

NIA | News

THE OFFICIAL NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL INSULATION ASSOCIATION® (NIA)
REPRESENTING THE MECHANICAL AND SPECIALTY INSULATION INDUSTRY

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**NIA | 68th Annual Convention
Naples, Florida** 



EVP/CEO MESSAGE

Time Well Spent Together



What an incredible 3 days we had together in Naples, Florida, at our Annual Convention! With the mix of energizing and inspiring speakers, perfect conditions for our networking time at the beach and pool, and more than 400 attendees from 109 companies representing the entire mechanical insulation industry, we were truly **Better Together** and showed our **Strength in Numbers!**

Turn to [page 8](#) to see amazing photos (especially from our White Linen Party on the beach) and read the highlights of all that we were able to accomplish together in Naples. A special shoutout to everyone involved with our successful Silent Auction, including our task force members who secured amazing packages, and everyone who outbid their friends and colleagues!

Recognizing our industry leaders is always a treasured highlight at the Convention, and this year was even more special. Not only was NIA Past President Ron King honored—by the industry and the association that he loves so much—with a newly named award in his honor, but also Dave Cox was the recipient of the Ronald King Distinguished Service Award. Turn to [page 18](#) to read more about these high honors. We were also excited to honor 44 Safety Stars (see [page 16](#)) from each sector of our industry. Our Premier Industry Manufacturer Award spotlights six Associate members—Aeroflex USA, Armacell, Johns Manville, Knauf Insulation, Owens Corning, and ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation for their leadership and commitment ([page 15](#)). You can also find our dedicated NIA Committee Chairs and Board listed on this page and read more about our new NIA President Jack Bittner on [page 14](#).

I invite you to explore this issue of *NIA News* to maximize your industry network.

- Find out how NIA's Education Center can help you retain your employees through ongoing learning opportunities ([page 24](#)).
- Learn how our certification courses can help you meet requirements for inspection and appraisals ([page 26](#)).
- Read the latest from our legal counsel about developments on OSHA enforcement and heat illness ([page 28](#)).
- Contractor members: Prepare now to enter your best project photos in the Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition by September 28 ([page 7](#)).

NIA LEADERSHIP

Executive Leadership

President

Jack Bittner, *Johns Manville*

President-Elect

Rick Sutphin, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Secretary/Treasurer

John Stevens, *Thermal Solutions, Inc.*

Assistant Treasurer

Lee Stuckenschmidt, *Systems Undercover, Inc.*

Counsel

Gary Auman, *Auman, Mahan, and Furry*

NIA Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer

Michele M. Jones

Board of Directors

Regional Representatives

CSIA—Brian Willett, *Gribbins Insulation Company, Inc.*

ESICA—Rick Baptista, *Irex Contracting Group*

MICA—Matt Hymer, *Midwest Materials Company*

SEICA—Matt Caldwell, *Caldwell Insulation, Inc.*

SWICA—David B. Patrick, *Specialty Products & Insulation*

WICA—Shawn Reichenbach, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Associates' Committee Appointee

Louis Walton, *Proto Corporation*

At-Large Representatives

Mellanie Askew, *Coverflex Manufacturing, Inc.*

R. Dean Burows, *DKB, Inc.*

Rob Elsey (Associate), *Cornerstone Sales, Inc.*

John K. Freeman, Jr., *Petrin, LLC*

Russ Huff, *Bay Insulation Systems, Inc.*

Mike McCowan, *L.C. Insulations, Inc.*

Marc Napolitano, *Insulation Materials Corporation*

Jon Perry, *Specialty Products & Insulation*

Past President Advisors

Laura Dover, *Dover Insulation, Inc.*

J. Kenneth Freeman, *Petrin, LLC*

Committee Chairs

2025 Convention Planning

Rick Sutphin, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Associates

Louis Walton, *Proto Corp.*

Merit Contractors

Mike McCowan, *L.C. Insulations, Inc.*

Distributors/Fabricators

Brian Blazek, *Specialty Products & Insulation*

Metal Building Laminators

David Tomchak,
Bay Insulation Systems, Inc.

Education and Training

R. Dean Burows, *DKB, Inc.*

Technical Information

Doug Fast, *Owens Corning*

Fall Summit

Jack Bittner, *Johns Manville*

Union Contractors

Rick Sutphin, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Health and Safety

Mike Hill, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Young Professional Advisory

John K. Freeman, Jr., *Petrin, LLC*

Membership

John Stevens, *Thermal Solutions, Inc.*

EVP/CEO Message, continued

- Amplify the mechanical insulation education message by supporting the Foundation ([page 20](#)).
- Meet our newest members in Welcome New Members on this page—we have asked them to share a bit more about their companies and their reasons for joining. We met some of them in Naples and we are looking forward to meeting even more new members at Fall Summit, taking place October 28–29 at the MGM National Harbor in Maryland.

Have a wonderful summer, and I look forward to seeing many of you as NIA President Jack Bittner and I travel to the regional meetings in the next few months!



Michele M. Jones
Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

In this issue, we are excited to welcome the following new companies. We encourage you to read the information each company has submitted and see if they are potential new business partners for your company. To view new NIA member companies, visit <https://tinyurl.com/mud6abtv>.



February 2024
Merit Contractor

Coastal Industrial Services, Inc.

Attn: Mark Sonnier
PO Box 158
Port Neches, TX 77651-0158
Phone: (409) 736-3797
\$15–20 Million
www.coastaltxs.com

Specialties: Asbestos Abatement, Cold Storage, Fire Proofing, Heat Tracing, Industrial Insulation, Paintings/Coatings, Refractory Contractor, Refrigeration Insulation, Removable Insulation, Scaffolding

About Coastal Industrial Services, Inc.

Coastal Industrial Services, Inc. is an AECR+ construction contracting company based out of Port Arthur, Texas. We specialize in industrial insulation, scaffolding, coatings, refractory, fire proofing, asbestos abatement, heat tracing, and staffing and logistics for turnarounds, maintenance, and capital projects.

Why did you join NIA?

We chose to join for the educational, networking, and branding benefits. We strive to provide the best customer service to our customers and know that staying up-to-date on the latest knowledge, connecting with our industry peers, and being recognized as a leader in the industry are the best ways for us to do so.

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INSULATION SUPPLY COMPANY

February 2024

Distributor

Insulation Supply Co., Inc.

Attn: David Carver

801 Visco Dr.

Nashville, TN 37210-2149

Phone: (615) 425-2700

\$6–10 Million

www.insulationsupplycompanynashville.com

Specialties: Acoustic Products/Services, Distribution, Fabrication, Heat Tracing, HVAC Insulation, Industrial Insulation, Plumbing Insulation, Refrigeration Insulation



February 2024

Merit Contractor

Northwest Pipe Insulation

Attn: Justin Hull

281 E. Santiago Dr.

Meridian, ID 83646

Phone: (208) 616-5642

\$1–3 Million

www.northwestpipeinsulation.com

Specialties: Industrial Insulation



NELSON
INSULATION CO.

March 2024

Union Contractor

Nelson Insulation Co.–Wisconsin (Entity of Nelson Companies)

Attn: Josh Routhieux

550 Telser Rd.

Lake Zurich, IL 60047-1500

Phone: (847) 526-8333

www.nelsoninsulation.com

\$1–3 Million

Specialties: Commercial Insulation, Fire Proofing, Firestopping, HVAC Insulation, Industrial Insulation, Plumbing Insulation, Refrigeration Insulation, Removable Insulation

About Nelson Insulation Co.–Wisconsin

Nelson Wisconsin is part of the Nelson Companies, with five separate branches in Wisconsin, Colorado, Central States, and Illinois offering mechanical insulation, thermal insulation, and firestopping. We are dedicated to delivering exceptional customer service and efficiently executing quality work on time, on budget, and in a way that is safe and environmentally responsible. A family-owned business since 1958, we are expanding nationwide with our team of experienced Account Managers, Project Managers, Estimators, and Field Installers.

Why did you join NIA?

NIA offers access to quality resources and great training, and always gives up-to-date information about our industry. Following NIA on LinkedIn has been a great resource to us so far, and we are very excited to become members and really take advantage of the benefits being a member can offer.



April 2024

Merit Contractor

Owens Insulation Inc.

Attn: Robert Owens

157 Winona St.

Peabody, MA 01960-4634

Phone: (978) 777-8882

\$6–10 Million

www.owensinsulation.com

Specialties: Commercial Insulation, HVAC Insulation, Industrial Insulation, Plumbing Insulation, Refrigeration Insulation

About Owens Insulation, Inc.

Owens Insulation is a mechanical insulation contracting company based out of Peabody, Massachusetts, with 35+ years of experience. We specialize in commercial HVAC and plumbing insulation as well as industrial applications.

Why did you join NIA?

Owens Insulation, as a team, decided to join NIA so we could stay informed on the direction of the industry as well as the various trainings offered through NIA's Education Center. Because of our membership, we feel better equipped to improve our business with customers and keep our team informed with the best information available to our industry.



