



BIR Spring Convention draws record attendance

Optimism reigns in Monte-Carlo

Almost 800 delegates and 300 accompanying persons found their way to sunny Monte-Carlo for this year's BIR Spring Convention. The mood among delegates was generally upbeat thanks to rising prices for most commodities coupled with stable and, for some countries, improving economic conditions.

By Manfred Beck

Perhaps it was the venue that attracted the largest number of delegates to a BIR convention for more than 15 years. Monte-Carlo has long been a playground for the rich and famous with its wonderful Mediterranean climate, stylish casino and beautiful medieval old town beneath Prince Rainier's

palace. It could be that some delegates were attracted by the Grand Prix staged the weekend before the convention. Or perhaps they were seduced by the opportunity of a break in Provence or on the golden beaches of the Côte d'Azur. In many instances, no doubt, delegates were drawn by the opportunity to meet old recycling friends, make new ones, do some business and discover what was happening on the international recycling scene. For most, it was possibly a combination of all these attractions but, for whatever reason, it turned out to be a highly successful convention.

On the financial side, Mr Hunter was able to report that BIR's finances had made a firm return to the black and that the organisation had begun to rebuild its depleted reserves. A substantial part of the General Assembly was devoted to a presentation on BIR's new website. Communications Director Elisabeth Christ gave the delegates a virtual tour of the new site, explaining the changes and displaying the new pages on the auditorium's large screens. Most interesting development is the on-line membership directory located in the website's 'Members Only' section, which provides the principal data for all BIR members.

Environment Committee restructuring

A change of name and structure for BIR's Environment Committee were confirmed by Patrick Neenan in Monte-Carlo, shortly before he stepped down after 12 years as its Chairman.

The Committee's name has been changed to the BIR International Environment Council (IEC), within which a more prominent role will be given both to BIR's Environment and Technical Director Ross Bartley and to the National Associations. Each association will be asked to provide the IEC with a delegate/member 'in order to give a view from a broader range of countries' while the representative from the host country's National Association will be invited to co-chair the Council for the year in question.

During the meeting, Mr Neenan also reported that the OECD has completed its consolidation work to replace the familiar 'Green', 'Amber' and 'Red' lists covering trans-boundary shipments. Meanwhile,



In the marina of the Yacht Club of Monaco, tourist can gaze in awe at the multi-million dollar yachts belonging to the rich and famous.

Jean-Pierre Lehoux, Chairman of the Communications Committee (left), chats with Dominique Maguin, President of the Paper Division.



New website

In his address to the General Assembly, BIR President Barry Hunter explained that, while he had left his post as Senior Vice President of U.S. company Keywell LLC, he would nevertheless complete his term as BIR President, which will end at next year's Spring Convention in Oslo, Norway.



Increasing the membership

Robert Voss of the U.K., elected Chairman of BIR's Membership Committee last year, presented the Committee's plans for increasing the organisation's membership. BIR currently has 524 members from 65 countries and, since the meeting in Madrid during May last year, 41 new member companies from 17 countries have joined BIR, as have national federations from China and Romania.

Mr Voss announced that BIR will appoint a consultant who will aggressively market BIR within the international recycling community. 'I believe that BIR, as a worldwide recycling organisation, could and should have ten times the current number of members and, with that in mind, we will appoint a consultant. I do believe 5000 is a realistic number for BIR membership, subject to various changes and promotions,' Mr Voss commented.



Other recruitment measures include establishing closer links with national recycling organisations, promoting membership of BIR as an international standard of quality, making more use of BIR's new website and, eventually, restructuring fees. 'Special attention will be given to recruiting more members from Third Countries where BIR is currently still under-represented,' Mr Voss concluded.

Robert Voss, Chairman of BIR's Membership Committee.



BIR Director General Francis Veys was very satisfied with the number of delegates in Monte-Carlo.



From the left: ISRI Chairman Charles 'Cricket' Williams, Robert Philip of Nucor, ISRI President Robin Wiener, and Rolf Willeke of the German steel recycling federation BDSV.



Theo (right) and Erik van den Heuvel of Dutch metals recycler Jacomij Metalen are obviously enjoying themselves at the BIR Cocktail Party.



After having served 12 years as Chairman of the Environment Committee, Pat Neenan (left) has stepped down in favour of Alvaro Rodriguez Martinez of Lajo y Rodriguez, Spain.

trials of 'on-line' systems designed to speed up the notification process are currently taking place in North America and the EU, he added.

The outgoing Chairman also confirmed that BIR is awaiting the publication of a UN-ECE report - endorsed by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the European Commission - to explain the difficulties presented to the recycling sector by radioactively contaminated scrap and to suggest possible remedies. 'The indications are that the report will follow the line BIR has been adopting,' according to Mr Neenan.

Mr Neenan's successor as Chairman is Alvaro Rodriguez Martinez of Lajo y Rodriguez SA, Spain. In Monte-Carlo, the latter highlighted the development in Spain of a 'Protocol of Vigilance' in response



Mr and Mrs Lacchini of Cell Data Information Systems of Milan, Italy.



Thirty companies took booths at the exhibition in Monte-Carlo.



to the growing problem of radioactive sources appearing in scrap consignments. Along with other organisations and some National Associations, BIR has put forward a proposal for this voluntary system to be extended to the rest of Europe.

Under the system in Spain, a radioactive source found to be of Spanish origin is taken away by a public body at no cost to the company which has signed the protocol. Radioactive material found to have come from outside Spain will either be sent back to the country of origin or, if this proves difficult, the costs of treating the radioactive source will be passed on to the importing company.

Mr Rodriguez Martinez also confirmed the formation in Spain of Sigrauto, an integrated management system devised by interested parties as a means of implementing the EU Directive on End-of-Life Vehicles. □



Michael West of Universal Recycling, Australia, was elected as a member of BIR's Convention Committee.



BIR's communications assistant Philip Muller was responsible for the graphics and design of the organisation's completely new website (www.bir.org).



Guest Speaker at the General Assembly was Jean-Michel Manzone, Head of Technology at Monaco's Department of Public Works and Social Affairs.



Peter Mathews, Chairman of BIR's Convention Committee.

Awards

During the General Assembly, BIR President Barry Hunter announced a posthumous award of the BIR Gold Medal - the organisation's highest accolade - to Ken Iverson, former Chairman and CEO of Nucor Corporation, U.S. Mr Iverson was awarded the medal in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the international recycling and steel industries. Ken Iverson passed away on April 14, aged 76, some three years after his retirement from Nucor's board of directors. Under Mr Iverson, Nucor became known worldwide as one of the most daring and innovative manufacturers in any industry. It was Mr Iverson's decision that Nucor should manufacture steel at relatively small factories based on steel scrap. This was at a time when nearly all steel was made in huge, capital-intensive blast furnaces. Thus, Nucor sparked the boom in 'mini-mills' and revolutionised the use of ferrous scrap as the main raw material in the production of steel. Currently, more than 35% of global steel production emanates from mini-mills. Nucor is now the world's largest mini-mill operator, the largest U.S. recycler of any material, and the U.S.' largest and most profitable steel producer with an output of 12.3 million short tonnes in 2001.

Also at the General Assembly, Mr Lehoux announced BIR 'Gold Pen' awards for Albert Patin and Jean-Claude Platier - respectively owner and editor of French trade magazine 'Recyclage Récupération' - for promoting recycling in trade journalism. In thanking BIR for the honour, Mr Platier said he liked writing for the recycling industry largely because of his liking for many of the people within the trade.



Jean Pierre Lehoux, Chairman of BIR's Communications Committee (right), presents the 'Gold Pen' award to Jean-Claude Platier, editor of 'Recyclage Récupération'.

Future BIR meetings

2002 28-29 October

Brussels Sheraton Hotel

2003 26-28 May

Oslo Radisson Plaza Hotel

2003 27-28 October

Vienna Hotel Inter-Continental

2004 24-26 May

Berlin (tentative)

2004 October

London (tentative)

According to Peter Mathews, Chairman of the Convention Committee, BIR is considering the following venues for future meetings: Chicago, Dubai, St Petersburg and Athens.