

THE DOWNLOAD

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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.

February 13, 2002
Statistical Information Committee Meeting; 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
BIFMA Conference Room
2680 Horizon Drive SE / Suite A-1
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

February 15, 2002
BIFMA "Ergonomics Guideline Explained" Session (Panel)
9 am - 12 pm at ASID's SuperCampus
Wyndham Canal Place
New Orleans, LA

March 4, 2002
Flammability Subcommittee Meeting
1 pm - 5 pm at Sheraton Four Seasons
Greensboro, NC

April 10, 2002
BIFMA Ergonomics Forum
3 pm - 4 pm at NeoCon South
Atlanta, Georgia

April 17 & 18, 2002
Annual Engineering Committee Meeting
Hotel Sofitel, Rosemont, IL
(Chicago area near O'Hare Airport)

June 12, 2002
BIFMA International's Annual Meeting
Chicago, IL (during NeoCon 2002)

January 30 - February 1, 2003
BIFMA Management Conference
Biltmore Hotel
Coral Gables, Florida

NEW MEMBERS:

Regular

CAF Contract Seating of Mississauga, Ontario, a division of Canadian Atlas.

J-Mac Enclosures of Shorewood, WI

Suppliers

Conwed of Toledo, Ohio. Division of Owens Corning.

Hardare Resources of Bossier City, LA.

Knauf Fiber Glass of Lanett, Alabama.

DEFENSE CONTRACTS SET FREE - MONOPOLY ENDED!

For the first time since the Depression, the power of Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (FPI) to force the U.S. Department of Defense to purchase needed products from them has been successfully challenged.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 enables the Secretary of Defense to conduct market research before being forced to purchase prison-manufactured goods. If FPI's products are not comparable to private sector products in

price, quality, and time of delivery, DoD can purchase from the private sector. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-MI) successfully shepherded the change through the Senate.

As part of the Competition in Contracting Act Coalition, office furniture companies including Herman Miller, Steelcase, Haworth, Knoll, HON INDUSTRIES, Kimball International and Trendway, along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO and other business and labor organizations, joined the campaign

to allow American workers to compete with Federal Prison Industries for federal contracts. The Coalition plans to encourage Congress to pass legislation next year sponsored by Congressmen Pete Hoekstra (R-MI), Barney Frank (D-MA), Mac Collins (R-GA) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) that would grant all federal

agencies the freedom to choose between prison manufactured goods and those manufactured in the private sector. The bill, HR 1577, "The Competition in Contracting

Act" has garnered the bipartisan support of 120 House co-sponsors.

EDITOR'S NOTE: As of press time, passage of the Defense Authorization bill seemed likely by the full Congress. Legislation then goes on to the President for signature and enactment into law. BIFMA would like to thank everyone within the industry who contributed to this victory along with our champions in the Congress, especially Senator Carl Levin and Representative Pete Hoekstra. Happy holidays!



Industry Shipments Off from Record High in 2000

Grand Rapids, MI – U.S. Office Furniture Industry shipments declined 21% during the third quarter of 2001 as compared to the third quarter of 2000. Year-to-date shipments, through September 2001, were down 13% as compared to the first three quarters of 2000. It should be noted that 2000 marked a record high for office furniture shipments at \$13.3 billion.

An updated office furniture industry forecast, prepared by the economic consulting organization DRI-WEFA, predicts continued nega-

tive shipment growth until late in 2002. The DRI-WEFA forecast model now predicts shipments to decline by 17.8%, to \$10.9 billion for calendar year 2001, and by 8.8%, to \$9.95 billion in 2002. A modest recovery in industry shipments beginning in late-2002 should continue throughout 2003.

This latest furniture industry outlook is based on the assumption that the U.S. economy is in the midst of a recessionary period that will be both mild and brief. The general economy is

expected to turn around in early 2002 with corporate profitability improving through the calendar year. The anticipated boost in corporate profits will provide a positive impact on office furniture shipments.

The outlook for service-sector employment and new office construction (two other important industry drivers) are not as favorable and will contribute a limiting influence on furniture demand until late in 2002.

Woodworking Industry Growing Workers

Giorgio Checchi, CEO Group USA, Inc., announced Pittsburgh State University's Woodworking Technology Department as recipient of the 2001 Woodworking Machinery Industry Association (WMIA) Educator of the Year Award.

