

NIA | News

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

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Fall Summit 
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EVP/CEO MESSAGE

Celebrating Success and Looking Ahead to 2026



I want to extend my gratitude to everyone who joined us at NIA's Fall Summit in October, which set a new attendance record! We truly embodied NIA President Rick Sutphin's theme of **Association Strong—70 Years** with an impressive turnout of nearly 170 attendees, including 25 first-time participants. Turn to [page 11](#) for a photo gallery and session highlights that capture the energy of this event.

For the third consecutive year, Fall Summit attendees voted in NIA's Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition. Congratulations to JT THORPE for its first-place win! See [page 16](#) for details on the top three projects.

Didn't make it to Fall Summit? Join us in Puerto Rico for our 70th Annual Convention, March 24–26, 2026 (see [page 6](#))! In addition to networking and education details, Erin Penberthy and I share insider tips to maximize your time at the iconic El Conquistador Resort. If you're planning to attend, book your hotel room now—our discounted room block will sell out.

Continue your professional development when it is convenient for you through NIA's Education Center, where new on-demand courses and tracks await ([page 19](#)). You can also pursue certification as an NIA Certified Thermal Insulation Inspector™ or NIA Certified Insulation Energy Appraiser™ (see [page 21](#))—set a goal to make 2026 the year you get certified!

Connection and growth are at the heart of NIA membership. Discover our newest member companies on [page 4](#), and meet our new Board members and get to know me and our newest team member, Callie Marolf, on [page 3](#), continuing our series of introducing our members to the NIA staff.

There's much more to explore in this issue of *NIA News*, including the latest from the Foundation and an update on our standards development. I hope to see you in 2026, and I wish you a wonderful holiday season!

Michele M. Jones

Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer

NIA LEADERSHIP

Executive Leadership

President

Rick Sutphin, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

President-Elect

John Stevens, *JT THORPE*

Secretary/Treasurer

Lee Stuckenschmidt, *Systems Undercover, Inc.*

Assistant Treasurer

Louis Walton, *Proto Corporation*

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—Paul Ainsworth, *Energy Insulation Conservation, LLC*

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

Ginny Gier, *Owens Corning*

At-Large Representatives

Mellanie Askew, *Coverflex Manufacturing, Inc.*

Rick Baptista, *Irex Contracting Group*

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

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

Russ Huff, *Bay Insulation Supply*

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

Auston Shaw, *Chaparral Insulation Co., Inc.*

Past President Advisors

Jack Bittner, *Johns Manville*

Laura Dover, *Chaparral Insulation Co., Inc.*

Committee Chairs

2026 Convention Planning

John Stevens, *JT THORPE*

Associates

Louis Walton, *Proto Corporation*

Distributors/Fabricators

Brian Blazek, *Specialty Products & Insulation*

Health and Safety

Mike Hill, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Membership

Lee Stuckenschmidt, *Systems Undercover, Inc.*

Merit Contractors

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

Metal Building Laminators

David Tomchak, *Bay Insulation Systems, Inc.*

Technical Information

Doug Fast, *Owens Corning*

Union Contractors

Rick Sutphin, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Young Professional Advisory

Thomas MacKinnon, *Armcell*

Paul Ainsworth and Auston Shaw Join the NIA Board of Directors



Paul Ainsworth: ESICA Regional Board Representative

Paul Ainsworth is the new Eastern States Insulation Contractors Association (ESICA) Regional Board Representative, with a term expiration date of 2028. In his Business Development role for Energy Insulation Conservation, LLC, Paul is based in Foxboro, Massachusetts. He has been active in the insulation business for more than 45 years, specializing in the industrial, mechanical, and process markets throughout the New England and New York areas. Paul began his career in estimating and has served in many roles over the years, including field engineering, sales, project management, branch management, sales manager, and business development.



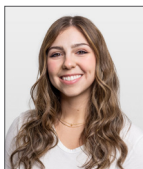
Auston Shaw: At-Large Representative

Auston Shaw joins the NIA Board as an At-Large Representative, as he fills Dean Burows's seat, which expires in 2027. Auston started in the industry working for his father in the mid-90s and took the reins at Insul-Con, spearheading growth for the firm throughout the Georgia market and extending into neighboring states. Since the acquisition of Insul-Con by Chaparral Insulation Co., Inc., Auston has been based in Alabama, where he took on the role of Southeastern States Business Development, expanding on his years of relationships and market familiarity. Auston has been instrumental in Chaparral's growth throughout the Southeast, as well as mentoring the project management team in the Southeast.

Getting to Know Your NIA Team

You may have met some of our NIA team members at events, or seen their names on our website, but we thought you'd enjoy getting to know the people behind the services you rely on. As we have done in the last few issues of *NIA News*, we'll introduce you to the staff members who make NIA work for you.

Callie Marolf, Digital Communications Specialist



As the new Digital Communications Specialist at NIA, Callie Marolf joined the NIA team in September 2025 and is enjoying connecting with members and sharing important news and updates across the association's many communication

channels. She combines creativity and strategy to craft engaging content for email, social media, print, and web platforms. Callie is passionate about transforming association and industry topics into clear, compelling stories that engage partners and support NIA's mission to advance insulation awareness, promote energy efficiency, and unite professionals across the industry. With a Bachelor's degree in Sustainability Management and practical experience in digital marketing, she brings both genuine enthusiasm for sustainable building practices and technical insight to the association.

Outside the office, Callie enjoys spending time with her husband, Jake, reading books, playing with her cats, and getting out in the Florida sunshine.

Callie welcomes your collaboration and ideas for digital communication strategies. To share your thoughts or feedback related to NIA's digital communications, contact her at cmarolf@insulation.org, or 703-464-6422, ext. 116.

Michele M. Jones, Executive Vice President/CEO



Michele M. Jones's dedication and passion for the mechanical insulation industry and its members span more than 34 years! Michele first served in the role of Director of Meetings and Program Development, and was promoted to Executive

Vice President and CEO in 2002. She leads the association in support of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Under her leadership, NIA has developed the NIA Education Center, begun managing other nonprofits, created two certification courses, and begun the development of National Insulation Installation Standards. Michele is a passionate advocate for mechanical insulation awareness, member growth, and advancing the professionalism of the industry. She works closely with the NIA staff to ensure the continued success and strength of the association, while also overseeing and supporting NIA committees, including the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Board of Directors, Long Range Planning Committee, Convention Committee, and Finance Committee.

