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# INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS Perspective

World Contracting News, Views & Comments

**Submit your news for publication to Denise Anderson at [danderson@bscai.org](mailto:danderson@bscai.org)**

## ARGENTINA-ENSENADA

### Municipal/Private Partnership Aims To Clean

The system of cleaning and collecting refuse has changed in the City of Ensenada as a result of an agreement among the Municipality and local enterprise, Repsol YPF, that aims to promote hygiene throughout Ensenada. To initiate the plan, Repsol donated carts, and other tools that will be utilized by municipal workers to clean the city. The initiative, called - Ensenada deserves to be cleaner, we need your help in maintaining it - will also promote local labor as part of the plan. According to a director at Repsol YPF, the goal is to improve the quality of life in the city and of its inhabitants.

## AUSTRALIA-NSW

### John Gough Re-elected BSCAA NSW President

At the Building Service Contractors Association of Australia NSW division's annual general meeting, John Gough and George Tsivis were re-elected as President and Vice President respectively. The NSW committee comprises Immediate Past President Aurora Fonte, Andrew Barker (Jani-King), Geoff Barnsley (Spotless), Terry Corby (Solutions Property Services), Tony Di Bello (BIC Services), John George (Group 4 Securitas), Rick Gesterkamp (Tempo Services), Scott Hartley (Spick N Span), Judy Koch (Swan Services), Greg Lerond (Broadlex Services), Gerry Manderson (Industrial Cleaning Services), Colin Reed (The Pickwick Group) and Andrew Yardley (Quad Services).

## AUSTRALIA-QUEENSLAND

### Brian Swinton Re-elected President

Brian Swinton (Biniris) has been re-elected Building Service Contractors Association of Australia Queensland Branch President. He is supported by Vice President Martin Stack (Springmount Services), and committee members

Barry Gray (Cleaning First), Lawrence Hardwick (Reflections Group Services), Judith Hoppe (J & C Cleaning), Adam Howard (Howard Services), Judy Koch (Swan Services), Rick Mackenzie (9T's Asset Management Services), Paul Marstaeller (Tempo Services), Peter Nipper (Sharman Property Services), Colin Reed (The Pickwick Group), Gaynor Sharman ([www.property.service.net.au](http://www.property.service.net.au)), Gary Tobin (Tempo Services) and Graham Wood (Spotless).

## BELGIUM-BRUSSELS

### Euro-Zone Labor Costs Up By 2.3%

Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, reported that total hourly labor costs for the Euro-Zone (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland.) increased 2.3% in the first quarter of 2004 over the 1st quarter of 2003. This number did not include Greek figures, as they were not available at the time of calculation. Among Member States for which data is available in the first quarter of 2004, the smallest annual rises were in Austria (0.2%), Portugal (0.5%) and Germany (1.5%). The highest increases were in Latvia (11.4%), Slovakia (8.1%) and the United Kingdom. (6.7%).

## CANADA-BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Cuts For School District Will Include Janitors

A budget for the North Vancouver school district that will result in larger class sizes, 27 fewer teachers and 10 less support staff, including janitorial staff members, is set to be approved by school trustees. Trustees have already given preliminary approvals to the \$125.5-million bud-

get. Layoff notices went out earlier this month to more than 100 of the most junior North Vancouver teachers. Ten full-time support staff, including janitors and secretarial staff will also lose their jobs.

## CHINA-HONG KONG

### Self-Cleaning Clothes Close To Reality

Chinese scientists have created a fabric that uses the sun to break down dirt and other organic materials, which could lead to the creation of self-cleaning clothes. Scientists at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University discovered that when exposed to sunlight, tiny particles of titanium dioxide, 2,500 times smaller than the width of a human hair, could break down grime into particles such as carbon dioxide and water. To make the fabric, cotton samples were dipped into titanium dioxide for about 30 seconds, removed, then heated in an oven for 15 minutes. Next, the samples were soaked in boiling water for three hours. Scientists are also investigating if the fabric can break down environmental pollutants and harmful microbes.

## DENMARK-COPENHAGEN

### Retirement Age In Denmark Falls

Effective in July, Denmark will change its minimum retirement age from 67 to 65, as the result of an agreement formed in 1999. Almost half the population aged 60-67 receives VERB benefits for early retirement, amounting to 1.5 percent of the country's GDP. The new measure will help reduce the number of people receiving the benefits and so, should reduce the cost. Workers who choose to remain employed beyond age 65 will receive higher pension benefits.

