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calendar BIFMA EVENTS

BIFMA (the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association) had scheduled the following list of meetings and events at press time. Additional events will be scheduled, so continue to watch for meeting notices on the Internet at www.bifma.org.

October 2 & 3, 2002
File/ Storage Subcommittee's
Storage Units Document
Writing Group Meeting
Best Western Hotel - Grand
Rapids, MI

October 9 & 10, 2002
Chair Subcommittee's
Document Writing Group
Canvas Comment Review
Meeting
Best Western Hotel - Grand
Rapids, MI

October 22, 2002
Government Affairs Committee
Meeting
NAM Conference Room
Washington, DC

NEW MEMBERS:

Regular:

Muebles de Marca, Mexico
D.F.

Supplier:

Imperial Components,
Agoura Hills, CA

Bostik Finley Inc.,
Wauwatosa, WI

Toray Ultrasuede America,
New York, NY

Dynea Overlays, Inc. of
Lexington, NC

Service:

Burr & Forman LLP,
Birmingham, AL

International:

Kuwait Furniture, Kuwait

Campaign To Get Steel Tariffs Removed Rolls On

By Janet Kopenhaver, CITAC Executive Director

President Bush's March 5 decision to impose up to 30 percent tariffs on steel imports is threatening the ability of steel-using manufacturers to obtain competitively priced raw materials. Raw material costs have soared 40-75%, shipments are delayed, and shortages have resulted in customers being put on allocation.

The Consuming Industries Trade Action Coalition (CITAC), a growing coalition of steel using manu-

facturers and their trade associations, have argued forcefully that ready access to high-quality competitively priced steel is essential. CITAC has formed a Steel Task Force dedicated solely to achieving the following goals: Terminate 201 steel tariffs by the mid-point review; Reform U.S. Trade Law and policies for the benefit of steel consumers; and build political recognition for steel-using manufacturers. To achieve these goals, Members of Congress need to hear from YOU!

That opportunity is NOW! The Steel Task force will hold its Trade Action Day/Steel Consumer Fly-In on Wednesday, September 25th in Washington. This is your opportunity to tell your Members of

Congress how the tariffs are impacting your business and your employees, and to ask for their help. The Steel Task Force will arrange all Hill meetings and group leaders for each state team of attendees, and provide background information, issue briefings, member profiles, etc. You need to be here to tell your story.

Make no doubt about it, the other side is telling their story, and has been doing so for 75 years. Now it's your turn. Please con-

tact Laurin Baker at 202-843-5059 so we can start setting up the Hill visits. The morning issue briefing will begin at 8:00 am, so please plan to arrive the night before. The day's events will conclude by 5:00 pm on Wednesday afternoon.

You need to participate in this important event! If you already have a working relationship with a Member of Congress or want to request a meeting with someone specific, please let us know.

BIFMA has formed a Steel Tariffs Interest Group to assist CITAC and urges interested association members to join that mailing list. Write email@bifma.org.



**Consuming Industries
Trade Action Coalition**

Office Furniture Outlook Weakens for '02, Gradual Improvement Expected in '03

By Tom Reardon, BIFMA Executive Director

BIFMA recently released the 3rd quarter, 2002 office furniture industry forecast prepared by the economic consulting organization, DRI-WEFA. The latest forecast downgrades the expectations for calendar year 2002, calling for an 18% decline in shipments to a level of just under \$9 billion. Modest improvement is expected early next year with a 7% increase in shipments, to a level of \$9.6

billion in 2003.

A cautious corporate investment outlook and weak office construction will continue to restrain order and shipment volumes in the near-term. Economic consultants DRI-WEFA believe that corporate profits have bottomed out and expect them to rise steadily for the remainder of 2002 and through 2003. This should begin to support some investment in business furniture during that period. Service-sector employment

will stabilize over the course of 2002.

Employment growth should accelerate toward the end of the year, however, will remain below the 3% growth rate of the late 90's. New office construction is expected to decline for several more quarters before any signs of recovery materialize. This downturn in new construction will provide the primary drag on furniture demand through mid-2003.

BIFMA Statistical Information Committee Crunching Numbers

By Michael Reagan, BIFMA Mgr Admin. & Statistical Information,

The BIFMA Statistical Information Committee is holding its next meeting on September 11, 2002 at BIFMA headquarters. The focus will be on insuring that the product categories, and their definitions, used in the various BIFMA reports, are in

sync with providing representative and sound information relevant to the needs of today's industry.