Patuxent Insulation LLC

April 2024

Merit Contractor

Patuxent Insulation

Attn: Daniel Clark

40550 Waterview Dr.

Mechanicsville, MD 20659

Phone: (301) 904-4324

\$1–3 Million

Specialties: Firestopping, Heat Tracing, HVAC Insulation, Plumbing Insulation, Refrigeration Insulation

About Patuxent Insulation

Patuxent Insulation is a full-service mechanical insulation contractor located in Mechanicsville, Maryland. We mainly provide service to the DC, Maryland, and Virginia region but have performed work on military installations internationally. We specialize in HVAC and plumbing insulation services for commercial, industrial, institutional, government, and military installations. Our goal is to provide a quality product for our customers that is energy efficient and allows mechanical systems to operate as designed.

Why did you join NIA?

We joined NIA to get connected with others in the same industry that are similarly goal oriented. NIA represents a great pool of knowledge and experience, and we are glad to be a part of the organization!



April 2024

Merit Contractor

Acousta Therm Corp.

Attn: John Dubuc

30 Kellogg Rd.

Essex Junction, VT 05452-2806

Phone: (802) 879-7303

\$1–3 Million

www.acoustathermvt.com

Specialties: Commercial Insulation, HVAC Insulation, Industrial Insulation, Plumbing Insulation, Refrigeration Insulation

About Acousta Therm Corp.

Acousta Therm is a mechanical insulation contractor located in Essex Junction, Vermont. We specialize in commercial insulation installation, providing temperature retention and protection, and noise control/condensation protection. We have been in business for over 50 years and have assisted in projects throughout Vermont, New Hampshire, and some of upstate New York. We have had our hand in insulating a variety of mechanical and plumbing systems in some of the largest companies throughout our state, most recently Beta Technologies and Global Foundries. We routinely assist local schools and state projects in meeting their insulation needs.

Why did you join NIA?

Acousta Therm has been one of the leaders in the mechanical insulation field throughout Vermont for many years. One of our goals has been to bring the company forward and in a direction that is more modern and more connected to others in the industry. I was amazed to see the offerings of NIA and thought it would be the perfect partnership to help me move the business in the direction I am looking for. I hope to access the trainings and education components, connect with like-minded individuals who know the industry and can provide mentorship for me as an aspiring young business owner, and to have conversations about how to grow and overcome hurdles that may arise. On top of all that, I want to add the legitimacy and professionalism that NIA will provide to our company. We have been operating for a long time, quite successfully, but I believe there's always room for improvement and increased knowledge!



May 2024

Associate Manufacturer

DuPont Tedlar

Attn: Brian Veeder

974 Centre Rd.

Wilmington, DE 19805-1269

Phone: (919) 943-9746

www.dupont.com/brands/tedlar.html

Specialties: Paintings/Coatings

About DuPont™ Tedlar®

DuPont™ Tedlar® offers a surface protection film that provides durable, long-lasting protection from the inside out, from buildings and transportation to aerospace and graphics. For over 60 years, the tested, trusted, and proven performance of Tedlar PVF film has continued to enable new possibilities through superior surface protection.

Why did you join NIA?

We chose to join NIA because of its focus on education and networking, which is key to introducing DuPont Tedlar in a new market. We hope to learn more about the market needs, educate members on DuPont Tedlar solutions, and develop new relationships and partners.

Do you know of a company that could benefit from becoming a member of NIA?

For more information or to refer a potential member, please call Rianna Gleeson at (703) 464-6422, ext. 113, or email membership@insulation.org.



NIA WANTS TO PROMOTE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

Share your good news, milestones, article and column ideas, new products, and industry photos with NIA by emailing editor@insulation.org.

We love to highlight NIA member companies and your achievements in *NIA News* and *Insulation Outlook*, through articles and columns such as *Contractors' Corner*, *Celebrating Members*, *Product Focus*, *People & Places*, and more!

Plus, for Contractors, remember to enter your best project photos in NIA's Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition by September 28. More details are here: www.insulation.org/niaprojectartgallery.

NIA's Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition Is Back by Popular Demand!

All NIA Contractor members are invited to submit photographs of their most impressive project for consideration in the second annual Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition by **September 28**. The competition highlights the craftsmanship, creativity, and artistry of contractor's industrial insulation system projects. To showcase the craftsmanship of our industry, we invite all NIA insulation contractors to submit their best photographs of their projects.

About the Competition

- Only NIA Contractor members are eligible to enter.
- As a benefit of NIA membership, there is no entrance fee.
- Three winners (1st place, 2nd place, and 3rd place) will be selected by members' votes during the Fall Summit 2024 (October 28–29).
- Each project will be showcased anonymously.
- Winners will be featured in NIA's communications and website.
- Recent articles about each winning company have been featured in *Insulation Outlook* magazine.

To Apply

- Review eligibility and submission requirements to ensure you qualify.
- Complete the electronic submission form.
- Email photos (up to four) of one project to events@insulation.org by September 28, 2024.
- Attend NIA's Fall Summit, October 28–29, 2024 to vote and be eligible to compete in the competition. Even if you cannot attend the event, all participant photos will be featured on NIA's website.

Visit www.insulation.org/events/niaprojectartgallery to access more information and the submission form.

Questions? Email events@insulation.org.

Fall Summit
EDUCATE | ENGAGE | ELEVATE  2024

REGISTRATION OPEN!
www.insulation.org/fallsummit2024

October 28–29, 2024
MGM National Harbor
National Harbor, Maryland
(located just outside of Washington, DC)

NIA | 68th Annual Convention Naples, Florida

A Picture-Perfect Industry Gathering: NIA's 68th Annual Convention!

KEYNOTE SESSIONS:

100%

of survey respondents indicated the overall keynote program content/educational value met or exceeded expectations.

With blue skies and white sandy beaches as the perfect setting in Naples, Florida, more than 400 NIA members from 109 companies, including nearly 60 first-timers, came together at NIA's 68th Annual Convention and Silent Auction, April 17-19.

Attendees heard from over 20 speakers for an insightful and targeted mix of insulation industry education while creating and strengthening business and personal connections each day. We truly were **Better Together**, which was 2023-2024 NIA President Laura Dover's yearlong theme that emphasized elevating and raising awareness of the value of our industry and what we can accomplish when we come together.





Knowledge Is Power

Attendees heard from two keynote speakers and several peer-to-peer panel discussions. In his keynote presentation, Kyle Scheele inspired through humor, connections, and great storytelling that demonstrated how ideas and everyday experiences can become wildly successful. “If you want conventional results, conventional ideas will get you there. If you want crazy results, you have to embrace crazy ideas,” he shared. Attendees described the session as “phenomenal, thought-provoking, engaging, entertaining, and captivating.”

Those who attended were also invested in Chris Kuehl’s engaging presentation on economic data. With a self-deprecating style of humor, he poked fun at his chosen profession, opening with a quote from George Bernard Shaw, “If all the economists were laid end to end, they’d never reach a conclusion.” Kuehl expertly guided attendees through a wide-ranging economic outlook covering global supply chain concerns, worker shortages, trade relations, interest rates, construction spending, and much more, while also offering solid insights.

Panel discussions are always a favorite, and this Convention featured a town-hall style discussion on the priorities of the Foundation for Mechanical Insulation Education, Training, and Industry Advancement, as well as a second panel on sustainability. Facilitated by Owens Corning’s Patrick Haller, the sustainability panel discussion—

with DKB’s Dean Burows, Anchor Insulation’s Jordan Fiske, Johns Manville’s Scott Sinclair, and SPI’s Heather Teasley—moved beyond buzzwords to focus on how a more intense focus on energy efficiency and emission reductions is affecting the insulation industry. Education was a common thread, as Burows commented, “We have to lead by example through education. We have to be able and knowledgeable to get the message out there—from the person who answers the phone to the person who delivers the project.”

Continuing the education theme, the Foundation’s town hall discussion focused on its current and future efforts delivering education and training. Facilitated by Program Manager Michele M. Jones, the panelists included Owens Corning’s Dave

COMMITTEE SESSIONS:

94%

thought the overall educational value of committee sessions/speakers met or exceeded expectations.





NETWORKING:

97%

of respondents indicated that business networking with new/potential customers met or exceeded expectations.

Cox, Irex Contracting Group's John Lamberton, and DKB's Dean Burows. All have served on the Foundation's Board. Read more about the Foundation's priorities on [page 20](#).

In addition, attendees heard from Owens Corning's Alec Cusick and Angie Ogino on the technical topics of reducing fire risks and designing district energy systems. We appreciate both presenters sharing their insights on these extremely important subjects for our industry.

First-time attendee and new member Robert Owens of Owens Insulation, based in Peabody, Massachusetts, decided to attend his first Convention primarily for the educational component. "I got to see what is coming down the pipeline for our contracting business, as well as meeting and talking to people in the industry from all over. I'm going to learn a little bit more each time I attend. Our company has grown so quickly, so learning about all the educational opportunities NIA offers will be great for my team. I just want to be a good contractor, and I've gotten great insights about where our industry is headed and what I need to do to prepare."