## DENMARK-COPENHAGEN

### Poor Hospital Cleaning A National Problem

Poor hand washing and shoddy cleaning at the nation's hospitals have been blamed for the spread of communicable infections between patients, requiring 700,000 more inpatient days per year and resulting in increased costs - topping DKK 1 billion - due to medicine, care and lost work-days. According to a new report from the State Serum

Institute, one of every ten hospital patients in Denmark contracts an infection caused by poor hygiene, which amounts to about 100,000 patients annually. The institute pointed out that poor hand washing techniques and practices, as well as, poor cleaning in hospital areas, caused the infections. Although an earlier report done in 1999 by the institute resulted in the developing of recommended hygiene standards, the government has not made the implementation of standards mandatory and many hospitals do not have them in place. In fact, a professor at the Royal Hospital in Copenhagen and one of the country's leading hygiene experts, says the problem of patient infections during hospital stays is probably far more severe than the official numbers indicate since hospital stays are shorter and infections may not appear before discharge. He also said that instead of cutting back janitorial staff, hospitals should prioritize cleaning, as it is the solution to the problem.

## GERMANY-WEISBADEN

### Germany Leads CSC Agreement Rollout

In May 2003, ISS signed a pan-European agreement with CSC (Computer Science Corporation) to provide facility services at a number of CSC sites throughout Europe. The rollout is well underway in a number of countries, as is demonstrated by ISS Germany. One year down the road, ISS supplies services such as access control, window cleaning, office support, reception services, general and specialized cleaning at 22 different CSC sites in Germany. Catering and other services are in the pipeline. 50 ISS employees currently work at CSC premises in Germany. About half of these are employed at the office in Wiesbaden.

## INDIA-KHARAR

### Unsanitary Conditions Pose Epidemic Threat

Recommending disciplinary action against the employees responsible for the problem, Department Deputy Director, Sarojani Gautam Sharda, visited parts of the township of Kharar, where unsanitary conditions were posing an epidemic threat. Sharda directed Municipal Council Executive Officer Jagjit Singh Sahi to launch a cleanliness drive immediately to ensure proper cleanliness of the entire township. The deputy director also asked Singh to send a daily progress report to the local government deputy director and the Municipal Council

president. The council put the massive clean up operation in place by putting around 70 men on the cleanliness job and renting cleaning equipment. The goal is to clean the entire township within 15 days.

## JAPAN-OSAKA

### Shiny Future Seen For Self-Cleaning Glass

**N**ippon Sheet Glass Co. started marketing photo catalytic-cleaning glass under the brand name Cleartect across Japan in February. The glass uses a coating of titanium dioxide - a harmless substance widely used in food additives, which when exposed to sunlight, will breakdown dirt and other impurities. The glass also causes rainwater to cover the surface evenly, suspend dirt and wash it away. So far, commercial application of the glass has started off slowly with test applications in large office buildings and airports, but there has been a strong interest from the residential sector, despite the fact that Cleartect costs about 9,000 yen more per sq. meter than regular glass. The company predicts the market for the product will increase to more than 1 trillion yen in the near future.

## JAPAN-TOKYO

### Japan Cleans Up Antarctic Garbage

**S**ince 1956, Japan has sent research teams annually to Antarctica and over the years, a pile of garbage - weighing about 550 tons in 1998 - began to form. At that time, Japan began to make an effort to clean up the pile and recently, has accelerated the effort with a goal of sending the remaining 370 tons of garbage back within four years. Currently, 62 scientists are stationed at the Japan Showa base on the continent.

## NORTH KOREA-PYONGYANG

### Cleaning Considered A Citizen's Duty

**N**orth Korean cities and villages do not employ janitors or municipal workers, who are considered incompatible with socialism. Instead, local inhabitants, all female, are organized to perform daily cleaning services by their 'inminban,' or 'people's group' which is usually headed up by a middle-aged woman. A typical inmin-

ban consists of 20-40 families. In neighborhoods consisting of individual houses, an inminban might include all of the inhabitants from a specific quarter, while in apartment buildings such a group might include all families sharing a common staircase (or 2-3 adjacent staircases if the building is not so tall). No North Korean of any age or sex can exist outside the inminban system. The group emerges daily, equipped with brooms and dustpans to carry out daily cleaning responsibilities, as well as garbage removal, upkeep of the water supply and sewage systems. The lack of garbage bins and flush toilets, makes the effort complicated.