Highlights for Michele include formation of the Foundation for Education, Training, and Industry Advancement; expanding NIA's role in national energy-efficiency and carbon-reduction

initiatives; representing the mechanical insulation industry on Capitol Hill and with federal agencies; and strengthening relationships with regional insulation associations, international partners, allied organizations, and government agencies. She is also proud of NIA becoming a Department of Energy Better Climate Challenge Ally, of the growth and modernization of NIA's programs over the past 3 decades, as well as seeing firsthand how NIA's programs and members' collaboration continue to elevate the mechanical insulation industry.

Michele graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.Sc.). Outside of the office,

Michele enjoys spending time with her family, especially her two children and grandchild, traveling, pursuing interests as a want-to-be sommelier, and staying active in her community.

Michele invites discussion with members about involvement in NIA committees, advancing industry awareness, promoting mechanical insulation within federal programs, and enhancing collaboration across regional and national insulation organizations. Contact Michele by email at mjones@insulation.org, or by phone at 703-464-6422, ext. 119.

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 www.insulation.org/newmembers.



October 2025

Alliance Fabrication
Fabricator

\$3–6 Million

Attn: Brian Mizell

2349 Plastics Dr., Ste. 400

Gastonia, NC 28054-1416

(704) 392-8853

www.alliance-fab.com

Specialties: Commercial Insulation, Distribution, Fabrication, HVAC Insulation, Industrial Insulation, Marine, Plumbing Insulation, Power, Refrigeration Insulation

About Alliance Fabrication

Alliance Fabrication is an insulation fabricator providing premium fabricated products.

Why did you join NIA?

We're excited to join NIA for increased industry representation, along with the opportunity to network with peers and potential customers.



October 2025

Irex Industrial Coatings
Contractor

\$0–1 Million

Attn: Andy Shammo

123 Oakdale Ave.

Toledo, OH 43605

(419) 661-8522

www.lrex.com

Specialties: High-Performance Coatings, Lake Freighters, Storage Tanks, Fireproofing, Asset Preservation

About Alliance Fabrication

Irex Industrial Coatings is dedicated to being the preeminent specialty contracting organization. Serving industries including: refineries, chemical, natural gas, pipelines, paper mills, powerhouses, steel manufacturing, and light and heavy industrial manufacturing.

Why did you join NIA?

Irex Industrial Coatings joins its proud sister companies being represented by NIA, taking advantage of the many resources that it offers.



October 2025

AEROFOAM USA

Associate Manufacturer

Attn: Shawn Dunahue

43 Commerce Dr.

Abbeville, SC 29620-4297

(864) 366-4888

www.aerofoamusa.com

Specialties: Acoustical Insulation and Noise Barriers, Duct Insulation, Insulation Blanket/Sheets, Preformed Pipe Insulation, Tapes

About AEROFOAM USA

AEROFOAM USA is the North American division of Hira Industries, dedicated to delivering high-quality mechanical insulation solutions for HVAC, refrigeration, and industrial applications. Operating from our new state-of-the-art facility in Abbeville, South Carolina, we proudly serve customers across North, Central, and South America.

With a dedicated U.S.-based team, AEROFOAM USA combines global expertise with local support to provide innovative insulation products that drive energy savings, corrosion protection, condensation control, sustainability, and total life-cycle value. Our mission is to deliver not only superior products, but also industry-leading service, technical support, and trusted partnerships that help contractors, engineers, and building owners achieve optimal performance, comfort, and safety.

Why did you join NIA?

AEROFOAM USA is more than a product supplier—we are a partner to designers, contractors, and building owners across the Americas. By joining NIA, we've aligned ourselves with the leading organization dedicated to advancing insulation performance, standards, and education. Membership demonstrates our commitment to industry leadership and continuous improvement.

Joining NIA also connects AEROFOAM USA with a network of contractors, distributors, engineers, and manufacturers across the insulation value chain. This collaboration helps us better understand challenges, advocate for the benefits of insulation, and work toward common goals of safety, efficiency, and sustainability.

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.

PEOPLE & PLACES In the News

Owens Corning Opens New Facility in Arkansas

Owens Corning recently announced the grand opening of its new manufacturing plant in Russellville, Arkansas. "The grand opening of our new Foamular® NGX™ manufacturing plant in Russellville marks a significant milestone in Owens Corning's journey to deliver sustainable building solutions," said Jose Canovas, President of Insulation at Owens Corning. "This facility reflects our commitment to our customers' growth, innovation, and the vibrant Russellville community. We're proud to invest in Arkansas, create new jobs, and grow alongside our customers with high-performance insulation."

Announced in February 2023, construction of the 150,000-square-foot facility was completed safely in August, and it will be fully operational by year end. The facility has created more than 50 new jobs in the local area.

Owens Corning has been a member of NIA since 1966 and is headquartered in Toledo, Ohio. For more information, visit www.owenscorning.com.

TopBuild Acquires Specialty Products and Insulation

TopBuild Corp. recently announced that it successfully acquired Specialty Products and Insulation (SPI), a specialty distributor and fabricator of mechanical insulation solutions for the commercial, industrial, and residential markets in North America. The acquisition closed on October 7. The acquisition excludes SPI's metal building insulation business.

Robert Buck, President and CEO of TopBuild, stated, "The SPI acquisition is highly strategic for TopBuild. The addition of SPI's resources and capabilities further enhances our customer value proposition, while its complementary fabrication footprint strengthens and expands our presence across North America."

Ray Sears, President and CEO of SPI, added, "We believe TopBuild is the best strategic owner for our business, better positioning the combined organization to provide customers with innovative and high-quality solutions. Both companies have similar corporate cultures, with an emphasis on safety, respect, and a continued drive to improve."

Based in Charlotte, North Carolina, SPI has been a member of NIA since 1984. To learn more, visit www.topbuild.com.



70th Annual Convention

El Conquistador Resort, Puerto Rico



NIA's Community Will Be Celebrating NIA's 70th Annual Convention Next Spring in Puerto Rico—**Make Sure You Are There, Too!**

NIA's 70th Annual Convention

March 24–26, 2026

El Conquistador Resort
Puerto Rico

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

February 26, 2026

Advanced Registration, Hotel
Reservation, and Golf Tournament
Deadlines

March 9, 2026

Regular Registration Closes

Since 1956, NIA members have celebrated the power of strong industry relationships—connections that extend across companies, projects, and entire careers. These relationships remain at the heart of NIA's mission and success. That's why NIA President Rick Sutphin has selected the 70th anniversary theme ***Association Strong—70 Years***, honoring the accomplishments, collaboration, and leadership that have shaped the mechanical insulation industry for 7 decades.