Checchi said, "The future of the woodworking industry depends on the commitment and innovation of those visionaries who have chosen to recruit and train people new to the industry and to upgrade the skills to work with the high-tech equipment that WMIA importer and distributor members supply to the North American marketplace. It is increasingly evident that such equipment and the ability to run it are essential in today's global business environment."

WMIA received a number of nominations for this prestigious award, however, in the end, there could be no argument that Pittsburgh

State University's Woodworking Technology Department more than satisfied the award criteria in every case, and raises the bar for future nominees.



WMIA's Giordano Checchi, left, Presents Award to David Miles, Head of Wood Technology at Pittsburgh State

The university won the award in 1988, the first year the Educator of the Year Award was presented, and because of the continuing breadth and depth of its program, is the deserved winner again.

Pittsburgh State University's Woodworking Technology Department is a national leader in the preparation of young men and women for careers in the wood products industry.

It boasts a student-to-faculty ratio of approximately 17:1 for its annual enrollment of 60-65 students and offers 20 wood technology courses, five general technology courses, and 11 support courses (e.g., elementary statistics, technical/professional writing, legal and social business environment, introductory organic chemistry). The degrees it awards to its yearly graduates, which average 15-20 per year, are Associate of Applied Science

and Bachelor of Science in Technology (Wood Technology), Master of Science in Technology, and Education Specialist. Its wood technology majors have enjoyed 100 percent placement of graduates for many years.

“LegalSpace” Conference and Exhibition

New York, NY - American Lawyer Media (ALM), the nation's leading legal journalism & information company, has announced the formation of LegalSpace, a conference and exhibition focused on law office planning and design. LegalSpace will be co-located with the already established LegalTech event, held annually in New York City. The inaugural LegalSpace event will take place on February 4-6, 2002 at the Hilton New York Hotel and Conference Center.

According to Henry Dicker, Group Trade Show Director for LegalTech and LegalSpace, "This past February, LegalTech attracted over 7,500 law professionals from around the U.S. Interestingly, 48% of the attendees were Law Firm Partners or Attorneys, 18% were Legal Administrators, 16% were Purchasing or Finance Directors, 10% were IT Professionals and 8% were Consultants. Since only 10% of the 7,500 attendees are dedicated to technology, we know over 80% of the attendees are interested in other areas. The most commonly requested additional subject area is LAW OFFICE DESIGN. Our new LegalSpace event will specifically address this topic... both in a cutting edge

conference program and in an exhibition of the latest products and services for law office environments. The combined events will provide attendees with a more meaningful experience by examining advances in legal workspaces in addition to new technologies."

Hank de Cillia, development consultant to the LegalSpace event, states "The New York Hilton is an ideal place in New York City to hold this event. We have created a distinct area within the overall conference & exhibit floor plan to hold LegalSpace, which will allow us to have the law office design & furnishings exhibits in a common area with high ceilings and more dramatic presentation capabilities. The technology exhibits are in immediately adjacent areas for excellent attendee traffic flow, but separated from the LegalSpace exhibits."

Both Dicker and de Cillia have prior experience in developing and conducting similar events for the commercial furnishings and interior design industries, having worked together in producing the Designer's Saturday and InterPlan events held at the New York Coliseum.

For more information about exhibiting, call Henry Dicker, Show Director at 212-313-9207. For general information about the event and conference program information, call Hank de Cillia at 631-725-2745.

In addition to the LegalTech New York event that attracts a national audience, regional events are also held in Toronto, Chicago, San Francisco, New Orleans, London and Los Angeles.

Headquartered in New York City, ALM is a leading integrated media company, focused on the legal industry. ALM owns and publishes 25 national and regional legal magazines and newspapers, including The American Lawyer and The National Law Journal. ALM's other businesses include book and newsletter publishing, trade show & conference production, educational seminars and distribution of content related to the legal industry. ALM was formed by U.S. Equity Partners, L.P., a private equity fund sponsored by Wasserstein & Co. L.P. More information on ALM and its business units is available on the Web by visiting www.americanlawyermedia.com.

Spectra Announces NEXCOM Contract

Spectra Products Corporation of Grand Haven, Michigan recently received a contract for the design, development and manufacture of NEXCOM's (Naval Exchange Commission) fitting room program. This further expands the approach of Spectra to be a one-stop source for large products with diverse components.

