

Skyscraper Group Regains Stature

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By Nadine M. Post

Tall buildings are alive and well and so is the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, an international group dedicated to improving the quality of skyscrapers and cities. After nearly collapsing at the turn of the millennium, the 39-year-old group reports it has more than doubled its membership in 18 months, strengthened revenue and increased its output through several publications and a revamped Website. CTBUH is so flush that it is expanding staff of two by three people.

"It's been a phenomenal 18 months," said Antony Wood, at CTBUH's Eighth World Congress, held March 3-5 in Dubai. Wood became the Chicago-based group's executive director in fall 2006, when David Scott, a principal at Arup New York, New York City, took over as CTBUH chairman from Ron Klemencic, president of Magnusson Klemencic Associates, Seattle.

The group, which represents the entire building team, had fallen on hard times in the late 1990s. Klemencic became chairman in 2001 and set out to restore its luster as the go-to place for information on tall buildings. By 2005, he had turned the group around. "Ron insured the survival of the council and gave us a platform" on which to build, said Wood.

Wood says the group projects a 300% increase in 2008 revenue over 2005. The council plans to hire a research director; a communications manager, to help produce a sustainable design guide for tall buildings as well as a definitive encyclopedia of the skyscraper; and a production assistant.

Scott has added two working groups to produce best-practice guidelines and tackle issues of the day since a 2006 reorganization. CTBUH's six groups are fire, progressive collapse, sustainability, seismic, construction logistics and cost planning.

Tall-building enthusiasts can find reams of data on skyscrapers at www.ctbuh.org. "We're here to disseminate information for the privilege of everybody," said Wood.

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