## RUSSIA-MOSCOW

### Students In US To Work At Hotels Stranded

**2**2 Russian students who paid several thousand dollars each to work this summer in the United States under the U.S. State Department's Summer Work/Travel Exchange Visitor Program, were stranded in St. Augustine Beach, Florida when an employment agency, that provides janitorial and housekeeping labor for local hotels, Euro House Co., failed to provide them jobs or housing. The students then heard about a company, employment agency Old City Service, that would provide them with jobs and housing. The agency's owner, Vera Chiamonte, demanded \$400 up front for housing, even though the students had contracts saying apartments would be provided. She squeezed the 22 Russians into two unfurnished apartments where they remained without food or money, as Chiamonte's company, which obtained its business license on May 13, was temporarily closed by local authorities for not providing its employees with insurance, in violation of Florida law. A local resident discovered the students after they became lost. The police were brought in and eventually, as the news got out, donations for the students started to pour in. According to the police, no criminal charges have been filed. Euro House President, Anna Czerwien, said her agency notified the students two weeks before they arrived in the US to wait because housing was not available. Of the 87,000 J-1 visas issued under the Summer Work/Travel Exchange Visitor Program last year, there were 500 to 700 cases of students arriving in the United States and seeing their job or housing arrangements fall through, he said. In such cases, it is the student's responsibility to contact

the sponsor organization, which is then obligated to provide other arrangements. Apparently, the students did not contact their sponsor. However, once the students' predicament became known, job offers started coming in and several have already been hired to work at local hotels. Officials expect the remaining students to be hired quickly.

## SCOTLAND-GLASGOW

### Inventor Sees Days Of Hardship Pay Off

**A** Scottish inventor, who invested his life savings into developing a revolutionary hovering vacuum cleaner and was forced to sleep on a sofa at his aunt's apartment, is finally seeing his investment pay off. In August, the Airider will go into mass production. The vacuum cleaner, which is patented in over 80 countries, works by hovering above the carpet, making it virtually weightless. Mike Rooney, who formed the company Air Rider Systems, came up with the idea after meeting a hovercraft engineer while he was working as a vacuum cleaner salesman. American retailers have ordered 20,000 of the £200 cleaners and business analysts believe the machine will make Rooney millions.

## SOUTH KOREA-SEOUL

### Foreigners Can't Work As Cleaners At Hotels

**T**he Ministry of Labor has closed a loophole in a current law, which prohibits foreign workers from working at accommodation facilities. Effective immediately, foreigners will be banned from working at hotels, motels and other lodging facilities. Previously, foreign workers could be hired as hotel cleaners through service businesses rather than directly by the hotel. Ministry officials said they decided to close the loophole in order to eliminate the possibility that owners may force the foreigners to provide sex to customers, although no cases of prostitution have been reported through cleaning services so far. The Ministry claims it will consider whether to allow foreign workers to clean at hotels, in the fall.

## TASMANIA-HOBART

### Plans For CLEANLINK 2005 In Place

**T**he planning for CleanLINK 2005 in Tasmania, which will be held April 21-24, 2005, is well underway. The educational event will be starting with a tour of Ulster Carpets in Devonport, then moving on to the Launceston Country Club Casino and finally heading down to Wrest Point Casino, in Hobart.

## UK-LONDON

### MITIE Signs With The Deputy Prime Minister

**M**ITIE has been awarded a new contract providing full facilities management service to the main office buildings of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister ("ODPM") in London. The contract is worth £4.5 million a year for an initial term of five years with options for two extensions of two years each. The main buildings covered by the contract are Eland House and Ashdown House in Victoria and Riverwalk House on Millbank. The services provided by MITIE include building services, grounds maintenance, pest control, waste management, catering, security, cleaning, mail services, reprographics, safety, health & environmental management, reception, conferences and space management. There will be over 100 MITIE people working on the contract, which should be completely in place by July. More Information: [www.mitie.co.uk](http://www.mitie.co.uk).

