

THE DOWNLOAD

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calendar BIFMA EVENTS

The Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA) International had scheduled the following list of meetings and events as of press time. Additional events will be posted to the BIFMA website on the Internet at www.bifma.org.

January 6, 2005, 9 am to 5 pm
Color Working Group Meeting
Best Western, Grand Rapids, MI

January 19, 2005 9 am to 5 pm
X5.5 Desk/ Table Kick-off Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

Jan. 20 & 21, 2005, 9 am to 5 pm
FES Subcommittee Meeting
Best Western, Grand Rapids, MI

January 24, 2005, 2 pm to 4 pm
Textiles Subcommittee Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

January 25, 2005, 9 am to Noon
Gov't Affairs Committee Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

February 10-12, 2005
BIFMA Management Conference
The Hyatt Regency Coconut Point
Resort and Spa, Bonita Springs, FL

February 17, 2005, 1 pm to 5 pm
Color Working Group Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

February 24, 2005, 9 am to 5 pm
FES Subcommittee Meeting
Best Western, Grand Rapids, MI

February 28, 2005 9 am to 5 pm
Flammability Subcommittee Mtg.
held in Conjunction with the AHFA
(AFMA) Flammability Workshop,
Greensboro, NC

March 14, 2005, 1 pm to 5 pm
Color Working Group Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

March 28, 2005, 2 pm to 4 pm
Textiles Subcommittee Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs. Grand Rapids, MI

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recycled paper with vegetable
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Federal Prison Industries (FPI) Reform Made Law



Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (FPI) effectively lost its "mandatory source status" when the Consolidated Appropriations Bill, H.R. 4818, was signed into law by President Bush on December 8, 2004.

Since the late 1980's, BIFMA has sought reform freeing U.S. federal agencies to use the standard government purchasing process rather than being required to buy FPI's products which go by the brand name UNICOR. The spending bill is composed of nine appropriation bills with one of these being the FY05 Transportation/Treasury Bill containing Section 637. The key paragraph ending mandatory source status is as follows:

Section 637. None of the funds made available under this or any other Act for fiscal year 2005 and each fiscal year thereafter shall be expended for the purchase of a product or service offered by Federal Prison Industries, Inc. unless the agency making such purchase determines that such offered product or service provides the best value to the buying agency pursuant to governmentwide procurement regulations, issued pursuant to section 25(c)(1) of the Office of Federal Procurement Act (41 U.S.C. 421(c)(1)) that impose procedures, standards, and limitations of section 2410n of title 10, United States Code.

BIFMA created the Competition in Contracting Act Coalition in 1996 to bring together all

businesses trying to sell goods to the federal government. This change is a great victory for the hundreds of coalition members who had banded together with government agencies themselves seeking this reform. A more competitive procurement process will bring additional purchasing options to all of government as a result of this change.

The coalition is very grateful to Senator Richard Shelby and Representative Ernest Istook for supporting the inclusion of Section 637 in the final bill, as well as Representative Peter Hoekstra, Senator Carl Levin, and the many Members of Congress who made this quest a non-partisan, good-government initiative. Rep. Hoekstra has pledged to continue seeking comprehensive reform to ensure that prisoners have valid work programs and the reforms achieved thus far remain uncompromised.



Reformers U.S. Senator Carl Levin and U.S. Representative Pete Hoekstra at 2001 Press Conference

IAQ Experts Working With BIFMA As Peer Reviewers

The BIFMA Furniture Emissions Subcommittee, under the chairmanship of Randy Carter of Steelcase Inc., continues on its aggressive schedule to complete a document for furniture emissions testing that will be useful in testing for emissions of formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Dr. Jensen Zhang of Syracuse University is assisting the FES Subcommittee in the development of a standardized test method for furniture emissions testing. Assisting Dr. Zhang in the capacity of peer reviewers are (as listed left to right

in the photo): Al Hodgson of Berkeley Analytical Associates; Dr. Marilyn Black of Air Quality Sciences; Dr. Bruce Tichenor, IAQ Consultant; Leon Alevantis, California Department of Health Services; and Mark Mason of the U.S. EPA. Bob Magee of the National Research Council of Canada is also assisting as a peer reviewer but was not present for the photo. Dr. Zhang is pictured with the group on the far right.