Celebrating Award Winners

Recognizing industry leaders is a highlight of Convention, and this year was extra special! In recognition of the impact of decades of leadership and service by NIA Past President Ronald L. King, the Board of Directors renamed the NIA President's Award to the Ronald King Distinguished

Service Award. This award is the highest recognition available from NIA and is only given by NIA's President when truly deserved by an individual. (Read more on [page 18](#).)

Laura Dover honored Past President David J. Cox with the Ronald King Distinguished Service Award, citing his passion for the industry and his work to include mechanical insulation in the carbon reduction discussion. (Read more on [page 19](#).)

Through the Safety Excellence Awards, NIA honored and acknowledged the commitment it takes to maintain a safe workplace. Turn to [page 16](#) to see NIA's Safety Stars from each sector of our industry.

With the Premier Industry Manufacturer awards, NIA spotlights the actions of six of our manufacturer members. Read about this year's winners—Aeroflex USA, Armacell, Johns Manville, Knauf Insulation, Owens Corning, and ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation—on [page 15](#).

NIA Business Meeting and Committee Session Highlights

On Thursday, Laura Dover led the NIA Business Session, where the new officers and representatives were approved. NIA's new officers for 2024–2025 are:

- **President**—Jack Bittner, Johns Manville
- **President-Elect**—Rick Sutphin, Performance Contracting, Inc.



- **Secretary/Treasurer**—John Stevens, Thermal Solutions, Inc.
- **Assistant Treasurer**—Lee Stuckenschmidt, Systems Undercover, Inc.

For the full list of the Board of Directors and Committee Chairs, please see page 4.

At the end of the week, newly elected Committee Chairs convened for the Council of Committees to share their meeting highlights, described below.

The **Associates** welcomed keynote speaker Chris Kuehl, Managing Director of Armada Corporate Intelligence, for a deep dive into economic topics for manufacturers, and it was a well-received presentation! The committee also elected new leadership—Chair Louis Walton, Proto Corporation; Vice Chair Ginny Gier, Owens Corning; and Secretary Jennifer Ball, Integrated Marketing Group—who will serve 2-year terms and automatically move up through the committee leadership. In addition, the committee decided to take a more active role in creating technical articles for *Insulation Outlook* magazine. Attendees also discussed the Premier Industry Manufacturer Program and did not make any changes to the framework.

The **Distributors/Fabricators Committee** agreed to update the Value of Distribution document and decided there was benefits to creating a "Value of Fabrication" document. Both documents created tasks force to help with the development and to create micro-learning modules for NIA's Education Center.



Brian Blazek of SPI was elected as Chair, and Kenny Cole of Insul-Therm International, Inc. was elected to serve as Vice Chair.

The **Education and Training Committee** had a full agenda, reviewing current and future course topics including a new "Mechanical Insulation 101" professional development track that will be available this summer to Premier Training Subscribers as part of NIA's Education Center, the Mechanical Insulation Basics course that will be offered with a Spanish voiceover later this year, and new topics for small contractors. In addition, members discussed ways to market NIA's Education Center's new courses to members and subscribers more frequently so they can promote them to their teams.

The **Health and Safety Committee** heard from Jason Spandet, Risk and Insurance Manager, Performance Contracting, Inc. on

GOLF WINNERS

1st Place

Mike Logue, Owens Corning
Frank Kovacs, Shannon Global Energy Solutions
Alec Cusick, Owens Corning
Kenneth Cole, Insul-Therm International, Inc.

2nd Place

John Brooks, Distribution International, Inc.
Ed Jarmin, JTThorpe Industrial, Inc.
Gary Thompson, Distribution International, Inc.
Robert Prinz, JTThorpe Industrial, Inc.

3rd Place

Matthew Calmeyn, Fabrication Specialties, Inc.
Adam Windmiller, Owens Corning
Russ Huff, Bay Insulation Systems, Inc.
Rick Sutphin, PCI

Closest to the Pin

Rich Cleminson, SPI

Longest Drive

Alec Cusick, Owens Corning



THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS!

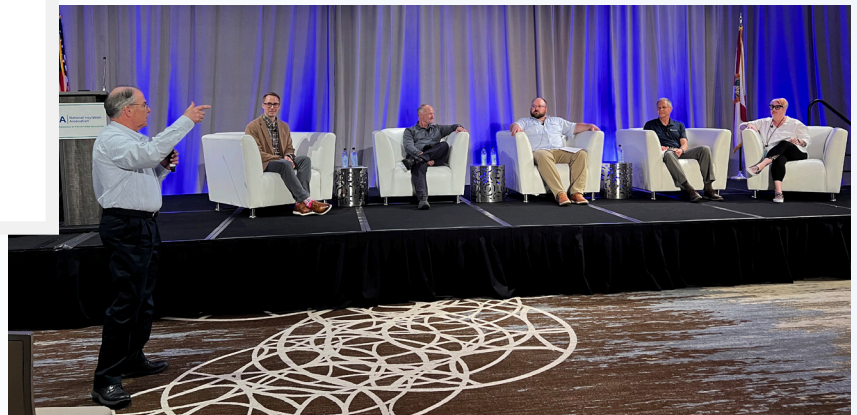


workers' compensation laws. He discussed several emerging trends, including the evolving claims process, the resurgence of companies and vendors promoting a wide range of services, and the critical need for existing programs to advance. NIA Legal Counsel Gary Auman of Auman, Mahan & Furry provided an overview of OSHA updates. The committee also discussed making updates to the Safety Excellence Awards for 2024.

The **Membership Committee** focused on efforts to create innovative ways to engage new members and first-time attendees and brainstormed recruitment and retention efforts. The current NIA membership report was reviewed, as was a list of current committee initiatives including the revisions to NIA's membership brochure, member testimonials, results of their recent recruitment initiative, and the effects of consolidation on membership. After the meeting, committee members hosted the **New Member and First-Timer Orientation**. Attendees heard from Laura Dover of Dover Insulation, Joe Leo of Atlantic Contracting & Specialties, LLC, and Michele M. Jones, NIA's Executive Vice President/CEO, on how to make the most of their time at Convention and how to maximize their membership benefits.

The **Merit Committee** had an informative presentation from Michael Keller from FMI on the topic of labor productivity, which featured not only informative stats but also good action items. Chair Mike McCowan of L.C. Insulations, Inc. and Vice Chair Jordan Fiske of Anchor Insulation were reelected to their positions. Members also spent time sharing regional conditions, focusing on active bidding, completing delayed work from previous years, and overall positive conditions.

The **Metal Building Laminator Committee** re-elected Dave Tomchak of Bay Insulation Systems as Chair and Chris Barton of Silvercote as Vice Chair. The committee slightly modified the NIA Certified Faced Insulation (CFI) Standard 404.1 2022 to clarify the timing and process for testing. They then focused on three prime discussion areas, including securing a testing facility for the newly revised NIA CFI Standard 404.2 2024, evaluating the need for further action on FM 4881, and adding specialty categories under the NIA Laminator designation.



The **Technical Information Committee (TIC)** elected Doug Fast of Owens Corning as Chair, Scott Sinclair of Johns Manville as Vice Chair, and Bill Gregg of Promat as Secretary. The TIC members recommended several items to the NIA Board of Directors, which were approved, including implementing a new reference numbering system for the following documents that the TIC reviews quarterly.

- NIA-TIC-101-24 Insulation Materials Specification Chart (Spec Chart)
- NIA-TIC-102-24 Mastics Chart
- NIA-TIC-103-24 Sealants Chart
- NIA-TIC-104-24 Jacketing Chart
- NIA-TIC-201-24 Guide to Insulation Product Specifications (GTIPS)
- NIA-TIC-301-24 Insulation Science Glossary

The technical documents will retain their current names in addition to the new reference numbers. NIA encourages members to share these references and use them in their own materials or with other organizations. (For example, ASTM C1696 is considering using the NIA-TIC-101-24 Insulation Materials Specification Chart as a replacement for the current chart listed in the C1696 Standard. This would give NIA more visibility within the ASTM community.)

Additionally, to make the Spec Chart as valuable as possible to engineers, and for specs and standards, the TIC requested and the Board approved adding insulation

materials that are not made by NIA member companies. The properties of those materials would be listed under the related ASTM specs, but manufacturers are not listed in this document. The next TIC meeting will be on Zoom in August and is open to all members.

The **Union Contractors** had an informative discussion regarding matters related to, and the initiatives of, the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers with fellow signatory contractors. Union and Merit Contractors participated in a **Joint Contractor Session** and heard from Erin Khan, Founder and Consultant, Erin Khan Consulting. She discussed how contractors can strategically identify, enable, and operate technology tools and solutions in their existing projects and workflows, and how to train their teams on these tools to help streamline processes and efficiencies. Further, she discussed how artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the industry by empowering contractors with game-changing solutions, along with providing practical tips on how to apply AI solutions in contracting operations. The contractors also heard from Ron King, NIA Past President and Consultant, about the recent agreement between the Association for Materials Protection and Performance and NIA for the joint development of Mechanical Insulation Standards for Commercial/Building and Industrial Market Segments (New Construction and Maintenance). Finally, the group had a discussion on trends affecting contract terms and clauses.