The fitting rooms are freestanding structures that ship RTA (ready-to-assemble) from a mixture of standard and custom product. Complete units are eight feet tall and up to eight

feet wide by twenty-one feet long. Each fitting room configuration has one large changing room compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and one or more standard changing rooms. The rooms have laminated wood interior walls, welded tubular steel internal frames and exterior covering with MEGAWALL steel slatwall. Benches, mirrors and solid louvered wood doors are some of the features in each room. A unique system of graphic frames aid in the structural support of the units and provide additional in-store advertising.

These units were designed, developed and prototyped by SOLUTION RESOURCE which is a full source design and development group located at Spectra in Grand Haven .

Spectra Products Corporation, an ISO 9001 certified manufacturer founded in 1985, is a leading supplier of metal fabrications, painting and assembly based products. MegaWall Corporation provides steel slatwall, gondolas and other products used in the store fixture and display industry.

Mold Experts To Gather in February '02

The presence of mold in buildings and its impact on human health is one of the most pressing environmental issues facing health professionals and building administrators today. To address this timely topic, Aerias and Air Quality Sciences, Inc. of Atlanta have teamed up to bring together indoor air quality (IAQ) experts, physicians, and attorneys to present such topics as control and remediation technologies, information on sampling strategies, guidelines and standards, and procedures for removing and preventing moisture in buildings.

One highlight of this course will be the presentation of current regulatory information and clearance criteria for mold in buildings. This subject becomes increasingly important due to the lack of regulations, standards, and knowledge regarding correct techniques for mold remediation and investigations.

In addition, attendees will hear the latest information on mold litigation as well as insurance issues that arise when dealing with a moldy building or school. With recent million-dollar lawsuits, this information is invaluable for legal professionals and building managers alike.

Pertinent information will also be presented to assist facility managers, developers, and construction engineers with information on moisture control, HVAC systems, mold prevention, and other building issues. Nationally recognized instructors will also present the most up-to-date information on

mold detection and environmental sampling.

The Investigation, Management and Remediation of Mold in Buildings is designed for remediation, safety, health and legal professionals; architects and engineers; building and facility managers; industrial hygienists; home inspectors; school administrators; real estate managers and developers; and insurance adjusters.

The course will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Pleasanton, California on February 12-13, 2002. The cost of early registration is \$650 for those received by January 14, 2002. Regular registration cost is \$700. The course registration fee includes conference space, seminar materials, and continental breakfast. A cocktail reception will follow the first day of the course. American Board of Industrial Hygiene (ABIH) certification maintenance credits will be awarded.

For more information, or to register for the course, visit <http://www.aerias.org> on the Internet, contact Kelley B. Hise (khise@akerias.org) at 678-931-2290, or contact Pam Hogue (phogue@aqqs.com) at 770-933-0638. Aerias, LLC is the premiere online resource dedicated to promoting better human health through indoor air quality awareness. Aerias provides the latest news and information on indoor environmental quality and its impact on human health.

Sustainable Forest Management Studied

The International Wood Products Association (IWPA) will have Dr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), address "Progress and Developments in Sustainable Forest Management" on April 18, 2002 during World of Wood 2002.

Dr. Sobral will address actions on recommendations made in ITTO's recent report, "Measuring Up." The report summarizes an assessment of progress by ITTO member countries towards the ITTO Year 2000 Objective. This objective stated that members should strive to achieve a trade in tropical timber based on a sustainable resource base by the Year 2000. The report found that although most ITTO members have made significant progress, particularly in policy and legislative reform, there was less evidence of progress on the ground, and made a number of recommendations. He will highlight ITTO's commitment to SFM and their efforts to encourage and help to facilitate further improved management in the tropics.

IWPA's Annual Convention, known as World of Wood, brings together the largest international gathering of U.S. importers, suppliers, manufacturers and service providers. Nearly 300 delegates and guests are expected to participate in World of Wood 2002, April 17-19, 2002 at the Renaissance Esmeralda, Indian Wells (Palm Springs), California. IWPA Members and non-members in the industry are welcome to attend. Registration forms and additional information are posted on-line at <http://www.iwpawood.org/convention.html>.

