

Reviews & Previews

PGC International Holds Legislative Retreat in Washington, D.C.

The Protective Glazing Council (PGC) International held its PGC Legislative Retreat May 10-11 at the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) headquarters in Washington, D.C.

"With so many rapid changes and evolution in the construction industry, it is vitally important for the organization to be engaged at the Federal level to remind those making key decisions that protective glazing technologies are a key element in their decisions," said Brian Pitman, director of marketing and communications for the PGC International. "There is a reason these technologies exist, and it is our duty to do all we can to encourage everyone to use them vigilantly."

According to Pitman, the meeting was the first in Washington, D.C., and involved key officials from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and NIBS.

Included on the program was a presentation by Richard Paradis of NIBS who discussed the NIBS Security Information & Technologies Exchange (SITE) database. Paradis previewed the product database for those in attendance, explaining that it allows visitors to the website, www.sitexchange.org, to view product listings, which also include the standards that each product meets.

According to Paradis, the database, which is currently still in the building phase, "helps users find the most appropriate technology that best fits the potential security threats of a specific facility." He noted that SITE is a searchable, online database of products that meet the DHS Interagency Security Committee, Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs se-



PGC's first retreat in D.C. included sessions with DHS representatives and building organizations.

curity criteria and standards.

A target date for the website to go live has not yet been set and NIBS also plans to enter more products into the database before it does so (manufacturers may submit products via the SITE website).

Philip Mattson, vice chair of ASTM International and program manager for the DHS S&T Standards Branch, discussed the importance of having an integrated standard, rather than a number of different government standards.

"The benefit of having an integrated standard is that it can enhance interoperability. Having metrics on how to measure a product allows you to develop a product that people can use and will buy," Mattson said.

Doug Read, the chair of HPBCCC and ASHRAE's program director of government affairs, presented background of the High Performance Building Congressional Caucus Coalition (HPBCCC). According to Read, before HPBCCC, "Congress had no place to go when they had questions about buildings." Now, HPBCCC is working with two members of Congress to help achieve some of its goals.

Attorney Thom Zarembo discussed

the history of building codes and what to expect from these codes moving forward.

"Recently, we have had tremendous natural disasters. You have to ask yourself if the building codes are doing enough to adequately protect occupants," Zarembo said. "You will encounter continuous pressure to reduce the amount of glass in buildings."

Earle Kennett, the chief operating officer of NIBS, provided background on the institute and discussed some of the offerings of the group, including the *Whole Building Design Guide*.

Dr. Christopher White from NIST closed out the event with his presentation on the durability of protective glazing products. White discussed how it is determined, through studies, how durable a product is. White also explained NIST's role in the standards process.

"We provide experts and technical data to support the development of standards," White said.

Plans for a protective glazing study with NIST are underway and the logistics of that study are to be discussed in later meetings.

Attendees also spent a day visiting decision makers on Capitol Hill to discuss the use of protective glazing technologies and products in government owned and run facilities.

"This is a very important opportunity to get reacquainted on issues that have taken a back seat," said Darrell Smith, chair of PGC International's government affairs committee. "I hope this will get people excited about things that they maybe haven't been excited about in the past."

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