This spring, the celebration continues, as attendees gather in Puerto Rico to connect, learn, and grow together. Each day of Convention will bring new opportunities to build the valuable partnerships that make our association thrive. Between industry-leading education, memorable keynote sessions, and exciting networking events, this milestone year promises to showcase the strength and future of our community.

TOP TIPS FROM NIA STAFF

Before you pack your bags for the iconic El Conquistador Resort, NIA's EVP/CEO Michele M. Jones and Vice President of Events and Education Erin Penberthy have insider advice to help you make the most of this unforgettable destination.

1. Spend the Day at the Exclusive Private Palomino Island

The resort's private 100-acre oasis features pristine white sand and calm turquoise waters, perfect for swimming and snorkeling. The island also has lounge chairs, umbrellas, towels, and an on-site restaurant—just bring your sunscreen and your flip flops! Get there early (complimentary boats depart starting at 10:00 a.m.) to secure the best spot on the beach.

2. Make Dinner Reservations Way in Advance

The resort has more than 20 dining options, including casual spots, bars, and fine dining experiences. Keep in mind that the most popular restaurants book up quickly, especially during peak season.

- **Book Fine Dining First:** For places like BoNo (Spanish fine dining) and Cutz Steakhouse (premium steaks and seafood), make reservations with the concierge before your arrival.



- **Explore Casual Eats:** Don't miss the more casual, yet fantastic, spots, such as Café Bella Vista for al fresco dining or Ballyhoo down by the marina for fresh seafood. La Ezkina offers Mexican food with a Puerto Rican twist.
- **El Cafecito** is your go-to for world-famous Puerto Rican coffee, pastries, and quick breakfast items. This is open 24 hours, so stop by anytime.

3. Don't Miss the Local Excursions

While the resort offers plenty of entertainment, some of Puerto Rico's best adventures are right on your doorstep. Kayak through the bioluminescent bay—one of only five in the world—and watch the water glow, or visit El Yunque National Rainforest, the only tropical rainforest in the United States where you can also zip line and enjoy natural waterslides. To book a tour, contact SALT Tours at 787-863-1000, ext. 7514, 787-433-0781, or Saltours@ConquistadorResort.com.

4. Indulge at Vita Spa

The resort's ultimate relaxation at Vita Spa is newly renovated and offers soothing massage treatments and rejuvenating facials. Plus, NIA attendees receive 10% off advanced reservation services. Book by phone (787-863-1000, ext. 7575) and mention "National Insulation Association," or make an [online reservation](#) and add "National Insulation Association" as a note, and the discount will be applied at the end of your service.

5. Water Parks, Pools, and Adventures for the Whole Family

Coqui Water Park provides fun for the whole family and is included as part of your resort fee. Enjoy the slides, the infinity-edge pool, and the lazy river. The main south pool areas feature hot tubs (one of these is private and overlooks the water), cabanas, and a swim-up bar. With three separate pools, there really is something for everyone!

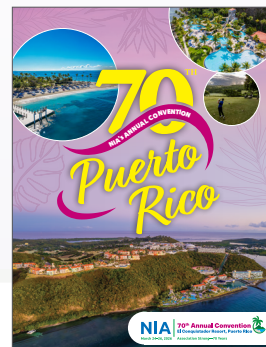
For more water sports adventures, head to Palomino Island and rent snorkeling gear, paddle boards and kayaks, and jet skis. For more information, email Saltours@ConquistadorResort.com.

6. Book Your Group Transportation

For airport transfers, the hotel partners with the third-party organization First Class Destination Solutions to provide shuttle service from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., please [reserve your spot here](#). If you prefer private services, please contact First Class Destination Solutions directly at (787) 296-5466, email them at info@limopr.com, or [reserve your spot here](#). Concierge can assist with arranging taxi services. You may contact them directly at Concierge@ConquistadorResort.com or by calling 787-863-1000, ext. 7003.

7. Choose Your Preferred After-Dinner Vibe

- **Coming Soon: Casablanca** is a brand-new lounge bar, featuring creative cocktails, mood décor, and curated entertainment. It will be open during our event in March.
- **Cigar Bar** offers an intimate, sleek setting and an exceptional collection of world-class cigars. Pair your cigar with a handcrafted cocktail, rare whiskey, or aged rum. The entrance to this bar is hidden and can be accessed from the outside (located toward the Las Brisas guest rooms).
- **Bar 21** is in the heart of the resort lobby, offering the best Caribbean vibes, ocean views, and lively entertainment.



Promote Your Brand at NIA's 70th Annual Premier Insulation Industry Event

Be a part of the industry's top event of the year, as NIA brings the best in entertainment, educational sessions, and networking opportunities for all attendees. From Contractor Recognition Packages to Website Sponsorship and Digital Packages, there is an option for every budget. Email Erin Penberthy at epenberthy@insulation.org to learn more.



Book Your Travel to Puerto Rico

The iconic El Conquistador Resort overlooks the exact spot where the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean meet. Perched high on a 300-foot cliff and enriched with 6 decades of history and architectural value, the resort boasts countless amenities, dining, and entertainment options. From a water park and pools to relaxing spa experiences, to athletic activities, there's something for the whole family.

NIA has blocked multiple room types at the El Conquistador Resort at a discounted rate, starting at \$239 per night (plus state and local taxes). These rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis, so be sure to book early and reserve your spot. All reservations must be finalized before February 26, 2026.

Your discounted resort fee of \$35 per night includes transportation to and from Palomino Island—the resort's own private island—with white sand beaches, restaurant, and lounge chairs and umbrellas. It also includes access to the fitness center, pickleball and tennis courts, entrance to Coqui Water Park and outdoor pools, and many more resort activities.

8. Take a Ride on the Funicular (Cable Car)

Built on a cliffside, the El Conquistador Resort is divided into sections—the main lobby level and the marina/water park level—yet all connected by a Funicular, which is a cable railway. Allow ample time (5 to 15 minutes) to ride the Funicular to the marina level to catch the ferry to Palomino Island or to get down to the water park, as it can get busy!

9. Active Adults: So Many Fitness Options

NIA is hosting our Golf Tournament on Tuesday at the on-site course, which we hope you can join us for (separate registration required)! The resort also has bike rentals, tennis and pickleball courts (included as part of your resort fee), as well as two fitness centers (one located at the spa and one near the Las Brisas hotel rooms). Take advantage of these amenities.

10. Singing Coquí

While on property and in Puerto Rico, keep your eye out for *coquí*s. You will see and hear these native frogs on and near the property, and they particularly love to “sing” at night. If you are a light sleeper and you prefer not to hear their song, we recommend bringing a pair of ear plugs or a sound machine.

