

Community Development has not itself mired in a series of union allgones, cost overruns, contractor piques and haggling over testing fees. While the questions of labor safety and combustibility are quickly put to rest (in favor of the pipe) as of late summer 1986, D had not completed the key tests of water quality tests—much produced a finished report. With PVC virtually locked out of the city's largest residential construction market, vinyl producers were reasonably impatient for HCD to complete their product. Through Vinyl Institute, they decided to let them do what California could not—complete the series of conducted tests. These so-called leachate tests are supposed to measure what toxic materials, if any, migrate from pipe into potable water over a period time. In late 1985, the Institute took State-approved testing protocol of McKesson Environmental Services.

A California laboratory certified the State for environmental testing analysis. The VI not only asked McKesson to run the tests on CPVC, the worst case form of PVC in view of its additional chlorine content, but on a copper system as well. Avoided any question of conflict of interest, the Vinyl Institute followed a sound hands-off policy—turning full control of the project to McKesson, from pipe purchase and as ability to analysis of the final results. On July 24, 1986, an industry attorney submitted the results to HCD. It showed that no carcinogens leached from the CPVC piping system (including the solvent cements joined it together) and that only trace amounts (in the low parts per

billion range) of any other organic contaminants were found, the presence of these latter chemicals trailed off over time. Conversely, the exact same tests on the metal piping system showed lead leachate levels far in excess of current EPA and Congressional standards. Potentially harmful amounts of copper also leached from the pipe under some water conditions. (A series of abbreviated tests conducted on galvanized pipe found known toxicants leaching as well. And arrays of non-leachate tests identified arsenic and other highly toxic metals as constituent impurities.)

In sum, the McKesson results proved one major form of plastic pipe to be at least as safe as metal pipe if not more so.

What will happen next?

By law, the State of California is compelled to review and consider the McKesson results, but has the right to continue its own drawn-out costly and no doubt duplicative testing program before resolving the matter. Union plumbers, meanwhile, achieve *de facto* victory as long as the LHB process stumbles on. It seems like a high price to pay for a product that already meets the standards of the National Sanitation Foundation and the U.S. EPA, and has been used safely for over 30 years in water distribution systems.

In the meantime, the McKesson results are being shared with various federal agencies, national scientific organizations and regulatory bodies in other states. As the study gains national recognition and acceptance, California residents may grow in increasingly suspicious of the Keystone comedy being played in their home state.

about Very Important People...

Jose Mary Clyburn, PPG Industries, has joined the Vinyl Institute advisory board, replacing Larry Smith, who has assumed new duties at PPG. She also will serve on Market Development Committee. The VI Legal Committee welcomes new members: Gail Cudak and Gail Rutman, of The BL Goodrich

Company, and Sherry Carr, of CertainTeed Corporation. Sherry also will serve as liaison to the Communications Committee.

Sandie Kroeger, Occidental Chemical, has agreed to serve as Communications Committee liaison to the Market Development Committee.



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advisory

Architects, Builders Cite Durability As Key Attribute; Plan Increased Use of Vinyl

550 Specifiers Surveyed Nationwide in New Study

What's the most important concern of builders and architects when they specify residential construction products? According to a new survey sponsored by the Vinyl Institute, durability outranks all other attributes, including appearance, ease of installation. And, when specifiers turn to vinyl product selection, durability also ranks high on the list of reasons why they choose PVC over competitive products, the study shows.

The survey represents the first time that the Institute has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the opinions held by building industry professionals. Currently, the construction industry accounts for over 60 percent of all vinyl end market, according to SPI statistics.

Conducted by Public Attitudes, an independent research firm located in New York City, the study surveyed 550 builders, architects and code officials throughout the country responsible for specifying or approving vinyl products in residential construction applications. Specifically, the survey was designed to determine how vinyl products are used

and why. Ray Gottesman, executive director of the Vinyl Institute, and George Sander, chairman of the communications committee, managed the project with Public Attitudes.

