Seminars Will Highlight Convention Educational Program

A series of educational seminars, led by experts in their fields, will highlight the AWCI convention program next month according to Education Chairman Carolyn Mason of Albuquerque.

According to Mason, Derrick Hardy, former staff director of the Tile Contractors’ Association, now residing in Saudi Arabia, will be coming back to the States from Arabia to conduct a session on How to profit in the Middle East construction market. In the past, this market has been basically determined by general contractors. However, the Saudis have gained sufficient experience to run their own jobs and are now looking for knowledgeable subcontractors to do the bulk of the work.

Hardy has been commissioned by the Saudi government to seek out subs and AWCI’s convention will be one of his first stops.

AWCI has now retained its own “computer guru,” James Jones of Savannah, Georgia. Jones will lead a session on Computers and construction. One of the foremost experts on computers in North America, Jones is not in the business of selling either hard- or software. His only service is that of consultation in the computer field and he has been officially named AWCI’s computer consultant. If you are looking at computerizing, Jones can point the way for you; if you are already computerized, he will give you that help you’ve paid for but have not yet received.

Two areas of union and open shop work will be under discussion.

Sigurd Lucassen, 1st General Vice President of the Carpenters’ International Union, will talk on Union market recovery. As one of the innovators of a national recovery plan for union construction, Lucassen will review “Operation Turnaround”, and the very serious effort being made by his union (and other trades) to make union contracting once more competitive and viable.

For those members who have determined to go open shop or to set up a double breasted operation, Joe C. Canterbury, the Dallas attorney who carried the now-famous Connell case to the Supreme Court where he won a landmark decision on subcontracting, will be on hand to give a strictly nuts-and-bolts session on “how to do it”. AWCI does not “preach” going open shop, but we do have an obligation to point out the pitfalls and to explain how to do it for those members and other contractors who are looking at this alternative.

Technical Workshop

A number of technical topics will also be addressed.

AWCI is the only national association in North America which is running seminars on Asbestos abatement. As we go to press, the 9th such 3-day meeting has been concluded in Los Angeles. For those in the industry who cannot take the necessary 4 days to attend a full-blown seminar on asbestos abatement, AWCI will hold a “mini-seminar” at the convention on this subject.

Two leading asbestos abatement experts, Fred Treadway of Indianapolis and Dave Spinouolo of Norfolk, Virginia, will be on hand to lead this one and to answer your questions on the subject.

A new and important area of diversification is Disaster reconstruction and hazardous waste cleanup and decontamination. Not devoted to asbestos, this meeting will concern a market nobody talks about, a market with far too few experienced and qualified contractors, and also a market where the cost is secondary to getting the job done! Tom Koenig, formerly with Conwed Company, and one of the outstanding acoustical experts in the world, will lead this session. Roth newcomers to the acoustical field and oldtimers will gain from Tom’s presentation!

One of the most popular sessions conducted each year by AWCI is our seminars on Steel framing and exterior claddings. For two years this has been a standing room only meeting, so we are well aware of the need for its being repeated again. The Metal Lath/Steel Framing Association (ML/SFA) and the Exterior Insulation Manufacturers’ Association (EIMA) have developed this year’s seminar, one of the most important meetings at the convention.

New fields to conquer

ERISA. The very name strikes fear into a contractor’s heart. AWCI was the only national construction contractors’ association which refused to endorse the law which today holds participating contractors liable up to 100% of their respective net worths should a local pension plan fail for lack of funding. Can your firm safely withdraw from a program? What are the implications in either case? Betty Southard Murphy, Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board under President Ford, will be with us to give you full chapter and verse on this badly misunderstood law.

Are you still bidding your work? Getting bid shopped to death? Cap-
ilulating to ridiculously low bids whose figures are actually lower than your costs?

Why fight it? Why not put salesmen out there to get those jobs and bypass the bidding procedure? It can be done, and a leading industry speaker will explain to you how your firm can start bringing in more work at your price by proper marketing techniques. This presentation could put you on the road to new-found riches.

What about Joint ventures? Well, we have been able to get William J. Palmer of Arthur Young and Company to agree to be with us in San Antonio to lead discussion on joint ventures from A to Z. If you have been eyeing jobs you can’t tackle on your own, the joint venture track may be the way to go. Let Bill Palmer tell you both what to do and what not to do if you get into a joint venture.

And even the best jobs go sour if the productivity is not there. And when you think of intra-company cooperation, which firm pops into mind in our industry? It’s the Brady Bunch in California, of course. Steve Wilders, an executive with E.F. Brady Co. of La Mesa, California, is going to reveal a lot of Brady’s close-held secrets on how to get every employee, laborer, journeyman, executive, to work as a team to produce the greatest productivity possible on every single job. We’ve done this before to a standing room only audience. Worth your trip to San Antonio!

How about getting into design? With the new technical improvements, Computer-aided design is not for architects only. We find more and more of our members are bringing CAD systems into their offices, hiring designers, and getting more work by being able to provide the owner with a better idea of what he can get by using their firms’ capabilities. Bob Vrancken of F.E. Seidman College of Business, who was once Sperry-Univac’s head design man, will lead this one.

That, of course, brings up the subject of Open plan vs. traditional partitions. We’ll take an in depth look at the newest area of partitions for our members, Open Plan, while hearing from those who favor traditional solid and demountable partitions. A four-member panel will conduct this session to tell you what’s what in all areas of interior construction, including the tax advantages of both open plan and demountables.

General contracting?

To round it all off, we’ll even have a session on getting into Light general contracting. Mike Kramer of HIVA of Maryland, will lead this important meeting. Once you’re into structural studs, and most of you are, the next logical step might just well be heading up the entire job. This session has a single goal: To tell you how.

“It’s easy to see we have something for everyone,” Mrs. Mason told Construction Dimensions. “In fact, to the best of my knowledge, it’s the biggest educational program ever offered by AWCI at a convention. This, plus three general sessions (see box), will make the San Antonio convention a must for everyone in our industry, even non-members!”

Three General Sessions Plus Regional VP Forum

The AWCI convention will feature three general sessions plus the ever-popular Regional Vice Presidents’ Forum.

A surprise speaker will open the convention... not trying to be “cute,” but until we have this one absolutely confirmed, we cannot reveal more.

Jim Walters, President of mammoth Jim Walters Corporation (and of Celotex) will be this year’s corporate executive and will address the closing session.

The Regional Vice Presidents’ Forum is a closed-door, no-holds-barred meeting at which 7 of our 21 Regional Vice Presidents will “tell all” about their respective areas of North America, and then open the discussion to everyone in the audience.