

The Hoecker perspective

At the HRIA Convention in May, Editor Allison Leo sat down with a veteran of HRIA conventions, Joe Hoecker for an industry insider's perspective of the events market, both here and overseas.

Even facing the prospect of 30 hours flying time from Germany to Australia in the mid 1980s, Hoecker Structures Director, Joe Hoecker never hesitated, seeing only an export market in need of structures.

The first structure Joe brought into the Australian market was 25 years ago for Abbey Rental Events Division; a 20m x 45m clearspan structure used for exhibitions and events in and around Melbourne.

Seeing a burgeoning market opportunity, Joe then established industry contacts by attending his first Australian HRIA

industry Convention in Adelaide somewhere around 1985 or 1987. (Being able to cite convention attendance in the mid 1980s would have to

make Joe one of the HRIA's longest attending international visitors.)

Joe remembers it well because Adelaide also had the Formula One Grand Prix.

"It was a smaller organisation back then but through the HRIA I met new people and potential customers," Joe said.

"The majority of Hoecker Structures' turnover is in export markets and our focus then was all about developing our market internationally. The size of the Australian market was never a consideration; I always only saw the need to supply structures here. Our philosophy was, and still is, simple; Australia holds events and therefore needs structures."

It was that philosophy which also took Joe to the United States in 1983 where he claims he was the first to put up a temporary structure in that market.

"I was the first to put up a temporary structure in the US in 1983. It was at an IFAI (Industrial Fabrics Association International) event and I still have the building permit required to erect it. It cost five dollars."

The Hoecker business began when Joe's grandfather started a business in the 1930s in the Depression years building permanent steel factory buildings. He moved into structure hire after the War, when he saw the potential of lightweight relocatable buildings being a useful alternative to per-

manent structures, before finally selling the hire arm of the business in the 1950s to concentrate solely on temporary structure design and manufacture.

From that time onwards, the Hoecker family name has become synonymous with structures, Joe said, more of a generic term for structures. The development of structures went through many stages, Joe said, with the company's first clearspan structure designed in 1948.

"We've moved from steel tube truss frames to hollow cast aluminium extrusions, which we are still using today," Joe said.

From the early years of devel-



Joe Hoecker at the HRIA Convention in May.

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ment the company went on to produce ever increasing spans, refining and developing the technology into efficient, fast, lightweight and easily assembled structures.

Today the Hoecker Group has five company arms, four in Europe and one in North America. In Australia, the Hoecker Group is represented by H-Line Structures who on sell the Hoecker range including the Pagodas, Party-Series, Festival-Series and Longterm-Series.

The H-Line F-Series structures range in widths from 10m to 30m, with 5m increments in length. Their standard structure has a 2.6m wall height and flat gable ends. Hoecker P-Series Party Structures are available from 3 to 12m in width in 3m modules on 2.4m legs.

The Hoecker E-Series Event Structures are available from 6m to 15m in width and increase in length in 3m modules on 2.4m or 3m side height. Various structures can also be fitted with hip-gable ends and peaks, to transform into hospitality units.

In Europe, the greater portion of the Hoecker Group business focus is in long term temporary warehousing.

According to Joe, temporary warehousing is a specialist market Hoecker is developing. "A temporary warehouse can go up from six months to 30 years. The reality

is people have warehouses on a contract basis anyway," Joe said.

Temporary warehousing provides a speedy and economical temporary storage building which eliminates the cost and logistical problems of product transportation, and security at an off-site storage location. And they can be relocated to new sites if the need arises.

Up to 2000m² of warehousing can be transported in one 40ft container. The standard warehouse structure has a 4.2m side height and the perimeter is clad with sheet metal. The roof sections and gables are made from PVC fabric. Roller door and lockable access doors can be fitted and Sandwich Insulated Panel perimeter walls and Twin Layer insulated (Thermo) roof sections are optional.

For the future, the Hoecker Group will look to extending its hire markets internationally.

"While the market in Europe was affected by the GFC, it was not as heavily affected as expected," Joe said. "I think things are improving but I do expect to see inflation in Europe in the near future." HR