



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

Register By March 31st And Save

Be sure to register by March 31st to receive a discounted registration fee for the 17th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors being held October 26-29, 2008 at the Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel & Convention Center. Situated in the heart of Buenos Aires, the Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel & Convention Center is just half an hour away from Ezeiza International Airport. Participants who wish to reserve the transfer service at their arrival and/or departure will have to complete the required information in the Tours and Transfers Form (Formulario de Tours y Traslados) stipulating the date, time and arrival and/or departure flight number. There is also public transport, city buses and taxis available at the airport. The hotel offers 24 floors and 742 rooms and spacious suites with internet service, including five fully-equipped executive floors designed for those who travel on business. For a Classic (single / double) room, the price per night is: USD \$230, for a Club (single / double) room the price is USD \$279 per night and Park Tower (single / double) rooms cost USD \$327 per night. All prices include VAT and the Park Tower rate includes breakfast. For Classic and Club rooms, the buffet breakfast per person is USD \$19 (VAT included). Two other hotel accommodations have also been arranged, the Melia Buenos Aires Hotel USD \$242 (VAT and breakfast buffet included) and the Tryp Buenos Aires Hotel USD \$170 (VAT and breakfast buffet included) There will be several tours available for attendees including a 3-hour Buenos Aires City Tour which will visit the most traditional areas in the city, experiencing its historical and cultural evolution from immigration to tango to football, a 4-hour Architecture and Art tour, a 3-hour shopping trip and an optional

tour to San Isidro and Tigre, two culturally rich and interesting areas in the northern outskirts of Buenos Aires. The optional tour includes lunch and lasts 7 hours. The temperature in Buenos Aires in October is mild (spring). However, the evenings can be cool and a sweater or jacket is recommended. The temperatures vary between 29° C (maximum) and 15° C (minimum). It usually rains during this period. All foreigners who arrive in Argentina must have an up-to-date passport. Those coming from countries that require a VISA must request one at the Argentine Consulate or at their respective Embassy. For more details, on the conference, please go to <http://www.wfbsc2008.com.ar/>.



AUSTRALIA-VICTORIA

Self-Cleaning Materials Close To Fruition

Researchers at Monash University, in Victoria, Australia, have discovered that by coating natural fibers like wool and silk with a layer of titanium dioxide, a photocatalyst that breaks down organic material when exposed to sunlight, the fibers automatically remove food, grime and red-wine stains, in effect making them self-cleaning. Red-wine stains disappear after 20 hours of exposure to simulated sunlight, coffee stains fade away in two hours and blue-ink stains disappear in 17 hours. In addition, titanium dioxide can destroy pathogens such as bacteria, which would be useful in medical environments. The downside is that titanium-dioxide-coated materials will not work unless they are exposed to sunlight for hours. Researchers anticipate self-cleaning wools will be available in the market within two years.

BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

Euro Area Unemployment Stable

According to figures from Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the EU27 unemployment rate was 6.8 percent in January 2008, unchanged from the month prior and actually under the year prior, which was 7.5 percent. The largest falls were observed in Poland (11.1% to 8.6%), Bulgaria (7.8% to 6.2%) and Latvia (6.6% to 5.0%), and the highest increase in Estonia (4.8% to 5.6%). Both male and female unemployment rates fell in 2008 over the year prior as did under-25s. The lowest rates for under-25s were observed in the Netherlands (5.5%) and Slovenia.

BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA

Countries Face Energy Shortage

Brazil and Argentina, with growing energy demands, face energy shortages. While both countries produce oil and gas, they do not have enough to meet demand. Bolivia, which is committed to supply 30 million cubic meters a day of natural gas to Brazil and 7.7 million cubic meters a day to Argentina, is only sending some 27 to 29 million cubic meters per day to Brazil and barely 3 million cubic meters to Argentina. Bolivian natural gas is a key energy source for Sao Paulo, the hub of industrial production in Brazil. Argentina, where the energy grid is highly dependent on natural gas-fuelled plants and which is facing severe shortages, especially in the peak usage winter months of June and July, has asked Brazil for 1 million cubic meters of natural gas per day per year from the allotment given to Brazil. Brazil has helped out Argentina in the past but it says it must focus on its own needs and future power shortages.

CANADA-CALGARY

Marlborough Station Set For Cleaning

After the Calgary Transit Authority cleaned Whitehorn station over a long weekend and deemed the process a success, the Authority determined the Marlborough LRT station will be the next. The station will be thoroughly cleaned,

including scouring the facility, cleaning the vents and escalators and scrubbing every corner of the windows. The cleaning will take place in March.

CANADA-OTTAWA

Study Shows Canadians Like Their Jobs

A global workforce study by Towers Perrin of nearly 90,000 workers of which 5,000 were in Canada, found 86 percent of employees in Canada liked or loved their job. And while 79 percent of Canadians surveyed liked their company and 81 percent their boss, they indicated they worked to live not lived to work, more than any other global group surveyed. Canadian workers ranked the ability to balance personal and professional life as the most critical factor in whether they would stay with an employer. Another interesting finding was a company's reputation and its senior leadership were more important factors in employee job engagement and performance than immediate supervisors.

GERMANY-BERLIN

Study Finds German Middle Class Is Shrinking

A recently published study by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) has shown the German middle class (defined as those who earn between 70 and 150 percent of the median income in the country) has decreased substantially and the gap between the rich and the poor has increased significantly. In 2006, the number of Germans considered middle class dropped from 62 percent in 2000 to 54 percent, or 44 million people. Workers who earned between 90 and 110 percent of the median salary were affected the most and lost about five percent of income. In addition, the study found that more people were employed in temporary jobs versus permanent ones.