The **Young Professional Advisory Committee (YPAC)** had a highly informative presentation from three NIA Past Presidents: Kenny Freeman, Steve Luse, and Joe Leo. They covered career development and NIA and industry history. YPAC member Marissa Davis of Ideal Products moderated. The committee elected John Freeman of Petrin, LLC as Chair, Thomas MacKinnon of Armacell as Vice Chair, and Nicole Barwick of DKB, Inc. as Secretary.

The YPAC Mentor Program's next pairing will be NIA EVP/CEO Michele Jones and YPAC Member Jessica Zahn, who will present a report during the summer virtual meeting. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force took an active role in making some changes to the YPAC meeting format to encourage YPAC members to get to know each other better. They also worked with staff to develop the questions for the panel. The Engineering Student Outreach Task Force is identifying contacts in the Washington, DC/Virginia/Maryland/Pennsylvania areas for outreach prior to this year's Fall Summit.

Making Connections

It has often been said that the insulation business is about relationships, and NIA focuses on creating networking opportunities each day, giving attendees every chance to expand their networks and reconnect with long-time industry friends. The Convention kicked off with an extra evening of networking on Tuesday, starting with the First-Timer Happy Hour, where we



welcomed 56 first-time attendees and 6 new member companies, followed by a pre-event Cocktail Reception for all.

On Wednesday evening, attendees headed to the beach to soak up some sun at the picture-perfect White Linen Party. As the sun set over the Gulf of Mexico, a professional photographer captured family and team photos that were shared with all attendees. It could not have been a more ideal night with industry friends on the beach!

On Friday, the final night of Convention, attendees gathered poolside for the Farewell Reception and Dinner before heading inside for browsing and bidding at NIA's 6th Silent Auction, and exploring and indulging at four festive Dessert Hospitality Suites, hosted by Knauf Insulation, Johns Manville, Owens Corning, and ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation.

NIA is so grateful for the record number of incredible packages (51!) from member companies and individuals, which generated more than \$28,000! The net proceeds were split evenly between Sunshine Kids and the Foundation. Many attendees requested a link to donate directly to Sunshine Kids: Go to <https://sunshinekids.org/donate>. New

donation options for the Foundation can be found on [page 21](#).

NIA offers a special thank you to the Silent Auction Task Force and our generous member companies and individuals for an amazing array of packages. We also congratulate the winners of the raffle drawings:

- Glenn Crouse of Breeding Insulation Company, Chattanooga, Inc. won the diamond necklace;
- Craig Skeie of Irex Contracting Group won the virtual reality headset; and
- Charlotte Nisleit of KW Specialty Services, LLC won the AMEX gift card from the Dessert Suite raffle.

Thank you to everyone who made the 68th Annual Convention and Silent Auction such a success! If you were not able to attend this year in Naples, we hope you can join us at NIA's Fall Summit 2024, October 28–29 at the MGM National Harbor, Maryland, and the 69th Annual Convention, April 28–30 at the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale, Arizona. We are sure to see NIA President Jack Bittner's theme, ***Strength in Numbers***, in action at these events!



Jack Bittner Is NIA's New President

Jack Bittner has begun his term as NIA's 2024–2025 President. Jack is a Senior Product Manager at Johns Manville (JM) Industrial, which is headquartered in Denver, Colorado. Jack has been in the insulation industry for more than 45 years, starting out as an insulator with Brown & Root. He has been with JM since 1991, serving as a Sales Territory Manager, Market Manager, and Vice President of Marketing with the Industrial Insulation Group before taking on his current role.

During his term as NIA's President, Jack's message will emphasize ***Strength in Numbers***. Throughout the year, he will work to increase awareness of the value of the industry and all mechanical insulation professionals. His term concludes at NIA's 69th Annual Convention, April 28–30, 2025, at the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale, Arizona.



2024
RECIPIENT

NATIONAL INSULATION ASSOCIATION®
**PREMIER INDUSTRY
MANUFACTURER**

NIA Honors Six Premier Industry Manufacturers

NIA is proud to honor the winners of the 2024 Premier Industry Manufacturer Awards, which were announced in conjunction with its 68th Annual Convention, which took place in Naples, Florida, April 17–19, 2024.

This award was first presented 5 years ago to recognize and distinguish exemplary manufacturing companies as insulation industry advocates and leaders. Available exclusively within NIA, the award spotlights Associate (Manufacturer) companies for demonstrating leadership, dedication, and support to the mechanical insulation industry and NIA. NIA's Associate members demonstrate to customers that their company is a recognized leader among their peers.

“Congratulations to these six industry-leading companies!” said Michele M. Jones, NIA’s Executive Vice President/CEO. “Through each company’s actions and commitment, they find creative and powerful avenues to amplify the message of the power of insulation. They have demonstrated their commitment to NIA and our objectives. When looking to work with a manufacturer that is at the top of their game, look no further. We look forward to celebrating them all throughout 2024.”



To learn more about this yearly award, please visit www.insulation.org/membership/premier_manufacturer.

The 2024 Premier Industry Manufacturers are:



Aeroflex USA

www.aeroflexusa.com



Armacell

www.armacell.us



Johns Manville

www.jm.com



Knauf Insulation, Inc.

www.knaufinsulation.us



Owens Corning

www.owenscorning.com



ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation

www.rockwool.com

2023
RECIPIENTNATIONAL INSULATION ASSOCIATION®
**NIA'S SAFETY
EXCELLENCE AWARD**

Safety Excellence Award Winners Honored at Florida Convention

NIA's Safety Excellence Award is the only national award for outstanding safety performance in the mechanical insulation industry. The award program recognizes top companies that have established structured safety programs to ensure the well-being of their employees and create safe working environments. NIA announced the 2023 Safety Excellence Award winners in conjunction with its 68th Annual Convention, which took place in Naples, Florida, April 17–19, 2024.

The Safety Excellence Award honors four levels of excellence: Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze. Assessments are available for companies in the following membership categories: Associates (Manufacturers), Contractors, Distributors/Fabricators, and Metal Building Laminators.

NIA's Executive Vice President/CEO Michele M. Jones said, "Congratulations to these 44 companies that make safety a top priority every day and strive to improve their safety program each year. Of our 44 total winners, we are very proud to have 34 Platinum winners, 8 Gold winners, and 2 Bronze winners. We are seeing an increase in Platinum winners each year, which demonstrates not only the commitment of all of these companies but also the value this program is providing. Plus, we are excited to welcome six first-time applicants to this year's program. Thank you all for your ongoing commitment to your keep your teams safe."

Throughout the judging process applicant companies remain anonymous, and winners are evaluated on the basis of their overall safety program, means of communication, and safety policy. All applicant companies receive an individualized and detailed Safety Training Analysis Results (STAR) Report™. The STAR Report includes personalized recommendations based on each applicant's answers to the application questions.

MANUFACTURER (ASSOCIATE) CATEGORY WINNERS

Platinum:

Aeroflex USA, *Sweetwater, TN*

Armacell, *Chapel Hill, NC*

CertainTeed, *Malvern, PA*

Ideal Tape, *Lowell, MA*

Johns Manville, *Denver, CO*

Knauf Insulation, Inc., *Shelbyville, IN*

Morgan Advanced Materials Thermal Ceramics, *Augusta, GA*

Owens Corning, *Toledo, OH*

Promat, Inc., *Maryville, TN*

ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation, *Houston, TX*

Gold:

Alkegen, *Tonawanda, NY*

Proto Corporation, *Clearwater, FL*

CONTRACTOR CATEGORY WINNERS

Platinum:

Advanced Industrial Services, LLC, *Toledo, OH*
 Advanced Nuclear, LLC, *Aston, PA*
 Advanced Specialty Contractors, LLC, *Aston, PA*
 Argus Contracting, LLC, *Santa Fe Springs, CA*
 Atlantic Contracting & Specialties, LLC, *Hicksville, NY*
 Cornerstone Services Group, LLC, *Omaha, NE*
 DKB, Inc., *Pasco, WA*
 Gagnon, Inc., *St. Paul, MN*
 Gribbins Insulation Company, Inc., *Evansville, IN*
 I&I, *Harahan, LA*
 I-Star Energy Solutions, *Quarryville, PA*
 JTThorpe Industrial, Inc., *Phoenix, AZ*
 KW Specialty Services, LLC, *St. Paul, MN*
 L.C. Insulations, Inc., *Lititz, PA*
 Performance Contracting, Inc., *Lenexa, KS*
 Summit Contracting, LLC, *Portland, OR*
 Thermal Solutions, Inc., *Proctorville, OH*

Gold:

Brock Industrial Services, LLC, *Joliet, IL*
 Farwest Insulation Contracting, *Anaheim, CA*
 F & H Insulation Sales and Services, Inc., *Kechi, KS*

International Asbestos Removal, Inc., *Babylon, NY*
 Luse Thermal Technologies, *Aurora, IL*
 TBN Associates, Inc., *Lanham, MD*

Bronze:

Kerco, Inc., *Santa Fe Springs, CA*
 Southern Insulation, Inc., *Hyattsville, MD*

DISTRIBUTOR/FABRICATOR CATEGORY WINNERS

Platinum:

Bay Insulation Supply, Inc., *Green Bay, WI*
 Distribution International, Inc., *Houston, TX*
 Extol of Ohio, Inc., *Norwalk, OH*
 Shannon Global Energy Solutions, Inc., *North Tonawanda, NY*
 Specialty Products & Insulation, *Charlotte, NC*

METAL BUILDING LAMINATOR CATEGORY WINNERS

Platinum:

Bay Insulation Systems, Inc., *Green Bay, WI*
 Silvercote, A Distribution International
 Company, *Greenville, SC*



Find Out More

For more information about the NIA Safety Excellence Award Program, please contact the NIA office or visit www.insulation.org. An archive of past award winners is available at www.insulation.org/membership/safety-award/award-winners.