World of Wood is organized by: International Wood Products Association - 4214 King Street West - Alexandria, Virginia 22302 USA - telephone: 703-820-6696 - fax: 703-820-8550 - email: info@iwpawood.org - website: <http://www.iwpawood.org/convention.html>

International Standard Activities

The International Standards Technical Committee, ISO TC 136, met November 12-14, 2001 in Limerick, Ireland. This Technical Committee is in the process of drafting International Standards for Office Seating, Office Desks and Storage Units.

BIFMA is well represented at these International meetings by the U.S. and Canadian delegates. BIFMA holds the position as the Convener (Chairman) of Office Desks Working Group. Development work has been underway during 2001 and groups of committee delegates will meet during 2002 to produce the first drafts of these potential new International

Standards. The meeting planned to review the proposed drafts will be held in December 2002 in Paris, France.

Delegates to the International standards activities are part of the BIFMA Engineering Committee and its subcommittees. The delegates coordinate the international activities with the work of the various technical subcommittees.

Anyone interested in the participation of BIFMA in the development of international standards should contact Dick Driscoll (driscoll@bifma.org) at BIFMA headquarters for additional information.

BIFMA's New SOHO Standard Available

The first new standard developed by BIFMA International since 1986 is now available in either paper or electronic form. The new standard, designated ANSI/SOHO S6.5-2001, was approved by the American National Standards Institute October 17, 2001.

SOHO stands for "Small Office/Home Office" and the new standard represents the completion of many hours of work by the volunteers from our industry who participate in the process of developing standards for the association. The new standard consists of tests for office products used in

residential office environments.

Included in the new standard are tests for performance and safety, such as stability, drawer cycling, moving and handling, and top loading tests. Approval was given to this standard by ANSI after the successful completion of a thorough review by industry representatives, potential end users and concerned parties.

Information on ordering the new standard is available at the BIFMA web site (www.bifma.org).

Product Liability Conference a Success



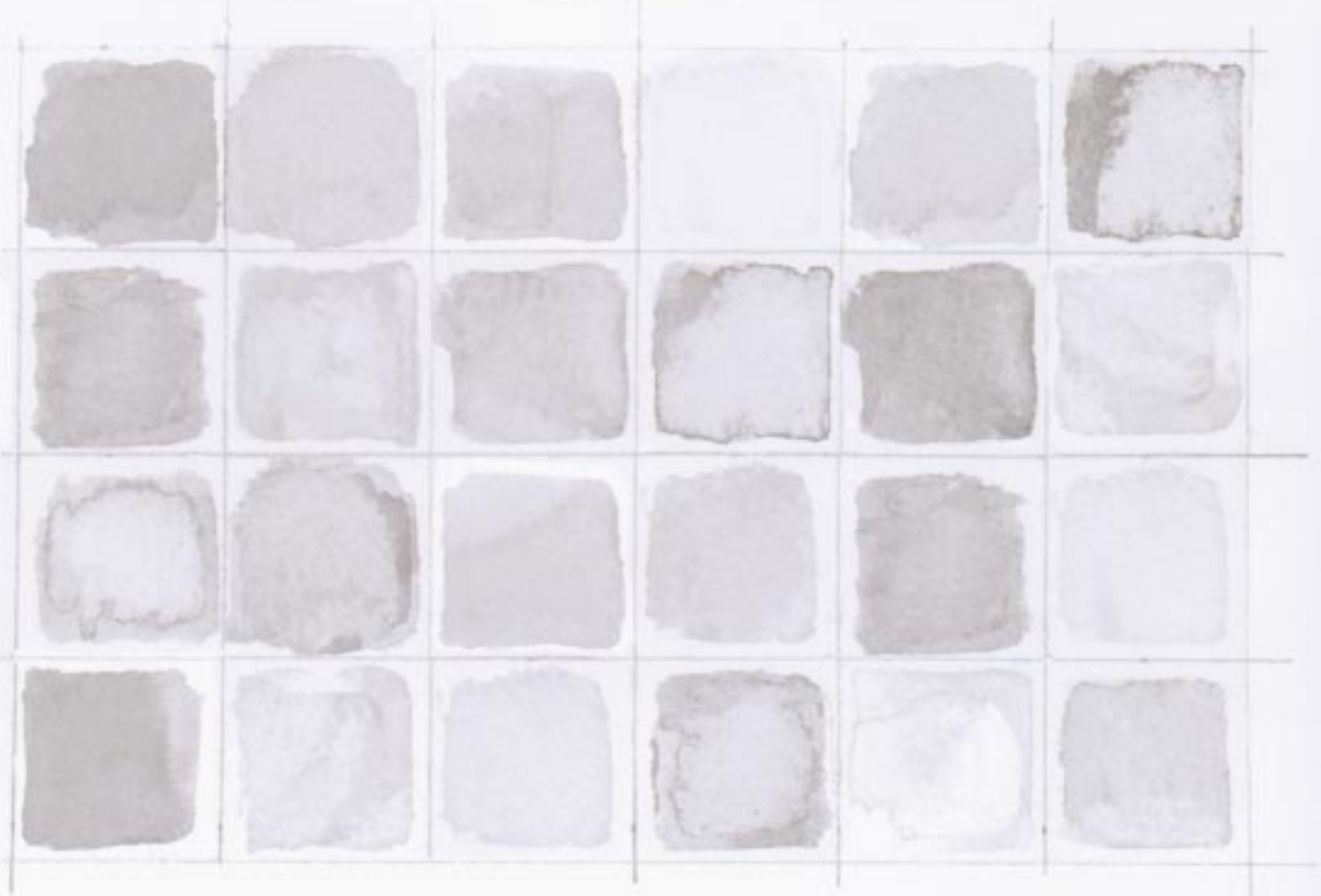
Bruce Preston Addresses the 2001 Product Liability Conference

