

NIA | News

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

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EVP/CEO MESSAGE

Milestone Moments to Bring Members Together



NIA's 70th Annual Convention was one for the books, bringing together members for an unforgettable time of learning and connection. Nearly 350 professionals from across the mechanical insulation industry convened, where we welcomed 65 first-time attendees and 7 new member companies—a sign of continued growth and engagement across our community.

At this milestone event, attendees brought to life outgoing NIA President Rick Sutphin's theme, *Association Strong—70 Years*, celebrating both our history and the momentum carrying us forward. You can explore Convention highlights beginning on [page 6](#), including the introduction of President John Stevens, the 2026–2027 NIA Board of Directors, and our new Committee leadership.

This issue also highlights the individuals and companies setting the standard for excellence across our industry. Our Premier Manufacturer Awards ([page 12](#)), Safety Excellence Awards ([page 13](#)), and the brand-new Star Volunteer Award ([page 15](#)) recognize the leadership that moves the Association and the mechanical insulation industry forward.

In the months ahead, there are many ways to stay engaged and make the most of your NIA membership. I encourage you to join us for the upcoming Fall Summit 2026 ([page 16](#)), where members will once again come together for valuable education, collaboration, and networking.

You can also invest in your team's growth through certification-level courses for insulation inspections and energy appraisals, as well as new offerings available through NIA's Education Center ([page 19](#)). This issue of *NIA News* includes updates on the Insulation Installation Standards ([page 22](#)), Foundation initiatives ([page 21](#)), and safety topics ([pages 24 and 25](#)), reflecting continued advancement and industry awareness.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members, which you can learn more about on [page 4](#). Their involvement strengthens our association and helps ensure a vibrant future for the mechanical insulation industry.

I look forward to connecting with many of you at regional association meetings this summer and at NIA's Fall Summit 2026 at the MGM National Harbor, October 28–29. Enjoy your summer!

Michele M. Jones

Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer

NIA LEADERSHIP

Executive Leadership

President

John Stevens, *JT THORPE*

President-Elect

Lee Stuckenschmidt, *Systems Undercover, Inc.*

Secretary/Treasurer

Louis Walton, *Proto Corporation*

Assistant Treasurer

Russ Huff, *Bay Insulation Supply*

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 & Scaffolding.*

ESICA—Paul Ainsworth, *Energy Insulation Conservation, LLC*

MICA—Matt Hymer, *Midwest Materials Company*

SEICA—Scotty Burnette, *Breeding Insulation Company, Chattanooga, 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.*

Reid "Huck" Finn, *API Construction Co.*

David Fischer, *Distribution International*

Jordan Fiske, *Anchor Insulation*

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

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

Past President Advisors

David J. Cox

Rick Sutphin

Committee Chairs

2027 Convention Planning

Lee Stuckenschmidt,
Systems Undercover, Inc.

Associates

Ginny Gier, *Owens Corning*

Distributors/Fabricators

Brian Blazek, *Specialty Products & Insulation*

Education and Training

Rick Baptista, *Irex Contracting Group*

Health and Safety

Mike Hill, *Performance Contracting, Inc.*

Membership

Louis Walton, *Proto Corp.*

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

Matt Stillitano, *Insul-Tech, Inc.*

Young Professional Advisory

Nicole Barwick, *Irex Argus Contracting*

PEOPLE & PLACES

In the News

Kingspan Insulation North America Completes Rooftop Solar Installation at Illinois Facility

Kingspan Insulation North America, a global manufacturer of building materials, has completed a rooftop solar installation at its manufacturing facility in Mendota, Illinois. The 881-kilowatt system spans approximately 50,000 square feet and is expected to generate about 1 million kilowatt-hours of renewable electricity annually. The installation is projected to offset roughly 700 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year. "Bringing solar power online at our Mendota manufacturing site is a milestone of which we're incredibly proud," said Kyle McEnroe, President of Kingspan Insulation North America. "This project is a tangible example of our Planet Passionate commitment in action as we continue to reduce operational carbon, increase our use of renewable energy, and invest in long-term solutions that strengthen both our environmental performance and our business."

