CONVENTION SPECIAL SECTION

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WCI’s annual convention and exposition in Reno, Nev., April 8-22, provided many first-time events for its 2,131 attendees.

This was the first year AWCI presented its highly esteemed President’s Award (see page 36).

This convention also marks the first time (in a long time) that the AWCI convention provided a big-name star to perform for attendees during the Final Night Dinner Gala and FWCI Live Auction—country music sensation T.G. Sheppard. Sheppard, who has 17 number-one singles to his credit, made famous songs like “Last Cheater’s Waltz,” “I Loved ‘em Every One,” and “Finally”

It also was the first year AWCI and the American Subcontractors Association worked jointly to host education sessions and social events. The high attendance at this year’s show have convinced officials at ASA and AWCI to host joint conventions for the next two years. This will mean more education sessions and more variety at future conventions.

AWCI’s 1999 Annual Convention and Trade Show will be held April 8-10 in Washington, D.C.

“The feedback this year is that this convention was perhaps the best in recent AWCI history,” said AWCI Executive Vice President Steve Etkin.

Said AWCI Director of Meetings and Exhibits Margaret Roberts: “Exhibitor contracts for next year’s exposition show overwhelming support for the D.C. location. As we were going to press, we have fewer than 50 booths left to sell for the 1999 trade show. Those who want to be a part of our next exhibit should sign up now before it’s too late!”

Committee Meetings

In the days preceding the convention, AWCI’s committees met to discuss industry issues. Some discussion highlights are these:

The EIFS & Related Products Committee discussed the ASTM PS-49 standard and reviewed other industry documents for possible endorsement.

The Gypsum Board, Gypsum/Metal Lath/Gypsum Plaster Committee discussed jobsite working conditions and a document for practical limitations of gypsum board installation.

AWCI’s Interior & Exterior Steel Framing Committee worked on the new AISI committee on cold-formed steel framing standards. Committee members also discussed the new state thermal building codes and their impact on the use of cold-formed steel framing materials.

The Education & Training Committee confirmed topics and speakers for the upcoming Industry Executives’ Conference, AWCI Academy and the 1999 AWCI/ASA Annual Convention.

The Safety & Insurance Committee reviewed the insurance plan AWCI members have with CNA. The committee also looked at the potential of offering safety posters to AWCI members.

The various craft committees of the Union Contractor Council discussed local issues, including apprentice and training plans.
Those in the Membership Committee were updated on programs being developed.

**Convention Activities**

Following the two days of committee meetings was the official start of the convention,

The AWCI/ASA Opening General Session featured keynote speaker Bill Blades, a certified management consultant who works with clients internationally in the areas of sales, leadership, world-class customer service and corporate culture. Blades spoke of ways to re-energize your organization, helping attendees find ways to stop corporate drift and to make every five minutes count.

Monday and Tuesday were extremely active days for those seeking education and opportunity. Attendees could choose from the many educational sessions offered by both AWCI and ASA throughout the day.

The AWCI/CISCA Combined Expo-sition opened on Monday as well. The 150 exhibitors showed attendees the newest products and services available to the wall and ceiling industry. Many attendees tried to win the $30,000 offered in the AWCI putting challenge. (Unfortunately, nobody got the elusive hole in one.)

**Spouse Events**

Activities for spouses were many In addition to receptions and other hospitality events, spouses were able to attend a special champagne breakfast featuring the show, “Secrets of an ‘Old’ Showgirl™.” It was here that those in attendance witnessed firsthand the transformation of Karen Burns, who went from wearing her street clothes to wearing the showgirl costume during the program. Burns also provided insight into the private lives of showgirls, and dispelled the myths regarding this “glitzy” career.

The Scenic Lake Tahoe Tour was a must for those who wanted to see the sights. This tour visited the Donner Memorial Historic Park and Museum, Squaw Valley and Lake Tahoe. The group also toured some marvelous homes and mansions, including Vikingsholm Castle and Fleur du Lac, where scenes from the Godfather movies were filmed.

**FWCI Fundraisers**

The Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry held its annual live and silent auctions during the convention. This year’s fundraising effort raised more than $70,000, slightly less than last year’s record-breaking revenue number.

As he has done for the last several years, Auctioneer Jackie Courson of Tupelo, Miss., kept the bids going higher.

The big-ticket item this year was a 1957 Chevy Bel Air, donated by Grabber Construction Products. Steve Baker, former AWCI president and current president of Baker Drywall Co., Inc., Dallas, paid $25,000 to win the car.

Another favorite fund-raiser is AWCI’s 50-50 raffle. The grand jackpot winner was Jim Tribbie of South Texas & Lone Star Drywall, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. He took home $4,100. The three jackpot winners, who each won $1,400, were King Cable of Angeles Metal Systems, Los Angeles; Terrie Miller of...
Denver Drywall Company, Englewood, Colo.; and, again, Jim Tribbie.

**FWCI Scholarships**

The Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry awarded educational scholarships to five individuals in the wall and ceiling industry who are seeking degrees in disciplines related to the building trades.

The scholarship recipients are as follows:

- Matthew Carl Graves, whose father is Jeffrey W. Graves, chief executive officer/president of Strahm Group Incorporated, Ft. Wayne, Ind. Graves is seeking a degree in building construction management from Purdue University.

- Aaron Marshall Bucher, whose father, Albert L. Bucher, is a carpenter at Mid-Illinois Companies, Peoria, Ill. Bucher will begin studies this fall in engineering.

- Joshua Henry Johnson, whose father, John Henry Johnson, is a plasterer with The Bouma Corporation, Grand Rapids, Mich. Johnson will begin studies this fall in engineering at either the Michigan Technological University or at University of Michigan.

- Andrew William Newett, who is an employee of C.J. Coakley Co., Inc., Falls Church, Va., is working toward a degree in building engineering and management from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown in Ireland.

- Charles W. Foster Jr. is an estimator with Grayhawk, LLC, Lexington, Ky. He is currently working toward a degree in architecture technology from Lexington Community College.

These scholarship winners will receive an initial $500 grant applicable toward tuition costs for the fall 1998 semester. By maintaining an acceptable grade point average and a full-time course schedule, they will automatically receive up to three more identical $500 grants for their next three semesters of study provided they maintain good grades and a good academic standing.

Applications for the scholarship program were accepted only from employees of or direct dependents of employees of AWCI or FWCI member companies who are pursuing a post-high school education in construction management, engineering or architecture.

To receive an application for the 1999 scholarship program, contact the Foundation at (703) 538-1614.

For more information about next year’s AWCI convention and expo, call Margaret Roberts at (703) 538-1609.