Vinyl Well-Regarded By Pros

In general, Gottesman and Sander note, the survey indicates that vinyl has a good reputation in the residential construction market. Not surprisingly, awareness of specific uses for vinyl tends to parallel actual market penetration. Here are some of the key findings from the study:

- Underground piping, siding and plumbing pipe are the best known uses for vinyl among all three groups. The other categories frequently named are wall covering, window frame, door and siding doors, hot and cold water distribution pipe and electrical conduit. (Code officials have the least awareness of other applications; architects the most.)
- Builders and architects currently are most likely to specify vinyl drain waste vent (DWV) pipe and flooring, a substantial percentage

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Results from the new Vinyl Institute study of construction specifiers reveal significant growth potential for vinyl building products.

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Sherry Carr

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of architects also favors vinyl wall covering.

- Regarding these applications for which they currently specify vinyl, a significant portion (10-20 percent) of builders and architects indicate plans to use more PVC in the future. Of note, the one application targeted for the most increase is in electrical conduit. Twenty percent of builders and 17 percent of architects say they plan to use vinyl more often in this application in the coming year.
- Vinyl construction products are widely regarded as approved by local building codes. Over 90 percent of all three groups for instance state that DWV is approved, recognition of approval for seven other common applications measured in from a 60 percent or higher.
- In addition to its durability, all three groups cite vinyl's ability to meet specific design, easy maintenance, variety of shapes and sizes, and good appearance as very important factors for approving or using PVC. Conversely, a product's perceived inability to provide the appropriate color is the reason why 10 percent or less they do not choose certain vinyl products.

Study Provides Base for Action

How will this information be useful to the VI? According to Gottesman, it serves two purposes.

Coding, Deposits, Topics of New SPI Papers

Two new publication papers from SPI's Plastic Bottle Institute (PBI) may be of interest to Vinyl Institute members, and customers seeking information on a subject related to solid waste management. The two papers discuss mandatory deposits and mandatory coding of plastic bottles.

Although both papers focus on high-density polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, much of the material is broader in scope and applies to other packaging materials as well.

Regarding mandatory deposits for instance, PBI points out that such systems typically include consumer

First, the survey gives us the type of statistical information we've never had before," he says. "While we've always known—pretty much by intuition—what our strengths are in this market, we've never had the data to back up our instincts. This information should be of great help to our members and their customers in positioning the value of vinyl building products with construction industry specialists."

Second, he adds, "The survey has pinpointed those areas where we need to expand communications efforts. For instance, some of the most exciting new uses for vinyl have very little top of mind recognition with builders and architects. This information will be particularly helpful to us by providing local points for the efforts of the market development and communications committees."

Gottesman notes that a communications program designed to promote the results of the survey already is underway via the Institute's public relations firm.

Gottesman also states, "This study is an excellent example of the type of service the Institute can provide its members. It's a concrete step toward our objective of becoming more proactive on behalf of the industry to help develop and expand markets for vinyl products."

Anyone who would like more details about the results of the study should contact the VI offices.

costs and restrict consumer brand choices, without substantially reducing recyclable litter.

Mandatory coding, PBI says, is not a feasible solution to solid waste and litter problems, and would be counterproductive to recycling. Recycling programs for easily identified containers such as PET soda bottles, combined with waste to energy incineration for other plastics, present better solutions, the paper states.

Both papers are available from the Plastic Bottle Institute, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017, (212) 503-0600.

Viewpoint

California's Elusive Environmental Impact Report on Plastic Pipe

George R. Snider, Jr. is director of external affairs for BF Goodrich's Geon Vinyl Division. In addition to chairing the Vinyl Institute's Communications Committee, Snider has served for the past two years as chairman of SPI's Ad Hoc Resin Producers Committee, which is funding the California EIR. Here, he presents his views on the long delayed approval of plastic pipe in that state.

In California, a product safety controversy plays on with the pace of a champion hip check match and the pratfalls of a Keystone Cops comedy.

The controversy concerns the safety of plastic plumbing pipe, and the tickety plot focuses on completion of a long stalk of Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Union plumbers, plastic producers, and the State's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) share top billing, with the California legislature in a supporting role.

A captive audience comprised of builders and homeowners awaits the outcome, since expanded use of residential plastic plumbing pipe has been blocked in the state since 1979.

