

CITW Facts by Fax

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ASSESSMENT 2000

The sign-up deadline for the voluntary participation of the nationwide plant assessment program was completed on March 31, 2000. All members of the CITW signed up, with 67 plants across Canada having registered. The CITW will play a leading role in administering the voluntary program.

The assessments will be conducted between April 1, 2000 and October 31, 2000. The Manufacturer/Treater Steering Committee retained the services of wood preservation consultant RW Stephens Consulting Ltd. of Vancouver to visit and inspect treating facilities across Canada. The team includes Bob Stephens, Dennis Konasewich and Friedl Brudermann, who have a total of 80 years experience in the wood preservation industry.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Environment Canada Strategic Options Report of July 1999, the assessments are a prerequisite to the formulation of a Technical Recommendations Documents (TRD) Implementation Plan. Implementation Plans describing the means by which each plant will come into conformance with the TRD must be submitted by June 30, 2001, with an annual follow-up report over the next five years.

Voluntary participation in the assessment program is expedient. Environment Canada will provide a financial incentive of up to \$3600 to treating facilities that voluntarily agreed to participate in the assessment program. The CITW is also providing a financial incentive thanks to a membership credit. Moreover, under the voluntary program the cost of the assessments are equalized, no matter where the plants are located. The cost of the assessments range between \$2,950 and

\$15,000, depending on the number of cylinders and preservatives. As well, under terms of the voluntary program, company data is kept confidential, with Environment Canada obtaining only an industry-wide aggregate report.

Plants that did not participate in the voluntary program will be required to have an assessment conducted by the same assessors at their own cost. These plants will also have to develop a Pollution Prevention Plan as required by Section 54 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act 1999, and comply within two years.

The assessment program will provide a benchmark for the industry and for Environment Canada. By 2006, the steering committee will review and measure the success of the voluntary program. It will also review the effectiveness of the TRDs in reducing CEPA toxic substance releases.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting held in picturesque Quebec City from March 1 to March 3 was a resounding success. Many motions were passed by CITW committees, and an array of speakers highlighted by author and internet consultant Jim Carroll brought to light invaluable insights on a wide range of topics from e-commerce to domestic and export markets and trends to reflections on SOP.

Several studies were approved by the Technical Committee headed by Nigel Banks. Besides sanctioning a study on zinc leaching for steel poles, the committee approved continuance of the pole longevity study that began last year. The decking study, which began nine years ago, is being moved up by one year so that the CITW can prepare a data submission to the AWPA for consideration for above-

ground residential standards using Canadian species. The Technical Committee also proposed that pole producers have a full standing committee. The Board will study the proposal.

The P&E committee will be revamping the CITW website as well as continuing to participate in trade shows such as the Wood Solutions Fair. This year it will participate in three shows.

E-COMMERCE

At present, e-commerce is primarily retail in nature, generating most of its sales from business-to-consumer. But that is quickly changing, according to Jim Carroll. It's only a question of time before the likes of Home Depot begin buying wholesale goods over the Internet, a move that will inevitably compel the treated wood industry to jump aboard the e-com train as well, says Carroll.

THE EASTERN CANADIAN LUMBER MARKET

Eastern Canada, the biggest Canadian lumber market, will continue to boom, predicted Nsimba Kinuani before a well-attended audience at a seminar held during the Annual Meeting. North America is in the midst of its longest economic expansion in history, noted the head of the economic and marketing department of the Quebec Lumber Manufacturers Association. Thanks to much welcome tax relief and positive government policies, confidence among business and consumers in Canada remains strong. The Eastern Canadian housing market will grow by 5% this year, posting stronger numbers than the U.S., says Kinuani. Eastern Canada consumes approximately 40% of Canadian lumber and about 30% of wood products.

Looming on the horizon, however, are environmental pressures and native claims. These two issues could lead to a decrease in lumber production in the coming years, says Kinuani. The Canada-U.S. softwood lumber agreement is also something the industry is going to have to grapple with. The agreement will expire on March 31, 2001. And while there is a consensus that the agreement should be reviewed, differences exist as to what to do next. Kinuani suggested it would be best interest of the different players in the Canadian lumber industry to forge a consensus before attempting to strike a deal with the U.S.

REFLECTIONS ON SOP

Wood treaters and users should be proud of their willingness to adopt a comprehensive environmental management program for the treatment of chemicals and treated wood, John Wilkinson told CITW members during a seminar held at the annual meeting.

