

# THE DOWNLOAD

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## calendar BIFMA EVENTS

BIFMA (the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association) had scheduled the following list of meetings and events at press time. Additional events will be scheduled, so continue to watch for meeting notices on the Internet at [www.bifma.org](http://www.bifma.org).

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October 3, 2000  
Building Code Subcommittee  
(Location to be determined / conference call participation will be available)  
St. Louis, MO

November 7 & 8, 2000  
Panel Standard Subcommittee  
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM November 7, 2000  
8:00 AM to Noon November 8, 2000  
Crowne Plaza, Grand Rapids, MI

November 14, 2000  
Environment Subcommittee  
8:30 - 11:30 AM  
BIFMA Headquarters  
2680 Horizon Dr. SE, Suite A-1  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

December 13, 2000  
Furniture Emission Standards Subcommittee  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
Crowne Plaza, Grand Rapids, MI

February 1 - 3, 2001  
Annual Management Conference  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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### NEW REGULAR MEMBERS:

Stone Dimensions

### NEW SUPPLIER MEMBERS:

Magnetic Corporation

### NEW SERVICE MEMBERS:

Air Quality Sciences

### NEW INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS:

Dist-Plex

Koleksiyon Mobilya

Merchandise Testing Laboratories

Richarz Kommunikation

Siam Steel Group

## BIFMA Annual Meeting Speaker Predicts Growth

By Mike Reagan

David A. Wyss, Ph.D. was the featured speaker at BIFMA's annual meeting and breakfast held during Neocon in Chicago this past June 2000. Since 1979, Dr. Wyss has been chief economist at Standard and Poor's DRI. He is responsible for DRI's economic forecasts and publications. He also co-authors regular DRI publications, manages research projects, has appeared

economic advisor for other major government and private entities.

Dr. Wyss described to the BIFMA membership the current state of the U.S. economy and how our industry might share in its robust state of health, even though there was increasing evidence for an economic slowdown. The Fed is trying to hit a soft landing, easing growth to a sustainable pace with-



David A. Wyss

on many major television programs, including Wall Street Week, Today, Good Morning America, and several others. In addition, Dr. Wyss has been a senior economist with the President's Council of Economic Advisers and the Federal Reserve Board as well as an

out causing a recession. Following are excerpts from Dr. Wyss's comments:

*Overall consumer price inflation remains moderate, but core inflation (excluding food and energy) accelerated.*

(continued on page two)

# Economist Predicts Surpluses & Growth

(continued from page one)

This rising core CPI inflation troubles the Fed, although DRI believes it is accounted for by the seepage of oil prices into the core. More importantly, the Fed is looking at the anecdotal reports in the Beige Book, which continue to show greater wage pressure than the data indicate.

U.S. consumers are still driving the economy. Their confidence increased further, despite declines in the stock market and rising oil prices. They may assume that the recent pickup in inflation will be short-lived, and are acting accordingly. The saving rate hit a record low in the first quarter and was expected to rise somewhat, but remain near 1%. High levels of wealth make American households content with their low saving rate.

Businesses are spending more on equipment and software. Labor is scarce and expensive, while interest rates are still relatively low. Any rational employer will try to substitute capital for labor in this environment. Equipment and software spending hit a record 10% of GDP in the first quarter. We expect to see continued strong investment.

Nonresidential construction has soft-

ened because of higher interest rates and overbuilding in some segments. The first-quarter bounce seems seasonal, reflecting the unusually good winter weather, rather than a reversal of the recent downtrend. But office vacancy rates remain low and the return to property owners is back near the levels of the early 1980s, providing support for construction.



BIFMA Annual Meeting: "Surpluses As Far As The Eye Can See"- David Wyss

Inventory accumulation dropped even more sharply than first estimated in the first quarter. We expect some building of inventory later this year, if only to restore needed stock.

There appears to be some rotation from the "new economy" technology stocks back to the old economy stocks. We expect stocks to recover from their current lows once the Fed finishes tight-

ening, but the five consecutive years of 20%-plus gains are over. Going forward, DRI expects gains to be below their historical averages, balancing the last 18 years of above-normal returns.

The trade deficit is widening. Although classical economics suggests that this would cut into the value of the dollar, in today's world, financial flows dominate the goods flows. The strong flow of investment into the United States is balancing the trade gap in goods, keeping the dollar strong. In fact, the strong dollar is widening the trade gap. American goods are less competitive overseas, while the U.S. economy continues to grow faster than its major trading partners. DRI expects to see record U.S. trade deficits in 2000 and 2001, before they stabilize.

GDP growth should slow to near trend rates beginning in the second half of the year, largely because of the rises in interest rates and oil prices. Higher interest rates are beginning to slow housing and investment spending. The Federal Reserve may have to hit the brakes harder before the economy slows enough to satisfy it, however.

Despite the threats, the current expansion seems likely to continue through 2004.

# Shipments Forecast Revised Upward

BIFMA announced in September that U.S. manufacturer shipments through July were up 10% over the first seven months of 1999. Incoming order rates and shipments growth improved throughout the seven-month period resulting in the highest first seven-month volumes ever; exceeding 1998, the previous record high first seven-month period.

This strength in both orders and shipments has prompted the association to raise their projection for calendar year 2000 shipment expectations to about \$13.34 billion for the year (9% growth). While nonresidential construction has softened because of higher interest rates, office vacancy rates remain very low in most markets.

The office furniture industry is generally not significantly impacted by rising interest rates and has in the past experienced significant growth during periods of high interest rates. Strong anticipated growth in white-collar employment and continued improvements in corporate profitability will continue to bolster demand for office furniture.

# N.Y. DESIGNWEEK™

october 30 - november 4, 2000



NYC Visitors Bureau



mark your calendar



Energy Photographer, Inc./Luce Lighting

**N.Y. DesignWeek™**, an all encompassing event, showcases the latest in contract and residential furnishings throughout New York City.

**NeoCon® New York**, the headline event **November 1-2**, brings over 300 exhibitors to the Jacob Javits Convention Center. See the newest trends and learn from numerous seminars offered – all in one place for your convenience.

For more information call **800/513-7557** or visit us at  
**www.merchandisemart.com**

• november 1-2, 2000 • jacob javits convention center • NYC

## NeoCon® New York



# Office Furnishings Online At The Mart

Winning Strategies for Manufacturers, eTailers,  
Dealers and Distributors of Office Furnishings to  
Harness the Power of a Web Presence  
October 17 - 18, 2000 Chicago, IL

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Co-Presented by the International Quality & Productivity Center and Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc., this two-day conference will examine how many companies have created innovative and cutting-edge web presences.

Attendees will hear case-studies and critical techniques to prepare or restructure their web strategies. The opening address is entitled "Understanding The Internet's Impact On The Office Furniture Industry". The purpose of this session is to demystify the Internet by examining the technology in terms that members of the A&D community, office furniture dealers, wholesalers, and manufacturers understand. The session starts by identifying seven emerging technologies that profoundly impact the way business is conducted. These technologies are examined in terms of the web sites applying the expertise as well as the changes they are causing in the industry.

The key note address will be given by the CEO/Founder of officefurniture.com. The basis for the presentation is the overall experience of moving a traditional business laterally onto the Internet. The transition to e-commerce presents its share of growing pains but the keys to success are through blending the on-line convenience with the personal approach of a traditional showroom. A perception out there is that the Internet is cold and sterile, and the fact is, it doesn't have to be. "Humanizing" the on-line experience will bring more customers.

The office furnishings industry has historically been characterized as one of long standing, interpersonal relationships, supported by frequent face-to-face contact and communication. This is reflected in and reinforced by the large group of dealers - small and large in size. Integrating the dealer network into a web presence is essential for manufacturers to provide the level of customer service most clients are accustomed to. This presentation will cover some of elements essential to include on your website to include the dealer and promote the sale of your product.

