



In The Industry

Business & Industry News

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"In The Industry." Here you will find noteworthy items of industry interest.

Van Hagens, Industry Veteran, Passes
Harry Van Hagens, who was well known in the solid surface industry via his long tenure with Colonial Saw Company, died unexpectedly of a heart attack on Dec. 11, 2008. With a career that spans 40 years and two continents, both Europe and the United States, Van Hagens has left many positive impressions on those who had the pleasure to work with him.

"When I first met Harry in Hannover, Germany, he won me over in less than five minutes with his knowledge of the grinding industry, and his quiet, without, as my mother used to say, 'tooting his own horn' way," recalled Paul Ravinski, president of Colonial Saw. Within months, Ravinski had convinced Van Hagens to leave the Netherlands and work with him in the United States.

Harry's extraordinary knowledge and ability to work with customers, always focusing on solving any issue brought to his attention, quickly became an asset to the company. "He instilled in [our technicians] his traits of respect for the customer and getting the job done quickly and professionally," noted Dave Rakauskas, vice president of Colonial Saw.

Van Hagens was known to freely share his vast knowledge of mechanical and electrical troubleshooting, and to pay careful attention to details. In 1991, he took on managing the West Coast branch of Colonial Saw, and was instrumental in the growth and developments of that office. The impact of this led to the company winning the title of Supplier of the Year for the Woodworking Machinery Industry Association. Harry was also appointed to the board of directors of the Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers (AWFS). A highly dedicated man who focused on taking care of the needs of others, Van Hagens will certainly be missed by all those he touched.

