AWCI’s 73rd Convention: Dawn of a Decade

The 73rd convention and exposition of the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries- International was held April 28 to May 3, 1990 in Toronto, Ontario. It set a number of records-more booths at the exposition than ever before, more supplier sponsors, a larger total attendance (over 2,800), and more total paid registrants of all types (nearly 1,800)—and, in the words of AWCI president Ron Brady, “it marked a beginning which can and should represent new opportunities.”

The convention included a wide variety of functions that served to show off the range of AWCI’s programs of service to its members. All day Saturday, April 28, was reserved for committee meetings. Committee members participated in projects such as the development of a manual on industry tolerances, a possible joint AWCI-Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association training program on exterior insulation and finish systems, and a model guide specification for prefabricated exterior wall assemblies. A new document, *Recommended Specification: Levels of Gypsum Board Finish,* was just released in advance of the convention. It is designed to help industry representatives, including contractors, suppliers, manufacturers and distributors overcome some of the problems associated with painted and wallcovered surfaces, especially in areas with critical lighting. It provides guidelines so that contractors, specifiers, architects, and others are all using the same language and expecting the same results.

Sunday, April 29, was set aside for educational programs. A Board of Directors meeting was held Sunday morning before the Presidential Brunch, sponsored by the Gypsum Association. The speaker at the brunch was Dr. James Melton, one of the foremost motivational speakers in the country. Dr. Melton’s talk encouraged listeners to take advantage of their full potential. “Reach for the stars,” he said. “You have the power within yourselves to do so.” Dr. Melton’s talk provided a fitting kickoff theme for the entire convention; an opportunity to explore one’s own possibilities in a new decade.

Following the brunch, concurrent educational sessions were held on topics including effective employee practices; motivating your employees; budgeting for a better bottom line; strategic planning; interior finishes; architectural acoustics; and how to avoid chapter 11. A second series of educational sessions was held Sunday afternoon, with talks on effective employee practices (part 2); motivating your employees (part 2); business continuity-planning for the future; managing cash flow; trends and techniques in interior finishes; scaffolding techniques; access into the ceiling cavity; and regional caucus meetings. As can be seen, the educational programs on Sunday covered a wide variety of interesting and relevant topics.

Sunday evening, Senergy sponsored a Lifetime Members Reception. Lifetime membership is now at its highest level ever for AWCI, with almost 55 companies signed on as lifetime members.

Monday, April 30, opened with a Canadian-American Fellowship breakfast, sponsored by the Interior Finish Contractors Association of Ontario. After breakfast, Rod Robbie, the architect who designed Toronto’s famous SkyDome, gave a talk on how it was designed—how he was able to undertake a project everyone thought couldn’t be done.

Richard DeVos, president and founder of Amway Corporation, presented the keynote address at the breakfast. As the CEO of the largest privately held corporation in North America, DeVos delivered a stirring talk on the importance of looking inside yourself—and building on the theme expressed by Dr. Melton the day before—and inspiring others by your own example. DeVos mentioned the three A’s that were most important to him: action, attitude, and most importantly atmosphere. “The atmosphere we come from and the atmosphere we build around us has more to do with how we turn out than almost anything else,” he said. “We need an atmosphere that encourages us to do the things we can do, rather than complain about the things we can’t.”

DeVos used a categorization of people developed by Walt Disney. There are three types of people, according to Disney: the well-poisoners, those who are always negative and who say it can’t be done; the
lawn-mowers, those who keep their grass neat and tidy, who come to work with a smile and do their jobs, but don’t really add anything; and the life-enhancers, people who reach beyond themselves to make a difference in other people’s lives. Disney wanted to surround himself with life-enhancers, and DeVos encouraged everyone to attempt to reach the goal of reaching beyond themselves to help other people.

Following the breakfast, AWCI held a grand opening ceremony for the exposition center. AWCI president Ron Brady and his wife followed some Scottish bagpipe players as they led the entire membership through the exposition center and to the exhibit hall. The center was open from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday. More than 273 booths were available for AWCI members and visitors to walk through. United States Gypsum provided a hospitality center throughout the exposition.

Sto Industries sponsored the New Member-Non Member Reception Monday evening, and then many convention guests went to see a special showing of the Andrew Lloyd Webber production Phantom of the Opera at Toronto’s magnificently redone Pantages Theater. Bus transfers for this event were provided by Fry Reglet Corporation.

Tuesday, May 1, opened with another series of educational sessions. The morning sessions covered topics including business fraud, marketing your firm, minority owned businesses, caulking and sealants, asbestos, and glass fiber reinforced products. As on Sunday, Georgia Pacific provided refreshments between educational sessions.

The exposition center opened from 11:00 to 2:30 on Tuesday. Drawings for prizes were held in the exposition center throughout the convention; the prizes were sponsored by Gold Bond Building Products.

Tuesday’s afternoon educational programs were also varied and interesting. They included programs on light general contracting, educating and keeping your workforce, job site communication, personal organization systems (managing the top of your desk), air barriers and vapor retarders, and demountables.

Tuesday evening featured one of
the most exciting events of the convention: the ninth annual Auction for the Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry. When final results were tallied, the auction grossed nearly $70,000 for the Foundation. A 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air classic car led the way, drawing more than $20,000 on a bid from C.A. LaFon on behalf of Gerald Lee of Honolulu. T. Gilley Hickman of Dallas once again served as Master of Ceremonies, with Jarvene Shackelford the Auctioneer. It was pointed out that under Hickman’s direction, the auction has grossed over $700,000—with the proceeds contributed to the Foundation for the betterment of the industry.

Wednesday morning opened with the Breakfast of Champions awards breakfast, sponsored by Dryvit Systems, Inc. Frank P. Morsilli of Dryvit served as Host and Master of Ceremonies. A noteworthy moment occurred when the Pinnacle Award, AWCI’s highest honor, was presented to Don Chambers. Joined on stage by his entire family and friends, Chambers was inducted into the Circle of Leadership by other Circle members, who also joined him on stage. In brief remarks, he offered his thanks to his wife and to AWCI.

The Annual Meeting which followed the Breakfast of Champions was another event of critical interest to those in attendance. Frank Morsilli of Dryvit returned to the stage and discussed the potential problems faced by exterior insulation finishing systems as a result of pressures put on those who develop codes by proponents of brick and other exterior finishes. His talk generated a great deal of interest, and will be featured in the July issue of this magazine.

The exposition center was open on Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., making a total of more than 12 hours available for those in attendance to tour the hall and see all exhibits.

A Wednesday afternoon Board of Directors meeting featured refreshments sponsored by Negwer Materials. The meeting, chaired by President Ron Brady, was well attended and also generated a great deal of interest and participation.

Wednesday night concluded with the annual Dinner-Dance, preceded by a VIP reception sponsored by Celotex. The Reception before the Dinner-Dance featured food sponsored by Westroc Industries Limited, and the Dinner-Dance itself was enhanced due to table decorations sponsored by Alabama Metal Industries Corporation. The Dinner-Dance had the theme “A Masked Ball.”

At the Dinner-Dance, President Brady was presented with a set of golfclubs, as well as a Presidential portrait provided by U.S. Gypsum.

As the concluding event of the convention, the Dinner-Dance was deemed a success. Those in attendance were urged to mark their calendars and attend AWCI’s 74th Convention and Exposition, to be held March 19-24, 1991, at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California.

In addition to sponsors listed, the following supplier companies sponsored convention services or events: Advance registration books by Dietrich Industries, Inc.; convention programs and shuttle bus service by Domtar Gypsum; convention registration kits by Larsen Products Corporation; convention ticket books by Bailey Metal Products; exhibit directory by Grabber-John Wagner Associates; exhibit hall shopping bags by Buildex Division of ITW; International question and answer session by Dale Industries; president farewell brunch by W.R Grace Company; programs-at-a-glance by Angeles Metal Systems’ and Regional conference caucus by Gypsum Dealers Management Association.

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AWCI President Ronald P. Brady called the opening general session to order on Monday, April 30.

Workers displayed their skills at the Drywall Contest, held all day Sunday and Monday during the Convention. Kenny Davis of Pacific Construction in Seattle won the competition.

The Exposition Center was open on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday during the Convention, allowing those who attended sufficient time to visit all exhibits.

Second Vice President Robert Heimerl pays attention to presentations made at an Executive Committee meeting during the Convention.

C.A. LaFon, facing, talks with Kingston Cable, left, and Gabe Reitter during the Lifetime Members’ Reception in the Harbour Suite Penthouse of the Westin Harbour Castle on Sunday evening.
Dr. James Melton's presentation on motivation was well received during the Sunday Presidential Branch.

Richard DeVos, president and founder of Amway Corporation, presented the address during the Opening General Session on Monday.

Rod Robbie, the architect Toronto's unique SkyDome domed stadium, discussed the problem associated with the project at the Monday morning Canadian-American Fellowship Breakfast.

Scottish Bagpipers performed during Monday's Opening General Session and then led the audience to Exposition Center.

AWCI dignitaries, including from Left Executive Vice President Joe M. Baker, Jr, Mary Alice Brady, President Ronald P. Brady, Donna Feldner, Convention Committee Chairman Joe Feldner, and Exhibitors Committee Chairman Edwin Jackaki participated in the Exposition Center opening on Monday.
AWCI's booth at the Exposition Center featured a Lincoln Town Car that was auctioned off to benefit the Wall and Ceiling Political Action Committee.

Educational sessions on Sunday and Tuesday presented topics of interest to all in attendance in the convention.

Incoming President Steven J. Watkins was presented with a portrait of himself, to join the other portraits of AWCI's Presidents contributed by U.S. Gypsum.
At the Breakfast of Champions awards breakfast on Wednesday, Don Chambers received the Pinnacle Award, AWCI's highest award from Pinnacle Award Committee Chairman Max O. Jensen. He also became a member of AWCI's Circle of Leadership. He was joined on stage by his entire family and other members of the Circle of Leadership.

Ronald P. Brady, who served as AWCI President during 1989-1990, was presented with a set of golf clubs in appreciation for his service at the Wednesday night Dinner-Dance. He thanked AWCI's members and officers for their help during his term of office.