Recognizing Enormous Contributions to NIA and the Mechanical Insulation Industry

Honoring an Industry Icon, Ronald L. King

NIA's Board of Directors has renamed the President's Award in honor of the incredible lifetime efforts of the only two-time past recipient: Ronald L. King. Beginning this year, the award will now be known as the Ronald King Distinguished Service Award. The award was first given in 1970, and Ron King received it for the first time in 1986 and again in 2001.



As the highest recognition available from NIA, the award is only given by NIA's President when truly deserved by an individual. The person must have demonstrated outstanding service and dedication to NIA, resulting in accomplishments that have tremendous benefits for the association and the industry.

NIA Past President Laura Dover shared numerous accolades gathered from Ron's colleagues when she made the surprise announcement of the award's renaming during NIA's recent Annual Convention in Naples, Florida: "Most Past Presidents, upon retirement, move on to the next phase of their lives, but Ron has remained passionate and involved, and his dedication has led us to greater heights." She quoted another colleague who said, "He has an innate ability to visualize and communicate the true potential of NIA and its benefits to the mechanical insulation industry."

As a second surprise, Ron's son Daniel King was present at the ceremony. He shared, "While he has become such a great advocate and spokesperson for this industry, he has been even a greater dad."

The industry's appreciation for Ron might be best summed up by this description, "an industry titan who just never let go of the industry, and we are so grateful."

Ron was amazed and speechless at the ceremony. After spending some time reflecting on the honor, Ron shared, "To be recognized in

this manner is a humbling experience. It took me a few days to truly appreciate the magnitude of the honor bestowed upon me. While my name may appear on the award, it truly belongs to the many individuals who have supported my efforts, from my mentors along the way to the great people I have worked for, with, and alongside, and to the NIA staff who all have been there time and time again."

In addition to being a Past President of NIA (1988-'89), Ron is a Past President of the World Insulation and Acoustic Organization and the Southwest Insulation Contractors Association. He is a 50-year veteran of the commercial and industrial insulation industry who has held executive management positions at an accessory manufacturer and specialty insulation contractor. He retired in 2004 as the Chairman, CEO, and President of a large national insulation distributor/fabricator. He currently serves as a consultant to NIA on a variety of educational, outreach, and governmental initiatives, including coordinating many association alliance-partnership activities, and serving as Chairman of the National Institute of Building Sciences' National Mechanical Insulation Committee, Past Chairman of Consultative Council, and NIA's liaison to the Federation of European Insulation Societies, which represents the European mechanical insulation market.

Recognizing David J. Cox with the Ronald King Distinguished Service Award for His Endless Creativity, Enthusiasm, and Energy

In appreciation of his ongoing contributions to NIA and the mechanical insulation industry, NIA Past President Laura Dover awarded the association's highest individual recognition—the newly renamed Ronald King Distinguished Service Award—to David J. Cox at NIA's 68th Annual Convention in Naples, Florida.

In the presentation to Dave, which was a surprise for him, Laura shared, "Let me tell you a little bit about the award recipient. He is dedicated and passionate about this industry—specifically, how we should be a larger part of the carbon reduction discussion. His creativity, enthusiasm, and energy are unmatched. You can't help but get excited about insulation when you talk with him."

After reflecting on receiving the award, Dave shared, "Not many times in my life have I been rendered speechless, but I was completely surprised when I received the Ronald King Distinguished Service Award. I am very honored and thankful for the recognition, especially since Ron and I go back decades. I have been part of NIA for many years now, and I will say it's among the best experiences of my career—to help serve this great mechanical insulation industry. Thank you for this honor!"

Dave served as the first-ever Associate (Manufacturer) NIA President from 2021 to 2022 and is the former President (2022–2024) of the Foundation for Mechanical Insulation Education, Training, and Industry Advancement Board of Directors. Dave began his career with Owens Corning in 1980, and he currently is a Strategic Business Development Leader of North American Technical Insulation. Dave has held multiple leadership roles at Owens Corning and is a vocal advocate for the benefits insulation brings to all sectors of the economy, and the value proposition insulation offers, which can be summed up in his mantra, "The cheapest energy is the energy you don't use in the first place—insulation works!"

To learn more about NIA's Ronald King Distinguished Service Award and see past recipients, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/y5z8auwp>.



From the Foundation Board of Directors

Update on the Foundation for Mechanical Insulation Education, Training, and Industry Advancement



Mechanical Insulation
EDUCATION TRAINING ADVANCEMENT

The Foundation for Mechanical Insulation Education, Training, and Industry Advancement (Foundation) has been active in the last few months spreading the word about the benefits of mechanical insulation.

Panel Presentation at the 2024 NIA Annual Convention

On Thursday, April 18, the Foundation had the opportunity to present a panel discussion to NIA members and Convention attendees on the importance of the Foundation and its work on behalf of the mechanical insulation industry.

Panelists included:

- R. Dean Burows, DKB, Inc.
- David J. Cox, Owens Corning
- John Lamberton, Irex Contracting Group
- Moderator: Michele M. Jones, Foundation Program Manager

The session began with a video that showcased the impressive history of the Foundation, which was established in 1989, focusing on its achievements and contributions in the form of training programs, resources, and outreach. Fast forward to 2024, and the global focus on carbon emissions, energy efficiency, and sustainability are top of mind for every industry. Competition for recognition of efforts and contributions to these initiatives is fierce. The mechanical insulation industry is no different in its commitment to a more energy-efficient world, and the Foundation's capabilities in this space are unquestionable. The panel's session proved to be an excellent platform to engage with industry professionals to expand on the work of the Foundation in the carbon emissions reduction space, clarify its mission, outline the programs it manages and financial supports, describe the impact of its work in the industry, and explain why funding is so important.

The panelists spoke in detail about:

- Current and ongoing initiatives;
- Studies and articles promoting carbon emissions reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainability;
- Financial support of content development for NIA's Education Center;
- Support for the standards development initiative between NIA and the Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP);
- Marketing and awareness efforts, and the ongoing work educating and communicating the value of insulation to end-user audiences and industry organizations; and
- Ways to support the Foundation, envisioning what could be accomplished with additional funding.

To learn more, access the presentation slides at <https://tinyurl.com/5n82cd22>.

Introducing the 2024–2025 Foundation Board of Directors

The Foundation Board of Directors met on Wednesday, April 17, and worked through a full agenda, including the election of its new Board members.

President: R. Dean Burows, DKB, Inc.

Treasurer: Matt Hymer, Midwest Materials Co.

Secretary: Marc Napolitano, Insulation Materials Corporation

At-Large Board Members:

- Daniel Aiken, ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation
- Jack Bittner, Johns Manville (NIA President)
- Wally Blewitt, Knauf Insulation, Inc.
- Rob English, Owens Corning
- Jordan Farrell, Irex Contracting Group
- Jon Perry, Specialty Products & Insulation

The Board of Directors would like to thank the following outgoing Board members for their service and enormous contributions to the success of the Foundation:

- David J. Cox, Owens Corning (Past President)
- John Lamberton, Irex Contracting Group (Past Secretary and Treasurer)
- Laura Dover, Dover Insulation, Inc. (Past At-Large Board Member)

New Foundation Contributor

The Foundation Board of Directors wishes to thank Greg Cundiff, Kirby-Cundiff Insulation, for being its newest contributor.

If your company would like to be a Foundation contributor, please visit www.insulation.org/foundation/contribute. If you do not see your company's name in the full list of companies supporting the Foundation (see below), please contact foundation@insulation.org for more information.



Mechanical Insulation
EDUCATION TRAINING ADVANCEMENT

The Foundation's Board of Directors would like to thank all of the following contributors who make the work of the Foundation for Mechanical Insulation Education, Training, and Industry Advancement possible.

