



CINTRAFOR hosts housing conference

The University of Washington Center for International Trade in Forest Products (CINTRAFOR) has organized the Second National Conference on "Exploring Change in the New Asia: Opportunities for US Building Material and Housing Exports".

Washington State Governor Gary Locke is expected to deliver the conference welcome.

The event will take place September 15-16 at the Doubletree Suites Hotel in Seattle and is structured as a series of panel discussions on such topics as "Japan housing conditions", "Challenges in China and Korea", and "Opportunities for non-structural materials".

Moderators and speakers at the conference encompass all levels of housing industry representation in Asia and in the United States, including: packaged housing companies, foreign association representatives, university faculty, and

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WWPA holds seminar in China

The Western Wood Products Association (WWPA) exhibited at China BuildCon 99 in Beijing this June. The show was in conjunction with a meeting of the International Union of Architects and attracted 40,000 visitors including 2500 architects and 300 exhibitors.

During the exposition, Dr. Kevin Cheung of WWPA and Dr. Bao Zhouzheng of APA-The Engineered Wood Association gave presentations to a group of Chinese architects, engineers, government officials, and other industry attendees. WWPA distributed 2000 copies of their Western Lumber species and grade guides.

The Seminars were co-sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Construction. Opening remarks were delivered by a high ranking official of the Ministry who gave several positive comments about the need to consider wood as a construction material. The audience was particularly interested in multi-story use of wood frame technology, fire resistance, and durability.

After the seminar, the American delegation was approached by a group representing the Beijing Yanxiong Construction Engineering Company. The company has plans to build wood-frame homes and construct an adjacent multi-story concrete office building. After attending the seminar, they requested more information about constructing the office building with wood-frame technology, and requested further information about fire safety and structural elements.

Dr. Cheung, assisted by Dr. Bao prepared an additional two hour presentation for the group, giving further detail on the benefits and considerations of multi-story wood frame construction. It focused on preventing fire damage and gave several additional examples of multi-story projects in the U.S. The AFPA-Beijing office will follow up with the group to evaluate how U.S. industry could be involved.

AFPA-Beijing is a key support element for SEC member programs in

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SEC annual meeting scheduled

The Softwood Export Council will hold its first annual meeting on Friday, September 17, 1999 from 8:30am-1pm at the Doubletree Guest Suites at Southcenter in Seattle.

The gathering will be structured as a Board of Directors meeting and will be open to all interested stakeholders of the SEC.

Topics will include successful SEC member projects over the past year, a discussion of upcoming activities, country focus of the membership, and business matters.

There is no charge to attend the meeting, but attendees are asked to pre-register by contacting Dick Krieger at the SEC.

Markets

June 1999

Report gives insight into Chinese market

According to Chinese Forestry Agency internal estimates, China could be consuming five times the official annual estimate of 60 million cubic meters. The GOC earlier this year set import tariffs on logs and lumber to zero to reduce the strain on domestic timber following the expansion to 18 provinces under a national forest logging ban.

China's 60,000 furniture, flooring and panel manufacturers, benefiting from earlier market reforms, are now looking to provincial timber lands to obtain new supplies. Chinese mills are also importing in record volumes. Chinese total wood imports for January-May 1999 rose by 35 percent over those of 1998, with total imports forecast to reach a record \$2.5 billion. With housing market reforms just beginning, China is already the world's third largest wood importer after the United States and Japan.

Excerpt from a new report from the Foreign Agricultural Service. For a complete copy of the 11 page report, contact SEC or access the SEC website.

Contact Information

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Positive trends in Japan housing

Housing starts in Japan were up in April 1.1 percent. This is the second consecutive month of growth based on a year to year comparison. Much of the rise was linked to favorable interest rates from the Government Housing Land Corporation (GHLC). Japan's housing starts were just under 1.2 million in 1998, and forecast to rise to 1.26 to 1.3 million in 1999. Visitor levels to Model Home parks are 16% over one year ago, and mortgage rates are at 2.2 %– 2.5%.

In other trends: Japan's new Product Liability Law will require home builders to provide a 10 year home warranty on the structural portion of the house.

The Japan building inspection system will begin to increase the number of construction site inspections. Traditionally, only a single inspection was carried out.

A new expanding concern in the Japan housing market is the "Healthy Housing" environment. Housing organizations are forcing manufacturers to tighten interior emission guidelines on panel products.

The Remodeling or Reform market took a slight decline in 1998 but current trends are positive. 86% of the remodeled units are wood frame and while the number of units was down 7% the amount of funding spent was only down 1%.

From Japan DoC and Industry offices

European Update

From the American Softwoods - UK Office:

Spain: Imports of U.S. softwood lumber increased by 12% between 1997 and 1998. However, imports of pine from Brazil increased 93% over the same period.

UK: A survey commissioned by the Timber Decking Association (TDA) predicts a large growth in the number of UK households installing timber decking. TDA has recently carried out a large media campaign promoting its products.

Germany: Window manufacturers are recording lower sales during the first quarter of 1999. However, some have increased their species mix to include more Douglas fir and Larch, as well as more laminated products from the U.S.

Korea Update

From the AFPA - Korea office

The Korean government reforecast their country's 1999 GDP growth from around zero growth to 4%.