## UK-LONDON

### OCS Rewards Long Serving Employees

**T**he OCS Long Service Lunch took place at the New Connaught Rooms in London on 21st May. This event has been hosted for more than 25 years for OCS and Cannon Hygiene employees past and present. This year a total of 245 people arrived for the lunch where the 'Walkabout' and 'The Railway Children' star Jenny Agutter was guest speaker. 135 of the attendees were pensioners and the rest current employees of Cannon Hygiene and OCS, all having completed 20 or more years of service. More information: [www.ocs.co.uk](http://www.ocs.co.uk).

## UK-LONDON

### Network Rail's Initial Award Winner

**N**etwork Rail's First Service Partner Award was given to Initial Transport Services, whose staff cleans at Victoria Station where eighty million commuters travel through annually. Network Rail, which manages 17 of the UK's major stations, developed the award to recognize the vital role contractors play in assisting commuters. The 56 member Initial team cleans up at Victoria Station 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week and it is estimated that each member of the staff helps up to 40 people during every shift.

## UK-TUNBRIDGE WELLS

### Undercover Report Reveals Hospital Filth

**A** recent BBC undercover report, showed clinical waste bins piling up in corridors at the Kent and Sussex Hospital and a build up of dirt under sterile medical equipment. Used needles were left in unlocked "sharps bins" on window ledges and moldy food was found in a fridge used by patients. A bloodstained gown was left on a trolley for 24 hours and used instruments left in a sink for a day. Some cleaners, who are employed by the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Health Trust, were also filmed taking extended tea breaks and routinely leaving work early. This occurred despite complaints going back eight years ago about poor cleanliness standards in the hospital wards. The hospital is investigating the findings and has suspended three members of staff from the in-house cleaning service. Managers said they had already reinforced the cleaning policies to staff and will improve standards by Christmas.

## US-MARYLAND

### Cleaners At Baseball Stadium Cry Foul

**A** group representing day workers who clean Camden Yards before and after baseball games has met with stadium authority officials to discuss complaints of poverty-level wages and sweatshop-like conditions. Roughly 65 to 100 day laborers - 40 percent of whom are homeless men - clean the stadium, according to the United Workers Association, which organizes low-wage workers in the state. Authority officials heard about alleged work-

er abuse, incomplete paychecks, unsustainable wages and labor violations. The stadium hired Philadelphia-based Aramark Corp. to clean the stadium. Aramark then subcontracted with multiple day-laborer agencies. The union says some of those agencies engaged in unfair labor practices.

## US-MICHIGAN

### Service Uses Dogs to Detect Toxic Black Mold

**K**-9 Detection, has recently launched a specialized service company which provides highly trained canines that detect a variety of dangerous substances, such as black mold in homes. The staff is led by canine expert L.D. "Mac" MacDonald, a 27-year veteran of the Michigan State Police with vast experience and certifications as a canine handler and trainer. "There are only about 90 mold dogs in the United States, and we have one of them," said Terry Hall, Owner of K-9 Detection. "40% of the homes in Michigan are contaminated with toxic black mold, including my own house. It can make you and your family very, very sick and you wouldn't even know why. These dogs find it even if it has been painted over or is hidden under a tub or sink." Recently, Hall, a local reporter, and a local realtor took a mold detection dog to three homes listed for sale. The dog found black mold in two of the homes, and the other one was "clean."

## US-NEW YORK

### Janitor Says He Saw 9/11 Hijacker

**I**n perhaps the first instance of an eyewitness to one of the 9/11 hijackers casing the World Trade Center, a hero janitor who helped victims escape from the World Trade Center's north tower before it collapsed, told the 9/11 panel that he spoke with one of the hijackers in the building a few months before the attack. William Rodriguez, 43, a 20-year Trade Center employee who swept stairwells, is certain he came across United Airlines Flight 175 hijacker Mohand Alshehri in June 2001 as Alshehri was 'casing' out the building. The janitor was working overtime one weekend cleaning rest rooms on the concourse and mezzanine levels, when a stranger approached him. Rodriguez says the man asked him how many bathrooms were in the area. Rodriguez recognized Alshehri from newspaper photos after the attack and reported the incident to the FBI.

