

51-10A INDUSTRY WEEK
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**Asbestos out
to improve image**

THE ASBESTOS industry is campaigning hard to counter the negative image created in recent years because of attacks

aimed at health hazards of asbestos use.

The dilemma of the industry is clearly illustrated by the continuing controversy over the use of asbestos in spray insulations used in high-rise building construction.

In some cities, New York and Philadelphia, for example, proposals are on the table to ban the use of asbestos for such applications. Other cities, such as San Francisco, are leaning toward tight regulation.

Industry leaders believe strict regulation is in order for such applications, or are at least reconciled to it, while fighting vehemently against bans.

Basically, industry spokesmen believe that there are no public health hazards from asbestos and that occupational health hazards are being and can be minimized through improved occupational use standards.

New group—To answer critics and to present the positive side of the issue, eight leading asbestos product companies have organized the Asbestos Information Assn./North America (AIA/NA). Sponsoring companies are: Certain-teed Products Corp., Flintkote Co., GAF Corp., Johns-Manville Corp., National Gypsum Co., Panacorp Corp., Raybestos - Manhattan Inc., and Woodward Corp.

The asbestos companies know they face formidable pressures from federal, state, and local governments, politicians, physicians, environmentalists, and consumer protection advocates.

Where it appears feasible, the AIA/NA will attempt to rebut criticisms considered to be unwarranted and will attempt to clarify statements regarded as having been taken out of context or exaggerated.

The AIA/NA kicked off its informational campaign at a news conference in New York at which association officials and

outside experts presented the industry side of the picture.

Industry side—While it is true that asbestos dust can be an occupational hazard for workers exposed to high concentrations over a long period of time, there is no hard evidence that asbestos presents a public health hazard, commented Harold McNabb, AIA/NA president and president of the Piping & Plastics Industries Div., Certain-teed Products Corp., Valley Forge, Pa.

Occupational health hazards have been and are being brought under control and the asbestos industry is cooperating to establish effective dust control in construction, said Mr. McNabb.

Commenting on community air, William P. Raines, AIA/NA secretary and director of public relations for Johns-Manville Corp., noted that the average New York resident over a 70-year lifetime would be exposed to an amount of asbestos no greater than that to which an asbestos mine employee would be exposed in 2.5 working days at levels recommended as safe by the American Conference of Governmental & Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH). □