

THE UPDATE

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The goal of our monthly update is to provide information on timely matters that may impact your practice and professional interests.



CONGRESS PLANS FOR NATIONAL INNOVATION SUMMIT

After meeting with a group of prominent US scientists in early June, members of the House Science Committee announced plans to hold a national "Innovation Summit" later this year. The scientists were concerned that America's science and innovation effort is stagnating or in decline, signaling a potential destabilization in prior US leadership as evidenced in fewer American scientists earning patents and Nobel Prizes or producing papers .



NEW EPA RULE WILL GENERATE MAJOR RETROFIT WORK

The US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recently released Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) now scheduled to take effect next month is expected to generate an estimated \$15 billion in air-pollution equipment sales over the next 10 years. CAIR seeks to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide at electrical generating plants in 28 eastern states including the District of Columbia in order to reduce current air pollution from these plants by 70 percent. The states required to implement CAIR ,however, will be able to have their power plants chose between an EPA-administered compliance program or follow state- specified measures..



MORE STATES FAVORING GREEN BUILDINGS

The following state governments; namely: Michigan , Washington and Arizona as well as cities such as Atlanta , Chicago , Los Angeles , San Francisco and Seattle have all passed legislation promoting the Leadership and Environmental Design (LEED) standards in their publicly funded construction projects. Despite their environmental benefits, however, green buildings do not differ greatly from comparable standard designed buildings .Yet despite their capital costs tending to be higher, it is beginning to be seen as having a "ripple effect" in spreading green building principles to the private sector as well.



POLYMERS OFFER ALTERNATIVE FOR OUR BRIDGES

The new northbound bridge on Highway 151 bypass around Fond Du Lac , Wisconsin looks identical to the adjacent span, but its internals include a novel fiber-reinforced (FRP) grid system to reinforce its concrete deck. Developed by engineering professors and graduate students at the University of Wisconsin , the polymer grid system offers several advantages over conventional steel rebar. For example it will not corrode, it is lighter and can be prefabricated in sections that can be rapidly put in place by cranes-saving both time and labor cost.

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