

# *The Strand Board*

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## **Florida Building Commission Hears AWC Testimony**

Further to our report in the July Strand Board, we are pleased to announce that the Florida Building Commission voted unanimously to rescind a previously approved amendment to raise minimum thickness of wood structural panel sheathing from 7/16" to 15/32". At the August meeting of the Commission, the American Wood Council's Southeast Regional Manager Dr. Jeffrey Stone provided key testimony on several issues of the new 2004 Florida Building Code, including the requirement for thicker roof sheathing, as well as prescriptive provisions for hurricane-resistant wood frame construction and moisture management of building systems. The previously approved amendment evolved from a local building code requirement in Palm Beach County enacted after Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

Dr. Stone argued persuasively that sheathing thickness should be determined through engineering analysis, and not established arbitrarily with little or no technical data. Representatives of the Florida Building Materials Association and the Florida Home Builders Association voiced their support for Dr. Stone's arguments. Although the Structural Board Association initially adopted a neutral position, it is clear that this decision for the status quo will result in little or no market disruptions and keeps the FBC in line with other codes on the issue of roof sheathing thickness.

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## **CSA Public Comment Period to Start for the New Draft CSA O325 Standard**

During a recent meeting of CSA's Technical Committee on Wood Based Panels, the committee reviewed the proposed draft CSA O325 standard. As reported earlier, this draft is based on adoption of the US PS 2-04 standard as the main element, with specific Canadian Deviations up front dealing with grade marking, plywood knot sizes and a quality system that differ in Canada from the accepted practice in the US. After a very fruitful discussion, the committee moved to accept this draft in principle albeit with last minute amendments regarding

acceptable binder systems and other editorial changes for clarity. CSA will be posting this draft on their web site most likely by month end for a mandatory 60-day public review period prior to a committee letter ballot. Anyone can submit comments to this draft, with the information to be found on the CSA's web site at [www.csa-intl.org/english/infoupdate/main\\_en.asp](http://www.csa-intl.org/english/infoupdate/main_en.asp). Once there, simply click on Drafts for Public Comments to access the files, and submit your comments if needed.

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## **SBA Updates Publications**

During the summer months several of our technical publications were reprinted or updated with current information. A new Generic OSB Material Safety Data Sheet with new information about formaldehyde and wood dust is available, as well as our ever popular OSB in Wood Frame Construction Manual (US Version). The manual will be distributed together with other SBA publications at the upcoming Wood Solutions Fair in Long Beach, California.

We are also currently in the midst of revising the Educational Residential Brochure (Spanish version) just in time for our planned participation at Expo-Cihac, a large construction and home show in Mexico City running from October 18 to 22.

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## **Second Notice for Virginia Tech Workshop**

The Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management offers a short course in the Fall on Forest Products Marketing (Oct 20-21). This workshop will be held in Blacksburg, Virginia, and is offered to industry professionals who want to hone their marketing skills. Additional information such as registration forms and course content can be obtained from their web site at [www.conted.vt.edu/forestpm](http://www.conted.vt.edu/forestpm)

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## **SBA Participates in BEC/JAS Meetings in Chicago**

SBA participated in the recent annual tripartite Japan/Canada/USA Building Evaluations Committee/ Japanese Agricultural Standards Committee meetings in Chicago, Illinois. The main purpose of these meetings, already in their seventeenth year, is to hear testimony from Japanese experts regarding building code and standard issues in Japan of interest to the North American wood and structural panel industries. US and Canadian delegates often have the opportunity to offer valuable comments and critique these proposed changes. Of note are the JAS changes affecting foreign overseas certification bodies. A trip report can be obtained from the SBA office on simple request.

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## **Formaldehyde Regulations Update**

The SBA participated in several conference calls lately dealing with proposed workplace formaldehyde emissions in the provinces of Ontario and BC.

We are pleased to announce that, after several years of negotiations and input from many stakeholders, the Province of Ontario has accepted in principle an industry proposal submitted by the Composite Panel Association to set the new workplace exposure levels for formaldehyde to 1.0 ppm TWAEV and a 1.5 ppm CEV, for a January 1, 2008 effective date. Exceptions may still be available for those mills requiring a longer implementation date, to be heard on a case by case basis.

On the other hand, we must also inform you that the Province of British Columbia is proposing a very stringent workplace exposure limit for formaldehyde based on the recommended ACGIH ceiling limit of 0.3 ppm. The SBA has joined an industry coalition, which will prepare comments in opposition to this proposal from WorkSafe BC ( aka TheWorkman's Compensation Board). Comments will be submitted as well by the US based Formaldehyde Council about the health risks associated with workplace exposure to formaldehyde.

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