11. On-Site Shopping

There are a variety of shops at the hotel to look for souvenirs or anything you may have forgotten to pack. Some of the shops are located near the restaurants in the main hotel building. Other shops can be accessed outdoors as you head toward the Funicular.

12. The Kids Will Love It

Bringing along the family? There are plenty of activities to keep your kids entertained and active:

- Scout About Adventure Program: A scavenger hunt where kids use a map to find checkpoints and collect rubber bracelets to earn a special El Conquistador bracelet.
- Coqui Water Park, with slides and a lazy river.
- Hunt for Coquis, Puerto Rico's first frog.
- Visit with the resident lobby birds.
- Additional kids' activities happen weekly. Stop by the hotel's concierge to learn more!

13. No Passport Required

Remember, Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, so U.S. citizens do not need a passport to travel!



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

+ Spouses Encouraged to Attend

* Family Friendly, Kids Welcome

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026

5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Past Presidents Reception
and Dinner (closed meeting)

MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026

(All events on Monday are closed meetings)

9:30 – 11:00 a.m. Past Presidents Advisory Council

12:00 – 3:00 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting
and Lunch

3:00 – 5:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

5:45 – 6:30 p.m. Board of Directors and Spouse
Reception

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

7:45 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration

8:00 – 10:00 a.m. Education and Training Committee and
Breakfast (closed meeting)

10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Membership Committee
(closed meeting)

12:00 – 5:00 p.m. NIA's Golf Tournament+
(separate registration is required)

5:15 – 6:00 p.m. New and First-Time Member Orientation

6:00 – 6:30 p.m. First-Timers Happy Hour
(closed meeting)

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Welcome and Appreciation Dinner*+

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026

7:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Registration

7:15 – 8:00 a.m. Networking Breakfast*+

8:00 – 11:30 a.m. Welcome General Session*+
• Keynote Presentation
• Business Session
• Safety Awards Presentation
• Education Session

10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Spouse/Guest Program+

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
and Lunch (closed meeting)

1:45 – 3:00 p.m. Regional/National Committee
(closed meeting)



1:45 – 4:00 p.m. Technical Information Session

1:45 – 4:00 p.m. Health and Safety Session

3:00 – 4:30 p.m. CAN/AM Meeting (closed meeting
open to all Canadian Convention
attendees)

4:00 – 5:45 p.m. Young Professional Advisory
Committee (YPAC) (open to members
under 40 years of age or new to
the industry)

Open Time for Supplier Meetings/
Dinners

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026

7:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Registration

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. Networking Breakfast*+

8:30 – 10:00 a.m. Keynote Presentation*+

10:00 – 10:15 a.m. Networking Break

10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Union Contractors Subcommittee
(open only to Signatory contractors of
the International)

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Merit Contractors Session

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Associates (Manufacturer) Session

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Distributors/Fabricators Session

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Metal Building Laminators Committee

12:00 – 12:30 p.m. Union Contractors Session

12:30 – 2:15 p.m. Education Session and Lunch

2:15 – 3:45 p.m. Council of Committees and Board of
Directors Meeting (closed meeting)

2:15 – 5:30 p.m. Open Time for Individual Member
Meetings/Networking

5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Farewell Reception and Dinner*+
7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Hosted Dessert Hospitality Suites*+



TARGETED INDUSTRY KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS AND EDUCATION SESSIONS

- **Keynote Presentation**

The Power of Significant Moments:

Elevating Relationships & Performance

The Keynote Speaker Jon Petz will reveal the significance of elevating relationships and performance through everyday moments. Jon will demonstrate how a simple perspective shift can bring more magic and positive results into work, life, leadership, and relationships.

- **Keynote Presentation**

Complete Leadership:

Navigating the New World of Work

The skills and characteristics that once served leaders are rapidly changing. In Eric Termuende's discussion on "complete leadership," he will deliver a research-based blueprint on how leaders can navigate through the new world of work through unwavering trust, a unified team, and organizational preparation.

- **Health and Safety Session**

Elevating Safety: Best Practices and Culture

Gain practical insights for building a safety program that protects and strengthens your workforce in our Health and Safety Committee meeting. Mike Hill, Performance Contracting, will explore the essential best practices for a highly effective safety program that supports your organization's overall performance while fostering a strong safety culture.

- **Merit Contractors Session**

Innovative Compensation Strategies and Trends

Back by popular demand, compensation expert Brett Addis will continue the conversation to explore innovative, tax-efficient benefits and compensation trends. Attendees will learn how to design performance-based pay structures that drive productivity, retention, and profitability, along with technologies that improve payroll accuracy and a Q&A with Brett.

More sessions, including a technical panel presentation on data centers, will continue to be added to the schedule. Visit www.insulation.org/convention2026 for more information.

CONNECT WITH YOUR PEERS, 70TH ANNIVERSARY STYLE

Get ready to network every day! Here's what's planned:

- **Tuesday, March 24**—Network on the course at NIA's Golf Tournament! Add the golf option when registering and join your colleagues on Tuesday at noon. Connect at the Welcome and Appreciation Dinner, an island-inspired evening outdoors with live entertainment, cocktails, and plenty of opportunities to mingle under the palm trees. First-time attendees can join the orientation and happy hour earlier that evening.
- **Wednesday, March 25**—Networking kicks off at the Networking Breakfast, continues with targeted industry session, and ends with an open night to explore and enjoy supplier events. For registered spouses and guests, experience the Flavors of Puerto Rico and the chance to connect with fellow guests (pre-registration required, so please check the box to attend when registering).
- **Thursday, March 26**—Cap off the Convention with an Educational Session and Lunch, followed by the Farewell Reception and Dinner honoring President Rick Sutphin. Stay for Manufacturers' Hosted Dessert Hospitality Suites—perfect to close out the celebrations!

Note: Most attendees can plan to arrive on Tuesday. Past Presidents and Board events begin Sunday and Monday. NIA's Golf Tournament is at Noon on Tuesday. (View the Schedule of Events on [page 9](#).)

This is your chance to strengthen relationships, make new connections, and celebrate 70 years of NIA! Ready to be part of this milestone celebration? Register today at www.insulation.org/convention2026. Questions? Email events@insulation.org.

Industry Experts Forecast the Future at Fall Summit 2025

Members explored economic, sustainability, and workforce trends shaping the mechanical insulation industry.



With record engagement and a focus on the future, NIA's Fall Summit brought together nearly 170 participants, including 25 first timers and 3 new member companies. From October 28–29, 2025, at the MGM National Harbor, we celebrated President Rick Sutphin's theme, **Association Strong—70 Years**. Members explored the trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the mechanical insulation industry in engaging breakout and keynote sessions.