The Furniture Emissions Subcommittee plans to complete work on the draft document by the end of January. The BIFMA Board of Directors

will review the proposed document and subcommittee recommendations at their February 10, 2005 meeting. The Furniture Emissions Subcommittee has been meeting on a monthly basis to develop a method of testing office furniture for emissions that can be used as an alternative under the USGBC LEED-CI EQ 4.5 credit for low emitting furniture.

If you are interested in this BIFMA activity, contact Dick Driscoll at rdriscol@bifma.org.



(Left to Right) Al Hodgson, Dr. Marilyn Black, Dr. Bruce Tichenor, Leon Alevantis, Mark Mason, and Dr. Jensen Zhang at the December 1, 2004 Meeting of BIFMA's Furniture Emissions Subcommittee in Grand Rapids, Michigan

BIFMA Welcomes New Members

BIFMA welcomes our newest members and hopes they will find the benefits of membership to BIFMA rewarding.

Newest Regular Members:

- Wright Line LLC - Worcester, MA

Newest Supplier Members:

- Momentum Ind., LLC -

Newest Service Members:

- MAS Inc. - Suwanee, GA

Formaldehyde Update

BIFMA continues to investigate what can be done to reduce formaldehyde that is added to products manufacturers purchase through their supply chain. While 'elimination' of formaldehyde is probably not possible since it occurs naturally in the environment, BIFMA is seeking to reduce levels of man-made forms of formaldehyde.

Rich Engler, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Green Chemistry Program and Tara O'Hare of EPA's Design for the Environment program participated in BIFMA's December 7, 2004 Sustainability Subcommittee meeting to discuss this issue. The purpose was to determine what assistance EPA might provide to BIFMA in support of the formaldehyde concerns. EPA offered to make its

database available for our review and suggested that alternative products are available today that could be recommended through the Green Suppliers Network (GSN). BIFMA is partnering with the EPA on the Green Suppliers Network and it may be the best way to influence the supply chain.

BIFMA will continue working with industry suppliers and other associations to reduce formaldehyde content. In early December, the staff of the Composite Panel Association (CPA) visited BIFMA to discuss ways of addressing common problems such as the formaldehyde issue. BIFMA had recently commented on the CPA's re-affirmation process for their ANSI Particleboard Standard. It was a very good meeting and they appear to understand our concerns.

BIFMA will be represented on a panel at the April 2005 National Environmental Partnership Summit in Chicago. The three-day, EPA program is focused on sharing innovations in pollution prevention, compliance assistance, and environmental leadership. The panel with BIFMA and industry representation will be entitled "Greening The Supply Chain: Creating Partnerships Beyond Measure". The target audience of manufacturers, suppliers, government, and trade associations will focus on methods of confronting challenges in collaborative ways to achieve a healthier environment.

For additional information, go to <http://www.EnvironmentalSummit.org>

Green Suppliers Network Continues To Make Inroads

By Steve Beurkens, H&L Advantage

When H&L Advantage was invited to participate in the GSN/Lean Manufacturing Survey program by our long time customer, Steelcase Inc., we were both excited and apprehensive at the same time. The excitement stemmed from being chosen as one of the suppliers able to go through the process and review the results for long term improvements, while the apprehension came from the not knowing what was really involved, and wondering "What kinds of skeletons are we likely to dig up? Will we get negative exposure?" Although I never shared this with Steelcase, the worries at H&L were indeed very real!

After our first few minutes with our facilitators, Bill Stough and Rick Fleming, our apprehension was removed, and we were instead anxious to find as many opportunities for

improvements as we could! The old saying, "You can't see the forest for the trees" was quite accurate in this case. Being involved with the H&L operations on a daily basis, it was easy for all of us here not to see things that the trained eyes of Bill and Rick were able to detect quite readily. Couple that with the non-emotional approach that they could both bring to the table, and a flow of ideas and processes soon took shape. Things that we would have thought were impossible to change, or to do without, were some of the easiest targets for improvement.

We met numerous times, had further phone and e-mail correspondence, and then met two additional times to finalize the information we had gathered and analyzed into a comprehensive report. H&L is in the process of reviewing action plans to address each area of opportunity, and over the next 12 months we will be implementing

most of the items we were able to analyze.

Although the GSN/Lean program targeted just one major assembled product, that product was chosen because of its impact throughout not only our own plant, but also our suppliers outside the organization. What we learned from this product will carry over into other products, and future plans, through H&L.