A member of NIA since 2010, Kingspan Insulation North America is based in Atlanta, Georgia.

Knauf Announces Executive Leadership Transition



Matt Parrish

Bill Matthias

Knauf Insulation North America has announced that CEO Matt Parrish will step down from his role at the end of June, following 7 years with the company. During his tenure,

Matt oversaw a period of significant growth, with the company nearly doubling in size while strengthening its market position. "We are immensely grateful for Matt's leadership, dedication, and the lasting impact he has made on the company," the Board of Directors stated. Bill Matthias, currently Chief Financial Officer, has been appointed interim CEO. He will work with Matt and the leadership team through the end of June to support a smooth transition. The company's Board of Directors will begin a search for a permanent successor.

A member of NIA since 1978, Knauf is based in Shelbyville, Indiana.

Remembering Marc Napolitano



March 30, 1971 – April 11, 2026

On April 11, 2026, the insulation industry lost a respected leader and dedicated volunteer with the passing of Marc Napolitano. Marc was deeply committed to advancing the association and the industry, giving his time and expertise generously through service on the NIA Board of Directors and the Foundation for Mechanical Insulation Education, Training, and Industry Advancement from 2022 to 2025. He also served on the Long Range Planning Committee and was a mentor in NIA's Young Professional Advisory Committee program, where he supported and guided the next generation of industry leaders. Marc served as Vice President and General Manager of Insulation Materials Corporation (IMC) in South Plainfield, New Jersey, where he worked for 20 years alongside his wife, Christine Napolitano, IMC's President and CEO. Marc will be deeply missed by his colleagues, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing him. [Click here](#) to read his obituary.

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.



January 2026

American Energy Contractors, LLC

Contractor

\$1–3 Million

Attn: Johnny Johnson

501 Terrance Ave.

Huntington, WV 25705

(304) 529-4771

www.aecwv.com

Specialties: Acoustic Products/Services, Asbestos Abatement, Commercial Insulation, Fabrication, Firestopping, HVAC Insulation, Industrial Insulation, Marine, Plumbing Insulation, Removable Insulation

About American Energy Contractors, LLC

American Energy Contractors, LLC specializes in industrial and commercial insulation, spray applied fireproofing, and asbestos and lead abatement. We also fabricate and install custom, removable, reusable insulation blankets. We serve many industries across the Eastern and Central United States, with a primary focus on oil and gas.

Why did you join NIA?

We joined NIA for the educational opportunities they provide as well as networking with industry colleagues and suppliers at various events. NIA offers a wealth of industry-specific educational and safety materials, and we are proud to be a part of this community.



February 2026

New England Abatement Resources (NEAR)

Contractor

\$1–3 Million

Attn: Blake Underhill

387 University Ave.

Westwood, MA 02090

(781) 828-1812

Specialties: Asbestos Abatement, Industrial Insulation, Removable Insulation, Scaffolding

About New England Abatement Resources

New England Abatement Resources (NEAR) provides selective industrial clients with abatement, insulation, scaffolding, demolition, and cleanup. We provide the support work so that our customers can perform the maintenance work needed to keep their operations running smoothly.

Why did you join NIA?

NEAR currently provides a high level of service to a small cohort of customers within Massachusetts and would like to know more about the industry at large.



March 2026

**Arnold Group USA Inc.
Associate (Manufacturer)**

Attn: Werner Arnold
225 Promenade Pkwy.
Fayetteville, GA 30214
+49 172 6245980
www.arnoldgroup.com

Products: Acoustical Insulation and Noise Barriers, Consultant, Corrosion Under Insulation (CUI) Mitigation, Fire Endurance Protection Systems, Firestopping (through Penetrations), Fitting Covers & Fitting Insulation, Insulating Cements, Insulation Blanket/ Sheets, Insulation Board & Block (Rigid/Semi-Rigid), Jacketing & Flexible Facings, Removable/Reusable Blankets, Pads & Covers

About Arnold Group USA Inc.