How does a company build a meaningful presence on the Web? US Office Products will tell how they are combining the traditional success factors of a Brick & Mortar and the new dynamics of the web to create a winning value proposition.

Renting furniture is a niche service of the office furniture industry. One session will study how CORT reaches episodic customers that need a temporary solution and place a high value on flexibility and 48-hour delivery. By using marketing alliances with a wide variety of web sites, CORT successfully reaches customers that have not considered the rental alternative.

With telecommuting becoming part of the Fortune 500's day to day life, there are a number of different approaches these companies have used to institute company-wide programs. Some work, some don't, some can, some won't. Examine the numerous issues surrounding telecommuting programs. A presentation will identify how differently corporations approach the issue, which departments they involve, and a general perspective on their results.

There are many challenges when starting an e-commerce site for office furnishings. Amidst the struggles to capture the right talent to build your site, the right partnerships for quality product, you have to consider the right strategy to transform Internet browsers to Internet buyers. Attendees will learn the art of customer acquisition on-line without breaking the bank from the perspective of this small e-tailer.

The most common reservation about selling office furnishings online surrounds the obstacles with delivery and installation. How do you maintain quality and consistency of service with deliveries outside your network? Through a standard service process, and years of developing strong relationships, InstallNET has serviced the needs of national multi-location accounts. Process oriented controls and checklist systems are among the tools that help guide clients in tracking and managing the progress of all projects.

The second day of this conference will focus on future trends. The most overused phrase by businesses today is e-commerce. Companies who develop little more than glorified yellow page directories on-line proudly announce their "e-commerce" capabilities. As the internet continues to evolve, especially in the Contract Furnishings Industry, manufacturers, dealers, and ultimately end users will utilize e-based services that add real "value" to the entire process. This includes sales and design tools that help dealers be more effective, product specifications and information from manufacturers that is easily obtainable, and, the capabilities to handle information exchange and transactions fully over the internet.

*For further information or assistance, please contact us at 1-800-882-8684 or info@iqpc.com.*

# Board of Directors Meet in Toronto



*Toronto Skyline*

*By Tom Reardon*

One of the challenges of operating an international organization is the difficulty of maintaining close relationships with members that may be located thousands of miles away. To help overcome this hurdle the BIFMA Board of Directors convenes its meetings in rotating locations around North America, usually traveling to cities that have a concentration of furniture manufacturers. Typically, on the evening before the Directors meeting, BIFMA will host an informal networking and dinner event with members and potential members from the area. This provides an opportunity for our Directors to hear first-hand of the issues members are facing. It also provides an

opportunity for our members to learn more about BIFMA's activities and to get to know the Staff and Directors better.

Previously, these roundtable/networking meetings have been held in Minnesota, North Carolina, New Jersey, Indiana, Southern California, Mexico, Chicago and Grand Rapids. The July, 2000 Directors meeting was held in Toronto and offered an opportunity to get together with Ontario-area members. A cocktail and dinner cruise (sponsored by Teknion and Steelcase Canada) around the Toronto islands proved to be the perfect setting for some camaraderie and networking with representatives from several member companies.



*Debbie Dickinson, Jean Doucet and Guy Boniface mingle at an area members dinner cruise.*

## Laminating & Fabricating Seminars

Wood & Wood Products magazine is joining forces with the Composite Panel Association and the Laminate Materials Association to sponsor a major technical seminar this fall on Laminating & Fabricating with Composite Panels. Scheduled for Nov. 13-15 at the City Centre Chicago Holiday Inn, the two-day program will focus on the twin themes of increasing productivity and profitability.

As in past years, Laminating 2000 will consist of back-to-back seminars beginning with the "Fifth Annual Essentials of Laminate

Flooring" and followed by the "Third Annual Laminating & Fabricating Composite Panels." The program will also feature networking receptions and tabletop exhibits hosted by leading manufacturers and suppliers of laminating materials and equipment, panel processing.