Fall Summit's collaborative format once again encouraged open dialogue and peer-to-peer learning. Attendees engaged in industry-specific sessions designed to address real-world challenges and highlight solutions for a rapidly changing market. From emerging economic pressures to sustainability goals, members left equipped with actionable strategies to strengthen their businesses and the broader industry in the year ahead.

The 3rd Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition highlighted the creativity, artistry, and craftsmanship of contractors' mechanical and industrial insulation system projects. We were delighted to have six participants in this year's showcase. Congratulations to First-Place Winner JT THORPE. Turn to [page 16](#) to see more on the competition. The next Insulation Project Showcase will take place in 2027.

An AMAZING
100%
of respondents rated
the Fall Summit
Excellent or Good

Expert Insights from the NIA Community

This year's keynote speakers offered powerful perspectives on the economy and the evolving role of insulation professionals in design and sustainability.

Back by popular demand, Chris Kuehl, Managing Director, Armada Corporate Intelligence, joined us for another year and gave an insightful presentation on the trends most likely to shape the U.S. economy in 2026. In "Economic Outlook: What's Next?" Chris provided a comprehensive analysis of construction industry spending across manufacturing, transportation, and infrastructure sectors, along with insights on the U.S. dollar, interest rates, real estate trends, and tariffs. His data-driven overview, and his humorous observations, helped members anticipate how global and domestic economic forces will impact the insulation market in the coming year.

In our second keynote session, Melanie Goerke, LEED AP BD+C, WELL AP, LFA, Senior Sustainability Specialist at Stantec (formerly Page), followed with "Design-Build, Decarbonization, and the Future of Mechanical Insulation." Melanie explored how mechanical insulation professionals can partner strategically with engineering and architectural firms to advance shared sustainability objectives. She detailed new regulations and decarbonization guidelines reshaping data center and design-build projects, and highlighted how collaboration and innovation are opening new opportunities for NIA member companies.



98%

of respondents said the program content/educational value exceeded or met expectations



INDUSTRY SESSIONS DELIVER PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

In addition to the keynote sessions, attendees participated in industry-specific breakout sessions in committee meetings that offered focused insights.

Associates

- Heard a presentation from Economist Chris Kuehl that focused on important topics for manufacturers, potential growth rates, sector challenges, and potential risks
- Discussed NIA's Premier Industry Manufacturer Award program and upcoming deadlines
- Discussed the nomination for the Associates' Board position and recommendation from the committee

Distributor/Fabricator

- Discussed mastering tariffs, trade, and next-gen supply chain with Senior Editor of Technology at the *Journal of Commerce*, Eric Johnson
- Updated the committee's purposes and objective
- Reviewed and updated the Value of Distribution and Value of Fabrication handout drafts the committee developed



Carey Ewanik
Intertape Polymer Group

Member Insights on What They Value about Fall Summit

"As a first-time attendee, I was impressed by the caliber of stakeholders at Fall Summit, including suppliers, service providers, and installers. The breadth of the insulation industry was well represented. The opening session with the economist set a strong tone for the event, and I saw the networking opportunities as the standout component of the event."





92%

of respondents said they would attend again



91%

of respondents learned new information



Education and Training

- The committee met virtually prior to Fall Summit and reviewed updates to NIA's Education Center, including 10 new fall courses and the launch of the Leadership Development 101 Track, with future tracks planned for Artificial Intelligence in Business and Leadership Development 102
- Discussed strategies to engage current Education Center subscribers and encourage active use of available content
- Shared new promotional efforts, including NIA's approved American Institute of Architects course and a new marketing flyer highlighting Education Center offerings and membership benefits

Health and Safety

- Discussed how to learn from near misses and take a proactive approach to construction safety with Occupational Safety and Health Professional Jerelle Santana
- Discussed resources NIA can provide to members regarding health and safety
- Received an OSHA update from NIA Legal Counsel Gary Auman

Membership

- Reviewed and discussed expansion of NIA's Ambassador Program
- Advanced the development of NIA's new member onboarding video and updated membership brochure
- Discussed ways to promote and celebrate member longevity

Merit Contractors

- Discussed regional market conditions, focusing on project statuses, data center demands, specification matters, and the outlook for 2026
- Considered adding one virtual meeting to the committee meeting schedule
- Heard from NIA Consultant Jeff DeGraaf on installation standards development; members were invited to participate and add the contractor perspective to the development process

Metal Building Laminators at METALCON

- Presented on the showroom floor to 50 highly engaged attendees, covering an introduction to metal building insulation; performance considerations including air leakage, surface burning characteristics, and air tightness; and acoustics
- Reviewed an approval process for FM 4880
- Discussed a new draft standard developed by an external group for installing products fabricated by NIA's metal building laminator members
- Explored the possibility of hiring a public relations firm to support marketing efforts for metal building insulation

NIA Board of Directors

- Approved two new Board members: Paul Ainsworth, Energy Insulation, filling the ESICA region board seat, and Auston Shaw, Chaparral Insulation, filling a vacant at-large seat
- Reviewed and approved a clean audit of NIA's 2024 financials, the 2026 budget, and the 2026 Board of Directors Nominating Committee
- Heard reports on the recent Board Assessment Survey, the 2024–2027 long-range plan strategic objectives, and updates from each NIA Operating Committee Chair



85%

of respondents would recommend the event to colleagues



74%

of respondents gained new business contacts

Technical Information

- Discussed the technical presentation taking place at the 2026 Annual Convention. The presentation will be a panel discussion format, and the topic will be data centers
- Received an update on the joint AMPP/NIA insulation installations standard practices and guidelines, and information about how to participate in working groups
- Approved updates to the Specification Chart, Guide to Insulation Product Specifications, and the terms Emissivity (Emittance) and Condensation Control
- Updated the committee on task group work, including a review of the Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy website for opportunities to promote and provide mechanical insulation information; monitoring IECC/ASHRAE 90.1 changes; technical paper submissions for the 2026 ASHRAE Conference; and scheduling an informational session for committee members on TIPCheck, a program of the European Industrial Insulation Foundation

Union Contractors

- Held a roundtable discussion on industry updates, including reports from the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, the National Union Insulation Contractors Alliance, and the Labor Management and Cooperative Trust; and on labor shortages and wage package increases
- Reviewed regional updates shared by attendees
- Received an update on the joint AMPP/NIA insulation installation standard practices and guidelines, including opportunities to participate in working groups
- Discussed potential speakers for the upcoming meeting at the 2026 Convention

Young Professional Advisory Committee (YPAC)

- Participated in networking roundtable discussions to build connections among YPAC members
- Discussed updates and invited new participants to YPAC's mentor program and Engineering Student Outreach Task Force
- Asked members to consider suggesting topics for future speakers and providing input on meeting format preferences, improving the YPAC webpage, and joining the leadership team



RECONNECTING AT SOCIAL NETWORKING HAPPY HOURS!