GOLD ELITE

Annual Contribution of \$15,000

Distribution International, Inc.
Johns Manville
Knauf Insulation, Inc.
Owens Corning
Performance Contracting, Inc.
ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation
Specialty Products & Insulation

GOLD

Annual Contribution of \$5,000

Aeroflex USA
Alpha Engineered Composites, LLC
Armcell
Caldwell Insulation, Inc.
Eastern States Insulation Contractors Association
Insulation Contractors Association of New York City
Insulation Materials Corporation
Irex Contracting Group
Lamtec Corporation
Thermal Insulation Association of Canada

SILVER

Annual Contribution of \$3,000

Midwest Insulation Contractors Association
R.P.R. Products, Inc.
Southwest Insulation Contractors Association

BRONZE

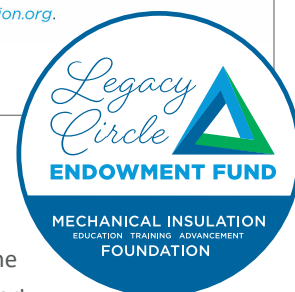
Annual Contribution of \$1,000

Advanced Industrial Services, LLC
Advanced Specialty Contractors, LLC
Argus Contracting, LLC
Atlantic Contracting & Specialties, LLC
Cornerstone Services Group, LLC
Coverflex Manufacturing, Inc.
Delaware Valley Insulation and Abatement
Contractors Association, Inc.
DKB, Inc.
Dover Insulation, Inc.
Geo. V. Hamilton, Inc.
Heat Frost and Thermal Insulation Education Fund
Hudson Bay Insulation Company
Ideal Products of America Holdings, LLC

I-Star Energy Solutions
Kennedy Insulation Systems, Inc.
K-FLEX USA, LLC
Kirby-Cundiff Insulation
L & C Insulation, Inc.
Luse Thermal Technologies
Midwest Materials Company
Petrin, LLC
Proto Corporation
Southeastern Insulation Contractors Association
Western Insulation Contractors Association
WICA Wisconsin Insulation Advancement Fund

Don't see your company listed?

To learn more about becoming a Foundation contributor, please see a staff member, visit www.insulation.org/foundation, or email foundation@insulation.org.



New Way to Give: Legacy Circle Endowment Fund

In addition to the current annual business funding contribution levels—Platinum (\$30,000), Gold Elite (\$15,000), Gold (\$5,000), Silver (\$3,000), and Bronze (\$1,000)—the Foundation's Board of Directors created the Legacy Circle Endowment Fund as a way for those in the industry to leave a personal legacy donation. The Legacy Circle Endowment Fund allows donors to specify funding for individual programs or as a contribution to the general fund. Donors will be part of a unique group who want to give back to the industry and provide a permanent way to honor their individual industry contributions and service.

All contributions, including Legacy Circle donations, are fully tax-deductible donations. (*Minimum contribution is \$2,000.*)

The Foundation would like to thank the following donors for their generous support:

- David and Susan Andrews (NIA Past President)
- Dave and Trudy Cox (NIA Past President)
- Glenn and Judy Frye (NIA Past President)
- Joseph P. and Dorothy Leo (NIA Past President)
- Owens Corning Foundation
- The Raymond M. Burows Education Fund (DKB, Inc.)
- Charles (Chuck) and Debbie Schattgen (NIA Past President)

To learn more about this contribution opportunity, please visit www.insulation.org/foundation/contribute/endowment.

National Insulation Standards Updates

Work continues on the first standards drafts, including Flashing–Sealant, Sealing of Protective Covering Joints, and Sealing of Insulation Joints. Initial development of additional standards is underway.

Once the NIA draft process is complete, the drafts will go through the AMPP review process. An open comment period will be announced for each standard.

To Learn More

To learn more about the Foundation and the programs it supports, and for 2024 donations, please contact Kristin V. DiDomenico at foundation@insulation.org. The Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) and is managed by the professional staff of the NIA.

Insights from NIA's Young Professional Advisory Committee (YPAC) Mentor Program

NIA's YPAC continues its unique mentoring program, pairing NIA Board of Directors member Marc Napolitano of Insulation Materials Corporation (IMC) with Brad Smalling of Victaulic. The two had virtual one-on-one sessions and then shared highlights of their conversations with the YPAC audience during YPAC's Winter Virtual Meeting in February.

Adopting New Technologies

By Brad Smalling

"Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master." More than 100 years ago, the duality of innovation was apparent to Norwegian Nobel Prize recipient Christian Lous Lange. In our modern era, the delicate assimilation of machines and software into work processes amplifies his point. Whether in our daily lives or continuous improvement initiatives within our respective organizations, we all have experienced the benefits of properly leveraged technology inextricably coupled with new challenges it creates. Nonetheless, Bill Gates states that "Investing in tomorrow's technology today is more critical than ever." The search for productivity gains, increased accuracy, or improved safety metrics ensures technology will play a pivotal role in construction for the coming decades. What does that mean for the mechanical insulation industry? What benefits can be reaped, and what challenges should be considered? Adopting new technologies requires continuous evaluation, thus I chose this topic for the

YPAC Mentorship Program. Fortunately, I was paired with IMC's Marc Napolitano to guide the discussion. Marc shared his vantage point of how technology has impacted the industry over the last 2 decades, the positives and pitfalls of technology integration today, as well as where there is need to leverage innovation in the future.

As a New Jersey-based fabricator and distributor established in 1971, IMC has witnessed the adoption of new technologies that impacted the industry and the business itself. Joining the company more than 16 years ago, Marc has held roles throughout the organization, allowing him to experience technological advances firsthand. He walked me through examples of material and product advancements with IMC's manufacturing partners. Along with those innovations came developments in fabrication processes and tooling. We discussed the importance of adopting new technology to grow business opportunities in a dynamic industry. One key takeaway was the importance of having

employees aligned with leadership so that the advantages of new technology benefits them in their respective roles.

As Vice President and General Manager, Marc is connected to IMC's multiple departments and locations, and video conferencing platforms have made that connectivity easier and more interactive, with expedited collaboration. While these platforms boomed during the pandemic, they continue to provide functionalities that increase productivity. Beyond business efficiency tools, we discussed the pros and cons of technologies such as thermal imaging devices, inventory management systems, and new materials/methods to address installation challenges.

Finally, Marc and I dove into how technology could shape the future. Interestingly, the discussion leaned toward educating influencers on the insulation industry. From owners and engineers to mechanical and general contractors, there was a prevailing sentiment that adopting new technologies goes hand in hand with getting all roles to appreciate the importance and intricacies of insulation systems. Whether the subject was fit and function with building information modeling (BIM), specification updates and accuracy, or quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) measures, educating the general construction populace seems to pace the integration of new applications and processes. As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to be leveraged in business functions,

we discussed utilizing programs to enhance takeoffs or find specification shortfalls. The use of scanners, robots, and drones on jobsites is another interesting concept, but *how* and *how valuable* those technologies could be specifically to insulation are up for debate. Material fabrication, packaging, and handling could be further automated, but are prohibitors such as cost and inability to implement technology efficiently keeping such updates from gaining traction? Many possibilities lie ahead along with questions that may still need resolutions.

In totality, it feels as though the mechanical insulation industry is willing to adopt new technologies with relative ease. Headwinds such as the need for customization, variabilities with other trades, and the construction lifecycle itself perhaps are limiting the speed and depth of adoption in the industry. There is an appreciation for the innovation focus of thought leaders and manufacturers in our industry, and the feedback loop within the industry itself allows for best-in-class ideas to rise to the top. Adopting new technologies within the industry may depend on our ability to educate and influence the rest of the construction industry. The leadership and focus of NIA should help us all to that end.

BRAD SMALLING is the Business Development Manager, Eastern United States, for Victaulic Co., which is based in Easton, Pennsylvania.



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Empowering Your Team through Continued Education

New Courses

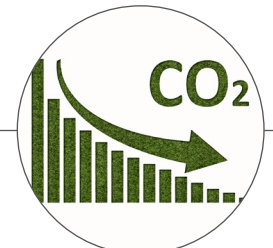
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- [Understanding the Decision Process for Specification Development](#)

NIA's Education Center was created for the mechanical insulation industry to meet the growing need for easily accessible, on-demand training from a trusted industry source. With more than 60 courses and continuously updated content, it is the go-to national resource for information and training tools specifically designed for anyone who is involved in the mechanical insulation industry.

The Education Center offers a variety of content available free for all NIA members, as well as additional content available for Premier Training Subscribers. Subscribing companies pay one yearly fee that allows access to all their team members.

Research conducted by LinkedIn reveals an enlightening statistic: 94% of employees are more likely to stay with a company that invests in their career development (<https://tinyurl.com/ypw575k4>). A study from Deloitte shows that 90% of professionals recognize the necessity of updating their skill sets annually to remain relevant in their respective fields (<https://tinyurl.com/47x6n82f>). Both findings illustrate the universal recognition among employees and professionals alike that ongoing learning is crucial. At NIA, we understand the significance of continuous learning, which is why we provide new opportunities through our Education Center.