Arnold Group is specialized to produce and install technical insulation systems for industrial and power plants, providing products and services globally with a branch in Fayetteville, Georgia. In the United States, we provide flexible and sheet metal cladding systems for piping, vessels and power plant equipment in the marine and engine industry, in power and chemical plants, and in automotive and agricultural vehicles. Our family-owned business is driven with our experienced workforce and our local branches to provide the best service and products for our customers.



March 2026

**Insultec, Inc.
Contractor**

\$0–1 Million
Attn: Natalia Punj
508 N 2nd St.
Fairfield, IA 52556
(641) 781-0344
www.insultec.com

Specialties: Commercial Insulation, Fabrication, Fire Proofing, Industrial Insulation, Refractory Contractor, Scaffolding

About Insultec, Inc.

Insultec combines global experience with on time, high-quality supply and installation to reduce energy loss, extend equipment life, and lower operating costs for major industrial projects. From power plants to petrochemical facilities, Insultec provides reliable thermal insulation, fireproofing, and corrosion protection that keeps your projects safe and on schedule.

March 2026

**Syngroup Management Consulting LLC
Consultant**

Attn: Jeff Hoskins
4949 Syracuse St., Suite 550
Denver, CO 80237
(720) 355-3714
www.syn-group.com

Specialties: Consulting

**About Syngroup Management
Consulting LLC**

Syngroup provides strategic direction, market analysis, legal and regulatory analysis, business management, corporate sales, and partnership building to our European clients within the North American market—either to new market entrants to North America, or to European-based companies with existing North American subsidiaries that need additional managerial and operational support. We primarily work with German-speaking companies (Austria, Germany, Switzerland) in the United States to manage and grow their business interests.

Why did you join NIA?

Syngroup is engaged in professional relationship building, market analysis, and strategic direction on behalf of European Union-based companies in the rigid foam insulation industry. We've identified NIA and its member companies as one of the primary and best avenues for making the right industry connections and building industry knowledge.

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.



Association Strong:

Strengthening the Network of Insulation Industry Professionals at NIA's 70th Annual Convention

Along the stunning east coast of Puerto Rico's cliffs and crystal-blue Caribbean waters, NIA's 70th Annual Convention brought members together to learn, connect, and grow. Nearly 350 professionals across the mechanical insulation industry convened at the El Conquistador Resort March 24–26, for 3 days packed full of education and networking—plus time spent enjoying all the tropical destination had to offer.

This year's event included 65 first-time attendees and 7 new member companies. Drawing from across the country, members rallied to make this annual meeting fit outgoing NIA President Rick Sutphin's theme for 2025–2026: **Association Strong—70 Years**. In celebration of this milestone event, six NIA Past Presidents were in attendance, including Darrel Bailey, Jack Bittner, Dave Cox, Laura Dover, Kenny Freeman, and Steve Luse. This time of collaboration and learning spanned topics from significant moments in life, to leadership in the new world of work and the realities of data center projects in today's industry.

EDUCATION SESSIONS FROM THE MAIN STAGE

On the educational agenda, Stephen Hunt from Jacobsen Construction addressed upskilling workforce performance through role-specific roadmaps. He explored how intentional career pathing can serve as a strategic tool to attract and retain talent, as the construction industry continues to face hiring and retention challenges highlighting the measurable return on investment (ROI) and practical ways companies can begin implementing these strategies.

Peer-led panel discussions are always a fan favorite. The session on navigating data center projects explored an increasingly critical and complex market for the mechanical insulation industry. From the day-to-day realities members face on these mission-critical projects to evolving challenges and lessons learned in the field, the discussion provided a tactical look at what's changed, what remains

94%

of survey respondents rated NIA's Convention as excellent or good





difficult, and the best practices proving successful in today's data center environment. As part of the discussion, attendees heard from panelists Steve Gorman (Owens Corning), Auston Shaw (Chaparral Insulation Co., Inc.), Matt Stillitano (Insul-Tech, Inc.), and Matt Vogt (Distribution International), led by Moderator Louis Walton (Proto Corp.).

NIA BUSINESS MEETING AND COMMITTEE SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

On Wednesday, Rick Sutphin led the NIA Business Session, where the new Executive Committee officers were announced and new Board representatives were approved. NIA's new officers for 2026–2027 are:

- President – John Stevens, JT THORPE
- President-Elect – Lee Stuckenschmidt, Systems Undercover, Inc.
- Secretary/Treasurer – Louis Walton, Proto Corporation
- Assistant Treasurer – Russ Huff, Bay Insulation Supply, Inc.

For the full list of the NIA Board of Directors, turn to [page 2](#). New Committee Leadership can be found on [page 10](#). To learn more about NIA President John Stevens, look to [page 11](#).

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

Associates heard updates on NIA Standards from NIA Consultant Jeff DeGraaf and received insights from Brian McCuller of GRASSI on key manufacturer-related developments tied to the One Big Beautiful Bill. The committee also reviewed the I-3 Member Entertainment Policy, and held elections and confirmed new leadership for the coming term.

The **Distributors/Fabricators Committee** heard from Brian Kaasalen, CPA, CFF, CCFIP, Principal–Construction Industry Leader, Baker Tilly, about the impact of tariffs on the construction industry. The committee reviewed the finalized [Value of Distribution Handout](#) and [Value of Distribution Education Center course](#). The committee then focused on



Significant Moments and Future Readiness

The Convention opened with a keynote presentation from Jon Petz, who inspired with a passionate talk on the value of turning everyday moments into lasting impact on the people around us. His blend of magic, humor, and personal stories left attendees spellbound and inspired, with many describing the session as *motivating, excellent, high energy, fun, and emotional*.

Attendees also heard from keynote speaker Eric Termuende, who explored the complexities of building resilient teams prepared to navigate constant change. Through powerful storytelling and a practical blueprint for leading through uncertainty, he left attendees feeling hopeful, confident, and ready to put new ideas into action.



Action Shots from Convention

Scan the QR code above to watch a short highlight reel of this year's event on LinkedIn. Scan the QR code below to visit the photo gallery.



reviewing and editing the draft Value of Fabrication Handout.

The **Education and Training Committee** discussed new subscriber benefits, ROI value to subscribers, and ideas to promote Premier Training Subscribers in the future. The committee identified future training topics, such as artificial intelligence, workforce transitions, data center resources, safety, and reviewed upcoming Department of Energy-related initiatives for 2026.

The **Health and Safety Committee** received a presentation from Mike Hill CHST, SMP, Vice President, National Safety, Performance Contracting, Inc. on strengthening safety culture through best practices. NIA Legal Counsel Gary Auman of Auman, Mahan & Furry provided an overview of OSHA updates.

The **Membership Committee** focused on enhancing recruitment and retention efforts by reviewing current initiatives, including updates to the membership brochure, the Ambassador Program, and a forthcoming Member Benefits Survey. The committee discussed next steps in creating a new membership for Industry Partners. Following the meeting, members hosted the New Member and First-Timer Orientation and Happy Hour to help attendees maximize their Convention experience and membership value.

The **Merit Contractors Committee** welcomed back Brett Addis from Baker Tilly on the topic of trends and strategies for recruiting and retaining talent. Members also spent time sharing regional market conditions, focusing on active bidding and some delays in projects being initiated, but reporting overall positive conditions. The committee reviewed positive feedback on the member proposal for the addition of a virtual meeting to the schedule.

