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Lines: The CWA Newsletter

Vol. 5, No. 6

September 5, 2009

Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

We have been busy here this summer. We are way ahead of schedule for Summit preparations this year and have started negotiating with pre-conference presenters to determine what our workshop line up will be. The call for workshop proposals was announced last week and can be found [here](#).

We have also been working on our first regulatory intervention on the federal level with the drafting of a petition on behalf of our manufacturing members regarding the Consumer Protection Improvement Act of 2008. Read the full account [below](#).

Finally, our talented Andrea Sutherland was offered a Graduate Teaching Assistantship at the University of Colorado. Andrea will continue to work at CWA but in a more focused capacity on the conference and editorial projects. Congratulations to Andrea on her success.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Zimmermann,
Executive Director

Exhibitor and Sponsor Prospectus

The Climbing Wall Summit is growing. The new venue at the University Memorial Center at the University of Colorado boasts four large conference rooms, several meeting rooms, a grand ballroom and a large room devoted solely to exhibitor space. Not to mention a bar, arcade, pool hall and bowling alley on the bottom floor.

Last year, over 200 gym owners, managers, equipment and wall manufacturers and other decision makers attended the Climbing Wall Summit. The CWA anticipates an even larger turnout at the 2010 Climbing Wall Summit.

While the Summit is not merely a trade show, we understand that business gets done. Our conferences target the climbing industry specifically, so they are focused and an excellent opportunity to connect with existing and potential customers.

Over the years, several industry leaders have exhibited and/or sponsored the Summit including Stratus Insurance, Walltopia, Nicros, Petzl, Entre Prises, Rock and Ice magazine, Asana, Black Diamond, Rockwerx, Trango and So iLL.

Companies may download the exhibitor and sponsor prospectus from the web site.

Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008

The CPSIA was enacted by the 110th Congress to establish and update consumer product safety standards and requirements for children's products. Important changes introduced by the law, which also reauthorized and modernized the Consumer Product Safety Commission, include strict limits on lead and lead paint in children's products, mandatory third party testing for certain children's products, tracking and labeling standards for children's products, and a ban on certain products containing phthalates (substances added to plastics to increase their flexibility, transparency, durability and longevity).

What does any of this have to do with climbing or climbing structures?

On the face if it very little, but after some investigation by member vendors such as Nicros and Entre Prises we have identified some potential problem areas for the climbing wall industry. There are climbing products targeted at children, primarily hand holds, panels, and certain climbing structures that contain lead (granted in very small amounts). Furthermore, phthalates can be present in certain foamed PVC products which have been used as flooring materials in the past. It is less likely that the industry is affected by banned phthalates given that this class of chemicals has been phased out in many products

for other alternatives. Lead however is present, and naturally occurring, in sand, steel, among other components used to build climbing holds and structures.

The CPSC, as authorized by the law, has gradually been decreasing the allowable lead limits in certain children's products from 600 parts per million, to 300 parts per million today, and ultimately to 100 parts per million in any part of a product accessible to children (for example a hand hold). After August 14th it became unlawful to manufacture, import, sell, or offer for sale a children's product that has more than 300 ppm lead content. Civil penalties have increased an order of magnitude under the new law from \$8000.00 per violation to \$100,000.00. Manufacturers are now required to include permanent distinguishing marks (for example a tracking label), which includes some basic information such as: manufacturer or private labeler, location, date of manufacture, and a batch or run number.

What is the CWA doing about this new law?

The CWA is drafting a petition for exemption on behalf of our members regarding lead limits in climbing products (to date we have not found any petitions requesting exemptions for phthalates). Our petition rests on a few fundamental arguments: 1) lead content in climbing products tested to date are lower than the future limit of 100 ppm, 2) it is not technologically feasible to reduce lead content in raw materials where it may be naturally occurring (which could be the basis of an alternative limit set for our industry if our petition for exemption is not approved), and 3) exclusion based upon the inaccessibility of certain components. For example the steel in a climbing structure could reasonably be exempted because it would not be accessible to children. Once a draft is complete and we have collected test data from member manufacturers we will submit the petition to the CPSC.

How can you help the CWA in this process?

If you are a manufacturer and have had your climbing related products tested for lead limits, please consider submitting the test data to Bill Zimmermann at the CWA. The test data can be incorporated into the petition as appendices to support the arguments and claims we are making on your behalf. If you have questions regarding your participation, please feel free to call Bill.

Finally, the work it takes to research and write a credible petition, submit it to legal review, and shepherd it through the regulatory process takes resources. If you are reading this, please join or renew your membership today.

Members of Colony take a field trip

Last month five employees from the Colony Insurance claims department traveled to Movement Climbing and Fitness and tied in for their first climbing experience. Their goal: to learn more about the sport and learn how a climbing gym operates.