The GSN/Lean Manufacturing Survey process was informative, educational, and at the same time enjoyable. We even had fun with the process, thanks to the approach that Bill and Rick took to help us understand how the process worked. We would suggest that all companies that have the opportunity to investigate the GSN/Lean process do so with open minds and positive expectations. H&L was certainly surprised and pleased at our positive results.

(interested companies can contact BIFMA.)

BIFMA International Standards Activities in the UK

In October 2004, BIFMA represented the USA in international standards development at Stevenage UK. The group pictured here is part of ISO Technical Committee 136 Working Group 2 Office Work Tables and Desks.

Dick Driscoll of BIFMA is the Convener (Chairman) of the Working Group (WG2). The Group is developing the ISO Standard for Office Work Tables and Desks. The British Association) hosted the meeting. The USA and laboratory FIRA (Furniture Industry Research



From left to right: Randy Ruster, Herman Miller, USA, Thomas Ekstrom, Sweden, Eberhardt Kloeber, Germany, Dick Driscoll BIFMA, USA, Phil Reynolds, FIRA, UK, Kjeld Bulow, Denmark, Bo Wadling, Sweden, Peter Smith OFFMA, UK Bill Gulliver FIRA (Retired), Paolo Balutto, Italy, and Jean-Paul Schnell, France (Tom Rademaker (Steelcase, Retired) was part of the delegation, but not shown in the photo.)

Canada are the only North American participants

in the international standards activities. Other participants come from European countries. Our mission is to have an influence in the development of international standards that pertain to office furniture.

We anticipate another two years before this international standard for Office Work Tables and Desks will become an approved ISO Standard. Contact Dick Driscoll at rdriscoll@bifma.org for additional information.

American Furniture Manufacturers Assoc. Reorganizes

From November 5, 2004 AHFA (AFMA) Press Release by Jackie Hirshhaut, AHFA VP for Public Affairs

SEA ISLAND, Ga. – The American Furniture Manufacturers Association has become the American Home Furnishings Alliance, a broad-based organization that will embrace the global home furnishings community while still remaining a critical advocate for U.S. furniture manufacturers.

"The new organization reflects our continued focus on assisting U.S.-based manufacturers, but also recognizes the new business models many of our members have adopted in recent years," said AHFA's CEO Andy Counts following the historic membership vote today that changed the organization's name and established new membership criteria on the eve of

AFMA's 100-year anniversary.

Previously, to be eligible for AHFA (AFMA) membership, a company was required to have a manufacturing facility within the United States. The new organization eliminates that requirement and welcomes any company that manufactures or imports home furnishings products for wholesale distribution.

"In the future, an increasing number of longtime AHFA (AFMA) members who value the association's programs and services would have no longer qualified for membership. While our new organization will remain a voice for domestic manufacturers at the state and federal level, we will also create new services for those members and prospective members whose business models do not necessarily include domestic furniture production," Counts stated.

"AHFA also will place renewed emphasis on gathering and disseminating timely, accurate and critical industry data and research to the membership and industry stakeholders."

The operations arm of the new

organization will remain focused on government affairs, as well as the professional disciplines within a typical member company, including manufacturing, human resources, safety, environmental affairs, information technology, purchasing, packaging, transportation and finance.

Marketing and public relations will take on added importance as the new organization works to impact consumers and gain a greater share of disposable income for home furnishings. The official Media Center of the International Home Furnishings Market in High Point will continue to be sponsored and staffed by AHFA to facilitate press coverage of new home furnishings products and trends each April and October.

The current Suppliers Division of the AHFA (AFMA) will remain intact within the new Alliance and will be open to companies that supply goods and services to AHFA members worldwide.

For additional information, contact the AHFA at <http://www.ahfa.us/index.htm>



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Management Conference “Sustainability” Focus A Draw

BIFMA's Management Conference from February 10-12, 2005 is shaping up to be the industry event of the decade. Association members, industry partners, and international leaders of the sustainability movement will gather at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort in Bonita Springs, Florida to explore and experience the history, meaning, and future of "Sustainability".

In 2004, BIFMA's Board of Directors adopted the following environmental mission statement:

BIFMA is committed to promoting sustainable work environments and business practices based on sound economics, environmental protection, and social responsibility. We will accomplish these goals by fostering partnerships between manufacturers, suppliers, end users, and the science community; providing association members with education in the concepts of sustainable design; and developing meaningful tools for quantifying and communicating industry progress to interested parties.

