRSA accounts for over 60 percent of Staphylococcus aureus infections, a staggering increase over the two percent of all Staphylococcus aureus infections reported in 1972. In addition, the study found the death rate from MRSA infections is more than 2.5 times higher than non-MRSA infections.

US-GEORGIA

C-diff Causing More Illnesses And Deaths

A new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study has found the number of people hospitalized with Clostridium difficile (C-diff) has been growing by more than 10,000 cases a year. Almost 300,000 hospitalizations in 2005 were traced to C-diff, twice the number in 2000 when the superbug was rarely seen. C-diff is spread by spores in feces that are difficult to kill with most conventional household cleaners or antibacterial soap and has grown resistant to certain antibiotics that work against other healthy colon bacteria.

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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