This review is particularly aimed at the annual "Detailed Product Description" report which breaks down industry shipments into various product types and categories.



Annual Meeting Speaker Allen Gutheim Answers Questions

The Committee published the "BIFMA Statistical Information Program Reference Manual" in late April after more than a year of preparation. The manual focuses on issues, definitions, and instructions to manufacturer members, to both promote program participation and to provide guidance and background to the



Incoming BIFMA Board President Bill Rubino Thanks Outgoing Board President Jack Michaels For His Leadership And Service To The Office Furniture Industry

individual data provider. The manual is available to all members who may be interested in learning more about the statistical program, and can be downloaded from the member resources section of the website.

Contact Mike Reagan at mreagan@bifma.org for details.

Solutions to High Health Care Costs

By Darren McKinney, Neil Trautwein, and Bill Canis of NAM

The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), its own research and education arm, the Manufacturing Institute, and the JSI Research and Training Institute released a report on September 4 offering solutions to the problem of rapidly rising health care costs that are plaguing America's manufacturing sector – especially small- and medium-sized companies. NAM President Jerry Jasinowski said the report also calls for “a first-of-its-kind cooperation between government and business in establishing a program that improves information about the quality of health care coverage and medical providers.”

“No employment sector provides more or higher quality health coverage than the manufacturing sector,” reported Jasinowski. “But manufacturers cannot absorb skyrocketing health care costs indefinitely.

“If small and medium U.S. manufacturers continue to face double-digit health care inflation that averaged more than 13 percent increases some faced this past year, it won't be long before they're forced to eliminate health care benefits. We must act now to improve the quality of health care as a means to both cut costs and improve the quality of care.”

Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the NAM report, *Health Care at the Crossroads: Manufacturers' Agenda for Lower Costs and Higher Quality*, provides detailed analysis of these increasing cost pressures on manufacturers as well as recommended strategies that can help reduce costs and maximize employee benefits, the quality of care and, most important, overall worker health. Several company-specific success stories are also included.

As increasing health care costs are forcing many employers to reduce coverage and/or shift more costs to employees, Jasinowski explained, another direction manufacturers can choose involves a stronger emphasis on quality and better employee health management. “The report suggests this second direction will be more readily pursued – particularly by small and medium manufacturers – if we can develop comprehensive sources of consumer information about health in general and the specific quality of care offered by competitive providers,” he continued. “Both employers and their workers could share such information in making smarter, healthier choices for the future.”

Accordingly, the NAM report also advocates a unique partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services and business that would establish a clearinghouse for information about the quality of health

care being delivered by various providers nationwide.

“This is one area in which the federal government could play a valuable role as we all seek market-based solutions to our mounting health care problems,” Jasinowski added. “As every line worker in America will tell you, when you skimp on quality in the first place you'll only be plagued by higher costs later on as you work to repair or replace a defective product, or otherwise try to win back a dissatisfied customer.

“Quality health care upfront means reduced costs in the long run. What the manufacturing sector and all of business needs desperately is a comprehensive mechanism whereby the quality of health care options can be measured and evaluated, and the NAM believes that a public and private sector partnership could well provide it.”

The report suggests a combination of tools to help small and medium manufacturers reduce costs and improve quality including:

- Promoting healthy behavior both inside and outside the workplace through management-employee partnerships;
- Instituting wellness programs with specific health goals backed by financial incentives for participating workers;
- Increasing health education through various media, especially internet communications;
- Encouraging health promotion and education for smaller businesses through a new federal health care education program;
- Helping more workers and individuals afford quality health insurance coverage through health insurance tax credits and deductions;
- Relieving cost pressures on smaller businesses through association purchasing programs; and
- Collaboration between companies, hospitals and physician groups to monitor and reduce medical errors by physicians and other medical providers.

“And finally, it should be noted that too often Congress has acted to increase health care costs for manufacturers and other businesses. We strongly urge lawmakers to refrain from adopting additional mandates and instead work to alleviate cost pressures through association health plans, refundable health insurance tax credits and deductions. Many such proposals have been introduced and President Bush has endorsed the concept,” concluded Jasinowski. The NAM report, developed by JSI, a Boston health research organization, is based on a survey of 750 manufacturers. Download a PDF copy of the report at <http://bifma.org/govt/index.html>.

