

International Federation for the Roofing Trade Congress 2011

By James Warden

Upon arriving at the 2011 IFD Congress in Dublin, Ireland, I noticed it had a different feel and focus than the 2010 IFD Congress and the associated 23rd World Championship of Young Roofers Competition held in Belfast, Northern Ireland last year. In 2010, the IFD decided that with the economic downturn, it would be far too expensive to have the competition every year, so now they are holding the associated competition every other year. The budget for this "off" year was E67K (\$87.5K) which will be raised to E69K (\$90K) next year, and the competition will add another E60K (\$78.3K).

Since there was no Young Roofers Competition this year, the IFD decided to initiate a new form of competition to fill the void. Thus the "Awards of the IFD" was started. This award was given for outstanding standards of workmanship and safety among competent roofing companies who submitted an entry. This was the first time there was a competitor from the USA for any of the IFD competitions. Our own Liam Tower won an award in the pitched roof category.

There were three main parts to the Congress. On November 2nd there was a Scientific Committee Meeting. Then on November 3rd attendees broke into two committees: one was Pitched Roofing and Wall Cladding and the other was waterproofing (Basically flat roofs). Then on November 4th they had the actual 4 part Conference. On Friday evening the Gala dinner was held and the awards of the IFD were handed out.

I had attended the Scientific Committee meetings in the previous year, and like last year it was a long process of hammering out roofing standards and minimum requirements for the industry. This is a difficult process because different countries regulations are constantly changing and some countries regulations are much stricter (like Germany). The United Kingdom has programs to teach standards and has now put them online in module form. These guidelines will most likely be generalized and will prove beneficial for many countries trying to establish regulations of their own. The Scientific Committee will have the next meeting in Budapest, April 8 to 12, 2012.

The Scientific Committee reported back to the Pitched roofing and Wall Cladding Committee meeting the next day with many of the Scientific Committee's findings and suggestions. These included guidelines for vapor barriers, ridge vents, green roofs, wind uplift resistance, wind load calculations, porous and air tightness of roofs, rain and snow protection, energy efficiency of roofs and walls, and use of alternative energy-- like solar panels. Some members express concern that stricter regulations will make them lose local control or restrict some roofing products and they think the IFD should just put together an overview of standards in different countries for members to refer to.

Finally, on November 4th, both the Scientific Committee and Pitched roofing and Wall Cladding Committee reported their findings to the General Conference Attendees. Afterwards, there was much talk about the 60th anniversary of the first IFD Congress that will be held on June 1, 2012 in Munich, Germany, the same location where the 1st Congress was held. This time it will be held at the BMW facility and Auto Museum. The 60th IFD Congress 2012 and the 24th World Championship Young Roofers will be in Luzern, Switzerland. Date to be announced.