Attendees gathered for two happy hour events to catch up and enjoy time with one another. The Tuesday night kick-off reception provided attendees with the opportunity to reconnect before a packed day of industry meetings. Wednesday night's happy hour allowed members to say farewell until next time, which will be NIA's 70th Annual Convention, March 24–26, 2026, at the El Conquistador Resort in Puerto Rico. See [page 6](#) for the latest details on the 2026 Annual Convention. Also, save the dates for the 2026 Fall Summit: October 28–29, 2026, at the MGM National Harbor in Maryland. If you missed this year's NIA Fall Summit, be sure to secure your plans for March and October 2026!



Rob Elsey
Cornerstone Sales, Inc.

Member Insights on What They Value about Fall Summit

"The networking opportunity with manufacturers, distributors, and contractors all in one setting at Fall Summit is always invaluable. The economic presentation was particularly outstanding, especially with the audience Q&A. For anyone considering attending, this condensed meeting is in an easy-to-reach location, with quality attendees from across the industry, and is well worth your time."



Thank You to Our 2025 Fall Summit Sponsors!



Congratulations NIA Contractors!

NIA's Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition

Congratulations to the winners and all the participants in NIA's Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition! The goal of the showcase is to highlight the creativity, artistry, and craftsmanship of contractor mechanical and industrial insulation system projects. We were excited to have six companies participate.

The projects were showcased anonymously at Fall Summit 2025, and all attendees had a chance to vote on their favorite. The judging criteria were: most parts insulated, aesthetics, difficulty of installation, and well-installed application.

The winners are:

FIRST PLACE: JT THORPE



We thank all the entrants, who helped highlight the diversity and creativity of the mechanical insulation industry:

- Argus Contracting
- Gribbins Insulation & Scaffolding
- Insul-Tech, Inc.
- Jersey Firestop, LLC
- JT THORPE
- Performance Contracting, Inc.

Visit NIA's website at <https://tinyurl.com/2u2kxrjr> for project photos and more information on all the projects. NIA is excited to promote the winning entries, including in future issues of *Insulation Outlook* magazine.

SECOND PLACE (TIE): GRIBBINS INSULATION & SCAFFOLDING



SECOND PLACE (TIE): INSUL-TECH, INC.



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) continues to strengthen its leadership and expand its impact across the mechanical insulation industry. At its recent October Board meeting, the Foundation's Board of Directors made several key leadership appointments to its nine-member roster and advanced important initiatives that will shape the Foundation's work in the coming year.

New Board Positions and Members

The Foundation is pleased to announce the following updates to its Board of Directors officers:

President: Wally Blewitt, Knauf Insulation, Inc.

Secretary: Jordan Farrell, Irex Contracting Group

Treasurer: Matt Hymer, Midwest Materials Corp.

Welcome New At-Large Board Members

Brian Blazek, Specialty Products & Insulation (SPI)



Brian is a skilled operations leader with experience across multiple industries, including retail, consumer packaged goods, and building materials. He joined SPI in 2017, first leading the supply chain organization and later moving into executive leadership roles, heading up the East Region for Mechanical Insulation and currently leading the Building Insulation and Spray Foam Business Unit.

Alan Shepherd, Alkegen



Alan has had a distinguished career in the insulation and building materials industry for more than 40 years. He has contributed his expertise to organizations like Owens Corning, Armacell, and Irex Contracting, and now serves as the Sales Leader for the Americas for Alkegen/Unifrax.

Other Board members include Daniel Aiken, ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation; Rob English, Owens Corning; David Fischer, Distribution International; and Rick Sutphin, Performance Contracting, Inc.

Working to Advance the Industry

The Foundation Board addressed several important items to continue advancing the mechanical insulation industry and fulfilling its mission:

- Reviewed major program content, mechanical insulation installation standards, educational course content, new educational tracks, development of educational content for the Department of Energy's industrial programs, and the potential of restructuring the biennial Industry Measurement Survey;
- Evaluated and approved a clean audit review conducted by the accounting firm PB Mares on the Foundation's 2024 financials;
- Examined and approved the 2026 budget;
- Discussed the Foundation's current list of contributors and established goals to reach new contributors in 2026; and
- Developed a marketing plan for the Foundation's Legacy Circle Endowment Program, with a focus on outreach to family-run companies in the mechanical insulation industry.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Foundation operates entirely on contributions from industry supporters who share its vision for advancing mechanical insulation education, training, and standards. These investments directly support critical resources that benefit the entire industry. We thank our current 2025 contributors! Contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible. As we come to the end of 2025, please consider making a donation.



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.

2025 CONTRIBUTORS

FOUNDING ORGANIZATION CONTRIBUTOR: National Insulation Association—\$40,000

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
Bay Insulation Supply
Caldwell Insulation, Inc.
Eastern States Insulation Contractors Association
Insulation Contractors Association of New York City

Insulation Materials Corporation
Irex Contracting Group
Lamtec Corporation

SILVER

Annual Contribution of \$3,000

General Insulation Company, Inc.
Midwest Insulation Contractors Association
Midwest Materials Company
R.P.R. Products, Inc.
Southeastern Insulation Contractors Association
Southwest Insulation Contractors Association

BRONZE

Annual Contribution of \$1,000

Alkegen
Coverflex Manufacturing, Inc.
Delaware Valley Insulation and Abatement
Contractors Association, Inc.

DKB, Inc.
Geo. V. Hamilton, Inc.
Heat Frost and Thermal Insulation Education Fund
Ideal Products of America Holdings, LLC
Irex Advanced Industrial, LLC
Irex Advanced Specialty, LLC
Irex Argus Contracting, LP
Irex Atlantic Contracting, LLC
Irex Cornerstone Services, LLC
Irex Energy Solutions, LLC
Kennedy Insulation Systems, Inc.
K-FLEX USA, LLC
Kirby-Cundiff Insulation
Petrin, LLC
Proto Corporation
Thermal Insulation Association of Canada
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.

If your company is interested in learning more about supporting the Foundation's mission or exploring contribution opportunities, please contact Program Manager Kristin V. DiDomenico at foundation@insulation.org.



National Insulation Association Standard Practice Update

The work to draft mechanical insulation installation standard practices and guidelines is moving forward. During NIA's Fall Summit, outlines for the first four installation standards were presented to the NIA membership. These cover:

- Pipe supports,
- Vapor retarders and vapor stops,
- Flanges, and
- Damaged insulation.