ASID and GSA Announce Partnership

By Michelle Snyder, ASID Public Relations Manager

The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) signed a landmark partnering charter this summer that recognizes the importance of interior design in federal buildings in providing welcoming, comfortable and safe professional environments for employees and visitors, while enhancing the beauty of local communities across the nation. ASID President Barbara Nugent, FASID, and Commissioner F. Joseph Moravec, Public Buildings Service, GSA, signed the charter during ASID's annual meeting at the J.W. Marriott Hotel.

"ASID is pleased that GSA and the Society share the belief that interior design can affect the mental and physical well-being of individuals, and that the agency is taking this philosophy into consideration as it redesigns federal government buildings," said Barbara Nugent, FASID, ASID president. "We are honored that GSA chose ASID as the representative of the interior design profession in its effort to revamp older, federally occupied buildings across the nation. And, more importantly, the Society salutes GSA on the leadership role it has taken to recognize the vital importance of

interior design in the redesign ventures."

Under the new agreement, and under the auspices of GSA's Design Excellence program, the agency and ASID will cooperate in efforts to promote and use state-of-the-art design solutions that take into account sustainable design and environmental considerations, encourage the sharing of industry and government best practices and advanced design approaches, advance team building among all parties involved in joint public design and construction projects, and educate ASID members about GSA's Design Excellence program, among other key goals.

ASID is the newest member of a group of associations representing the built community, including the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Associated General Contractors, the Congress for New Urbanism and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which have signed similar partnering charters with GSA.

To review the full text of the agreement and for more information on ASID, visit www.asid.org.

Design Project With University of Minn.

By Michelle Snyder, ASID Public Relations Manager

ASID and the University of Minnesota have announced two major developments regarding the landmark clearinghouse for design and human behavior research: the unveiling of the project's name -- InforDesign -- and logo, and



The mission of InforDesign is to facilitate the use of current research as a decision-making tool in the design process, improving the

the addition of two new founding contributors. Armstrong World Industries and the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) have joined the list of leading companies and organizations sponsoring this revolutionary research project.

"With the exciting developments of this week, the momentum regarding the launch of InforDesign continues to grow," said ASID President Barbara Nugent, FASID. "The Society is especially delighted about the addition of Armstrong and CRI to InforDesign's list of distinguished contributors. Through their support, these organizations are acknowledging the critical role that research plays in evidence-based design solutions and setting a solid foundation for the profession's future. ASID invites other organizations to support this project, which will benefit everyone in the design community."

overall quality of design solutions, and enhancing public health, safety and welfare. This mission will be accomplished in large part via the Web site -- offering the first online, searchable database of research summaries pertaining to design and human behavior. Visitors to the InforDesign will be able to query the database by topic, keyword or full-text searches linked to a wide range of design-related topics and behavioral disciplines. The services on the Web site will be available at no cost and also will feature online discussion opportunities, a calendar of research-related events, a monthly newsletter and much more. InforDesign is scheduled to go live in fall 2002. Any manufacturer, architecture or design firm, or other company or organization interested in learning more about the many benefits of becoming contributors, should contact ASID Industry Partners at (202) 546-3480.

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IFMA

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CONFERENCE AND EXPO

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2002

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Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc. Moves Another Show, Zeros In On Government

By Joanna Mannino, Merchandise Mart Properties Inc.

NeoCon East, the East Coast's premier conference and exhibition for interior design and facilities management, will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Md., November 6-7, 2003. Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc. (MMPI), producer and manager of NeoCon World's Trade Fair in Chicago, NeoCon West in Los Angeles and IIDEX/NeoCon Canada in Toronto, will introduce NeoCon East to the design communities of Baltimore, Md., Washington, D.C., and the surrounding region next year.

"We have decided to move our NeoCon East show to the fall for a couple of key reasons," said Mark Falanga, vice president of business development, MMPI. "The November timing of the show allows manufacturers to infuse new products introduced at NeoCon in Chicago into the East Coast marketplace faster. A significant number of products showcased at the fall show will have been introduced at NeoCon in Chicago in June, so much of the East Coast audience will be seeing these new innovations for the first time. Plus, NeoCon East plans to attract the federal government buyer. The federal government's fiscal cycle closes in September, which means federal buyers have a full budget to work with in November. NeoCon East coincides perfectly with the timing of the budget and planning process, benefiting the manufacturers and attendees who participate in the show."

More than 200 exhibitors are expected at the show, representing all aspects of the commercial furnishings industry including commercial furniture for office, government, education, hospi-

tality and health care, floor coverings, ceiling systems, fabrics, lighting, retail furnishings, wall coverings, window systems and coverings.