JAPAN-TOKYO

Tokyo Still Most Populous Megacity

A UN report, which projects the total urban and rural populations around the globe every two years shows the greater Tokyo area will remain the most populated area in

the world. Tokyo has almost 36 million inhabitants and according to the director of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the city accounts for 42 percent of the urban population of the country. The city is expected to remain number one for the next 17 years. Between 2007 and 2050, the global urban population is forecast to increase to 6.4 billion and by the end of 2008 half of the world population will live in urban areas for the first time ever, with most of the urban populations of the world centered in Asia.

NEW ZEALAND-CHRISTCHURCH

Would Be Franchisees Taken To The Cleaners

As many as 30 people, mainly Chinese immigrants, claim they have been scammed. Each paid \$20,000 to Green Power, a commercial cleaning franchise company. They were promised a guaranteed weekly income of \$1,000, but there was no business to be had. Apparently reps for Green Power arranged several free trial cleaning offers with local businesses but when the trial was over, the business owners dropped the service. Many said the understanding was that Green Power would get the business. Franchisees would only have to clean and not worry about speaking English or meeting clients. As a result of this situation and others, the Franchise Association is preparing to ask Parliament to call for tougher franchise controls.

SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

Fuel Will Be Cheaper

In an effort to dilute the effect of rising oil prices, government officials plan to reduce taxes on fuel products by about 10 percent and indicate it will exist at least until the end of the year. Consumers are expected to pay 82 won and 58 won less for gasoline and diesel, respectively, depending on individual filling stations.

TAIWAN-TAIPEI

Departments Not Allowed To Raise Fees

In an effort to stabilize commodity prices, Premier Chang Chun-hsiung has banned several government departments from raising more than 3,000 administrative fees. Among the fees to be frozen

include vehicle fuel fees, certificate and license fees, passport fees, visa fees, and the filing fees for judicial complaints.

THE NETHERLANDS-AMSTERDAM

Business Sector Remains Optimistic

More business service companies expect growth in orders and turnovers in the next three months than those who do not. Twenty-seven percent expect to hire more staff in the next three months, particularly those employers who are computer service providers. Nearly four out of ten companies in the business services sector report that shortage of manpower is impeding production growth.

UK-LONDON

Google To Aid In MRSA Research

UK researchers are turning to the method that Google uses to rank search results in order to determine how superbugs get from A to B. Scientists hope to build a matrix using normal daily observations to log all interactions between people and objects in a hospital ward, much like Google does when it searches the web. The results would rank routes of infection just like Google ranks search results. With that data, scientists hope to identify MRSA transmission sources and ultimately combat the superbug.

UK-LONDON

Mental Health Units Get Cleaning Grant

While infection at trust properties is very rare, the Department of Health has given the mental health units at Lincoln County Hospital a grant of £440,000 for a deep cleaning program. The cleaning will include cleaning vents, radiators, walls and carpets on 13 units. The cleaning program is expected to be completed by July.

UK-LONDON

CSSA News

The CSSA and its members continue to campaign for improvements to the funding and management of NHS cleaning services. In January this campaign resulted in the CSSA collaborating with BBC Online to break the story that the £50 million hospital deep clean program would be a waste of money if it was not backed up by increased funding for hospital cleaning. The story was a popular one, and resulted in a number of press interviews and follow up articles in the national press. It is encouraging that the articles were very supportive of the CSSA line. We heard from the medical profession, NHS property managers and even the union movement; all agreeing with the view that the deep cleans must be supported by further action. The public have also been supportive. Online comment in response to web articles in the national press shows a solid support for our views, with little in the way of contractor bashing. We have a long way to go, but the first six weeks of 2008 are an encouraging start to our campaign. We will not stop until we have secured more money for hospital cleaning, because only then will cleaning be able to play its proper role in the fight against infections.

CSSA invited to NHS Cleanliness Summit
The CSSA is delighted to announce it accepted an invitation from David Nicholson, NHS Chief Executive, to attend the NHS Cleanliness Summit. This summit brought together a small group of key representatives across the field to discuss the issue of cleanliness in hospitals and to look at how all parties can work together to improve matters across the NHS. The invitation is a key step forward for the CSSA. We are now able to have direct influence at the heart of Government and we will use it to promote both the benefits of a mixed economy in cleaning and also the need for further funding. The Summit took place February 28th and the CSSA will report back on its outcome.

Support from the Medical Profession
A number of published medical practitioners in the NHS have come forwards in support of the views of the CSSA. We are working with them to marshal the evidence that strategic investments in increased cleaning frequencies can yield dramatic improvements in infection control. We presented this evidence at the NHS Cleanliness Summit and pressed the Government to support its conclusions with more cash.

US-CALIFORNIA

Contract Cleaning Will Grow

Global Industry Analysts, a publisher of off-the-shelf market research is forecasting that the contract cleaning market will reach US\$155.3 billion by 2010. Office cleaning holds the largest share of the market with an estimated 31.6% share in 2007 while residential cleaning is expected to have the largest growth. For more details about this research report, please visit http://www.strategyr.com/Contract_Cleaning_Services_Market_Report.asp.

US-FLORIDA

Cleaning Out The Store

When managers at a North Naples cell phone store noticed that boxes of high-end equipment were missing, they studied the security video at the store and saw a cleaning woman removing several boxes of the expensive equipment. The woman, who was hired at a cleaning company one month prior to the discovery did not have a valid driver's license and was in the US illegally. She was charged with grand theft for stealing \$300,000 worth of expensive equipment.

UPCOMING EVENTS

17th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors

Buenos Aires, Argentina
October 26-29, 2008

Visit www.wfbcs2008.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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