NIA is seeking member volunteers to help draft the first four insulation installation standard practices/guidelines for our industry. This is an opportunity to contribute your expertise and ensure the standards reflect current best practices and real-world applications.

NIA Consultant and AMPP/NIA Standard Committee 27 Chair Jeff DeGraaf explained, "Our Standards Committee kick-off meetings provide a unique opportunity to develop installation standards that truly reflect every aspect of the insulation industry.

Owners, engineers, manufacturers, and contractors will collaborate to create comprehensive standards that address the most common challenges and concerns across the field. We invite you to consider contributing a small portion of your time to help shape the AMPP/NIA insulation standards. Your expertise and perspective are invaluable; and together, we can build a resource that will benefit the entire industry for years to come."

If you're interested in participating in this important work, please sign up using the following form: <https://forms.gle/bg7x5b8SmvRZlgQU6>.

A virtual informational session will take place on Tuesday, December 16 at 2:00 p.m. ET. To participate, please contact Kristin V. DiDomenico, kdidomenico@insulation.org.

Questions? Need help signing up?

Contact Jeff DeGraaf, jdegraaf@insulation.org, or Kristin V. DiDomenico, kdidomenico@insulation.org.



Future-Focused Training

Arriving in NIA's Education Center



NEW FEATURED CONTENT: NIA'S Understanding Specification Course

Starting in January, NIA's Understanding Specifications course will be included in NIA's Education Center Premier Training Subscription. This course covers how a specification is developed, the challenges and opportunities that come with it, the consequences of poorly written specifications, how knowledge of mechanical insulation and insulation inspections can improve specifications, and how codes, standards, regulations, and guidelines are involved. After completing the course, each participant will receive a completion certificate and 6 professional development hours (PDHs).

From foundational techniques to the latest developments in business management, energy efficiency, and more, NIA's Education Center provides an on-demand platform for 24/7 access to targeted training. NIA's Education Center features 80 expert-designed courses tailored for professionals at every career stage, and new courses are added throughout the year.

With easily accessible, industry-specific content and a user-friendly interface, everyone can build skills at their own pace—whether they have a few minutes or longer dedicated time to dive deeper.

Ready to discover the latest additions? Explore the new offerings and take the next step in professional development with industry-leading education from a trusted source.

COMING IN JANUARY 2026

New Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Focused Courses for Premier Training Subscribers

Generative AI Prompt Writing for Beginners

Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, are reshaping the digital landscape by serving as powerful catalysts for productivity and creativity. Participants will learn the art of prompt writing and transition from passive questioning to strategic collaboration with the chatbot.

Generative AI Approaches to Business Challenges

The course focuses on how to identify common business challenges and use AI to automate tasks, analyze unstructured data, and create engaging, personalized customer experiences. Participants will learn how to choose the right tools and practice ethical AI use to solve real-world problems.

Creating an AI Adoption Strategy for Business

This course provides a practical road map for organizational leaders to successfully deploy AI company-wide. Participants will learn the important steps for preparing their workforce, establishing governance, and ensuring executive alignment to drive adoption effectively.

Using AI to Build a Strategic Mindset

This course dives into the realm of strategic foresight, exploring how to use AI as a high-level partner to enhance business vision. It explores how to move beyond basic productivity and integrate generative AI into a company's core strategic planning and problem-solving processes.

AI Business Track 101

This track is designed to provide an overview of generative AI, guiding participants from foundational fluency to high-level strategic deployment. Throughout the course, participants will learn AI fundamentals, advanced prompt writing, strategic application of AI, and how it can help solve business challenges. After completing this track, they will earn a completion certification and 1.5 PDHs.

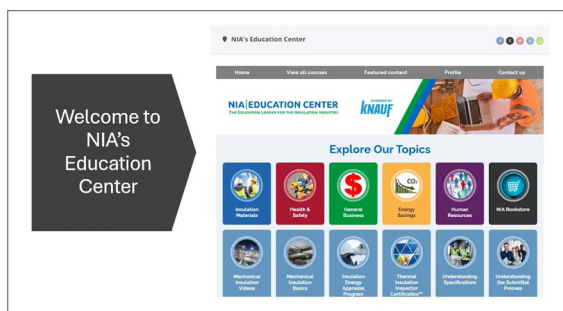


Become a Premier Training Subscriber Super User!

Check out NIA's Education Center's Tips and Tricks video to learn more about how to navigate the platform, track courses, and download certificates.

For more information, or to become a Premier Training Subscriber, visit www.insulation.org/trainingtools/niaeducationcenter, or email training@insulation.org.

WATCH HERE!



NEW TRACK AVAILABLE: Leadership Development 101

NIA's Leadership Development 101 track is available to Premier Training Subscribers of NIA's Education Center and is designed to prepare new and aspiring leaders with the fundamental skills needed to build a strong leadership foundation.

COURSES INCLUDED IN THE TRACK:

- Best Practices for New People Leaders**
 Learn how to transition successfully into a new role as a leader of people with these time-tested management strategies.
- Communication Tips for Modern Business Professionals**
 With this road map to improve professional communication, this course provides practical strategies to enhance skills across multiple channels, including writing, presentations, email, and virtual meetings.
- Conflict Resolution for Beginners**
 This session provides a practical, four-step process to help participants reach resolutions confidently. Gain the tools to navigate disagreements and guide others toward positive, lasting resolutions.
- Become a Manager Your Team Loves**
 Successfully transition from a team contributor to a manager with this course, designed to help managers become effective team leaders.

After completion of these courses, each participant will receive a completion certificate and 5 PDHs.

Your 2026 Professional Development Starts Here

Build your mechanical insulation expertise through three intermediate and certification-level courses offered throughout the coming new year. (All dates are for 2026.)

NIA | Understanding MECHANICAL INSULATION

Understanding Mechanical Insulation On Demand

Training Level: Intermediate

Course Length: 2 days

One of NIA's most popular intermediate-level courses will be offered on demand starting January 2026!

This course is excellent training for new employees looking to gain an overview of the mechanical insulation industry and products. It reviews 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.

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Included in your course registration is access to virtual office hours scheduled throughout the year. These live, interactive sessions allow you to engage directly with the instructor and connect with fellow learners. This is your chance to ask detailed questions about the course content and exam, review challenging concepts, and get specific guidance to ensure you master the material.

Virtual office hours will be from 2:00–2:30 p.m. ET on the following dates in 2026:

- [Wednesday, March 4, 2026](#)
- [Wednesday, June 10, 2026](#)
- [Tuesday, September 8, 2026](#)
- [Tuesday, December 1, 2026](#)

To attend, you must register for your preferred session. If you have any questions directly related to the course, please reach out to training@insulation.org.