After heavy declines of forest products imports in 1998, Korea has shown tremendous improvement in imports during the first part of 1999. Increases range from 30% to 200% depending on the forest product sector over last year.

According to a new housing survey, the new generation of young Koreans dream of owning a wood house in a suburban setting. They are willing to accept a long commute as a trade-off for a big yard and fresh countryside air.

Programs

July 1999

Oregon promotes healthy home

Oregon Economic Development Department (OEDD) recently sponsored a series of "Healthy Home" seminars in Japan.

Mr. Cecil Smith, a healthy home specialist gave presentations in Sapporo, Osaka, and Tokyo on the benefits of using U.S. softwood materials to improve the livability of Japanese homes.

The seminars focused on the use of wooden mouldings, flooring, structural pieces, wall panels, and other elements to create an atmosphere better suited to the human body. Many Oregon

companies are able to provide the products necessary to build or remodel a home in a "healthy" manner.

Recent market information has shown that an increasing number of Japanese home buyers are concerned about the health and environmental qualities of a home.

The series attracted a total of 170 attendees. Mr. Smith was assisted by "Yami" Yamaguchi, SEC representative in Japan who interpreted and organized the seminars.

EBPA hosts Japanese delegation

Evergreen Building Products Association hosted the 1999 Japan Housing Business Program from June 21-23.

28 Japanese delegates attended the event, representing construction, real estate, architecture, and housing manufacturing sectors.

The program is intended to increase participants' understanding of wood frame construction with western building materials and provide opportunities for participants to network and build business relationships with US manufacturers, exporters and related service companies.

The delegation visited housing projects in the Puget Sound region and heard from industry speakers such as Mithun Partners International, Cary

Kopczynski, Interface International and O'Brien & Co. Topics ranged from multi-story timber frame construction, to single family homes and the home remodeling market.

The program also allowed U.S. companies to learn about the Japanese market. Over 30 company representatives attended a presentation by Steve Corless of the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service in Japan. And 70 people took part in an industry networking reception.

EBPA is planning a similar program on November 8-9. For more information, contact Larry Kvidera:
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(WWPA in China - Continued from page 1)

China. The office helped WWPA register for the trade show, organize the technical seminar, and arrange visits with Chinese government and industry representatives. Office Director Grace Zheng announced plans to participate in at least two more trade shows before the year is over: Furnitek/Woodmac in Shanghai in October and China Building '99 in Beijing in December.

For a copy of the complete travel report from this activity, contact Dick Krieger at SEC.

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Pacific Rim FAS personnel.

The two-day conference will include open forums on Japan, China, and Korea, allowing participants to interact directly with conference speakers and other housing experts. For registration information, contact CINTRAFOR at 206-543-0867 or visit their link via the SEC website.

Japan Market

SEC has added a direct web link to the US Department of Commerce (DoC), Japan information and market research papers on the Internet. Japan DoC commercial specialists produce thorough and timely research on the Japanese home building market. Recent reports focus on Home Remodeling, Multi-family Wooden Housing, and Ketchen Cabinets. Go to the "links" page on the SEC website.

Events

July 1999

MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Department of Commerce

American Institute of Timber Construction

California Redwood Association

Center for International Trade in Forest Products

Evergreen Building Products Association

Idaho Department of Commerce

Industry Network Corporation

North American Wholesale Lumber Association

Oregon Economic Development Department

OSU Forest Products Department

Pacific Lumber Exporters Association

Pacific Lumber Inspection Bureau

West Coast Lumber Inspection Bureau

Western Wood Preservers Institute

Western Wood Products Association

Wood Moulding and Millwork Producers Association

International publication becomes SEC member

The *Import/Export Wood Purchasing News*, has become the latest to join SEC supporting membership.

Miller Publishing Corporation, based in Memphis, TN publishes six bi-monthly issues of the paper annually. The organization also prints the *Softwood Forest Products Buyer* and several specialty guides and directories related to domestic and international forest products trade. Distribution of the *Import/Export Wood Purchasing News* includes over 23,000 overseas addresses from their

circulation of nearly 40,000.

SEC association members receive a special discount advertising rate from Miller Publishing. Contact SEC for more information.

For more information on Miller Publishing, contact Wayne Miller.

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Upcoming Events

- 🚗 Korean Carpenters School - July 10-17 1999
- 🚗 Australian AQIS Technical Mission - August 1999
- 📅 Pacific Rim Housing Conference-Seattle, Sept. 15-16, 1999
- 📅 SEC Annual Meeting - Seattle, September 17, 1999
- ◆ Country Style Living Fair - Seoul - September 17-20, 1999
- ◆ KY Housing Fair - Pusan - September 1999
- ◆ Japan Home Show - Tokyo - September 28 - October 1, 1999
- ◆ WoodMac/Furnitek China - Shanghai - October 12-15, 1999
- 📅 Philippines Treated Softwood Seminars - October, 1999
- ◆ Batimat - Paris - November 8-13, 1999
- ◆ Maderalia - Valencia - November 10-14, 1999
- ◆ China Building 99 - Beijing - December 1-4, 1999
- ◆ Taipei Int'l Building Materials & Furniture Show - Dec. 17-20

Call Dick Krieger for more detailed information

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