

AWI Minnesota Chapter Co-Sponsors “Green” Event

On Thursday, January 15, the Minnesota Chapter of AWI co-sponsored an event along with Minnesota Chapter Supplier-Member Metro Hardwoods, which was an informational extravaganza – on the topics of CARB, LEED, FSC Certification, and the AWI Quality Certification program. To add even more to this font of sustainable knowledge, there was an optional tour before the main program.

Tour participants were treated to a walk through the new offices of Great River Energy, in Maple Grove Minnesota. Great River Energy is a generation and transmission cooperative serving 28 co-ops and 620,000 members. It is also proud to reside in the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certified building in Minnesota. The facility boasts such green features as an on-site wind turbine, the largest photovoltaic solar array in Minnesota, a cistern that uses rainwater and snowmelt for toilets and urinals, plus a whole host of energy saving and management technologies that are on the cutting edge.
www.greatriverenergy.com

The seminar commenced after the tour, first with lunch, and then with a web conference featuring staff from the California Air Resource Board (CARB) to talk about the new composite-board formaldehyde compliance standards that went into effect on January 1, 2009. Presented by Staff Air Pollution Specialists Brent Takemoto, Ph.D.; Angela Csondes, and Rebecca Geyer, the web conference featured thoughtful insight as well as hard facts. There was a question and answer period, which largely went unused as the preceding content was very complete.

Following the CARB segment was a brief discussion of the AWI Quality Certification Program (QCP) led by AWI Manufacturing-Member Rick Siewert, from Siewert Cabinet and Fixture. Of the roughly 120 participants in the event, only a handful were already AWI



members and/or QCP participants, so it was a great venue to share some thoughts and facts about the program.

Next was an informational segment regarding new changes in LEED for 2009, including the reorganization (V3) of the system and how credits work consistently now across the various LEED programs. This presentation was given by Kay Stoebe, LEED AP, from Metro Hardwoods. Kay was able to bring some understanding to this oft-misunderstood and maligned topic.

The event wrapped up with a presentation by Paul Vanderford, a local representative of the SmartWood organization, who spoke at length about the merits and steps to become FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified. Paul helped to clarify some terms of the program, as well as an understanding of what chain-of-custody (COC) certification means for both suppliers and woodworkers.

In total, there were more than 50 local companies represented; many of whom have never had much exposure to the networking that we all may take for granted as AWI members. Even though the daytime high temperature was way south of zero, turnout was great, and the content was even better. A special thanks goes to Harry Leadbetter of Metro Hardwoods for spearheading the event, and also to Rick Siewert for engaging the Minnesota Chapter as a co-sponsor, and presenting the QCP portion of the event.

