One of the key reasons any association exists is to provide a forum for an industry to come together to address legislative and regulatory issues more effectively than individual companies can do on their own. As I complete my tenth “legislative season” monitoring and tracking bills for MBI, one thing is certain: government interference and oversight is at an all-time high for this industry. Each year, MBI reviews literally thousands of bills and regulations for possible impact on the industry.

In a typical year, MBI is actively involved in hot issues in two or three states while monitoring and tracking the other states. In 2013, however, we have had active battles in Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Additionally, we are still working on code development issues and dealing with larger issues in California and New York pertaining to the expansion of prevailing wages into the factory for public projects.

The common underlying theme is that budgetary constraints at the state level are leading to new and creative ways to squeeze a few more dollars from the industry. Another disturbing trend is the apparent power grab happening at some agencies — implementing new rules without industry or public comment. We have also found that the manufactured housing associations are particularly influential in the southeastern states. Given their local representation and a marginal crossover of modular companies, that group often positions itself as the industry spokesperson. And without MBI member involvement or activity, they often are.

One of our key efforts this year has been to get our industry representatives appointed to key advisory councils at the state level. Our industry now has volunteer reps at the table in Texas, Massachusetts, Florida and Pennsylvania as well as on the Interstate Industrialized Building Commission Program, which covers New Jersey, Rhode Island, Minnesota and North Dakota.

This monitoring and tracking at the state level mirrors our work in Washington, D.C., where keeping an eye on policy makers is a full-time job! And, as it turns out, governments everywhere are generally too intrusive and heavy handed. At our most recent meeting, the MBI board voted to create a separate Canadian Government Affairs Committee to monitor issues at the national and provincial levels. MBI plans to work with similar groups in Canada, initially on national building code development, but also on more local issues impacting the industry.

It’s not an easy part of what we do at MBI. In fact, it’s often the most cumbersome and frustrating service we provide. But consider the alternative of doing nothing. If you would like to become more involved with MBI’s government affairs efforts, please email tom@modular.org.

Tom Hardiman, MBI Executive Director
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MODULAR CONSTRUCTION SUMMITS: MBI CONTINUES TO SPREAD THE WORD THAT MODULAR IS CHANGING THE WAY THE WORLD BUILDS GREENER, FASTER, SMARTER.

It started in New York City – MBI's first Modular Construction Summit of 2013. On May 17, more than 200 people came to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn to network and learn about modular construction. At least half of those in attendance were from outside the modular industry – a good mix of GCs, developers and architects, who came to the Summit to explore the possibilities of modular. They heard informative panel discussions entitled “Permanent Modular Construction for Multifamily Applications” and “Modular Solutions for Disaster Relief: Respond, Recover, Rebuild.”

Then in June, MBI went to the Nation's Capital, where the Washington DC Modular Construction Summit drew about 100 professionals. About half were from outside the modular industry. Attendees listened to a comprehensive keynote talk from National Institute of Building Sciences President Henry Green and then heard lively panel discussions on “Modular Solutions for Large Mixed-Use Projects,” “Innovation in Modular Construction” and “High Performance Green Modular Schools.” They were then invited to attend a meeting of the new NIBS Offsite Construction Council or tour the Green Schools Exhibit at the National Building Museum.

Next on the calendar will be two Summits on the West Coast in October. Join us at BCIT in Vancouver, British Columbia on October 2, and at Cal Poly in Pomona, California on October 4. The events will feature excellent panel discussion and networking, as well as factory tours of Britco and Silver Creek Industries, respectively. Stay tuned to Member Connection Now, social media and the MBI website for more details.
Williams Scotsman Supplies Modular Units to New Jersey Beach Towns

Williams Scotsman recently announced that several of its modular units have been deployed to multiple New Jersey beach towns post Hurricane Sandy.

“Our modular units will be up and down the East Coast this summer, allowing towns like Belmar and Avon-by-the-Sea to reopen for their busiest summer tourist season,” said Joseph Vecchiolla, president of Williams Scotsman. “We are glad to be part of the rebuilding efforts.”

Williams Scotsman supplied Belmar Township in New Jersey with multiple modular units to be used as restroom facilities, umbrella and chair rental stands and first aid stations. The company also provided its new Moduflex™ unit to a boutique clothing store, so the small business could be open to shoppers by the start of the summer season.

Previously, the company played a critical role in helping to rebuild after Hurricanes Rita and Katrina. Williams Scotsman played a vital role within New Orleans’ Recovery School District, providing 500,000 square feet of modular classroom space to seven different school sites after Hurricane Katrina.

Matt Manarino of Williams Scotsman and NJ Gov. Chris Christie
San Bernardino County Chooses Modular Construction For Upcoming Affordable Senior Living Project

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino and Perera Construction and Design have selected US Modular as their modular installation contractor for an 86-apartment project in Redlands, California. This 105,317-square-foot affordable senior housing project will consist of 13 apartment buildings and a community center set on 11 acres of land formerly occupied by housing built in the 1940’s. The 173 modules, built off site by Clayton Homes, will be craned on to the foundations and site built garages installed by Perera Construction and US Modular.

