

PAMA, TRD & FSA ICC HEARING UPDATE

June 3, 2016

The International Code Council (ICC) held Committee Action Hearings (CAH) hearings on the Group B sections of the International Fire Code (IFC) in Louisville, Ky. April proposals had been entered for modifications to the IFC that would affect IFAI divisions; Tent Rental Division (TRD), Professional Awning Manufacturers Association (PAMA) and the Fabric Structures Association (FSA). Tom Markel who has been representing TRD throughout the ICC code process agreed to additionally represent PAMA and FSA on code proposals that affected all three divisions. In addition to Markel, the following members were present:

- PAMA Vice-Chairman, Mike Gatti (Herculite)
- PAMA member, Peter Weingartner (President, Queen City Awning)
- TRD Chairman, Mike Holland (President, Chattanooga Tent Services)
- TRD Steering Committee Member, Lync Aldershof (Verseidag US)
- IFAI Division Supervisor, Andrea Jauli

These proposals were labeled F166-16 for Detached Non-combustible Canopies, F298-16 for Umbrella structures and F303-16 flame retardancy requirements for membrane structures.

The 166-16 proposal as written, would cause serious impact to the awning industry and PAMA members. F166-16 essentially proposed sprinkler system requirements for canopies attached or within 10 feet from building structures. After a lengthy process full of hearings, networking, meetings to gather opposing support and testimony, the F166-16 proposal was successfully disapproved by the IFC committee. However, proponents may try to modify their proposal by Public Comment (PC) at the Public Comment Hearing (PCH) hearing in October 2016 in Kansas City, Mo.

For the other two proposals, the Committee approved them based on modifications for F298, a compromise was worked out to modify the definition of Tent and Canopy to include Umbrella Structures. Lastly, F303 a proposal to modify all materials in tents and canopies to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 701 test method 2 only was compromised to align IFC 3104.2 to read as NFPA 701 reads for both test methods 1 and 2 allowing decorative materials and light-weight fabrics to continue under test method 1.

Going forward in the short term, the PCH hearing in October 2016 will require additional representation to follow through on any modifications to F166 by public comment or any PCs for the other two proposals. The process must be monitored, understanding that anyone can enter a PC at the last minute and a knowledgeable advocate for IFAI membership and divisions must be present to argue against it.

As we look beyond the ICC proposals, TRD, PAMA, and FSA will continue to work in their respective code committees so they can become actively involved in the ICC process in the next cycle. Also we must consider that NFPA and possibly ASTM E84 standards are also in flux and all three divisions should establish monitoring by a knowledgeable code consultant and their code and steering committees.

Sidebar: Public Comments deadline is July 22, 2016. In order to argue for or against any PC, someone must be present at the PCH hearing.