Very few industries have shown the fortitude to work as hard as wood treaters have towards becoming environmentally responsible, noted the manager of the Penta Task Force. Moreover, wood treaters and producers stood together during the SOP. That led to risk management strategies being adopted instead of the bans and phase-outs favoured by environmental NGO's.

Wilkinson pointed out that utilities and telecoms have strongly signalled their continued need for treated wood and have shown a willingness to responsibly handle treated wood. Steel and concrete were no doubt the biggest losers at the SOP.

The SOP answers concerns held by PMRA regarding treated wood life cycles. Thanks to the hard work by the CITW and PTF, the PMRA recognizes the SOP accomplishments. Unfortunately, the PMRA is still reluctant to concede that the SOP will address all issues surrounding treated wood chemicals, added Wilkinson. The SOP results are also proving to be invaluable in dealing with the Great Lakes Binational Toxics Forum made up of representatives from EnCan, the U.S. EPA and several state and provincial agencies.

New reporting requirements for the National Pollutant Release inventory will require release numbers for the industry that will be carefully scrutinized by both government and environmental groups.

Wood treaters, says Wilkinson, must take great pains to ensure that the numbers are accurate while not overstating releases. The PTF is currently working on accurate and easy-to-use emission factors for Penta, Dioxins/Furans and HCB for U.S. treaters, something that will be shared with Canadian treaters as well.

In the U.S., wood treaters report releases of toxic chemicals to the Toxics Release Inventory, a body similar to the NPRI. While wood treaters have reported copper, chromium, arsenic, penta and creosote for years, there are now new rules for Dioxins/Furans, HCBs and PAHs. HCBs and PAHs must be reported if the treater handles 10 pounds or more over the course of a year. An umbrella of federal statutory requirements regulate the wood treating industry in the U.S., the most important being the RCRA, explained Wilkinson. This is a very important regulatory program for it is a cradle-to-grave management system for hazardous waste. Under the RCRA, wood treaters are required to develop contingency plans to minimize hazards from fires, spills and explosions. Wood treaters are also obliged to develop storage yard clean-up plans. RCRA also compels wood treaters to ship wastes to specially permitted hazardous waste combustion units.

GREAT LAKES BINATIONAL TOXICS STRATEGY

A joint U.S.-Canada endeavour, the Great Lakes Binational toxics program is a voluntary action by industry designed to achieve deep reduction in releases of toxic chemicals to the Great Lakes Basin. Herbert Estreicher of the Penta Task Force explained that its goals are to reduce Level I Substances, including D/F, HCB and B(a)P, by 75% in the U.S. and 90% in Canada. Level II Substances such as penta and PAHs will be reduced through Pollution Prevention Measures.

PLASTIC LUMBER

Wood-processing giant Georgia-Pacific Corp. will now sell plastic lumber. It recently signed an agreement to sell US Plastic Lumber's SmartDeck composite decking products nationwide. This is a significant development, not in the least because of Georgia-Pacific's extensive distribution.

Another matter to consider is that SmartDeck boasts that its planks, rails and rail supports are ostensibly made with 90% recycled wood fibre and plastic materials.

PAULINE BROWN LEAVES FOR NEW CHALLENGES

After successfully marshalling the completion of the Environment Canada Strategic Options Process, Pauline Brown is leaving Environment Canada to pursue educational opportunities. Pauline was the key individual in ensuring that the various meetings and conference calls ran smoothly and meeting notes were distributed promptly. In addition, she had the important role of developing guidance documents, requests for proposals and assisting with various consultants.

CITW wishes to express our sincerest thanks to Pauline for her hard work and dedication. We wish you every success in your future endeavours.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

North American Softwood Conference
Quebec City Convention Centre
Quebec, Quebec
May 1-3, 2000

QLMA Annual Convention
Quebec City Convention Centre
Quebec, Quebec
May 3-5, 2000

Canadian Wood Council
Quebec City Convention Centre
Quebec, Quebec
May 3-5, 2000

American Wood Preservers Association
Sheraton Palace
San Francisco, California
May 7-10, 2000

International Standards Organization
Sheraton Palace
San Francisco, California
May 10-11, 2000

IRG on Wood Preservation
Kona Surf Resort
Kona, Hawaii
May 14-19, 2000

Rocky Mountain Pole & Treating Association
Cavanaugh's Inn at the Park
Spokane, Washington
June 4-6, 2000

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