We have an exciting lineup of new and upcoming courses, and we encourage you to share the following updates with your team.





Upcoming Courses

- Benefits of NIA's Insulation Product Specifications
- Defining a Mechanical Insulation Contractor
- How to Use NIA's Insulation Materials Specification Chart
- Introduction to Social Media for Businesses
- Killer Contract Clauses
- Mitigating Corrosion Under Insulation (CUI)
- Overview of NIA's Insulation Science Glossary
- Overview of the Mechanical Insulation Industry
- Top 10 Technical Terms You Need to Know

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS COMING LATER IN 2024

We also have two large projects in development for Premier Training Subscribers that will be available later in 2024.

1. Mechanical Insulation 101 Track

The Mechanical Insulation 101 Track will provide a comprehensive foundation for individuals who are new to the industry. This track covers an overview of the mechanical insulation industry, insulation system products, insulation's energy efficiency capabilities, the basics of using the 3E Plus® software platform, installation videos, and much more.

2. Mechanical Insulation Basics Course in Spanish

NIA is updating this popular course with a Spanish voice-over so that more members of your team can access it. The Spanish version will be available to Premier Training Subscribers later this summer.

NIA is continuously developing courses to help your organization and team. By encouraging your team members to use their access to complete our courses, you are investing not only in their professional growth but also in the success of your organization.

READY TO SUBSCRIBE?

Only NIA members can subscribe to the Education Center. The primary representative from each company can sign up for this service by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/49ej4j28> or when renewing their company's membership dues. Once a company is signed up, the on-demand training opportunities will be available to anyone employed by the company (user registration required) through December 2024.

To learn more about NIA's Education Center, visit www.insulation.org/niaeducationcenter or email training@insulation.org.

Get Certified in 2024

You have several options to obtain a new certification this year. Whether you are looking to add another revenue stream to your business, cross-train your current staff and new hires, or inform your end-user clients about inspections and appraisals, NIA has virtual options to become a Certified Thermal Insulation Inspector™ or a Certified Insulation Energy Appraiser™. Plus, for anyone newer to the industry, NIA offers the option to take Understanding Mechanical Insulation, covered in the first 2 days of the full 4-day Thermal Insulation Inspector Certification course, as a stand-alone education option. As always, NIA members receive significant registration discounts.

NIA is starting to see Certified Inspector requirements in specifications for projects. We recommend getting someone from your team certified to ensure your business is ready to bid new projects as they arise.

For learning objectives, prequalification details, and course benefits based on your business type, visit www.insulation.org/training-tools.

Hosted Courses: Bring NIA's In-Person or Virtual Training to Your Team

You can host any of NIA's courses for your employees, members, or clients. Hosted courses are a cost-effective way to bring industry training to your team and guests, providing an avenue for your company's end-user and engineer clients to learn more about the value of appraisals and inspections. Each course can be presented in person at your location or hosted virtually, and they can be held anywhere within the United States or Canada. NIA staff members will ensure you receive your member discounts. Contact NIA at training@insulation.org for pricing and more information.

November 2024



Insulation Energy Appraisal Program™

Course Dates: November 12–13 (virtual)

Registration Deadline: October 24

Training Level: Advanced/Certification Level

Member Registration Fee: \$1,555

This certification-level course teaches students how to determine the optimal insulation thickness and corresponding energy and dollar savings for a project. Learn how to conduct a facility walkthrough, use the 3E Plus® software, utilize infrared cameras during inspections, understand steam efficiencies, analyze and complete an appraisal spreadsheet, and present your customer with a final report that outlines the potential savings and emission reductions mechanical insulation can provide.

December 2024

NIA | Understanding MECHANICAL INSULATION

Understanding Mechanical Insulation

Course Dates: December 4–5 (virtual)

Registration Deadline: November 14

Training Level: Intermediate

Member Registration Fee: \$1,665

This course is excellent training for new employees to gain an overview of the mechanical insulation industry and products, focusing on a review of industry market segments; the need for and importance of inspection; the purpose of mechanical insulation systems and why that is important to the inspection process; primary insulation materials and protective coverings; the importance of Safety Data Sheets; and codes, standards, regulations, and guidelines, and how they are intertwined.

For more information or answers to questions about hosting a course for your company, please visit www.insulation.org/training-tools or email training@insulation.org.

New Opportunity to represent the Mechanical Insulation Industry:

A Call for Course Instructors

NIA is actively looking for seasoned industry personnel to teach the NIA certification-level training courses, which are in-person and virtual. Instructors may be actively employed by a member company and previous experience as an instructor is not a requirement for knowledgeable, seasoned insulation professionals. If you are currently employed, please check with your employer for their support. This is a great opportunity to represent the industry and NIA. To express your interest and obtain additional information, please contact Erin Penberthy at training@insulation.org.



Thermal Insulation Inspector Certification™

Course Dates: December 4–5 and December 11–12 (virtual)

Registration Deadline: November 14

Training Level: Advanced/Certification Level

Member Registration Fee: \$2,805

This certification-level course is designed for experienced insulation professionals ready to learn a new specialty, and for companies ready to add insulation system inspection as part of their services. Who should take this course? Anyone who has responsibility for contracts, maintenance, business development, quality assurance/quality control, project oversight, safety, inspections, estimating, management, product development, mechanical insulation system design, and specification development.





Safety Corner

Update on OSHA Enforcement Initiatives

By Gary Auman

I recently had the opportunity to present an update on OSHA developments to NIA's Health and Safety Committee. During that briefing, I discussed some of the comments made by various leaders and the OSHA hierarchy regarding their plans for 2024, which I will share with you here. Please understand that my commitment now, as always, is to the safety of all employees at all times. I try to keep abreast of the latest concerns and comments, as well as developments made in the safety area, which impact our employees. However, it is important that employers in our industry be aware of enforcement initiatives announced by OSHA for the immediate future.

At a meeting of the American Bar Association OSHA/Mine Safety and Health Administration Committee with leadership of OSHA in Puerto Rico on March 6, representatives of OSHA had an opportunity to announce their areas of concern for 2024. Douglas Parker, the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, stated his focus in several areas:

- National Emphasis Program (NEP) for warehousing,
- Fall protection in both construction and general industry,
- Hazards associated with exposure to respirable crystalline silica,
- Preventing employers from passing the burden of safety compliance to employees and increasing emphasis on whistleblower protections and 11(c) issues, and
- Increasing penalty amounts and using willful and egregious violations to enforce safety compliance with employers.

Seema Nanda, the Solicitor of Labor for OSHA, listed additional areas of concern:

- Prioritizing retaliation and the protection of immigrant workers,
- Focusing on repeat offenders,
- Using debt collection initiatives,
- Considering enhanced abatement for OSHA citations, and
- Coordinating with the Department of Justice regarding civil and criminal penalties.

Dionne Williams, Deputy Director, Directorate of Enforcement, listed additional "key enforcement initiatives," including:

- NEPs in the areas of heat hazards and warehousing and distribution centers,
- Focusing on the hazards of respirable crystalline silica,
- Working on the Severe Violator Program,
- Increasing heat illness inspections by 100% over 2023, and
- Engaging in targeted inspections regarding heat exposures and both indoor and outdoor work environments when the heat index reaches 95°F. *Author Note: I believe this initiative will fall squarely on the construction industry.*

Peter Vassalo, Counsel for Special Litigation, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, listed some initiatives in his area, to include:

- Using all the tools in OSHA's toolbox, including criminal enforcement mechanisms; and
- Partnering with the Department of Justice and State Attorneys General regarding OSHA enforcement initiatives.

The preceding should give NIA members some idea of OSHA enforcement initiatives for the remainder of 2024 and beyond. I presented the preceding information, along with additional comments, to the CSIA Spring Labor Conference in Lexington, Kentucky on April 30. Further information I provided at that meeting emphasized the importance for employers to understand what is going on at their jobsites and not relying on second- or third-hand information to get a picture of safety efforts being implemented and enforced on a daily basis. I reminded owners and management from mid-sized to large insulation contractors that they cannot afford not to pay attention to, or not attempt to obtain information on, what is actually happening on their jobsites on a daily basis.

I have found that more employers than ever appear to be relying on weekly or monthly site safety inspections conducted by either their safety director or a safety consultant to apprise them of what is happening on their jobsites. Infrequent visits to a jobsite once a week or 1 day a month do not necessarily show conditions that are indicative of what is actually going on at that site on a daily basis. Safety directors for many companies are spread very thin, but they must get to jobsites under their control on a daily basis,

whenever possible, to confirm that their directions with regards to safety compliance are being followed every day on every jobsite. If a branch/regional corporate safety director cannot get out of the office to every jobsite, they should at least be able to FaceTime or digitally contact their foreperson on each jobsite one or two times a day at random, unannounced times to have the foreperson walk the jobsite using FaceTime or some other smartphone app to show the safety director a visual of what is actually occurring on the jobsite. The safety director then can use that information to supplement more frequent in-person visits.

