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Industry News



FCICA Members Catch Up on commercial business at annual convention

The Flooring Contractors Association (FCICA) met for their 23rd annual convention at the Intercontinental Hotel in San Juan Puerto Rico on March 9-12. Titled "Catch the Wave," this four-day event combined business meetings, educational sessions, industry networking opportunities, and a welcome departure from winter for many of the attendees. In attendance were a mix of commercial flooring contractors and associate members representing various floor covering and sundry manufacturers.

At the opening session, incoming FCICA Chairman Jonathan Stewart of Acousti Engineering talked about what FCICA is. "We are a not for profit trade group that exists for the education and betterment of our members. We offer an open forum for the free exchange of ideas on installation techniques, new products, current industry issues that affect profitability. Our contractors are exposed to the latest technology, products

and business practices to keep them both competitive and profitable.” He went on to talk proudly of the FCICA members. “We are commercial flooring contractors – where the floor covering hits the floor. Our members are some of the most influential contractors in their respective market places.”

During the opening session, attendees also heard Dr. Terry Lyles give a talk titled “Navigating Life Storms”, a 90 minute seminar on how to recognize the stress in your life and make it work to your benefit. Another high point in the opening session was when the FCICA honored former FCI Columnist and long time industry educator Ray Thompson of Armstrong with Honorary Member Status – only the seventh honorary member of FCICA.

One of the themes during the convention was the fact that floor covering has no value until it gets installed. The floor covering dealer or contractor, and their installers are an important part of the process. Chairman Stewart said “We’re the people that give value to floor covering products”, and Lew Migliori of LGM Technical Services echoed this during a round table discussion, saying, “Floor covering material has no value until you install it.” Migliori’s roundtable discussion on claims focused on issues related to proper claims handling and the importance of not moving forward with an installation if conditions are not right, even if that upsets the customer. “I’d rather have you disappointed with me now than mad at me later,” he said.

The seminars at the convention were a combination of information about the most up to date installation techniques and helpful suggestions for business management. Seminar topics included how to write a proper floor covering specification, heat welding resilient flooring and new carpet seaming technologies. “An Effective Hiring Selection Process,” by Dave Stafford of Commercial Carpets of America presented ways of screening job applicants with proper interview techniques, handwriting analysis, testing procedures and background checks. Lenny Hall of Endurance Floor Company gave a seminar titled “Wood Flooring Installation Issues” that covered pros and cons of prefinished versus site finished wood flooring, engineered versus solid hardwood and tips for successful installation of wide plank floors. The final day saw Marty Anderson of National Carpet Equipment give an overview of the latest equipment for floor removal and preparation, and talked about ways of turning this into a profit center, followed by an update on the new FCICA Resilient Floor Covering Installation Training (FIT) program (See FCI April 2005).

The Convention, however, was not all work. Many attendees found time to attend one of the optional tours such as a visit to the Bacardi Rum Visitor Center or a tour of the Puerto Rican Rainforest, or just take a little time off to bask in the sun and sit by the pool. Attendees were also treated to cocktail

receptions and dinners, one at a beautiful hacienda atop a high hill overlooking the northeast coast, and the other the hotel boardwalk overlooking the crashing waves.

One aspect of FCICA membership that was heard over and over is the networking that goes on – over breakfast, at breaks, over dinner or sitting by the pool. “We have so much to share”, said Bruce Newbrough, Director of Technical Service for Ardex Engineered Cements and W.W. Henry, and it was apparent from the non stop conversations that there was a lot of sharing going on. New member and first time convention attendee Craig Higgins of Sinak Corporation summed it up, “I have been involved in a lot of different associations over my career and I have never seen one where the members are so generous with their knowledge and willing to share what they know.”

Next up for FCICA is their midyear meeting in Chicago September 30 and October 1, and next year’s convention in San Antonio Texas. For more information, visit www.FCICA.com or call 248-661-5015.

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