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EIMA’s Major Goals for 2012

The early months of the new year always usher in opportunities to make resolutions and adjustments for improvements, be they for individuals or business. This is true for the EIFS Industry Members Association. The stress that has already been placed on severely depressed construction markets (read: markets for exterior insulation and finish systems) has guided the EIMA leadership to develop some new goals that will enhance business and markets for the entire EIFS supply chain. This stress underscores the urgency to achieve the new goals established for EIMA.

To establish a refined direction for EIMA, the EIFS Industry Members Association’s board of directors met late in 2011, and the purpose of the meeting was twofold: 1) to address an agenda of business matters affecting the association and assess progress on goals and ongoing activities, and 2) to develop a strategy that EIMA should pursue over the next two to three years. On the business side of the discussions, the board reviewed the status of EIMA initiatives in the insurance arena, advocacy efforts at the federal, state and local levels, relations with allied industry groups including consideration of joining the Foam Sheathing Committee of the American Chemistry Council, and the status of current EIFS research initiatives.

With the vast majority of the strategic goals from an earlier strategic plan met, the board turned its attention to a review of the most pressing issues that are affecting the industry now and those that will be affecting it two to three years from now. The board agreed that the biggest issue affecting the industry was the lack of business for everyone. Although the industry is well-poised to seize on forthcoming opportunities that come with an improving economy, the board decided that EIMA must be more proactive in gaining a larger share of the opaque exterior wall market. To that end, the EIMA board will ask the appropriate EIMA committees to assess what resources they will need to have for the industry to make the EIF system more appealing to project owners and architects. That assessment is now under way with completion and review of the plan during the EIMA Annual Meeting in Charlotte, N.C., on April 17.

The board also agreed to expand the EIMA budget by increasing the EIMA membership at all levels. Not only will this raise much needed resources of all forms, but it will also broaden the base of the membership for the benefit of all. The board also reviewed a proposal to establish a Project Owners Forum comprised of project owners in the public and private sectors, developers and building and facility managers. This forum, which would broaden the membership, would also serve as a solid endorsement of the EIF system—one from the direct consumer. Such owner forums have been established with overwhelming success by the Design-Build Institute of America and the Associated General Contractors of America.

A top 2011 EIMA priority that will continue in 2012 is to continue pursuit of obtaining more solutions for the lack of insurance that is available to the EIFS industry. Part of this goal was achieved with the discovery and development of important insurance markets comprised of very strong insurance companies. This goal was achieved largely through the tenacity of insurance agents and brokers who were committed to the EIFS industry and who doggedly pursued the development of markets for EIFS coverage. Another part of this goal was achieved with the survey of key insurance agents and brokers to determine if they had access to markets for EIFS coverage. This survey yielded results that show that more than 60 insurance agencies, many of them with a national scope, can provide access to markets that cover EIFS exposures. The survey results are available on EIMA’s website (www.eima.com). According to EIMA President Buck Buchanan, “EIMA pushed hard in 2011 to win some progress on this issue, and the work of insurance agents, the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry, and the EIMA insurance survey did a lot to gain some success.”

EIMA will also be publicizing soon the final results of the Phase III of the Exterior Wall Cladding Performance Study done by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory; only the preliminary report of the Phase III study has been received by EIMA. The early results of Phase III show that EIF systems are better than other opaque wall claddings in all ASHRAE climate zones in addition to that climate zone in which the earlier phases of the study took place. In Phase I, the study showed that EIFS was better than brick, stucco and cementitious fiberboard in controlling moisture and in providing thermal control in ASHRAE climate zone 3. EIMA’s Technical Committee is working with ORNL to develop the final conclusions of the report.

Like other sectors of the construction industry, there is no shortage of challenges confronting the EIFS industry, and priorities will always be adjusted when the need arises.

—Information provided by the EIFS Industry Members Association, www.eima.com, (800) 294.3462