BIFMA's team of experts in the area of product liability law worked together to bring the industry its third conference on this subject. Meeting in Chicago on October 11 and 12, specialists advised company representatives on legal threats and best practices for communicating the proper use of products.



Conference Participants Study Warning Labels

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Reducing Taxes, Protecting Assets, and Estate Planning all in 1 – VEBAs, anyone?

By Lance Wallach, CLU, ChFC, CIMC

Are you interested in reducing taxes, protecting assets, and accumulating wealth? Who isn't? These goals, while often more easily stated than accomplished, can be remarkably facilitated by a vehicle known as a Voluntary Employees Beneficiary Association (VEBA, for short). It features contributions which are tax deductible and which grow tax deferred, the protection of plan assets from creditors, flexibility in the amount of contributions, as well as no penalties for withdrawals before age 59 and no requirement for distributions after age 70. It is even possible for assets to pass to beneficiaries free from income and estate taxes.

A VEBA is a tax-exempt organization authorized by the Internal Revenue Code. A true VEBA must have a letter of determination issued by the Internal Revenue Service. It is possible to join an already existing multiple-employer VEBA that already has a letter of determination.

In general, the VEBA provides for the payment of benefits to the business owner and employees, with contributions being tax-deductible and the funds growing tax-deferred. It

can be terminated at any time, with all plan assets going to the active participants. Unlike traditional retirement plans, there is no vesting.

A VEBA can, and often does, co-exist with a qualified retirement plan, such as a 401(k) or profit sharing, and it allows for larger deductions than those plans. IRAs and pensions can be subject to shrinkage of perhaps as much as seventy-five percent, on death, from income and estate taxes. Taxable accounts can be hit by estate taxes as high as fifty-five percent. At the other extreme, assets in a VEBA can be the only accounts that are income and estate tax free at death.

So who should consider a VEBA? Profitable businesses and high-income professionals looking to reduce their tax liabilities; business owners who can no longer make contributions to their qualified retirement plans, either because they are overfunded or no longer favor the owner (most don't); as well as individuals anticipating estate tax problems and wishing to engage in estate planning by way of reducing or even eliminating estate taxes. Most businesses would like to protect assets from creditors: this vehicle can be utilized for that, among other things. A final

important candidate would be a business in need of a buy-sell agreement. Those business owners who have one or more partners face a unique business succession problem. If a partner dies, and if someone having no desire to be active in the business inherits his or her share of the business, this obviously creates problems. Buy-sell agreements, which commonly feature each partner purchasing a life insurance policy on the other partner, can solve this problem. The life insurance death benefit proceeds are used to buy out the spouse, family, etc. But these agreements are normally funded with after-tax dollars. Since contributions to a VEBA are tax-deductible, by using a VEBA, the same result can be achieved while deducting life insurance premium payments.

Lance Wallach of Plainview, NY speaks and writes extensively about VEBAs and pension plans. For complimentary copies of his technical articles on these subjects e-mail lawallach@aol.com. The information provided here is not intended as legal, accounting, financial, or any other type of advice for any specific individual or entity. You should contact an appropriate professional for any such advice.