Next year, from March 30-31, 2001, the Texas Industrial Strength Woodworking Expo & Conference, will be held at the Arlington Convention Center in Arlington, Texas.

Further details about the seminars will

be posted on [www.iswonline.com](http://www.iswonline.com) and published in future issues of W&WP. To be included on the seminar brochure mailing list or to receive information about reserving a display table, contact the Wood Division Conference Office at (888) 903-9663 or (630) 323-7214, fax (630) 323-6989. To reserve a room at the Holiday Inn City Centre phone (312) 787-6100. Mention the Laminating 2000 Conference to qualify for a discounted room rate.

# Management Conference in Puerto Rico

BIFMA International's 2001 Management Conference will be held from February 1st to 3rd at the Ritz-Carlton, San Juan Hotel located on eight acres of prime beachfront property in Isla Verde, convenient to the city's business district, the airport, and historic Old San Juan. The elegant accommodations complement three restaurants and the hotel offers guests a quietly luxurious retreat. Close by, guests enjoy privileges at six championship golf courses, reef areas for diving and snorkeling, sailing and horseback riding.

Our theme this year will be "Technology & the Workforce" and participants will hear presentations on topics such as e-commerce, lean manufacturing, and training needs in this era of rapidly changing technologies.

Keynote speaker Thomas W. Faranda will speak on "E-Commerce: The Web of Wealth". Tom will look at digital delivery, Internet demographics, wealth of the future and how to use E-Commerce to your advantage.

In addition to Mr. Faranda, BIFMA has just secured Bill Bruck, Ph.D., a psychologist and



*Bill Bruck*

futurist who focuses on the effects of rapid technological change. His presentations help identify the technologies driving change, and the human factors and business models required to capitalize on them.

Unlike narrowly focused specialists, Dr. Bruck integrates technical expertise honed over two decades with his understanding of organizational systems and the people who make them work. He is Chief Knowledge Officer at Caucus Systems, Inc., a leading producer of collaborative infrastructures for Global 1000 companies.

A prolific author, Dr. Bruck has written ten books on the effective use of information technology. His best-selling books on Microsoft Office, WordPerfect Suite, PerfectOffice, and GroupWise have been translated into foreign languages and are sold internationally.

Understanding technology without understanding the people who use it is useless. A licensed psychologist and former tenured professor of psychology, Dr. Bruck is an authority on human motivation, adult learning, organizational change, and group dynamics. A social scientist, he has published on distance learning, virtual teams, and emerging technologies and organizational transformation.

Dr. Bruck's presentation in Puerto Rico will be entitled "The Heart of Distance Learning - Dialog, Community, And The Learning Experience". He will explain why dialog and community is crucial if higher-order learning is to occur. Management Conference attendees will hear how leading corporations create dialog and commu-



nity in their distance learning programs. His basic principles of virtual group dynamics and how they impact the learning process will illustrate how to weave face-to-face and any-time, any-place communications together in a way that keeps the workforce current on new technologies.

While in Puerto Rico, attendees will also sample its cultural and recreational treasures. From the traditional golf outing to special tours and networking at the hospitality suite, this will be the place to be in February. To inquire about sponsorship opportunities for any of the conference events, contact Brad Miller at the BIFMA office ([bmiller@bifma.org](mailto:bmiller@bifma.org)).



*Ritz-Carlton Pool*

# Promoting & Supporting Trade in Wood Products From Well Managed Forests

By Annette Ferri, International Wood Products Association

The International Wood Products Association's Board of Directors, aware of evolving changes in the industry and the current interest in certified timber products, decided recently to consider revision of the Association's position on certification. An Ad Hoc Certification Group was appointed in April to undertake the task.

The Association's statement on certification acknowledges interest in certified timber products, recognizes the efforts that many countries are making with regard to improved forest management practices, and addresses efforts toward a process for mutual recognition between credible and market-oriented sustainable forest management standards and certification systems.

This action now sets the stage for IWPA to act as a source for information on developments in forest management and certification.

