

INSTALL attracts hundreds for spring conference

LAS VEGAS—More than 150 flooring contractors from the U.S. and Canada were guests of the INSTALL program here for a conference dedicated to sharing best practices in the industry.

Attending business leaders heard from Bentley Prince Street's president, Anthony Minite; installation troubleshooter, FCNews columnist Lew Migliore, and others during the four-day event, which was hosted by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC) at its International Training Center here. In addition, 13 mill and manufacturer partners of INSTALL presented a product exhibition.

INSTALL, the International Standards and Training Alliance, is a network of manufacturers, contractors and the floor covering arm of UBC, and is the only four-year, industry-endorsed training, marketing and certification program in North America. INSTALL's programs were the focus of discussion at the conference.

Chris Drummond, vice president of quality assurance for Bentley, noted, "As an industry veteran, I can say the INSTALL program is very impressive."

A diverse audience of reps from companies such as Mohawk Industries, Nora, Armstrong World Industries, Beaulieu, Johnsonite, Tarkett, Orcon and the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) joined John McGrath, INSTALL director, for a roundtable discussion. The conversation centered on teamwork and how an active INSTALL partnership allows its alliance members to address everything associated with the industry, especially training, marketing and certification. "We're most effective when we align ourselves in a task," he said.

The roundtable also explored the INSTALL certification program. The process—which tests professionals in a difficult hands-on skill demonstration, "is uncompromising in its depth and requirements for skill," McGrath said.

And INSTALL isn't fooling around with the implementation of using certified installers on a job site. If an installer does something that's not up to the INSTALL standard, that mechanic can have his certification card pulled, he noted. "This is not a rubber stamp. It's meant to raise the bar in flooring installation across North America. Anyone employing an INSTALL-certified

sive's director of flooring, added, "I really believe in this program. I can't compliment it enough. Many of the contractors who have facilitated [the program] have found that it pays off."

David Meberg, INSTALL's labor-management committee co-chairman, who is president of Consolidated Carpet in New York, noted the progress INSTALL has made the last few years. "Opportunity is knocking and INSTALL is ready. Together, we provide the best flooring solution



Contractors Marty Murdoch, left, of S.E. Sabosik in New Jersey and Tony Prince of Tony Prince, Inc., in St. Louis take a break between sessions during INSTALL's recent flooring conference in Las Vegas.

in the construction industry."

Asked about what impressed him most concerning the event, Meberg stated, "Mostly the

attendees. Over 150 contractors matched with over 150 union reps. To have 150 contractors at one conference, specifically aimed at installation, says a lot about the viability of this program.

"Another highlight was venue, and the illustration of the commitment the INSTALL program, the UBC and its contractors have made to training and certification," he added. "This is a real program and the first of its kind to have the financial viability to

make a difference.

The goal was to further educate union reps, contractors and mill partners in the progress the program has made, and the tools that are available to them on a local level to promote trained, certified installers, explained Meberg. "The program is geared to growing market share for the contractors and their installers, and to that end INSTALL has provided its local markets all the tools to do that."

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