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Innovative Marketing Builds Confidence for ICF Concrete Construction

DELTA, BC – June 3, 2004 -- A rapidly increasing demand for green design, spawned by a new sustainable living movement, is sweeping the country - and concrete is positioned to meet the need. Raising visibility and building credibility are the goals of marketing activities designed to generate concrete sales and introduce new products. Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF) are just one of many promotional initiatives underway in BC.

Reaching the ICF niche is a marketing challenge for the industry, and the *Home with a Difference* campaign rolled out by the Cement Association of Canada, and BC Ready Mixed Concrete Association has been introducing ICF to the residential and low-rise markets for some time. Leveraging the campaign in innovative ways gives it mileage and enables the industry to reach many audiences. From a model home constructed on the Vancouver Home Show trade show floor to many presentations and events – ICF promotion has been active thanks to leadership from the BCRMCA ICF Committee.

Co-chaired by Rodger Nissen, (Lehigh NW, Sales) the ICF committee is committed to engaging promotional efforts - where they have value. But as we all know, choosing the right events to generate excitement in the marketplace that will lead to increased sales is vital, but results can be difficult to measure.

Attending the BOABC (Building Officials' Association of B.C.) 49th Annual Education Conference, Victoria, BC, April 25-28, 2004, was discussed by Nissen's committee with trepidation. Past experiences led the committee to think that building officials in BC have no interest in ICF building systems. This time, it was apparent that positive ICF messaging has been resonating with the 250 building officials at the event.



Rodger Nissen, Lehigh NW Cement Ltd, Sales & Steve Braun, Ocean Concrete Ltd, Sales; market ICF to building inspectors.

"Many building officials who attended our booth expressed their interest in the ICF system. Their support was fantastic!", reported Nissen. He continued to say, "... the majority (inspectors, code consultants, architects & engineers) who discussed the system were definitely in favour of building with ICF. They understood all the benefits that home owners receive from ICF concrete homes." BOABC member Roger Allen, a building official from Sooke, BC, was an integral part of the event's management. Allen commented, "ICF industry presence shows our members that you are interested in helping us work with your products."

Feedback from the officials provided valuable input for the BCMCA ICF committee by identifying areas of concern, and points for clarification. This input could not have been garnered if Nissen and the ICF promotional group had not been face-to-face, and able to engage in conversation with the delegates at the event.

Having a presence at events such as this, clearly shows that ICF marketing efforts are resonating in the building community – and are gaining momentum. The market is demonstrating an increased awareness of the benefits of ICF and a genuine interest in understanding more about the product, process and results. This input enables ICF marketers to chart a course in the right direction. Nissen suggests that next-steps in the marketing efforts should be training for the building officials in all areas of BC – to give them first hand knowledge of what to expect when they visit sites where the ICF products are being used.

The results of a focused, strategic approach to marketing are effective and put the cement and concrete industry, and Lehigh Northwest on the leading edge. Lehigh Northwest is excited to promote new market areas such as **soil cement alternatives, stabilization/solidification for contaminated soil, cement and concrete as sustainable design products** – specifically in homes and low-rise residential building. The auspicious potential of broadening the cement market by moving into innovative areas such as Insulated Concrete Forms is encouraging.

For more information on concrete innovation, call Marketing Services at 604-952-5645 or visit us online at www.lehighnw.com

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ICF - Insulating concrete forms are hollow blocks or panels made of high insulated polystyrene. They are forms for poured concrete walls that stay in place as a permanent part of the wall assembly. The left-in-place forms, not only provide a continuous insulation and sound barrier, but also a backing for drywall on the inside, and stucco, lap siding, or brick on the outside.

BOABC (Building Officials' Association of B.C) is an association of over 600 members primarily representing local government Building Officials and those involved in building design, construction, testing and research.

Lehigh Northwest Cement Limited services its customers in the Pacific Northwest region of North America. Lehigh Cement has served the construction industry in North America for more than 100 years as a producer of high quality portland, blended and specialty cements. Lehigh cements are widely used by all sectors of the construction industry for numerous construction, marine, architectural and industrial applications. Lehigh is fully owned by the HeidelbergCement Group of Germany and is affiliated with some of the most technically advanced cement operations and related construction activities. Around the globe, the Group has extensive operations in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa.