

# CITW Facts by Fax

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### ASSESSMENT 2000 A PROGRESS REPORT

The nationwide plant assessment program is progressing well, with five plants in lower mainland British Columbia having already been assessed. By the end of this month, 12 more plants in northern B.C., western Quebec and central Ontario will have been assessed.

The exercise has proven to be a model in cooperation, says wood preservation consultant Bob Stephens of R.W. Stephens Ltd. of Vancouver. "Since it is such a unique exercise and one that could involve the expenditure of a significant amount of capital that not everybody believes to be productive, we expected there would be some resistance," says Stephens, who is part of a six-man team visiting and inspecting treating facilities across Canada. "But people realize it's a necessary exercise. And so far they have been very open and very welcoming, going so far as to tell us that the CITW and Environment Canada have come up with a well-designed program."

The assessment team is taking great pains to mitigate concerns. After initial contact is made, arrangements are made by the assessment team to visit the plant. Once at the plant itself, the assessment team provides a brief introductory explanation and respond to concerns and queries plant managers may have. After receiving "a certain amount of documentation," the assessment team asks for a guided tour of the plant. After that, the assessors ask to be left to their own devices. "So far, there have been no restrictions placed on us."

The six-man assessment team includes three team leaders and three assistants. At least one senior assessor is present for each assessment. When inspecting large

preservative plants or multi-preservative plants, an assistant joins the team leader to conduct the plant assessment. Depending on the complexity of the plant's operations, it can take between one and one-and-a-half days to assess a single-cylinder plant and two to three days for the larger ones.

Under terms of the voluntary program, company data is kept strictly confidential. Environment Canada will receive only an industry-wide aggregate report.

So far, the assessment team has been able to meet its agenda. Thirteen plants in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Quebec are tentatively scheduled to be assessed by the end of June. By the end of July, another 15 will hopefully be assessed in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec. In August, 15 more are slated to be appraised in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan. Plants in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland are scheduled to be assessed in September.

### WOOD SOLUTIONS FAIR

The Wood Solutions Fair proved to be a sound success. Held in Vancouver on April 4, 2000, the fair was attended by over 1,200 professionals, mostly decision-makers including architects, builders, designers and engineers.

Sponsored by the Canadian Wood Council in conjunction with Forintek Canada Corp., the Wood Solutions Fair is considered to be one of the top shows to promote wood products since it provides an opportunity to interact directly with customers. The CITW booth, a table-top display replete with brochures and pictures of treated wood products, was busy and interest high. Besides wondering about the

environmental impact of treated wood people posed many questions regarding specifications.

### PEST MANAGEMENT REGULATORY AGENCY

The re-evaluation that was announced in 1992 is expected to take place by the end of this year. The CITW has had several consultations with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), with a particular focus on penta. The PMRA is examining the usage pattern of penta-wood treated products, penta production standards and penta product labels.

At the behest of the PMRA, which wants to update penta labels, the CITW will shortly be sending out a survey to members to assess penta product usage and penta production standards. Responses will help the CITW formulate recommendations to the PMRA.

### SECTION 54 OF CEPA NOW IN FORCE

Section 54 of CEPA (Objectives, Guidelines and Codes of Practice of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999) came into force as of February 2000. This section requires the Minister of Environment to issue directives that address pollution prevention, including goals stated in quantitative or qualitative terms.

Under Section 54, the Minister is also required to issue guidelines recommending limits for the release of substances into the environment. Codes of practice must also be issued. They must specify procedures for environmental control related to activities during any phase of development and operation,

including the location, design, construction, start-up, closure, dismantling and clean-up phases, as well as subsequent monitoring activities. Treating plants that may have chosen not to participate in the voluntary Assessment 2000 program would have been subject to this Section of the CEPA.

#### **COURT LAYS BLAME FOR FAULTY FOUNDATION**

An eight-year legal battle in one of the largest class-action civil suits ever in Eastern Ontario came to a dramatic end recently when an Ottawa judge delivered a stunning verdict and found building materials giant, Lafarge Canada Inc., and a building contractor liable for defective foundations.

The ruling by Justice Albert Roy could eventually cost the businesses up to \$20 million to replace the foundations of 131 homes and several small businesses. The amount will also cover legal fees, court costs, interest on the principal amounts and a place for people to live while their foundations are being rebuilt. The plaintiffs are expected to receive up to \$14,000 each.

The court heard that the flyash Lafarge added to the cement used by homebuilders Bertrand & Frère to build the foundations caused walls to crack and flake in extreme cold and hot humid weather. Several homes have literally fallen down since the foundations were poured between 1986 and 1995. "None of the plaintiffs could have foreseen the nightmares that awaited them," said Justice Roy while handing down his decision. "For over ten years they haven't able to really enjoy their homes."

Justice Roy assigned Lafarge, one of the largest concrete companies in the world, 80% of the responsibility for the negligence. In spite of the verdict, the company maintains that its cement was not the cause of the faulty foundations. The company is considering launching an appeal.

#### **PUBLIC CONCERNS ABOUT PRESERVED WOOD ARE INCREASING**

New research reveals that public concerns about preserved wood are on the rise. According to a survey conducted by L.C. Williams & Associates of Chicago, 18% of

respondents indicated that they had concerns about using pressure-treated wood around their home or property, up from 11% in 1996 and 1993. Moreover, 12% expressed some concerns about pressure-treated wood for utility poles, railways, guard rails, marine pilings or in parks, up from 9% in 1996 and 1993.

The survey also revealed that 44% indicated an awareness of substitutes for treated wood, compared to 32% in 1996 and 24% in 1993.

The survey, however, also spelled out some good news. It noted that specific concerns about treated wood has not changed much over the past three years. Longevity, chemicals and safety are concerns most cited, all by less than 5% of the survey population.

The survey also revealed that respondents were satisfied with their purchases of treated wood, rating it an 8 out of a possible 10, with 10 being the highest. The survey was conducted in the U.S. on a national random sample of 1,000 adults, with equal representation from men and women.

#### **NEW DIRECTOR OF WOOD COUNCIL**

Catherine Lalonde has been appointed President of the Canadian Wood Council (CWC), marking the first time the Board of Directors has chosen a candidate from within the CWC.

A structural engineer with 20 years of experience in design and construction, Ms Lalonde joined the CWC in 1993 as a Codes Engineer and became Manager of Education in 1995. In 1998 Ms Lalonde became the National Project Manager for the successful Wood WORKS! Project to increase wood use in public and commercial construction. "The good work that is underway at the CWC will continue," says Ms Lalonde.

"We will focus on our strengths, such as our technical excellence in codes and standards which is critical to market success for the wood products industry. We will also continue to provide a unique and invaluable service to our members through technical information, education and support."

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **Rocky Mountain Pole & Treating Association**

Cavanaugh's Inn at the Park  
Spokane, Washington  
June 4-6, 2000

### **American Wood Preservers Association Technical Committee Meetings**

Hilton Hotel  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
September 17-22, 2000

### **Canadian Institute of Treated Wood Committee Meetings**

Toronto, Ontario  
September 18, 2000

### **Canadian Wood Council Fall Meeting**

Calgary, Alberta  
October 19-20, 2000

### **Canadian Wood Preservation Association Fall Meeting**

Montreal, Quebec  
October 23-24, 2000

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