As a part of that commitment, BIFMA has invited keynote speaker, Paul Hawken, Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to

explain the connections between the three components of sustainability's "triple bottom line": the economy, society, and the environment.

This conference is filling fast. Register online at:

<https://www.grandconnection.com/bifma>



Dianne Dillon-Ridgley



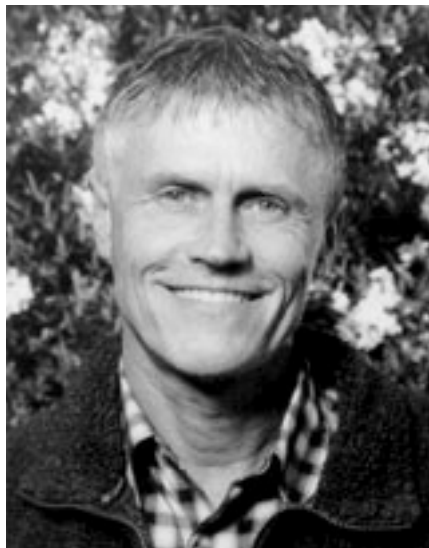
Jared Diamond



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.



Frances Cairncross



Paul Hawken

The conference will also feature evolutionary biologist and author of "Guns, Germs, and Steel" Jared M. Diamond; former Management Editor of The Economist, Frances Cairncross; and Morton Kondracke's report on the political scene from his perspective as a 37-year veteran journalist in Washington, D.C.

Wrapping it all up will be Rick Fedrizzi of the U.S. Green Buildings Council with an executive briefing on the new Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building System for Commercial Interiors, or "LEED-CI".



Morton Kondracke

A New Year, A Pro-Active Agenda To The World

2004 was a year of action for BIFMA and the many industry volunteers who contribute their time and talents to our many projects. Thank you all! It is making a difference.

From the initiatives outlined in this newsletter (the furniture emissions work, Green Suppliers Network, and international standards activity) to those detailed in previous stories this year (designing suspect flame retardants out of products, reduction of formaldehyde in materials, and a resource reclamation project to keep discarded furniture out of landfills), BIFMA has stepped forward on the environmental front and is becoming known as a player in the sustainability movement.

To usher in 2005, BIFMA eagerly anticipates the adoption and distribution of Sustainability Guidelines for office furniture manufacturers and suppliers. This document will serve as a "roadmap" to help guide all companies along a path where profits, environmental performance, and partnerships with all elements of society co-exist harmoniously and can be continued indefinitely to everyone's benefit.

There are many good reasons for creating this document and BIFMA members adopting it. The long-term health of any company or industry is dependent upon the availability of resources. Even in the short-term, studies are showing that businesses with practices making minimal demands on natural resources are more profitable. The BIFMA Sustainability Guidelines are intended to assist in the implementation and continuation of sustainable business practices.

The Guidelines will show consumers expressing a preference for sustainable, green, or

ethical products that companies are doing the right thing. As the movement toward transparency in all institutions continues, early adopters are benefiting from the trust and good faith established by taking action before being asked to make changes.

Regulatory pressures are reduced or eliminated when regulators see evidence of corporate responsibility and leadership on environmental and social issues. When governments meet industries willing to partner on problem-solving the myriad of complex issues that continually arise,



The Table Is Set: BIFMA Executive Director Tom Reardon, Legal Counsel John McNeil, and Administrative Assistant Roxanne DeBoer at Staff Holiday Lunch (Dick Driscoll in Foreground)

the issues become the enemy rather than the industry.

And finally, to remain competitive in a global market, all businesses must concentrate on eliminating costs that do not translate directly into value for customers. Companies pursuing sustainability recognize nature as the ultimate low cost/high value producer and will design business processes to mimic natural, zero waste cycles.

BIFMA will complete a furniture

emissions standard in 2005 that is targeted to be used as an option for credit in the U.S. Green Buildings Council (USGBC) LEED for Commercial Interiors program. BIFMA is a strong supporter of the Green Buildings Council and will cultivate relationships with the Canadian and Mexican Green Buildings Councils next year.

Another USGBC project that could impact the office furniture industry is the issue of life cycle assessment or "LCA". BIFMA will participate in a working group that is expected to run all year and into 2006. The outcome of this

effort could significantly alter the entire LEED credit structure and which products and processes are considered "green", BIFMA will work to make sure that clarity (comprehensible tools) and consensus for both manufacturers and customers is achieved in what is being called the "LCA into LEED Project".

