



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

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### ARGENTINA-BUENOS AIRES

#### Indicators Show Plunge In Foreign Trade

**W**hile Argentine stocks have shown recent gains and the Merval Index rose almost 2 percent, Indec, the national statistics agency reported that the first quarter account surplus was down significantly from the previous year. Indicators also showed that imports and exports had also declined sharply over the same period, prior year. Exports were down \$4.17 billion and imports were down \$4.25 billion. According to Indec, the decline continues despite an increase in the trade surplus, which was mainly the result of a drop in imports. Exports in May were down 17 percent over the prior year and imports were down 49 percent.

### AUSTRALIA-VICTORIA

#### New National Trade Show

**T**he National Cleaning Suppliers Association (NCSA) and Australian Exhibitions & Conferences (AEC Pty Ltd) are pleased to announce the launch of a brand new National Trade Show, CleanScene: The National Cleaning & Hygiene Expo. CleanScene will showcase the latest in cleaning equipment and supplies for the commercial cleaning sector. It will also include features of interest to industries where a high level of hygiene and cleanliness is of importance, such as healthcare, aged care, hospitality, food and beverage and the public sector. Of the feature areas, a key one will be the environment. The

CleanGreen Feature will incorporate cleaning products and services that are either eco-friendly, are made of recycled material, can be recycled or which use significantly reduced amounts of water. Feature areas will be just one of a number of initiatives designed to make a visit to CleanScene a completely interactive experience. Other activities will include various networking opportunities, such as the NCSA Dinner, as well as their series of informative industry seminars. Co-located with The Safety Show Sydney, New South Wales' largest workplace safety event, CleanScene will take place between 27– 29 October 2009 at Sydney Showground, Sydney Olympic Park, for more information visit [www.cleansceneshow.com.au](http://www.cleansceneshow.com.au).

### BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

#### Employment Down In First Quarter

**A**fter remaining stable in the fourth quarter of 2008, employment in the Euro area and EU27 was down 0.8 percent in the first quarter of 2009 over 2008. Eurostat estimates that, in the first quarter of 2009, 223.8 million men and women were employed in the EU27.

### BRAZIL-SAO PAULO

#### New Strain Of H1N1 Found

**S**cientists in Sao Paulo, Brazil have found a new strain of H1N1. This new strain contains differences that allow the virus to infect new hosts. It's unknown right now if the new strain is more aggressive than the current but officials of the World Health Organization are closely watching the

developments, particularly during the flu season in South America to see what will happen with the virus and its future infection rates, severity and spread.

## CANADA-OTTAWA

### Canadians Get 60 Out Of 100 For Green Homes

**A** survey conducted by Environics Research for Home Depot revealed that many Canadians have not embraced Green Products. According to the new Canadian Green Home Index, 83 percent of those surveyed claim that they have room to improve with 54 percent stating that they are somewhat confident they have the tools to green their homes and 22 percent saying they were not confident. While the survey showed 68 percent of respondents rated their homes as somewhat green, only nine percent of respondents had purchased green household cleaning products in the previous nine months, and six percent had curbed water usage at home. The survey of 2,004 Canadians aged 18 and over was conducted in March and is considered accurate within 2.2 percentage points. It will be conducted bi-annually.

## FRANCE-PARIS

### Electronic Retailers Struggling

**T**he owner of Darty electronic stores, Kesa, which is the third largest in Europe, hopes that the recent announcement by John Lewis, Britain's biggest department store, that electrical and home-technology sales rose 8.2 percent over the same period prior year will give it a badly needed boost. However, Kesa will still be facing major declines in profit with the numbers expected to be 46 percent below 2008. Thierry Falque-Pierrotin, who succeeded Jean-Noël Labroue as chief executive of Kesa in January, is expected to outline his strategy for the group in the very near future.

## GERMANY-BERLIN

### Immigrant Study Revealing

**A** survey by the Bertelsmann Foundation conducted across Germany, of 1,581 immigrants aged 16 and older from Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Italy, Croatia,

Spain and Greece revealed that while most were happy, many still felt like an outsider and experienced disadvantages. While 69 percent of those surveyed said they were happy in their new country those immigrants most dissatisfied came from Turkey and Russia. Eighty percent said they had confidence in the German government, compared to 58 percent of the general German population. Most respondents, 79 percent, said they were happy with their jobs and 77 percent were content with their current living situation. One disadvantage noted was that many immigrant degrees obtained in universities outside Germany were not recognized by German employers. As a result, many have to go retrain or take jobs lower than their skill set.

## JAPAN-TOKYO

### Economic Assessment Positive

**T**he Bank of Japan noting rising exports and industrial output has revised its economic assessment upward for a second straight month and says the economy will continue to recover into the latter half of the year. As a result, the BOJ Policy Board held the key interest target rate at around 0.1 percent. Government stimulus measures, including the cash handout program and public works projects, are propping up the economy as well as new fiscal and monetary policies and better news from overseas, including a recovery in global financial markets. However, economists claim that projections after October will depend on continued domestic production increases and on the recovery of U.S. consumption and investment in plants and equipment. Economists also note the government should not plan any further stimulus because it would only risk increasing the swelling fiscal deficit. May was the first time in three years that the BOJ had made a positive economic assessment.