"We're anticipating more than 8,000 commercial and federal government interior designers, facility managers and purchasing managers at the show. The federal government purchases over \$1 billion in furnishings through the Arlington, Va.-based GSA's National Furniture Center alone each year," said Melvin R. Schlitt, vice president of marketing, MMPI. "We are aggressively marketing and promoting the show to



BIFMA Staff Promoting The Association at NeoCon in Chicago

professionals with buying power, and they won't want to miss the largest collection of commercial furnishings and services on the East Coast in this convenient location."

NeoCon East will attract interior designers, architects, facility managers, dealers, manufacturers' representatives, students and corporate executives. Following the successful pattern of each NeoCon show, NeoCon East will present a wide variety of CEU-accredited seminars, special events and networking opportunities to provide attendees with a complete educational, informational and inspirational experience. NeoCon East will feature Greenlife (TM): Products for Sustainable Environments, to highlight companies

that recognize the importance of green design.

"The climate in and around our nation's capital is vibrant with 429 million square feet of existing office space and another 16 million square feet of new construction," added Falanga. "Commercial furniture manufacturers can maximize their opportunities by showcasing product in an untapped region for NeoCon. It's a great way to reach new customers in an economy that is on the rebound."

Exhibitors from NeoCon World's Trade Fair in Chicago and the regional NeoCon shows expressed interest in an East Coast show and are pleased with the decision to hold a major design event in Baltimore in 2003. "NeoCon East will allow us to put a venue in place to reach both the private and public sector in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., areas," said William E. Davies, president, Davies Office Refurbishing, Inc. "No one else has ever given us this opportunity before. We enter the mid-Atlantic region with great enthusiasm."

FUTURE SHOWS

(To attend: www.merchandisemart.com)

IIDEX/NeoCon Canada - September 19-20, 2002

NeoCon West, Los Angeles CA - March 5-6, 2003

NeoCon World's Trade Fair, Chicago IL -

June 16-18, 2003

IIDEX/NeoCon Canada - September 18-19, 2003

NeoCon East, Baltimore MD -November 6-7, 2003

For more information on NeoCon East and MMPI, please visit the Web site at www.merchandisemart.com or call 312.527.7600. To exhibit, please call 312.527.7598.

World of Wood 2003 Will Take Place In New Orleans

By Annette Ferri, International Wood Products Association

The International Wood Products Association (IWPA) is pleased to announce the group's 47th Annual Convention, World of Wood 2003, will take place March 26-28, 2003 at the Omni Royal Orleans Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana.

For the last 46 years, IWPA's Annual Conventions have been an indispensable, cost-effective meeting point for companies involved in international trade of wood products to the North American marketplace. World of Wood has consistently proven to be a successful tool for companies aiming to present their products in the North American marketplace. "This year is no exception," stated Wendy Baer, Executive Vice President of IWPA. "The opportunities are there for companies that want to expand their marketplace for wood

products, and to meet with new and existing customers."

As in previous years, the Convention program will feature presentations by industry experts on developments and markets in the imported wood products industry. Emphasis is also placed on networking and making industry connections. To enhance the networking opportunities, there is scheduled time for companies to display their products before all attendees. More than 250 delegates from nearly twenty countries participated in World of Wood 2002. "We fully expect to meet and even exceed that number in 2003," added Baer.

World of Wood is organized by the International Wood Products Association, and brings together importers, producers, wholesalers and service providers, among others, to conduct

business and to discuss the latest issues concerning trade in imported wood products. The International Wood Products Association is the only group in the United States organized to represent the interests of companies active in the import of wood and wood products. Membership also includes companies with interests allied to the trade (manufacturers, sales representatives, steamship lines, customs brokers, port authorities and others) and overseas producers and exporters of wood products to the U.S., as well as the major organizations to which these producers belong.

For more information, please contact the International Wood Products Association (IWPA) at 703.820.6696. As the program and speakers are finalized, updates will be made online at:

<http://www.iwpawood.org/convention.html>

Chamber Council Watches Big Govt.

The US Chamber of Commerce has created a Privatization and Procurement Council to serve as a focal point for legislative or regulatory activity pertaining to the way government does business. Brad Miller of BIFMA is beginning his second term on this body and will keep association members informed of the council's activities.

Current initiatives include fighting off language that would deny new contracts to companies incorporated in certain tax-advantaged foreign countries. Letters to Members of Congress urge rejection of any attempts to insert such language in the FY 2003 appropriations bills.

