Talk about a turning point—and the subject just has to be the 60th Annual Convention and Exposition of the international association of Wall and Ceiling Contractors/Gypsum Drywall Contractors International.

Living up to promises, the iaWCC/GDCI put on an industry magnet from Feb. 25-March 2 in the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Orleans that saw:

• the highest attendance—slightly over 1,000—in the history of the wall and ceiling industry
• the biggest exhibition—73 exhibit booths—in the history of the wall and ceiling industry
• more educational workshops, seminars, lectures and convention events than any wall and ceiling industry convention in history.

Then to top off the record-smashing event, the entire exhibit hall—77 booth—for the 1978 convention in San Francisco was sold out completely even before the New Orleans event closed.

That the 60th Annual Convention would be something special was evident from the beginning. And if ever any doubts persisted that the recent consolidation between iaWCC and GDCI would be beneficial to both organizations and to the industry, they were rapidly removed by one of the swiftest and best-organized conventions in the industry’s history.

Even with a record-breaking pre-registered attendance, new registrants kept coming in for the entire length of the-convention.

More than 850 contractors, wives, guests, and manufacturers poured into the Grand Opening of the 1977 Wall and Ceiling Exposition, this following a record 580 people who attended the Early Bird Party the previous evening.

Gypsum Association Sponsors

The exhibit hall party, sponsored by The Gypsum Association, set the keynote for the events to follow as “this association has really come of age”—as one convention-attender, Mike Schwartz, of Grand Prairie, Texas, put it.

Following a series of national committee and iaWCC/GDCI Board of Directors meetings on Friday, the convention moved into high gear on Saturday morning, featuring a unique audiovisual opening followed by the MNO management education program.

Here, contractors participated in the unique experience of interviewing three management experts who posed as different executive personalities competing for the head job of a failing company.

Sunday was a day of relative rest and sight-seeing in New Orleans. The exhibit hall was open for 3 hours and after religious services, contractors and their guests spent the day at their leisure, including a visit to the New Orleans Fairgrounds Racetrack where the feature of the afternoon consisted of a special iaWCC/GDCI race at the track.

The President’s Reception was held that evening in the Stadium Club in the famous Louisiana Superdome where the huge superscreen, the four-foot high scoreboards in all four corners of the stadium and the towering lighted pylon outside were devoted to iaWCC/GDCI, and to the reception’s sponsors.

Monday’s general session saw a program on getting control of contractor insurance costs and then seven break-out workshops with outstanding national figures held 3 times each.


“Buck” Hoyle, General Manager of the American Society of Association Executives, and Mike Welsher, Lawrence-Leiter and Company, shared workshop responsibilities for programs conducted for the Young Executives Program. In addition, William S. Baird, Alabama Metal Industries; William A. Duguid, Jr.; and Vito Arsena spoke to the Young Executives’ audience.

Breakouts Are Repeated

The break-out workshops were repeated twice again on Tuesday, following a general sessions program that featured James King, of the General Services Admin-
“It started at the registration desk . . .”

“. . . proceeded to packed general sessions . . .”

“. . . for exciting, innovative programs . . .”

“. . . and with a clip of the ribbon . . .”

“Special meetings and workshops . . .”

“. . . the business talk began in earnest.”
CONVENTION:
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istration, presenting a multi-visual slide show on the new “Megastructure” concept being advanced for federal office buildings by the Public Building Services.

Tuesday afternoon saw the second section of the Board of Directors Meeting and the Annual Business Meeting.

The annual banquet and dance was held in the hotel ballroom Tuesday evening with some 700 guests attending. Highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Romany Mardi Gras Krewe, the actual Krewe that paraded in a Baton Rouge Mardi Gras celebration.

The Krewe was made available to the iaWCC/GDCI convention by member John Bolton, of Baton Rouge, and his wife, Jeffie Jean, who sang, and moderated the entire presentation.

Throughout the entire convention, the ladies’ program and hospitality room enjoyed the most attendance and activity since inception. In the hospitality room itself, ladies—joined by an increasing number of men—relaxed with coffee and talk while participating in such events as worm painting, macrame making, Opal gem cutting, caricaturing, a hog dog vendor, handwriting analysis, astrology, hairdressing, and other activities.

At the same time, there were tours, a luncheon at the Beverly Playhouse where Actress Dorothy Lamour personally greeted the ladies, the annual get-acquainted luncheon, and a special optional tour of New Orleans’ famous Garden District.
Annual Business Meeting

Donald J. Chambers, President of J & B Acoustical, Mansfield, Ohio, and Robert S. Mitchell, President of Denver Drywall Company, Englewood, Cola., were elected Co-Presidents of the international association of Wall and Ceiling Contractors/Gypsum Drywall Contractors International.

Their election to the dual posts of President came at the Annual Business Meeting of the Association during the convention in New Orleans.

They will assume their office on July 1, 1977, succeeding Vito J. Arsena, President of Acme-Arsena Company, Cleveland, Ohio. Arsena will remain on the Executive Committee in the role of Co-Immediate Past President, along with William A. Marek of Houston.

