



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

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## ARGENTINA-MENDOZA

### Major Expansion Approved For Vineyard Resort

The municipality of San Rafael, Mendoza, Argentina, has approved a major expansion plan for Algodon Wine Estates, a 2,000 acre winery and luxury resort property in the scenic wine country in Argentina. The plan calls for a luxury hotel, spa, two additional world-class golf courses, over 200 vineyard homesites (between one and fifteen acres) and 50 villas. Investors believe demand is strong-attracting luxury travelers and investors who appreciate Argentina's advantages such as undervalued property in a sought-after, high-profile location; healthy hotel and lodging rates; and a currency situation in which the dollar still goes far. Development at the resort will follow a Green five-year development plan.

## AUSTRALIA-VICTORIA

### BSCAA Holds Forums On Industrial Relations

The Building Service Contractors' Association of Australia held collective agreement forums throughout the country in the month of April with contract cleaners, whether BSCAA members or not. The forums sought to gain feedback from employers on LHMU's national collective agreement draft and BSCAA's collective agreement draft. Attendees agreed that a national collective agreement (NCA) was an appropriate first step and that the next step was to create an NCA amenable to all employers no matter the size. It was the first time contract cleaner employers took a unified industrial relations stance in their dealings with the LHMU.

## BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

### Construction Output Down

Construction output declined by 2.2% in the euro area in March 2008 compared with February 2008. Construction output rose in Sweden (+5.1%) and Poland (+1.4%) and remained stable in France, while decreases were recorded in nine Member States. The most significant falls were observed in Germany (-12.3%), Slovenia (-12.2%) and the United Kingdom (-9.0%). Building construction fell by 1.9% in the euro area and by 2.5% in the EU27.

## BRAZIL - SAO PAULO

### Inflation Concerns Cause Bovespa Drop

Brazil raised interest rates for the first time in three years last month, after inflation rose to a two-year high of 4.73 percent in March. Both a report showing consumer prices rose 0.55 percent in April, which was way above what was expected, and a report from the nation's largest retailer, Lojas Americanas SA, that its first-quarter profit dropped 68 percent from the previous year caused Brazilian stocks to fall, which resulted in the first decline in four weeks. Lojas Americanas SA's stock dropped 4.8 percent, Lojas Renner SA, the second-biggest retailer, dropped 1.3 percent and TAM SA, Brazil's biggest airline, dropped 1.3 percent. Rossi Residencial SA, Brazil's third-biggest homebuilder, dropped 2.2 percent and Cyrela Brazil Realty SA Empreendimentos e Participacoes, the biggest homebuilder, fell 2.8 percent.

## CANADA-ONTARIO

### Canadian Consumers More Pessimistic

A survey of 1,015 Canadians indicated they were more pessimistic about the state of the economy now and in the future. The level of consumer optimism about the future was the lowest the survey has recorded in the past four years.

## FRANCE-PARIS

### French Industrial Production Falls

According to an economist at BNP Paribas SA in Paris, economic and financial headwinds will occur in the second quarter and will last a good part of the year. Industrial production, led by production at factories and utilities, which accounts for 15 percent of the economy, fell for the first time in four months in March as global demand waned and domestic spending lost momentum. Production fell 0.8 percent in March from February. Prime Minister Francois Fillon trimmed his forecast for French economic growth to a range of 1.7 percent to 2 percent, down from a previous estimate of 2 percent to 2.25 percent and European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet said inflation remains the bank's top priority.

## GERMANY-BERLIN

### Fuel Prices At Record Highs

German politicians and auto industry officials urged the government to take measures as gasoline prices surged to €1.50 per litre for the first time a result of such things as high environment and motor vehicle taxes. The value-added tax also increases the burden as it is always 19 percent of the final price so as the price of gas rises, so does the value-added tax. Some criticized that the government was raking in more and more revenue as fuel prices soar and demanded that the money be given back to taxpayers in the form of rescinding taxes, lowering other taxes placed upon tax-payers or increase tax allowances for commuters, which are linked to distances from work.