The Chamber will also be sending a let-

ter supporting a motion to strike the Dorgan amendment to FY03 Treasury/Postal Appropriation bill. They oppose the Dorgan amendment because it would limit agencies ability to set targets or quotas for public-private competitions.

The Chamber continues to advocate for comprehensive FPI reform. On August 29, 2002, a proposed modification to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) relating to FPI's past performance was published for public comment. Currently, the FAR prohibits the evaluation of FPI's past performance as it is deemed unnecessary because of their mandatory source status.

The proposed rule would lift this prohibition. The comment period ends on October 28, 2002.

On Sept. 18 & 19, the U.S. Dept. of Commerce and the Office of Homeland Security will host an expo and conference allowing businesses to showcase their homeland security products and services to federal procurement officers, law enforcement officials, and others. For more information, visit www.techexpo.gov.

The next Privatization and Procurement Council policy meeting will be October 3 at Chamber headquarters. For additional information on the Council, contact Stefanie Starkey at SStarkey@USChamber.com.

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CALENDAR of industry events

Updated regularly on BIFMA's Internet Site: www.bifma.org

September 19-20, 2002 - IIDEX/ NeoCon Canada - Toronto, ON, Canada; Internet: www.iidexneocon-canada.com

September 30-October 4, 2002 - Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 46th Annual Meeting - Baltimore MD; Internet: <http://hfes.org>

October 6-8, 2002 - World Workplace 2002 - Toronto, Canada; Contact: IFMA; Telephone 713-623-4362; Internet: www.worldworkplace.org

October 15-18, 2002 - National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) International Congress & Exposition - Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Internet: info@noma.net

October 17-23, 2002 - International Home Furnishings Market - High Point; Telephone: 336.889.0203; Internet: www.furnituremarket.org

October 22-26, 2002 - ORGATEC 2002 - Cologne, Germany (biannual); Internet: www.koelnmesse.de/orgatec; E-mail: rperry@citf.com

Nov. 9 - 12, 2002 - International Hotel/ Motel & Restaurant Show - New York, NY; Telephone: 800-272-SHOW; Internet: www.glmshows.com

Nov. 12 - 14, 2002 - School and Home Office Products Association (SHOPA) Show - Atlanta GA; Internet: <http://www.shopa.org>

Nov. 20-23, 2002 - Furniture World China 2002 - Beijing, China; Internet: www.furniture-cn.net.cn

Nov. 27 - 30, 2002 - International Furniture Fair Tokyo (IFFT) 2002 - Tokyo Big Sight, Japan; Internet: <http://idafij.com>

January 9-13, 2003 - Le Salon du Meuble de Paris - Paris, France; Internet: www.salondumeuble.com

February 2003 - LegalSpace Conference & Exhibition - New York NY; Telephone: 800.537.2128, ext. 9100; Internet: www.legaltechshow.com

February 23-28, 2003 - First International Furniture Exhibition Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; Internet: www.dhahran-expo.com

February 25 - 28, 2003 - FurniTek China 2003 - Shanghai, China; Internet: www.furnitekchina.net

March 5-6, 2003 - NeoCon West - Los Angeles, CA; Internet: www.neoconwest.com

March 6-9, 2003 - Architectural Digest Home Design Show - Pier 94 (55th Street & 12th Avenue), New York City, NY; Telephone: 312.527.7531; Internet: www.merchandisemart.com/homedesignshow

April 9-11, 2003 - Construct America (newly co-located CSI Show and Facility Forum) - Chicago, IL; Telephone: 703.706.4776

April 3-10, 2003 - Spring International Home Furnishings Market - High Point, NC; Telephone: 336.889.0203; Internet: www.furnituremarket.org

May 6-8, 2003 - GSA's National Product Expo - San Antonio, Texas; Internet: expo.gsa.gov

May 23 - 27, 2003 - Interzum 2001 (furniture supply fair), Cologne Fairgrounds, Cologne, Germany. For more information phone 212-974-8837. Web Address: <http://www.interzum.de>

June 16-18, 2003, NeoCon World's Trade Fair - Chicago, IL; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.; Telephone: 800-677-6278 or 312.527.7599; Internet: www.merchandisemart.com

June 18, 2003, BIFMA International's Annual Meeting - Chicago, IL; Telephone: 616.285.3963; Fax: 616.285.3765; Email: email@bifma.org; Internet: www.bifma.org

July 31 - August 3, 2003 - AWFS Woodworking Machinery & Furniture Supply Fair - Anaheim, California; Internet: www.awfsfair.org; Phone: 800-946-AWFS