Chambers is a former Executive Committee member with iAWCC, and Mitchell served formerly on the Executive Committee of GDCI. Their Co-Presidencies are part of the consolidation agreement when the two organizations joined together last July.


Also elected at the meeting were new members of the Board of Directors. They include:


Robert Heimerl, of Los Angeles, was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Donald Rice, who resigned from the Board from the Western Conference.

William J. Thompson, of San Francisco, was also appointed to fill the unfilled seat on the Board of Directors from the Western Conference for GDCI. His appointment makes the final of 11 representatives from GDCI on the Board.
Convention Overwhelmingly Re-Endorses Right-To-Work Concept; Opposes Situs Picketing

With only two or three negative votes, the Annual Business meeting gave its support to a resolution endorsing the principle of right-to-work and reaffirming the iaWCC/GDCI position in opposition to repeal of Section 14(b) of Taft-Hartley. Asking the Convention to back this resolution, Joe M. Baker, Jr., Executive Vice President reminded the members that both GDCI and iaWCC had taken a similar position in the past.

Another resolution reaffirmed the iaWCC/GDCI opposition to common situs picketing and directed the staff to so advise every member of both Houses of Congress.

Four other resolutions were presented to the Convention by Resolutions Co-Chairman Donald S. Little of Toronto, as follows:

Resolution No. 1, to instruct the Board of Directors to consider establishing an award to go to the member who brings the most architects and/or engineers to future iaWCC/GDCI meetings was carried.

Resolution No. 2, instructing the Board of Directors to provide an at-cost registration fee for full time employees of promotional bureaus, industry associations, and industry pension and apprenticeship programs, who attend various iaWCC/GDCI meetings, was also carried.

Resolution No. 4, to direct the Board of Directors and/or Executive Committee to develop sectional memberships for superintendents, foremen, estimators, and “young executives” was tabled and referred back to the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Conferences for further explanation and elaboration.

A final resolution, No. 6, to provide more assistance to overseas members in the technical areas was referred back to its maker for further explanation and elaboration.
“. . . and genuine Opal cutting . . .”

“. . . training with Eloise Brady showed . . .”

“. . . along with worm painting . . .”

“. . . during a lunch break.”
Awards Given
At Convention

Frank J. Krafft, of Krafft-Murphy Company, Alexandria, Va., and Gerold B. Reed, Jr., of Eastern Dry-Wall Associates, Inc., Lowell, Mass., the two men considered most responsible for the successful consolidation of iaWCC and GDCI, received the top awards from their industry at the 60th Convention.

Both Krafft, former President of iaWCC, and Reed, former President of GDCI, were recipients of special recognition awards for their role as a highlight of the banquet which culminated the iaWCC/GDCI annual convention.

Each contractor was instrumental in trying to bring the two groups together in an earlier merger effort, but continued to push for consolidation even after the first failure. Their efforts were rewarded in July, 1976, when the two organizations successfully worked out a consolidation that has produced the biggest association in the industry’s history.

Also selected for awards during the convention were: Outstanding Regional Chairman—Thomas J. McCartney, of Nashua, N.H.; Outstanding Industry Employees—Jerry Shields, Executive Director of the Michigan Drywall Contractors Association, and Mrs. Ernestine Fischer, Executive Secretary of the Gypsum Drywall Contractors of Hawaii; Outstanding Associate Member—Alabama Metal Industries Corporation, Birmingham, Ala. (William Baird accepted the award), and Outstanding Committee Chairman—Robert F. Watkins, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The coveted Emmer Award, given for the most outstanding technical advance in drywall construction, went to the Chicago Metallic Corporation. G. Donald Marseilles, a representative of the company, was on hand to accept the award at the banquet.

Don Darling, of the W. W. Henry Company, Los Angeles, made a special drawing, awarding $500 worth of Henry Company materials to Thomas E. Donnelly, of the R. F. Donnelly Stucco Company, Minneapolis, Minn., and Al Ricca, President of Service Art Company. St. Clair Shores, Mich., was the winner of the annual Essick Mixer drawing.

C. E. “Doc” Kallem, Drywall Associates, Westmont, Ill., was the winner of the Celotex color television drawing.

The biggest winner of them all—from a cash standpoint—was James J. Martin III, of James J. Martin & Sons, Camden, N.J. Jim walked away from the convention with $2562.50 as his share of the 50/50 drawing.

Winners in the annual drawing among pre-registrations for next year’s convention—San Francisco—were:

Third—Lewis Espinosa, Beadex Manufacturing

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AWARDS:
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Co., of Renton, Wash., who won a complimentary
room for two for 5 nights at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel
in San Francisco;
Second—Fred V. Hormuth, Drywall & Painting
Service, Evansville, Ind., who won a complimentary
registration for two to the iaWCC/GDCI San Fran-
cisco Convention, and
First—Leonard Greedy, Allsteel Rolled Products,
Fort Lauderdale, Fla., who won a complimentary reg-
istration and room for two at the San Francisco Con-
vention.

“... or win industry recognition . . .”

“Camden, N. J., had a big winner . . .”

“. . . while entertainment was jazzy . . .”

“. . . until the President closed shop.”