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News Briefs

Denver Conference to Address Real Estate, Economic Concerns

RICS Americas, a division of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the world's leading membership organization for professionals in property, land, construction and related environmental issues, will host a speaker event tomorrow in Denver, set to coincide with the organization's Mountain Chapter launch.

The event, "Property in Chaos—Where Are We Now?" will be headlined by leading real estate, economics and fiscal policy experts Dr. Mark Lee Levine of the University of Denver and Dr. Sam Chandan, president and chief economist of Real Estate Economics LLC. Both are member fellows of RICS.

Levine is currently the director of the Burns School of Real Estate and Construction Management, Daniels College of Business, University of Denver, and is extensively published in the fields of accounting, appraisal, business, finance and financial planning, law, property management, securities and taxation. He will discuss the changing economy as it relates to real estate.

Chandan is an expert on macroeconomics, fiscal policy and monetary policy surveillance and forecasting products. He is among the most widely cited and widely recognized researchers in the field of multifamily and commercial real estate. He is a regular speaker at industry events and a contributing author to many of the industry's preeminent publications. He is also a member of the Urban Land Institute.

Also attending will be RICS Americas Chairman Thomas Justin, RICS Americas Managing Director Matthew Bruck, and RICS Americas Senior Advisor John Ross, as well as Mountain Chapter Chairman Dennis Webb.

The launch of the RICS Americas Mountain Chapter provides a forum for networking and consultation.

The event will run from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Phipps Mansion Conference Center, 3400 Belcaro Dr., Denver. Cost to register is \$40. For more information or to register, e-mail: zkhaze@rics.org or go to www.rics.org.

Names in the News



Edward Becker

• **Edward Becker** has been promoted to vice president of field operation at Murphy Co. He will oversee labor coordination for all trades in Denver, foremen training and development and enhancement of the firm's union partnerships. Becker's experience includes 32 years experience in the mechanical construction industry. He attended the University of Missouri and is a member of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, Plumbers Local 35, JATC Plumbers Local 3 and the Colorado Association of Mechanical and Plumbing Contractors.



Mary Peters

• **Mary Peters** has been named to the board of directors of HDR. She will serve a one-year term and stand for re-election in 2010. Peters also will provide consulting services to HDR on a limited basis. Peters was the U.S. Secretary of Transportation from 2006 to 2009. She also served as administrator of the Federal Highway Administration from 2001 to 2005, when she joined HDR as national director of transportation policy and consulting.

Trautman & Shreve to Install Mechanical, Plumbing Systems for Vestas

EMCOR Group Inc. recently reported that its Trautman and Shreve subsidiary has been awarded a contract to install the mechanical and plumbing systems for the Vestas Wind Turbine Tower Manufacturing Campus in Pueblo.

The new campus on the southern edge of Pueblo will include an approximately 4000-sq-ft production facility where the tower sections will be made, an approximately 140,000-sq-ft surface treatment plant where the finishes will be applied, an approximately 43,000-sq-ft internalls building where all of the hardware will be installed in sections, and administrative offices.

Trautman and Shreve will be responsible for all of the mechanical and plumbing systems involved in

Vestas' new 600,000-sq-ft manufacturing facility. In connection with the project, Trautman and Shreve will install 2.4 million lb of ductwork, including 8 miles of spiral and 2 miles of vacuum duct systems and more than 20 miles of industrial gas, mechanical and plumbing piping.

The firm will additionally install 20 air-handling units on the roof of the facility, which will total over 850,000 cu ft per minute. Compressed-air piping will be installed in order to help power Vestas' manufacturing equipment. Trautman and Shreve will also line the walls in the Surface Treatment building with a custom filtration system to contain paint spray and install a high-tech advance automation system to control paint inhalants.

Once complete later this year, the new manufacturing campus will be Vestas' largest and most advanced facility, representing one of the largest single investments in Vestas' history. When fully operational, the new plant will produce more than 1,000 towers a year.

PCL Construction Services of Denver was awarded the contract to build the campus.

Vestas opened its first North American facility earlier this year in Windsor. The new Pueblo project will be one of four total production facilities in Colorado, amounting to millions of dollars in capital investment by Vestas. Other facilities include two planned for Brighton—one for wind blade production and another for nacelle assembly.

COMMENTARY

The Hidden Costs of Heavy Equipment and Tool Theft

By Don Kafka

Heavy equipment theft is a low-risk, high-profit enterprise. With the average cost of a piece of heavy construction equipment at around \$135,000, according to the National Equipment Register, the low recovery of stolen equipment and a thriving black market for stolen equipment, it's no wonder that equipment theft has become a growth industry.

Like horse thieves in the Wild West, heavy-equipment thieves operate stealthily, under cover of darkness, targeting isolated, unattended, unsecured construction sites. Loaders, tractors, excavators, backhoes and other highly mobile items are easy and profitable pickings. Because construction equipment typically uses a universal ignition key, it's easy for a thief to buy a standard key from a dealer, switch on the ignition and simply load the item on a waiting flatbed, with little risk of detection and prosecution. Even anti-theft devices like cylinder sleeves aren't sure-fire deterrents to sophisticated crime rings.

Fraud is another growing problem. Unlike cars and trucks, heavy equipment product identification numbering systems have not been standardized and uniformly placed, and national databases like those for automotive products are lacking.

That makes it easy to switch identification codes between two pieces of equipment, use the same counterfeit number for several pieces of equipment or create paper purchases for fraudulent loss claims. Beginning in 2000, equipment manufacturers adopted a standard, worldwide 17-digit product personal information number system that will enable inter-

national law enforcement computer systems to check, verify and track stolen equipment, the National Insurance Crime Bureau reports.

The losses resulting from stolen construction resources are staggering. According to the NICB, the construction industry loses more than \$1 billion annually from equipment and tool theft, a figure that is growing by approximately 20% a year. Contractors file more than twice as many insurance claims for equipment theft than for any other loss event, including fire, vandalism, collision and natural disasters.

In addition to the cost of stolen equipment and tools, the NER estimates that contractors lose an additional \$300 million to \$1 billion annually resulting from the business interruptions that ensue when these resources are not available to those who need them. This includes time spent filling out theft reports, waiting for equipment to be replaced, waiting for scheduling conflicts to be resolved, the expense of short-term rental costs and the penalties that can result from missed deadlines.

Since equipment thieves operate like low-tech horse thieves, it will take a high-tech posse to stop them. Twenty-first century technology is now available to simplify the process of tracking and managing a construction company's expensive and hard-to-secure heavy equipment.

For example, today's sophisticated theft-deterrent systems use software, hardware and a unique identifier, like the uniform worldwide 17-digit PIN, on a tamper-resistant bar code label attached to equipment and parts. The coded information is scanned and maintained in a central database.

Radio frequency identification is gaining widespread acceptance. With this method, an RFID tag inserted into, rather than applied on, equipment, making it difficult for thieves to locate and alter.

RFID can be integrated into a bar code-scanning system, allowing the company to choose which option is appropriate for each piece of equipment. Most vendors offer scanning tools that can read both RFID tags and bar code labels, so both technologies can be used in a single system.

Add global positioning systems to the mix, and law enforcement will be able to locate and recover stolen equipment more readily. And once the missing equipment is found, forensic tagging technology will enable companies to prove ownership, wherever the stolen item may turn up.

When more construction companies take advantage of the sophisticated tools now coming online, equipment theft will decline, insurance claims will drop, profits will rise—and thieves will be caught and prosecuted for their crimes.

Don Kafka is the president of Denver-based ToolWatch Corp., a technology company offering construction resource management systems to organizations of all sizes. Its applications use the most current and reliable technology to manage resources, including tools, equipment, materials and consumables for maximum utilization and productivity throughout an organization. ToolWatch's customers include 30% of the top 400 general contractors on the ENR 400 list and 28% of the top 50 specialty contractors on the ENR 600 list. For more information, visit www.toolwatch.com or call 1-800-676-4034.

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Mike Nelson
Meteorologist



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	Today	Tomorrow	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Denver Metro	48/27	62/38	56/38	52/37	57/38
Colorado Springs	48/27	62/38	56/38	52/37	57/38
Alamosa	55/18	57/24	56/21	53/19	54/22
Grand Junction	61/30	62/741	60/38	58/37	59/40
Fort Collins	49/25	62/35	57/36	54/35	56/36
Greeley	51/20	66/31	60/31	57/30	60/31
Pueblo	57/20	72/34	67/32	62/30	66/32

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