An LCA procedure developed by USGBC could become the standard for specifiers everywhere so it is important to know how energy, transportation, and material selection decisions are made by our members and the ramifications of going one direction versus another. It's the old "paper versus plastic" debate raised to a new, critically important, level. It would be a very positive outcome if this effort could cut through all the competing approaches causing confusion in the marketplace.

Our work is cut out for us and BIFMA members interested in playing a personal role with any of these initiatives need only say the word. There is plenty of room at the table, so have a chair and let's get down to business.

The Download is published quarterly by BIFMA International to provide a brief update of association activities.

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Paul Simons, *The Mayline Group*

Brian Walker, *Herman Miller Inc.*

CALENDAR
of industry events

Updated regularly on BIFMA's Internet Site: www.bifma.org

January 13-17, 2005 - Paris Furniture Fair - Paris, France; Internet: <http://www.salondumeuble.com>

January 17-23, 2005 - International Furniture Fair (IMM) - Cologne, Germany; Internet: <http://www.moebelmesse.de>

January 23-26, 2005 - The Furniture Show 2004 - Birmingham, U.K.; Internet: <http://www.interior-sevent.com/tfs/index.shtml>

January 26-29, 2005 - San Francisco Furniture Market, Winter Market 2005 - San Francisco, California; Internet: <http://www.sfmart.com>

Feb. 10-12, 2005 - BIFMA International's Annual Management Conference - Bonita Springs, Florida; Internet: <http://www.bifma.org>

February 21-24, 2005: ZOW Furniture Supply Show, Bad Salzufflen, Germany; www.zow-messe.com

Feb. 28-Mar. 1, 2005 - AHFA (AFMA) Upholstered Furniture Flammability Workshop - Greensboro NC; Internet: [http://www.ahfa\(afma\)4u.org](http://www.ahfa(afma)4u.org); to register 336.884.5000 Ext. 114

Feb.28-Mar.3, 2005 - Philippine International Furniture Show - Manila, Philippines; Internet: <http://www.pifshow.com>

March 1-5, 2005 - International Furniture Fair Singapore - Singapore Expo (Changi); Internet: www.iff.com.sg

March 7-10, 2005 - National Manufacturing Week - Chicago, IL ; Contact: National Association of Manufacturers, Telephone: 1.800.840.0678; Internet: www.manufacturingweek.com.

March 9-10, 2005 - Neocon West - L.A. Mart, Los Angeles, CA, jmineau@mmart.com, 312.527.7074, Internet: <http://www.neoconwest.com>

March 9-11, 2005 -World of Wood 2005; Savannah, Georgia; Internet: <http://www.iwpawood.org/convention.html>

March 15-17, 2005 - OFDA Legislative Conference - Loew's L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, Washington DC; Internet: <http://www.ofdanet.org>

March 16-20, 2005- Furnidec - Thessaloniki, Greece; 0030 2310 291 203, Email: kosmima@helexpo.gr, Internet: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

April 11-14, 2005 - National Environmental Partnership Summit (USEPA) - Chicago IL; Internet: <http://www.EnvironmentalSummit.org>

April 20-22, 2005 - EnvironDesign9 - New York, NY, USA; Internet: <http://www.isdesignet.com/ED/index.html>; Telephone: 561-627-3393

April 14-20, 2005 - Spring International Home Furnishings Market - High Point, NC; Telephone: 336.888.3700; Internet: www.ihfc.com

April 29 - May 5, 2005 - Interzum 2003 - Cologne, Germany; Internet: <http://www.interzum.de>.

May 3-5, 2005 - GSA's National Product Expo - San Diego, California; Contact: General Services Administration's National Furniture Center; Telephone: 703-305-5853; Internet: expo.gsa.gov

June 13-15, 2005, NeoCon World's Trade Fair - Chicago, IL; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.; Telephone: 800-677-6278 or 312.527.7599; Internet: www.merchandisemart.com

October 23-25, 2005 - World Workplace - 2005 Conference & Expo, Philadelphia, PA USA; Contact: IFMA.org; Internet: www.worldworkplace.org

November 9-11, 2005 - Greenbuild International Conference & Expo - Atlanta, GA; Internet: <http://www.greenbuildexpo.org>