When union plumbers won a legislative directive (and, in 1982, a court order) halting new approvals of plastic pipe. In late 1980, in response to legislative pressure, the State announced it would conduct (with plastic industry funding) an EIR on the safety of this popular, though suddenly prohibited, product.

But why the controversy?

Plastic pipe such as PVC won't rust or corrode, resists the buildup of sediment on interior pipe walls, requires no welding to join together, is lightweight, costs less than metal piping systems and can be installed in roughly 40 percent of the time required for traditional copper. Moreover, there's no solder to leach lead or other metal toxicants into drinking water—a current concern of both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Congress.

Skeptics say that plumbers fear some of these very attributes. Any material that costs less, lasts longer and is faster to install points to pos-



sibly lower revenues per job and, even worse, to the potential invasion of household plumbing installation by do-it-yourselfers.

The California Pipe Trades Council and several of its union locals say that's hogwash—that what really concerns plumbers is plastic's safety to them and to the public. Specifically, they allege the solvent cement used to join certain types of pipe poses a health hazard to installers. Moreover, they claim plastic pipe leaches potentially harmful chemicals into the drinking water it conveys and also gives off toxic fumes when it burns. The EIR, now in its sixth year, was designed to resolve those issues in eighteen months.

Using the EIR process in this case is unusual in itself, since EIRs typically are reserved for industrial plant siting evaluations and the like. As the lead agency for the State in this instance, the Department of Housing

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English "Film Wars" Prompt Government Apology

In England, the vinyl industry is facing attack from a surprising adversary—another member of the plastic industry. There, a group of polyolefin manufacturers are using false health and safety issues to promote their products at the expense of vinyl "cling film" (flexible food wrap).

Organized as the European Polyolefin Cling Film Association (EPCFA), the group has raised concerns about additives migrating from vinyl film into the fat or oil content of wrapped food. By inference, the group also has associated vinyl with "toxicous fumes" and choking generated during the incineration process.

Earlier this year, a regional government body located in Birmingham, England, raised similar issues about vinyl food wrap. The group later was forced to retract its statements and issue a formal apology when the British Plastics Federation refuted the group's research findings with independent data from both sides of the Atlantic.

Commenting on the dispute, Vinyl Institute technical committee chairman Michael O'Mara notes that the safety of vinyl film in food contact

applications has been confirmed and reaffirmed in extensive testing conducted by both government and industry for many years.

Additionally, he states, work recently being conducted in both the United States and Europe—and specifically the research at the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency—already is indicating that incinerator operating conditions, rather than the presence or absence of PVC in municipal waste, are the most important factor in minimizing dioxin formation.

Adds Roy Gottesman, VI executive director, "Over the years, most plastic product manufacturers have learned that using 'dirty tricks' in looking to promote a product at the expense of a competitive one is a backfire. Most consumers, we've found, tend to lump all plastic in very broad categories, so that negative things said about one make eventually rub off onto another. It's really far more cost-effective to promote the strengths of your product rather than attack the real or alleged weaknesses of your competitors."

in brief

✓BF Goodrich has announced plans to increase vinyl compound capacity at its Long Beach, California, plant by 50 percent. The expansion and modernization is scheduled for completion by the end of 1987.

✓October is presentation month for VI executive director Roy Gottesman who is meeting with vinyl industry members throughout the country to update them on Institute activities. He also is presenting the results of the Institute's recent survey of the residential construction industry.

Audiences include SPI's Vinyl Formulators Division, the Vinyl Plastics Division of the Chicago section

of SPI, the Reliant Floor Covering Institute, the Vinyl Chloride Safety Association, and BF Goodrich's Geon Vinyl Division management.

Others interested in having Gottesman address their group about vinyl industry activities and issues, should contact him at the Institute office, (201) 890-9299.

✓Vista Chemical has announced formation of a new division dedicated to specialty vinyl compound production and custom color matching new division, Premiere Polymer, began production in July at renovated facilities in Jeffersonstown, Kentucky that previously were owned by H. Old Chemical. Target markets for new division include automotive and cable. If you and spec molding