Ramtech to Provide New Modular Building for the University of Texas Charter School Program

Ramtech Building Systems of Mansfield, Texas has announced that the company has secured a contract with the University of Texas System to provide a new 9,480-square-foot modular building on a 36-month lease to aid in expanding the university's charter school program. The new facility was procured through the Texas BuyBoard purchasing cooperative and will accommodate third through sixth grade students by providing five additional classrooms. In addition to the classroom space, the modular school building also features a large conference room, seven private offices and a reception area. The exterior of the building will utilize a 26-gauge metal R-panel siding along with an aluminum landing and ramp assembly at the main entrance, and a wood landing and ramp connecting the secondary entrance with the existing facility.

Seattle’s Best Coffee Gets Modular

Ten of Seattle’s Best Coffee locations opened in May in the Dallas area. The stores were fabricated and installed in the previous three months by the DeSoto-based Palomar Modular Buildings.

“The custom specifications for these projects came from the Seattle’s Best Coffee group. They made a conscious decision to utilize the modular building approach because modular construction would provide the company with the build quality they wanted, and their plan for a coordinated launch of all 10 stores within a three month window would be impractical using site-built construction,” said John Martin, president of Palomar Modular Buildings.

“Palomar’s accelerated construction method allowed us to build and complete the production of these 10 buildings in less than 30 days while the job sites were being prepared. The completed modular coffee shops were transported to the prepared job sites for quick installation.”
MBI Welcomes Newest Staff Member

Please join us in welcoming Catherine Adkins as the Member Services and Events Coordinator for MBI. Catherine, who has a background in events and office administration, will be assisting with MBI events and membership services. She is a recent graduate of the University of Virginia. If you need help with anything, feel free to contact her at catherine@modular.org. Welcome, Catherine!

Modular Solutions Hires New Sales and Preconstruction Team Member

Former Champion Commercial Builders executive Bill Sandigo recently joined the team at Modular Solutions. Modular Solutions provides prefabricated buildings for temporary and permanent space solutions throughout the southwest. Sandigo brings more than 25 years experience to their team with expertise in production, project management, sales, estimating and preconstruction design services. He will be responsible for helping clients with preconstruction design, feasibility reports, sales and estimating, and providing turnkey space solutions to any educational client in the southwest region.

PCL Construction Opens Modular Fabrication Centre of Excellence

The PCL family of companies opened the Peter Stalenhoef Centre of Modular Excellence in Nisku, Alberta in June. The new $10 million facility bears the name of the recently retired chief operating officer of PCL’s heavy industrial division and is home to PCL’s modular assembly office and training centre.

“No one has been more supportive of building strong, integrated teams at PCL than Peter Stalenhoef,” said Paul Douglas, PCL president and CEO. “That’s why this building, and the yards it supports, deserves the title ‘Centre of Excellence’.”

The 35,000-square-foot building provides permanent space to accommodate those of PCL’s operations teams who were previously housed in 14 portable trailers on site, and to provide meeting and training space, and a lunch area for workers.

The Nisku site is one of PCL’s manufacturing centers for large modular components, which are used in oil sands, mining and petrochemical refining processes. The site is currently home to more than 800 craft workers. In the 15 years the Nisku module facilities have been operating, this group has produced more than 2,000 modules for various industrial clients.

Titan International Purchases Manufactured Structures Corporation

In June, Titan International purchased the assets of Manufactured Structures Corporation, located in Rochester, Indiana. Founded in 1984, Manufactured Structures Corporation designs, engineers and manufactures movable and permanent commercial modular buildings – including administrative offices, banks, classrooms, guard houses, press boxes and medical facilities.

Titan International, a holding company incorporated in Quincy, Illinois, owns subsidiaries that supply wheels, tires, assemblies and undercarriage products for off-highway equipment used in agricultural, earthmoving/construction and consumer applications.
Innovative Procurement Agreement Aims to Create New Business Opportunities

WesternOne recently announced that its modular building division Britco and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation have entered into a procurement partnership that will see both parties work together to create new business opportunities for both the company and the First Nation.

“Britco is a leading BC construction company. Its modular approach to building is a more sustainable, faster and smarter way to build, something we value tremendously,” said Leonard George, Director of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation Economic Development Corporation.

Britco and Tsleil-Waututh will be working together to source opportunities to rent and sell temporary or permanent modular buildings. In addition, they will be seeking to secure projects that require design-build and construction management expertise, such as residential housing, senior accommodations, daycares or office complexes.

“The Tsleil-Waututh Nation has a strong track record of building partnerships focused on long-term value-creation for the community as a whole,” said Britco President Mike Ridley. “We are looking forward to working closely with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation to provide sustainable modular building solutions on major projects in and around the region.”

ModSpace Opens New Branch Office to Better Serve Customers in Northeastern, Pennsylvania

The newest of ModSpace’s 80-plus network of branch locations opened in May in Hanover Township, Pennsylvania, a neighborhood in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton region. The new sales office and storage yard will allow them to better serve customers throughout Northeast Pennsylvania with a local fleet of mobile offices, ModSafe portable storage containers and their innovative HQ ultimate onsite office.

“Opening this branch and investing greater resources in the region is a logical step for us,” said ModSpace VP of Sales John Liefgr. “Growth in the region, due in part to the Marcellus Shale, has steadily increased demand for our temporary and permanent buildings. By moving part of our fleet closer to our customers, we can improve delivery times, service intervals and overall customer service.”
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