## NEW ZEALAND-ROTORUA

### Five-Year-Old Made To Clean Toilet

**A** new caregiver at Chipmunks after-school care program made a five-year-old clean toilets as part of his punishment for hitting a girl in the face with a ball. The boy was made to squirt cleaning product into a toilet before scrubbing it with a brush. The mother, complained to Child, Youth and Family, which funds the Rotorua program and has sought legal advice. According to

the owner, the caregiver has been told she must not use cleaning toilets as a punishment. Child, Youth and Family would not be drawn on whether making a child clean a toilet was appropriate and is waiting for a written complaint. According to a Child Youth and Family manager, Chipmunks was last assessed in February 2009 and was found to provide a good standard of care.

## SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

### Interest Rates At All-Time Low

The chairman of the Financial Services Commission, Korea's top financial regulator, said that Korea needs to continue business activities, boosting trade and securing a turnaround in macroeconomic conditions and that a sustained recovery from the global recession is not yet evident. Despite several experts noting that excessive liquidity, which was used to stimulate the economy, can raise prices if it is not reduced in a timely manner, the Korean government boosted fiscal spending, and the central bank lowered the key rate by 3.25 percentage points. The Bank of Korea Governor even suggested that the liquidity might be doing more harm than good but kept the benchmark interest rate on hold at 2 percent, an all-time low, for the fourth consecutive month. Korea's economy grew 0.1 percent in the first three months of this year, after a 5.1 percent contraction in the previous quarter. Experts predict that while the Bank of Korea does not see a need to raise interest rates in the near-term, it will shift its stance from monetary easing to tightening late this year or in early 2010.

## TAIWAN-TAIPEI

### Integrated Energy Tax Proposed

**A** new tax being proposed on environment and energy is aiming to consolidate 13 existing taxes in addition to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging energy conservation. The tax reform plan would add a green tax to existing gasoline costs each year for the next 10 years. The result would be to integrate different pollution and waste disposal fees, as well as commodity and fuel taxes, into a single levy. The government would also look at cutting taxes on rubber tires, drinks and electric appliances, entertainment and stamp taxes. If realized, the green reform would generate NT\$50.4 billion (US\$1.53

billion) in tax revenues in the first year and NT\$810 billion in the 10th year, a preliminary report showed. The proposal is set to be final in late October.

## THE NETHERLANDS-AMSTERDAM

### 25 Percent Of Companies Laying Off Employees

**C**BS reports that in the second quarter of 2009, over 71 percent of Dutch companies reported taking measures to combat the effects of the economic recession, slightly higher than in first quarter. Staff reductions in particular were mentioned more often than in the previous quarter. In the second quarter of 2009, 22 percent of companies said they had laid off temporary workers. Another 6 percent said they were giving notice to staff with a permanent contract. Postponing investment was also mentioned more often than in the first quarter. Relocating and outsourcing production activities were mentioned less frequently than in the first quarter. The number of companies who reported being affected by the credit crisis has hardly changed from the first quarter. Just as in the first quarter, one in five companies said they were finding it more difficult to get credit. But fewer businesses said they could not get credit insurance; large companies in particular had fewer problems in this respect. More companies said they had trouble banking surplus liquidity, on the other hand.

## UK-LONDON

### Employers Encouraged To Sign Pledge

**T**he Health & Safety Executive has launched the Be Part of the Solution program which requires employers to sign a pledge to improve health and safety standards in their workplaces. New research shows that while almost 90 percent of employers acknowledge employees are their most important asset and 65% of employees say that in addition to preventing accidents, good health & safety practices make them feel valued, almost half of Britain's workers know someone who has been injured at work. The study also shows that on average employees significantly underestimate the danger with most saying that the number of employees who were killed or seriously injured at work in the previous year is 3,000 when the actual number is 137,000.

## UK-LONDON

### Levels Of Excellence Program

The British Quality Foundation (BQF) is 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, demonstrate to their stakeholders a commitment to Excellence and instill a culture of continuous improvement. Committed to Excellence (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 relatively 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 and learn how to identify improvement areas in a simple and practical way. Recognized for Excellence (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 and demonstrate in tenders a commitment to continuous improvement. To register your interest in this program and to find out about special rates available to CSSA members, please contact Mark Bell at the BQF on 020 7654 5009 or mark.bell@bqf.org.uk or Andrew Large at the CSSA on 0207 920 9632 or alarge@cleaningassoc.org.uk

## US-CALIFORNIA

### Drive-Through Pandemic Triage Tested

In the first test of its kind in the United States, Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto, California, is testing a drive-through approach to processing large numbers of medical patients during a pandemic. In order to avoid infection, the drive-through allows for

screening and treating patients without the usual walk-in process. The plan includes using portable digital monitors and labs for blood and specimen testing as well as dispensing medications and administering vaccines. Stanford Hospital officials said the federal government may consider results of the test for incorporation into a new protocol at hospitals nationwide during pandemic emergencies.

## US-INDIANA

### Cleaning Fumes Empty Store

After an employee mixed bleach with ammonia while cleaning a bathroom at a grocery store, the resulting fumes forced the evacuation of shoppers and employees from the store. Those present waited in the parking lot while firefighters in hazmat suits cleaned up the noxious fumes. No injuries were reported.

## US-TEXAS

### Cleaning Tank Leads To Dangerous Exposure

While employees were cleaning a 1,500 gallon tank at a Tyco Plant, the cleaning products used, combined with the chemicals inside the tank to form what fire officials believe to be hydrogen sulfide gas. As a result seven Tyco employees and five first responders were hospitalized. One man remains in critical condition after being exposed to the potentially deadly gas.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Congress updates will be available at:  
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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