How to Host

If your company is interested in hosting a course for 10 or more team members, or for a group of customers, special pricing is available. This includes NIA's Understanding Mechanical Insulation On Demand course! You can purchase a group of codes for your team to use throughout 2026 at a reduced rate. For more information, please email training@insulation.org.

Upcoming 2026 Courses



Thermal Insulation Inspector Certification™

Training Level: Certification Level

Course Length: 2 days

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. Prior to the virtual course, all participants will complete the Understanding Mechanical Insulation on-demand course.

COURSE DATES

May 13–14

Registration Deadline: April 22

Virtual Course

December 8–9

Registration Deadline: November 17

Virtual Course



Insulation Energy Appraisal Program™

Training Level: Certification Level

Course Length: 2 days

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.

COURSE DATES

April 22–23

Registration Deadline: April 1

Virtual Course

November 4–5

Registration Deadline: October 9

Virtual Course



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Stay up to date with all our programs and events! Visit:



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[LinkedIn.com/company/NIAInfo](https://www.linkedin.com/company/NIAInfo)



[www.YouTube/NIAInfo](https://www.youtube.com/NIAInfo)

#NIAMeets is our event hashtag—please use it when sharing event photos and updates. Scan the QR code to connect with NIA on X, LinkedIn, and YouTube.



NIA National Insulation Association®

Contractors' Corner: Technology Tips from a Construction Consultant

Contractors' Corner provides quick tips and useful information for contractors, especially smaller Contractor member companies. How can we help your business? Email editor@insulation.org to share what types of specialties you would like to read about in *NIA News*.

Artificial Intelligence in Construction: What Contractors Must Build First

By Michael Kanaby

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly becoming a significant part of the construction industry every year. Analysts predict it will grow more than 20% annually. Yet most contractors are not ready to benefit from it.

The problem is not resistance to technology. It is that most companies lack the necessary structure for AI to work effectively. When information lives in notebooks, text messages, and separate spreadsheets, even the best software cannot make sense of it.

Before AI can help improve efficiency or profitability, contractors must first lay a foundation. Building that foundation has three steps: centralizing data, standardizing processes, and automating repetitive work. We will use change orders as an example.

1. Centralize Your Data

Every insulation contractor deals with change orders. The question is, where does that information live?

In many companies, it is scattered. The project manager keeps a spreadsheet, the foreman tracks items on paper, and accounting has a different set of numbers. AI cannot fix that.

Start small. Choose one place for all change order data: a shared folder, Smartsheet, or in your estimating software.

Use the same fields each time, such as project name, scope, amount, and status.

Once data is in one location and entered consistently, it becomes trustworthy and ready for automation.

2. Standardize the Process

AI depends on consistency. If every project handles change orders differently, no technology can deliver valuable results.

A basic process might look like this:

1. **Identify:** The foreman notes the change and documents it with photos.
2. **Validate:** The project manager confirms the scope and cost.
3. **Authorize:** The customer approves, and accounting updates billing.

This is not about adding paperwork. It is about clarity and accountability. Standardizing how work gets done ensures everyone follows the same steps, providing complete, consistent, and predictable outcomes.

3. Automate and Apply AI

Once data and processes are consistent, automation can save time. A digital form can automatically route approvals. A dashboard can show which change orders are open or billed.

Then, AI can add value by spotting patterns, predicting risks, or highlighting

cost trends. However, if the information being input is inconsistent, AI only magnifies the confusion.

Why This Matters

Many contractors still rely on what is in people's heads or handwritten notes. That may have worked in the past, but it will not prepare companies for the next decade. AI thrives on accurate data and reliable processes. Without them, it cannot help.

The Takeaway

AI is not a replacement for people. It is a tool that amplifies strong systems and consistent habits.

Contractors who take the time now to centralize data, standardize workflows, and automate where it makes sense will be ready for what is next. Those who do not will be left reacting to it.

The construction industry is changing quickly. The question is not whether AI will reshape it, but whether your company will be ready when it does.

MICHAEL KANABY, Managing Partner of Profitability Works, Inc., has more than 30 years of experience in the construction industry. He is Co-Author of *Building Excellence: Implementing Standard Processes for Construction Trade Contractors*.

EVENT CALENDAR



(703) 464-6422

www.insulation.org/events/calendar
events@insulation.org

NIA MEETINGS

NIA's 70th Annual Convention

March 24–26, 2026

El Conquistador Resort
Puerto Rico

Fall Summit 2026

October 28–29, 2026

MGM National Harbor
National Harbor, Maryland
(just outside of Washington, DC)

NIA News

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NIA EDUCATION AND TRAINING

For information about education programs and training opportunities, please visit www.insulation.org/training-tools

REGIONAL INSULATION MEETINGS

www.insulation.org/events/regionalcalendar
events@insulation.org

Central States Insulation Association (CSIA)

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

CSIA Spring Labor Conference

April 27–29, 2026
Dream Nashville
Nashville, Tennessee

Eastern States Insulation Contractors Association (ESICA)

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

2026 ESICA Spring Conference

May 6–8, 2026
The Belgrove
West Palm Beach, Florida

Midwest Insulation Contractors Association (MICA)

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

MICA Winter Board and

Committee Meetings

January 22–24, 2026
Wyndham Grand Jupiter at
Harbourside Place
Jupiter, Florida

Southeastern Insulation Contractors Association (SEICA)

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

SEICA 2026 Spring Conference

June 21–23, 2026
The Breakers
Palm Beach, Florida

Southwest Insulation Contractors Association (SWICA)

Contact: Catie Duhon
(832) 971-5989, www.swicaonline.org

Annual Craft Competition

February 2026
Houston, TX
(Date and location TBA)

Thermal Insulation Association of Canada (TIAC)

Contact: Tristan Bertram
(613) 724-4834, www.tiac.ca

2026 TIAC Conference

August 19–22, 2026
Hilton Québec
Québec City, Québec

Western Insulation Contractors Association (WICA)

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

WICA Annual Convention

September 13–15, 2026
The Ritz-Carlton
Santa Barbara, California

NIA'S ONLINE RESOURCES

www.insulation.org
www.insulationoutlook.com
www.niaeducationcenter.org
www.insulatemetalbuildings.org
www.linkedin.com/company/NIAInfo
www.x.com/NIAInfo
www.youtube.com/NIAInfo

Instructions on how to use NIA's new membership
and educational portals are available at:

www.insulation.org/about-nia/makingthemostofyourmembership