

Environmental Management Association of Singapore (EMAS) to raise professionalism in cleaning trade through accreditation scheme and mechanisation

Cleaning show Pulire Asia to showcase the latest in cleaning equipment

3 April 2009, Singapore - The Environmental Management Association of Singapore (EMAS) is out to start an accreditation scheme for cleaning companies to raise professionalism in the cleaning trade and also help create jobs for Singaporeans against the backdrop of these troubled times.

The EMAS move is also intended to:

- Weed out operators who blemish the industry
- Encourage more mechanisation and automation in this labour-intensive industry
- Remove some of the stigma attached to cleaning jobs
- Absorb workers retrenched by the manufacturing sector

In relation to encouraging greater automation in the industry, a range of the latest cleaning equipment and technologies will be showcased at Pulire Asia Cleaning Solutions Expo jointly organised by MP International and Afidamp FAB, organisers of Pulire in Italy. EMAS, which is supporting Pulire Asia, wants to expose cleaning companies to the latest in mechanisation.

The cleaning industry in Singapore is worth some S\$600 million per annum, and is growing at a rate of more than 30%. The global industrial and institutional cleaning market is projected to reach almost US\$23 billion by 2010, with the Asia Pacific as one of the fastest growing regions.

Said Mr Milton Ng, President of EMAS, of the move to start an accreditation scheme: "There is a lack of an accreditation system to ensure cleaning standards and quality of companies. We are on the verge of forming an accreditation body to draft out the scheme. We have discussed our plan with NTUC's Unit for Contract and Casual Workers and are also in the process of sourcing Government support for our plan. Having an accreditation scheme will enable customers to go to creditable cleaning companies."

He outlined some of the challenges facing the cleaning industry:

- Shortage of local labour in the workforce
- Heavy reliance on foreign workers
- Poor working conditions and low wages
- Negative stigma associated with cleaning workers
- Impractical terms, conditions & clauses in contracts by service buyers

... Page 2

Said Mr Ng: "We want to look into the welfare of cleaning workers. At present, the industry has to depend considerably on foreign workers. Local workers tend to shy away from cleaning jobs because they perceive a stigma attached to them. If we can raise the profile of the industry, then cleaning companies will be able to attract workers who are retrenched from the manufacturing sector."

He added that raising the profile of the industry will also entail cleaning companies to modernise and automate with the latest in cleaning equipment, and even look into ergonomics for cleaners. Cleaning companies can no longer afford to be "broom and mop" operators.

The trend in the global cleaning industry is to move towards mechanisation and to be less labour-intensive, according to Mr Michele Redi, President of Afidamp FAB, the Italian Association of Manufacturers of Professional Cleaning Equipment and Products.

He said: "There has to be a green-wave to profitability in the cleaning industry. Rather than using a very labour intensive solution to a cleaning problem, there should be greater use of machinery to counteract rising labour costs. It can be a great force multiplier in our industry."

Mr Redi continued: "Using mechanisation guarantees a standard of cleanliness, not possible to be achieved doing it by hand alone. Coupled with good training techniques, cleaning companies will find that they do not need quantity of workers, but rather, quality of workers."

Among the new mechanisation solutions that will be on display at Pulire Asia will be sweepers vacuum and scrubber dryers. These are machines that are used by hospitals and supermarkets, that are able to vacuum, wash, mop and dry after them, all in just one action.

"Sweeping a large parking lot may take 10 persons," said Mr Redi. "But with the use of mechanisation, just one man can clean the lot in just one hour!"

Mr Tony Chan, Project Director, MP International, said that there is great scope for Pulire Asia to become a high profile show for the region's cleaning industries and international cleaning equipment suppliers.

Mr Chan said: "It would be a perfect platform to capitalise and draw upon the world leaders of the industry and instil, as well as transfer the required knowhow to Singapore and the region. Taking advantage of the global slowdown, cleaning companies will see it fit to train and mechanise, and to increase the overall standard of professionalism within the industry."

The Pulire Asia trade exhibition will focus on cleaning technologies, products and services from leading international and regional players. The new-to-market cleaning solutions will cater to a variety of sectors, including the transportation, medical and hospitality sectors. The exhibition will be accompanied by a conference and workshops which will feature best practices and tips from leading industry experts and practitioners. A gamut of other issues will also be addressed, including cleaning standards and policies, and emerging trends.

Exhibitors include Duplex, Duropad, Fiorentini, Karcher, Lavorwash, Nozomi, Nilfisk-Advance and Klindex to name a few. Visitors can expect the latest in air management and control, cleaning equipment and products, cleaning services and maintenance, household supplies and products, laundrytech appliances and products and many more.

Pulire Asia will be held from 2 to 4 December 2009 at Suntec Singapore. It will co-locate with the World Toilet Summit & Expo 2009, giving visitors a more comprehensive platform towards cleaning and sanitation solutions.

In association with Pulire Asia, an industry forum was held at Suntec Singapore today. Titled *Staying Ahead in Challenging Times: Winning Strategies for Professional Cleaning*, the forum featured presentations by Mr Milton Ng, President of EMAS, Mr John Selvan, Honorary Secretary, EMAS; Mr Michele Redi, President of Afidamp FAB; and Dr Massimiliano P. Sponzilli, Italian Trade Commissioner, Singapore. It was attended by some 50 cleaning industry members.

For more information on Pulire Asia, please visit www.pulire-asia.com.

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About Afidamp

Afidamp Servizi is the business corporation of Afidamp FAB, the Italian Association of Manufacturers of Professional Cleaning Equipment and Products. Afidamp Servizi is specialised in the organisation and coordination of trade fairs in the cleaning business and has been, for many years, the strategic partner of major cleaning show organisers in the world. Since 1999, Afidamp is the organiser of the PULIRE show in Verona (Italy) and has organised other projects in Spain, and has partnerships in India, UAE and China.

About EMAS

Environmental Management Association of Singapore (EMAS) was first established in 1986 by service providers contract cleaning, waste management and pest control industries. The aims of EMAS are to provide a cohesive platform for companies in the environmental industry to raise the professionalism of the industry and to address the common concerns of environmental and hygienic services. Since its inception, EMAS has organised various activities such as seminar, mission trips, trainings, etc, to promote and expand the interest of its members and the Industry.

Page 4 - Environmental Management Association of Singapore (EMAS) to raise professionalism in cleaning trade through accreditation scheme and mechanisation

About MP International

Established in 1987, MP International is a respected professional exhibition organiser (PEO) and professional conference organiser (PCO) in Asia. To date, the group has organised and managed some 300 national, regional and international events. It is a founding partner of WEO, a regional network of professional event organisers. It is also a member of the PICO group. Leveraging on the PICO global network, it has expanded into key Asian cities with offices in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand.

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