## US-VIRGIN ISLANDS

### Hotel Workers Fired For Union Activities

The United Steelworkers of America has filed federal and local complaints on behalf of three Grand Beach Palace hotel workers who say they were dismissed after participating in union activities. The union, which is seeking to organize the hotel's approximately 250 eligible employees, said the organizing effort comes three years after the failure of a similar drive at the hotel. The hotel was bought last November by Mexico-based hotel chain Palace Resorts. One employee, a laundry worker, was told that missing several days of work led to his dismissal although the worker believes he was fired because he was distributing union cards - which workers must sign to indicate they want to engage in collective bargaining. The two other employees, room inspectors in the housekeeping department who have worked for the hotel for over 18 years, were fired after they attended a May 29 union meeting on their own time. The hotel claimed that supervisors are not allowed to participate in union meetings. Supervisors are exempt from federal protections that apply to regular employees with regard to joining a labor union, but the room inspectors deny that they are managers as they have no authority to hire or fire staff, are paid hourly and spend much of their time cleaning rooms. They do not attend daily management meetings or even work full time. Each room inspector works 52 hours every two weeks. According to the union, the room inspectors were allowed to vote during the previous organizing drive. Renaissance employs 320 employees. The Steelworkers estimate that about 250 current employees are eligible to join a labor union. The union must have cards signed by 30 percent of employees in order for the National Labor Relations Board to call a vote on union representation.

## WALES-CARDIGAN

### Cleaning Firm Wins Contract For Olympics

Ben Giles, who runs Ultima Cleaning in Cardigan, has won the contract in Greece to clean the "bubble-style" roof at the new Olympic Stadium during the games. He and his team will be working 80 meters above the ground to clean the plastic roof, which is the size of more than two football pitches. His firm - which has worked at the Millen-

ium Stadium in Cardiff - won the contract, after cleaning at the offices of the London company who will be supplying the roof to the Athens stadium. The company will be working with special nets, which can support nine people at a time, and workers will be wearing harnesses. The company will have to set up and take de-ionized purified water systems to Greece.

**CORRECTION:** an article in the June issue of International Dimensions mentioned there were 20,000 employees in the Dutch cleaning industry. That number should have been 200,000 employees.

## CORPORATE MEMBER NEWS

### Ecolab

Ecolab Inc. announced it has entered the commercial pest elimination market in South Africa, acquiring Elimco, which is based in Cape Town, South Africa. Elimco had 2003 sales of approximately \$4 million. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed. Commenting on the acquisition, Allan L. Schuman, Ecolab's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, stated, "This marks our second pest elimination acquisition this year, and reflects yet another step in our commitment to expand our attractive and growing pest business globally to help serve our customers in this key area of sanitation. We will continue to aggressively pursue the development of new product and service solutions to meet our customers' critical sanitation needs around the world and to grow our business." More information: [www.ecolab.com](http://www.ecolab.com).

### JohnsonDiversey

JohnsonDiversey announced the sale of Whitmire Micro-Gen, its manufacturer and supplier of insecticides and equipment to the professional pest management industry in the U.S. The subsidiary has been acquired by The Sorex Group, a leading European pest-control manufacturer headquartered in the United Kingdom. JohnsonDiversey had determined that the Whitmire Micro-Gen business was no longer part of the overall corporate strategic focus and therefore had been seeking a buyer. Whitmire Micro-Gen and the Sorex Group have complimentary values and product lines. The acquisition will create a strong and more globally significant, independent pest-management business. It builds upon an alliance the two companies have had for the past two years. The new combined company will continue an ongoing relationship with JohnsonDiversey providing various pest-control products and services. More information: [www.johnsondiversey.com](http://www.johnsondiversey.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

15th Congress of the World Federation of Building  
Service Contractors

**Montreal, Canada**  
**September 26-29, 2004**

Visit the WFBSA website at [www.wfbsc.org](http://www.wfbsc.org) and the web-  
site at [www.opus3.com/wfbsc](http://www.opus3.com/wfbsc) for more information.

BSCAI Annual Convention and Trade Show

**Orlando, Florida**  
**April 1-5, 2005**

Visit the BSCAI website at [www.bscai.org](http://www.bscai.org) for more  
information or call 703-359-7090.

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