Founded in 1956, IWPA continues today as the only organized group in the United States committed to the promotion and enhancement of trade in the imported wood products industry. Through the years, IWPA has modified and enhanced its activities to meet the needs of a dynamic and evolving industry.

IWPA members are American importers, processors, manufacturers, and individuals and organizations affiliated with the international wood products trade. These include shipping lines, customs brokers, overseas manufacturers/exporters and trade associations,

and many users of these items, such as builders, prefinishers, and furniture manufacturers.

IWPA and its C.U.R.E. Program (Conservation, Utilization, Reforestation and Education... A Commitment to the Future) is working to educate on the importance of continued and expanded trade in imported wood and wood products. C.U.R.E. publishes factual information about forest management in the tropics, and encourages continued progress toward sustainability of the resources. The communications and public outreach program has gained global recognition as a leading spokesgroup on the international wood products industry and the environment. Visit <http://www.iwpawood.org> for more information on IWPA.

# The UK Furniture Showcase: ASFI 2000

By Leslie Burns

Sponsored by the Association of Suppliers to the Furniture Industry, ASFI 2000 is a showcase for the UK furniture manufacturing industry. The latest products - raw materials, components, fittings, fixtures and services will all be on show during this event catering to the supplies industry from November 12 to 15.

Aside from manufacturers and distributors looking for new component solutions, it also provides manufacturing retailers with the opportunity to spot useful innovations. Around 300 companies will be participating and ASFI 2000 hopes to beat visitor records with 20,000 expected through the doors across the four days.

Overseas interest has been very positive

and companies will be attending from most of the European Countries and further afield.

This year's ASFI has 'Design' as its theme so exhibitors have been asked to pay particular attention to the design of their exhibits and, in doing so, contribute to the overall look of the event. There will be no shortage of new, innovative products, with the furniture supplies industry being actively encouraged to innovate and design for the new millennium.

ASFI promises to meet the needs of exhibitors and visitors between 12 and 15th November. Says, Allan Lewis, Chief Executive of the Association, 'Our biennial show caters specifically for furniture trade suppliers. This year's show is going to be an exciting event for the entire fur-

niture industry. It is an ideal opportunity to meet, update, entertain and of course, do business.'

It is the UK supplier's only opportunity to show off all of their products under one roof. The range and variety of products will be a must-see for any furniture manufacturer.'

To pre-register for tickets - fax your details on +44 (0) 1273 648341, email [info@pjpartnership.co.uk](mailto:info@pjpartnership.co.uk) or visit the Internet site: [www.asfi-expo.co.uk](http://www.asfi-expo.co.uk)

*For more information on the show visit the ASFI 2000 website - [www.asfi-expo.co.uk](http://www.asfi-expo.co.uk)*

*Press Contact: PJP - Gaye Price-Jones or Leslie Burns T: 01273 648340*

*Email: [info@pjpartnership.co.uk](mailto:info@pjpartnership.co.uk)*

In Review is published quarterly by BIFMA International to provide a brief update of committee and association activities.

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## CALENDAR of industry events

Updated regularly on BIFMA's Internet Site: [www.bifma.org](http://www.bifma.org)

**September 17-19, 2000 - World Workplace 2000 - New Orleans, LA; Contact: IFMA; 713-623-4362; Telephone: 800-677-6278**

**September 28-29, 2000 - IIDEX/ NeoCon Canada - The National Trade Centre at Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON, Canada; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties Inc.; Telephone: 800-677-6278 or 312-527-7598 or 416.944.3350 Ext. 223; Internet: [www.iidexneoconcanada.com](http://www.iidexneoconcanada.com)**

**Oct. 4-6, 2000 - Design Days NY - New York, NY; Telephone: 888.316.8228 or 203.656.4100; Internet: [www.designdays.com](http://www.designdays.com)**

**October 17-18, 2000 - Office Furnishings Online - Chicago, IL; Contact: International Quality & Productivity Center; Telephone 800.882.8684; Internet: [www.iqpc.com/nb55/officefurn](http://www.iqpc.com/nb55/officefurn)**