Interestingly, as I was drafting this article and updating my presentation from another conference, the National Safety Council's *Safety+Health* magazine presented an article written by Kevin Druly dated April 28, 2024 on why falls in construction keep happening. The article discusses five reasons revealed by The Center for Construction Research and Training's analysis in 2022 of Bureau of Labor Statistics data concerning fatal falls. The first reason listed was "not making time for safety." The second reason was "not wearing PPE." While these are only two of the five reasons stated for the leading causes of fatal fall accidents in the construction industry, they can be directly tied into my comments in the preceding paragraphs. They demonstrate that you need to make a *very strong* effort to ensure safety on *all* of your jobsites *100%* of

the time you have crews working on them. I urge you to review your safety oversight program and answer a simple question: How confident am I that the safety practices our employees are trained on are actually being performed on a daily basis on every one of our jobsites? If you cannot answer this question by saying that you have 100% confidence that safety is being practiced continuously, with no exceptions, on every site, I suggest that you step back from whatever you are doing and reassess your efforts to see that safety is really happening as you expect it should be happening every minute of every day you have employees working on every jobsite.

One additional item for you to note: Recently, Julie Su, Acting Secretary of Labor, predicted that OSHA will have a heat illness protection standard by the end of 2024. The National Safety Council reported in a Membership News Alert May 3rd that OSHA could issue a notice of proposed rulemaking on heat illness by September 30. This statement came during Su's testimony at a May 1 House Education and the Workforce Committee hearing in response to a question from Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR). Remember, until a standard is finalized, OSHA will continue to enforce heat illness protection under the General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Heat Illness Prevention:

5 Steps for Employers to Take

By Gary Auman

In 2021, President Biden directed OSHA to develop a standard to cover heat illness prevention. Following this action, OSHA issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rule Making (ANPRM) on October 27, 2021, and invited comments from the public. OSHA reportedly received 965 comments about this ANPRM. On May 3, 2022, OSHA held a virtual public stakeholder meeting and established a work group to move forward on a standard. On May 31, 2023, recommendations of the work group were passed on to OSHA. In August 2023, the Small Business Advocacy Review (SBAR) panel heard from Small Entity Representatives. As of May 2024, OSHA remained engaged in the rulemaking process, and Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su predicted that a proposed standard would be available for public review by October 2024. She also predicted that a final standard on heat illness prevention would be in place by the end of 2024.

In the meantime, it is important to remember that OSHA has been mostly successful in enforcing heat illness prevention on employers

under the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which requires all employers to provide their employees with a workplace free of recognized hazards causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

Heat illness meets that criteria. In a decision in 2012, Judge Patrick Augustine of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission listed five parts of the criteria document that he felt were feasible steps for employers to take to prevent heat illness. Some locations may be confronted with heat illness issues year-round, but we are entering a part of the year with warmer temperatures for most U.S. locations. Recently, OSHA went on television in Texas and warned employers of their responsibilities to provide heat illness prevention steps for their employees. In this televised notice, the OSHA Representative emphasized providing water, rest, and shade for employees when working in a high heat index environment. I believe that is an oversimplification of the

problem. As I have reviewed safety programs in construction-related industries, many employers' heat illness prevention program provides water, some shade, and some rest (the latter two are undefined) for employees. I feel that employers need to go well beyond water, rest, and shade in developing their heat illness prevention programs. Employers must understand that it is their responsibility to prevent heat illnesses for their workforce—and not the responsibility of their employees. Heat illness prevention is taking a front-and-center position for OSHA's safety enforcement in 2024.

The five steps discussed by Judge Augustine begin with acclimatization and proceed through training. Remember that your heat illness prevention program is based on the heat index, not on temperature alone. I strongly suggest that you have your site supervisors download the OSHA–NIOSH Heat Safety Tool App (<https://www.osha.gov/heat/heat-app>) on their smartphones. This app will provide them with the heat index at their job site and reminders of actions they should take to prevent heat illness corresponding with the heat index they are experiencing.

Step 1: Acclimatization. Employers need to identify employees who are reporting to the high heat index environment for the first time or are returning to the high heat index environment after having been away from it for 1 or 2 weeks. Set a schedule for the gradual indoctrination of those employees to the heat index on the jobsite over a period of 1 to 2 weeks. With this step, as well as the others, you might want to consult with your company doctor for guidance on the best approach for your employees. If you are unsure about how to proceed in setting an acclimatization schedule, you should consult with your company doctor or an occupational medicine specialist for assistance.

Step 2: Establish a Work/Rest Regimen. This regimen will vary, depending on the heat index. For a low heat index, you might start with shorter rest periods with longer work periods between them. As the heat index increases, you will need to increase the length and frequency of rest periods. Again, guidance can be obtained from the OSHA–NIOSH Heat Safety Tool and/or from your company doctor or an occupational medicine specialist.

Step Three: Hydration. Employers need to be sure adequate cool water is provided on the jobsite. There should be sufficient water to provide up to a quart of water for each employee, each hour. Establish a hydration schedule at the start of the day and be prepared to modify it as the heat index increases. A rule of thumb is a cup (8 ounces) of cool water every 15 to 20 minutes in a moderate heat index. Again, consult the OSHA–NIOSH Heat Safety Tool and/or your company doctor for advice and ideas.

Step 4: Cooling-off Areas. Employers should establish cooling-off areas in close proximity to the jobsite. These should be available for use by employees during rest breaks, especially as the heat index climbs during the day. Cooling-off areas should also be available to employees anytime they begin to feel the symptoms of any heat illness. An employee who needs to use a cooling-off area should never be permitted to find their own way to the area, especially if it is somewhat remote or removed from the active jobsite. Ideally, the cooling-off area should have an ambient temperature of 76°F.

Step 5: Training. Employers should train employees on the different types of heat illnesses, the symptoms of each, and how to recognize those symptoms in themselves and others. They should also be trained in the first-aid steps to take whenever they see the symptoms in themselves or others. Training also should include such things as staying away from alcohol, highly caffeinated beverages, and energy drinks during the entire period of time they will be working in a high heat index environment. Employees should be warned that anyone with underlying medical issues such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc., and/or a history of prior episodes of heat illness (especially heatstroke) is more susceptible to heat illness than other employees. Other related discussions include appropriate clothing for a high heat index environment. As you can see, training employees on this topic cannot be accomplished in a 5- to 10-minute toolbox talk.

Employers need to document all training as well as the steps taken each day to protect employees in a high heat index environment. Finally, your program has to be supervisor driven. You must ensure that supervisors know that this is NOT something they only tell their employees once and then leave it up to the employees to comply or not. **Site supervisors must understand that they are 100% responsible for ensuring that employees working for them fully comply** with each part of all the steps. Start developing and implementing your heat illness prevention program now. When OSHA does finalize a heat illness prevention standard, you should see specific steps in the standard that you will need to take to be in compliance. Until then, you should follow the outlined steps, or steps close to them, to meet the requirements of the General Duty Clause.



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His practice focuses on counseling and defending employers in safety and health matters. He frequently works with employers and OSHA to find workable solutions to OSHA enforcement actions. He represents four national and

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July 8–10, 2024

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October 28–29, 2024

MGM National Harbor
National Harbor, Maryland

NIA's 69th Annual Convention

April 28–30, 2025

Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort
& Spa at Gainey Ranch
Scottsdale, Arizona

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Central States Insulation Association (CSIA)

Contact: Rachel Pinkus
(937) 278-0308, www.csiaonline.org

Joint Conference: CSIA & ESICA

September 4–6, 2024

Sunseeker Resort
Port Charlotte, Florida

Eastern States Insulation Contractors Association (ESICA)

Contact: John F. DeLillo
(516) 922-7855, www.esica.org

Joint Conference: CSIA & ESICA

September 4–6, 2024

Sunseeker Resort
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Midwest Insulation Contractors Association (MICA)

Contact: Rachel Pinkus
(937) 278-0308, www.micainsulation.org

MICA 67th Annual Conference

June 16–20, 2024

Hotel Alex Johnson
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Southeastern Insulation Contractors Association (SEICA)

Contact: Erin Penberthy
(571) 266-3129, www.seica.org

SEICA 2024 Spring Conference

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and Spa and Casino
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Southwest Insulation Contractors Association (SWICA)

Contact: Lindsay Konlande
(832) 971-5989, www.swicaonline.org

SWICA Poker Tournament

July 27, 2024

Pasadena Convention Center
Pasadena, Texas

Thermal Insulation Association of Canada (TIAC)

Contact: Robin Baldwin
(613) 724-4834, www.tiac.ca

2024 TIAC Conference

August 21–24, 2024

Delta Hotels St. John's Conference Centre
St. Johns, Newfoundland

Western Insulation Contractors Association (WICA)

Contact: Robert Bergman
(801) 364-0050, www.wica1.com

WICA Annual Convention

September 15–17, 2024

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Kamuela, Hawaii

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