"Meeting of Leaders" Set for N. Carolina

By Deborah Dunning

BIFMA is to be one of the co-sponsors of a national event on using Life Cycle Management in building design, construction, furnishing and management, an event hosted by IDCE – the International Design Center for the Environment.

Product designers and manufacturers will benefit from having an opportunity to review

three new resources useful to incorporating Life Cycle Thinking, Life Cycle Assessment, and Life Cycle Management in product development. Participants will have an opportunity to tour the New EPA Center and the KnowRoom™ that IDCE has created for the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, featuring furnishing products that meet benchmark standards.

Called "Designing for the Future: A Meeting of Leaders to Review New Resources for Life Cycle Management," this event will provide opportunities for education and networking. Registration will be possible on the IDCE website as of January 5, 2002. For additional information, contact: Deborah_Dunning@IDCE.Org.

In Review is published quarterly by BIFMA International to provide a brief update of committee and association activities.

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CALENDAR of industry events

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

January 10-14, 2002 - Le Salon du Meuble de Paris - Paris Expo, Porte de Versailles; Internet: www.salondumeuble.com

February 4-6, 2002 - LegalSpace Conference & Exhibition - New York NY; Telephone: 800.537.2128, ext. 9100; Internet: www.legaltechshow.com

February 12-13, 2002 - Technical Course on the Investigation, Management and Remediation of Mold in Buildings - Pleasanton, CA; Internet: www.aerias.org

February 13-16, 2002 - Expo Mueble Internacional Winter 2002 - Guadalajara, Mexico; Internet: www.afamjal.com.mx

February 27 to March 3, 2002 - XIV Exhibition of Furniture, Lighting and Household Goods for Export - Portugal; Internet: www.exponer.pt

February 28 to March 5, 2002 - International Office Furniture Trade Show, OFITEC 2002 - Madrid, Spain; Internet: www.ofitec.ifema.es

March 1-3, 2002 - International Design Center for the Environment Conference "Designing for the Future: Using Life Cycle Management in Building Design, Construction, Furnishing & Operations"; Contact: Deborah Dunning <Deborah_Dunning@IDCE.org>

March 1-5, 2002 - International Furniture Fair Singapore 2002, 19th ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS 2002) - Singapore Expo (Changi); Internet: www.iffs.com.sg

March 5-8, 2002 - National Manufacturing Week - Chicago, IL; Contact: National Association of Manufacturers; Internet: www.manufacturingweek.com; Telephone: 1.800.840.0678.

March 8-9, 2002: Chicago Industrial Strength Woodworking Expo & Conference, Tinley Park Convention Center, Tinley Park, Illinois; Email: isw@bacon-hedland.com.

March 18-21, 2002 - National Manufacturing Week - Chicago, IL; Contact: National Association of Manufacturers; Internet: www.manufacturingweek.com; Telephone: 1.800.840.0678.

April 10-11, 2002 - NeoCon South - Atlanta, GA; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.; Telephone: 312.527.7598; Internet: www.merchandisemart.com

May 1 - 4, 2002 - Woodworking Industry Conference (WIC) - San Antonio, TX. For more information call 410-931-8100. Internet: www.wmia.org

May 21-23, 2002 - GSA's National Product Expo - San Diego, CA; Contact: General Services Administration's National Furniture Center; Internet: www.nfc.fss.gsa.gov

June 10-12, 2002, 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 12, 2002, BIFMA International's Annual Meeting - Chicago, IL; Telephone: 616.285.3963; Fax: 616.285.3765; Email: email@bifma.org; Internet: www.bifma.org

June 30 - July 5, 2002 - Indoor Air 2002, 9th International Conference on Indoor Air Quality and Climate - Monterey, California; Internet: www.indoorair2002.org

September 19-20, 2002 - IIDEX/NeoCon Canada - The National Trade Centre at Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON, Canada; Internet: www.iidexneoconcanada.com

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

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

October 30-31, 2002 - NeoCon New York - Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York NY; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties Inc.; Internet www.merchandisemart.com

January 30-February 1, 2003 - BIFMA International's Annual Management Conference - Coral Gables, Florida; Telephone: 616.285.3963; Email: email@bifma.org; Internet: www.bifma.org