**October 19-24, 2000 - ORGATEC 2000 - Cologne, Germany  
Contact: German American Chamber of Commerce; 212-974-8837**

**October 19-26, 2000 - International Home Furnishings Market - High Point**

**November 1-3, 2000, Interplan/ NeoCon East 2000 - New York, NY; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties Inc.; Telephone: 800-677-6278 or 312-527-7598**

**November 10-11, 2000 - Midwest Industrial Woodworking ExpoSM and Plast\*Fab 2000 SM - Grand Rapids, MI; Contact: Trade Shows, Inc., PO Box 2000, Claremont, NC 28610; Telephone: 828-459-9894; FAX: 828-459-1312; E-mail: [tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net](mailto:tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net). Website: [www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com](http://www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com).**

**November 11 - 14, 2000 - International Hotel/ Motel & Restaurant Show - New York, NY; Telephone: 800-272-SHOW; Internet: [www.glmshows.com](http://www.glmshows.com)**

**December 11-13, 2000 - e-Office Supplies and Equipment - Scottsdale, AZ; Contact: International Quality & Productivity Center; Telephone 800.882.8684; Internet: [www.iqpc.com](http://www.iqpc.com)**

**February 1-3, 2001 - BIFMA International's Management Conference - San Juan, Puerto Rico; Telephone: 616.285.3963; Fax: 616.285.3765; Email: [email@bifma.org](mailto:email@bifma.org); Internet: [www.bifma.org](http://www.bifma.org)**

**February 16 & 17, 2001 - Carolinas Woodworking & Furniture Supply Show®  
Greensboro Coliseum Complex, Greensboro, NC; Contact: Trade Shows, Inc., PO Box 2000, Claremont, NC 28610; Telephone: 828-459-9894; FAX: 828-459-1312; E-mail: [tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net](mailto:tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net). Website: [www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com](http://www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com).**

**March 9 & 10, 2001 - Northwest Industrial Woodworking ExpoSM - Seattle, WA; Contact: Trade Shows, Inc., PO Box 2000, Claremont, NC 28610; Telephone: 828-459-9894; FAX: 828-459-1312; E-mail: [tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net](mailto:tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net). Website: [www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com](http://www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com).**

**April 4-5, 2001 - NeoCon South with Senior Housing - Atlanta, GA; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.; Telephone: 312.527.7083; Internet: [www.merchandisemart.com](http://www.merchandisemart.com)**

**April 6 & 7, 2001 - Mid-Atlantic Woodworking Furniture Supply Show® & Plast\*Fab 2001; Fort Washington, PA; Contact: Trade Shows, Inc., PO Box 2000, Claremont, NC 28610; Telephone: 828-459-9894; FAX: 828-459-1312; E-mail: [tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net](mailto:tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net). Website: [www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com](http://www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com).**

**June 18-20, 2001, NeoCon World's Trade Fair - Chicago, IL; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.; Telephone: 800-677-6278 or 312.527.7599; Internet: [www.merchandisemart.com](http://www.merchandisemart.com)**

**September 13-14, 2001 - IIDEX/ NeoCon Canada - The National Trade Centre at Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON, Canada; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties Inc.; Telephone: 800-677-6278 or 312-527-7598 or 416.944.3350 Ext. 223; Internet: [www.iidexneoconcanada.com](http://www.iidexneoconcanada.com)**

**November 29-30, 2001, NeoCon West 2001 - Los Angeles, CA; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc. ; Telephone: 312.527.7600; Internet: [www.neoconwest.com](http://www.neoconwest.com)**

**November 30 & December 1, 2001 - Florida Woodworking & Furniture Supply Show®; Orlando, FL; Contact: Trade Shows, Inc., PO Box 2000, Claremont, NC 28610; Telephone: 828-459-9894; FAX: 828-459-1312; E-mail: [tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net](mailto:tsiwoodworkingshows@twave.net). Website: [www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com](http://www.tsiwoodworkingshows.com)**