Colony Insurance, located in Denver, is the carrier for the CWA's Risk Purchasing Group which provides consistent highly-rated coverage for our members.

"A major problem facing gyms is the payment of claims that have no merit -- perhaps because they are cheaper to pay than to fight," Executive Director of the CWA Bill Zimmermann said. "If the people handling our claims understand the sport, they can understand the inherent risks and make better decisions regarding which claims to pay and which claims are frivolous. Paying unnecessary claims could ultimately cause rates to increase. Fortunately, rates have remained stable for our program to date."

"Colony is high on education," claims manager and climbing novice Gail Pennels said after receiving a comprehensive introductory lesson, which included learning to tie and re-tie figure-eight knots, belay techniques and climbing commands. When she reached the top of her very first climb, Pennels smiled and said, "That was so much fun. I can see why people do this!"

Recently, CWA conducted a second training at Colony's Denver office covering the Industry Practices. A third training is scheduled in a month which will cover the new engineering and inspection specifications.

Access Fund announces multimillion dollar campaign to save endangered climbing areas

Note: Provided by the Access Fund

The Access Fund announces the launch of a new campaign to save endangered climbing areas-the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign (AFLCC). The AFLCC is a multimillion-dollar revolving loan program designed to provide local climbing organizations and other agencies with the funds and expertise needed to act quickly to save threatened climbing areas.

"Over the years, we've seen more private climbing areas changing hands, some of them lost to cash-ready developers. Local climbers don't always have the money or the resources to save these climbing areas. This program was designed to help them," says Brady Robinson, Access Fund Executive Director. While a portion of the Access Fund's focus and revenues has always been allocated to acquisition and protection of threatened land (see acquisitions history), the new AFLCC program will expand on this capability, arming local climbing organizations to take on the ever-growing threats of development and protect our climbing resources from landowners who are not climber friendly.

The AFLCC will provide local climbing organizations with short-term loans and expertise on direct acquisitions, leases, easements, and other tactics. This assistance and bridge financing for time-sensitive projects will give local climbers the opportunity to raise money over a longer period of time and/or

finalize take-out strategies. In addition to loans, the AFLCC may also offer grants for direct conservation efforts, including acquisitions and other projects that protect climbing areas on private land.

The AFLCC already has two successful pilot projects underway. The first is a \$15,000 bridge loan to secure an option agreement for the acquisition of the Lower Index Town Wall in Washington. "The Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign stepped in at just the right time to loan WCC the funds necessary to secure this option," says WCC Secretary Matt Perkins. The second is a \$20,000 bridge loan to Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC) to help facilitate the purchase of a 29-acre cliff line in Steele, Alabama. Learn more about these projects.

The Access Fund has been fundraising for the campaign for 14 months and is over halfway toward its goal of \$2.5 million. To date, the AFLCC has been supported by a number of generous individuals and companies within the outdoor industry. Bill Supple, President and CEO of Mammut Sports Group commented, "from an outdoor industry perspective, as the bar gets higher and more complicated in maintaining access to multi-recreational areas, we need to step up and support initiatives like the AFLCC for both future generations of users and for the long term sustainability of our businesses."

Because the AFLCC is a revolving fund, donors' contributions are recycled over time, allowing the Access Fund to protect more and more valued climbing areas for future generations. For more information about the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign, visit www.accessfund.org/AFLCC.

Member Profile: Nantahala Outdoor Center

Located on the Nantahala River in North Carolina, the Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) is an employee-owned outdoor outfitter, specializing in whitewater rafting and other river activities but also offering several other outdoor instructional programs including rock climbing.

Since founders Payson and Aurelia Kennedy and Horace Holden opened their small whitewater rafting company in 1972, NOC has exploded, offering river expeditions on nine rivers in the Eastern US and Adventure Travel to more than 40 countries.

"We are currently building a 18,000 square foot outdoor retail operation in Gatlinburg, Tennessee," NOC employee Grant "Woody" Woodruff said. "We have contracted with the fine folks at Eldorado Wall Company to build a climbing wall as a key feature to the retail space. We will use the wall for instruction and as a recreational attraction." For more information visit the NOC web site at www.noc.com.

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About the Climbing Wall Association, Inc. (CWA). The CWA is a 501(c)(06), non-profit, trade association incorporated in May of 2003 for manufacturers of climbing wall equipment, builders of climbing walls, operators of climbing walls, and others involved in the climbing industry.

The CWA is the only trade association addressing the needs and interests of the climbing wall industry and climbing wall operators. The mission of the Climbing Wall Association is to support the growth, health and independence of the climbing wall industry, and to promote the sport of climbing.