
ICC Global Membership Council Governing Committee Chair Geoff Mitchell welcomed attendees and introduced the keynote and guest speakers. Presenters Paul Rivers, Jaime Moncada, Imai Tadaumi and Jeff Harper addressed codes and fire safety and prevention during the morning session. The fire safety theme intertwined with individual country presentations during the annual Global Panel discussion.

Keynote speaker Paul Rivers, senior fire protection specialist at 3M Company and president of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) International board of directors, presented “Technology Running Way Ahead of Fire Protection Code Development.” With more than 40 years in the fire protection industry—working in fire insurance, fire protection consulting, fire sprinkler contracting and...
Global Connections Day Addresses Trends and Practices for a Changing World continued

Fire protection solutions for critical assets at 3M laboratories—Rivers’ expertise on technology moving rapidly ahead of, and influencing, fire protection code development was of great interest to global attendees from Japan, India, Dubai, England and North America.

Rivers presented specific examples of fire protection of data centers and telecommunications, electronics immersion cooling, and energy storage to demonstrate how technology is out-pacing fire protection code development. He elaborated on emerging fire protection challenges with hot aisle/cold aisle containment in data centers; how data centers account for about two percent of the planet’s entire electricity consumption and that 30 billion watts of electricity (equivalent to 30 nuclear power plants) are used for data centers; how data centers are making the migration to liquid cooling; and artificial intelligence in autonomous vehicles and the introduction of HR 3388, the Self Drive Act, before the U.S. House of Representatives that would allow automakers to obtain exemptions without meeting existing auto safety standards.

Guest speaker Jaime A. Moncada, director at International Fire Safety Consulting, presented “Fire Safety in Latin America—Challenges and Potential Solutions.” An experienced fire protection engineer with a 30-year-long career of projects throughout Latin-America in the oil and gas, industrial, institutional and commercial sectors, Moncada illustrated the problems and potential solutions to the worldwide fire problem. He touched on the perception that large fire losses are a “developed world problem,” many of the largest loss-of-life fires have occurred in the developing world, and that in countries with sub-standard fire codes there is little enforcement and few fire protection engineers.

Guest speaker Imai Tadaumi, building official with the Construction and Development Supervision Office in the Osaka prefecture of Japan, presented “Fire Prevention Design and the Evaluation System for Fire Prevention in High-Rise Buildings in Japan.” Tadaumi discussed important measures that may be taken, including preventing fire spread in the early stages of a fire and effective fire-fighting activity as well as what should be required in fire preventive building design.

Rounding out the presentations on building and fire codes and how they relate to global safety, guest speaker Jeff Harper, PE, of Jensen Hughes International presented on “U.S.-Based Codes and Standards in International Design.” Harper discussed how codes and standards development and globalization are driven by product manufacturers, how
Global Connections Day Addresses Trends and Practices for a Changing World

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Performance standards are guided by building code development, and how the application of codes and standards is still subject to local politics and traditions. He stressed that economically developed countries are more likely to have their own codes and standards and that competing test facilities and multiple international codes and standards help to drive best practices and grow global acceptance.

The afternoon session, featured a keynote economic presentation and a panel discussion featuring building safety service providers from the United States and abroad, comparing domestic and international trends in helping governmental jurisdictions to advance the Code Council mission of creating safe, sustainable and resilient buildings and communities.

The business keynote address on “Global Economic Trends and Business Practices” was given by Dante Amato, strategic account manager at Metrostudy, the leading provider of primary and secondary market information to the housing and residential construction industry. He illustrated how job growth is remaining steady; unemployment is approaching record lows; labor force participation is rising; and rises in new construction, sales and remodeling. He stressed that as household income growth accelerates, housing shortages will become more intense, peaking in the 2018/2019 time frame. Rising mortgage rates may contribute to severe housing over valuation in many markets, despite only modest price appreciation during the next few years.

Lori Parris, deputy director of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) in Washington, D.C., moderated the business panel on “Building Safety Service Providers,” which discussed the topic of third-party providers in the building sector, international and domestic building safety industry perspectives, and current and future trends relating to the built environment. Parris briefed attendees on DCRA activities and its Third-Party Program authorizes qualified third-party entities to perform inspections and plan reviews to certify compliance with the District of Columbia Construction Codes. Panel participants included Geoff Mitchell, Mike McCurdie and Craig Tole.

Global Connections Day concluded with the participation of global members and partners providing a report on the activities and state of affairs in their regions. Geoff Mitchell, chair of the Global Membership Council, provided a report on Australia’s National Construction Code; Nick Hill presented an overview on New Zealand’s Building System; and Maurice Ngwaba reported the challenges and opportunities of the Building Code Program in Nigeria. The Code Council’s global partners Stephen Mawn of ASTM International and Joanne Littlefair of the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Agency, provided an account of activities of the three organizations in the Gulf Region.