## JAPAN-TOKYO

### Panel Advises Lifting Regulations

In order to attract foreign investment and stimulate growth, a government advisory panel proposed the government clarify regulations restricting foreign investment on the grounds of national security by the end of fiscal 2008 and cut the current corporate tax rate, which is currently at 40 percent. Foreign direct investment in Japan accounted for only 2.52 percent of gross domestic product in 2006, whereas it was 44.6 percent for the U.K., 13.5 percent in the U.S. and 8.8 percent in South Korea. Japan has set a goal of raising the percentage to 5 percent by the end of 2010.

## NEW ZEALAND-QUEENSTOWN

### Café Patron Served Cleaning Chemical

Chico's Restaurant Ltd. is being sentenced in June by the Queenstown District Court after it served dishwashing liquid instead of mulled wine to a customer who had to be hospitalized as a result. An investigation revealed a mulled wine container had been filled with dishwashing detergent. Queenstown Cleaning Suppliers, who supplied the dishwashing liquid, had recycled about 50 Mountain Thunder Mulled Wine containers for use with chemicals. A detergent sticker was placed over the old mulled wine label, but some of the previous label was still visible and the container was not stored properly with the other chemicals.

## SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

### Task Force Will Deliver Labor Reforms

In the administration's efforts to improve the South Korean business environment a new task force on labor regulation, comprised of 14 officials from government, businesses and labor unions, as well as labor experts, will lay out a comprehensive list of reform tasks in October. These tasks will include enhancing the employment permit system for foreign-

ers; reviving the market for career development; training and reducing complicated administration procedures regarding labor issues; constructing a more flexible market and offering exclusive services to foreign firms on labor relations. The task force will compose and operate six different action learning teams to narrow down targeted tasks in their assigned fields.

## TAIWAN-TAIPEI

### County Closes Nursery For Disinfection

**A**fter more than ten confirmed cases of enterovirus infections among four and three-year-olds, the Taitung County Government temporarily shut down the county nursery school to clean and disinfect the facility. County government officials will oversee the disinfection operation to clean all facilities and toys inside and outside the classrooms in an attempt to eliminate the virus. The health bureau in Taoyuan County reported the number of infections in the county has jumped from 45 to 79 since April. As of May 6<sup>th</sup>, there have been a total of 64 serious cases, including two deaths, reported this year nationwide. Of the cases, 62 were type 71 infections – the deadliest type of all.

## THE NETHERLANDS-AMSTERDAM

### Fewer Very Large Families

**T**he number of families with four or more children living at home has dropped dramatically over the past decade. While the number of families with three children has not changed, The proportion of very large families has declined and was much more substantial among people with a non-western background than among native Dutch families. The most striking trend is the decline of very large Moroccan families.

## UK-LONDON

### Hijacker Worked As Cleaner At Airport

**W**hen police pulled over a man driving a car around the new Terminal 5 at Heathrow airport, they discovered he was an Afghan hijacker, who in 2000

along with others, diverted an Ariana Airlines flight with 160 passengers on board. The man had been working for several months at Heathrow as a cleaner for a contract cleaning firm and had a British Airways pass on him. While the pass did not give him airside access, it did allow him to go into secure areas.

## UK-LONDON

### Computer Keyboards Dirtier Than A Toilet Seat

**A** British consumer-advocacy group compared more than thirty keyboards with toilet seats and toilet door handles to determine how clean the average keyboard is. One keyboard was five times filthier than the toilet seat and had over 150 times the level of acceptable bacteria. Two other keyboards were found to contain *Staphylococcus aureus*. The research found that of keyboard users, 11 percent never cleaned their keyboards, 46 percent cleaned them less than once a month and only 29 percent cleaned their keyboards regularly. The CDC says computers play a bigger role in the spread of germs than was previously suspected and have recently been linked to the spread of flu germs.

## UK-LONDON

### CSSA Director Serves As Panelist

**C**SSA Director General Andrew Large was delighted to be a panelist at the Westminster Health Forum keynote seminar: Healthcare Associated Infections and Patient Safety, on 20th May 2008. The seminar discussed all aspects of HAIs in the UK and was a valuable opportunity to promote the role of cleaning in the cutting of infection rates. Speaking after the seminar, Andrew Large said; " This has been a most worthwhile event. I am pleased that there seems to be a consensus both that cleaning has a key role to play in the fight against HAIs, but also that it can only play its full part in collaboration with other activities, such as better antibiotic prescribing and hand hygiene." The seminar had a broad attendance, including Conservative and Liberal Democrat Shadow Ministers and a range of health professionals. Andrew Large concluded; "I hope that this consensus on the importance of cleaning will filter through both to individual NHS Trusts and the Depart-

ment of Health so that hospital cleaning benefits from the increase in resources that it needs in order to play its full part against infection."

## US-ARIZONA

### Cleanup Costing Taxpayers Millions

**G**arbage dumped in the desert by illegal immigrants and their smugglers is costing taxpayers millions and in 2006 more than 1.18 million pounds of trash were collected along the southern Arizona border with Mexico. For the past five years, Arizona officials have spent an estimated \$4.4 million to clean up the garbage, and nearly \$1 million was spent in just 2007 alone. The Arizona BLM has run a project since 2003, to help mitigate the damage, however it is a never-ending battle. Groups that go in to clean up the mess find that within months the area is trashed again and they say the problem will take years to fix.

## US-CALIFORNIA

### Residents Unaware Of Toxic Home Environment

**T**he U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, states the average American home generates over 20 pounds of household hazardous waste per year, of which 176,000 tons is from cleaning products. In a Harris Interactive telephone survey of 1,108 moms across the US conducted in January 2008, while 95% agreed that household cleaning products can be toxic; only 49% agreed that their children may be exposed to household toxins and only 38% of respondents agreed that the air inside their homes is more toxic than the air outside their homes, despite a five-year study by the EPA which found that the organic pollutants inside the typical American home are two-to-five times higher than the air outdoors. Only 94% of moms said they would stop using their favorite cleaning product if they found it may be harmful to their family.

## US-TEXAS

### Swarming Ants Are Not Hollywood Fiction

**A** flood of voracious ants has been creating all kinds of trouble for five Texas counties in the Gulf Coast area. Because of their sheer numbers and voraciousness, the ants have been

known to destroy computers, radios and even vehicles in their path. The Johnson Space Center has called in extermination experts to keep the pests out of their sensitive and critical systems. The ants are short-circuiting computers in homes and offices, and when affected machines are pried open, there are three to four thousand ant bodies clustered inside. The ants are known as Crazy Raspberry ants after Tom Raspberry, owner of Budget Pest Control in Pearland, Texas who first tackled this particular type of ant back in 2002. Since then, the problem has only escalated.

## CORPORATE MEMBER NEWS

### Ecolab Establishes EMEA Headquarters

**E**colab Inc., confirmed its plans to establish the company's Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) headquarters in the community of Walisellen just outside Zurich, Switzerland. The Zurich office will house the EMEA leadership team whose focus is to drive the strategic leadership and management of the region. The operation is comprised of current European management staff, as well as new talent totaling over 100 employees by the end of 2008. Ecolab's EMEA headquarters will provide the leadership team, which has regional responsibilities, a central hub to strategically manage the business, including the centralization of supply chain. This important step enhances the company's leadership model and better aligns its management structure to support Ecolab's pan-European market approach. Ecolab has been operating in EMEA for over 60 years and is represented in 35 countries. Today, the company employs approximately 7000 associates throughout the region.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

17th Congress of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors

Buenos Aires, Argentina  
October 26-29, 2008

Visit [www.wfbsc2008.com.ar](http://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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