The **Metal Building Laminator Committee** advanced several key initiatives, including reviewing proposals for an

upcoming market study and expanding industry visibility through published articles and company promotion in *Metal Architecture* and *Design and Build with Metal*. The committee also hosted an educational webinar in partnership with the Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association on high-performance fiber glass insulation and energy code considerations.

The **Technical Information Committee (TIC)** reviewed and updated several of NIA's key technical resources, including charts, specifications, and industry definitions for Hazcom Article, Design Temperature, and Non-Combustible, while also evaluating proposed changes to API 521 Report, Table 6. The committee discussed ongoing technical content development and identified potential article topics for *Insulation Outlook* magazine.

The **Union Contractors Committee** held a roundtable discussion led by Chris Grando, Chief Operating Officer, International Asbestos Removal, Inc. and President, National Union Insulation Contractors Alliance (NUICA), focusing on updates from key industry organizations and sharing regional insights from members across the country. The committee also secured speaker John Nesse, Attorney, Management Guidance, to discuss high-impact CBA clauses at the Union Contractors Subcommittee meeting at the 2026 Fall Summit.

The **Young Professional Advisory Committee (YPAC)** heard from Jacob Construction's Stephen Hunt, who led the attendees through interactive leadership strategies. Attendees received updates on YPAC programs, including the YPAC Mentor Program and the Engineering Student Outreach Task Force. YPAC members were asked for input on association engagement and educational programs, and a new subcommittee was created to focus on YPAC growth and engagement.



98%

of survey respondents indicated that the overall educational value of the sessions met or exceeded expectations



Celebrating Award Winners

A highlight of Convention is recognizing the individuals and companies whose achievements continue to elevate the mechanical insulation industry. Through the Safety Excellence Awards, NIA honored the ongoing commitment required to maintain a culture of safety across all sectors. Turn to [page 13](#) to see this year's 40 Safety Excellence Award winners and the companies leading by example.

NIA also recognized outstanding manufacturing leaders with Premier Industry Manufacturer™ awards, celebrating companies that demonstrate excellence in service, innovation, and support of the industry. Read more about this year's recipients—Aeroflex USA, Armacell, Johns Manville, Knauf, Owens Corning, Proto Corporation, and ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation—on [page 12](#).

New this year, the Star Volunteer Award was introduced to recognize an individual who has gone above and beyond in service to the association. This award highlights the dedication and impact of volunteers who help drive NIA's mission forward. Learn more about Scott Sinclair, this year's inaugural recipient on [page 15](#).



100%

of survey respondents indicated that business networking met or exceeded expectations

BUILDING STRONG CONNECTIONS THROUGH NETWORKING

At the heart of NIA's Convention is the opportunity to build lasting connections across the industry. With networking woven throughout the schedule, attendees had countless opportunities to spark new relationships and reconnect with long-time colleagues. The Convention kicked off Tuesday evening with the First-Timer Happy Hour, where NIA welcomed 65 first-time attendees and 7 new member companies. The Welcome and Appreciation Dinner followed, bringing all attendees together for an evening of great food, live music, and the unique experience of a live muralist capturing the spirit of the 70th Annual Convention in real time.

On the final night, attendees gathered once more for the Farewell Reception and Dinner, reflecting on the connections made and conversations shared throughout the week. The evening continued with four Dessert Hospitality Suites, hosted by Johns Manville, Knauf, Owens Corning, and ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation, offering a relaxed setting to continue networking. Congratulations to Irex Contracting Group's Craig Skeie, winner of the Dessert Suite Bingo raffle, who took home a \$250 AMEX gift card.

Thank you to everyone who made the 70th Annual Convention such a success! If you were not able to attend, we hope you can join us at our next members-only event, Fall Summit 2026, October 28–29, at the MGM National Harbor in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Read more on [page 16](#).

"Attending NIA's Annual Convention is a great way to stay connected with the trade while building your network and continuing to grow professionally. It's also an excellent opportunity for newcomers to get acclimated to the insulation industry, form meaningful relationships, and find solutions to the real-world challenges they face."



Amanda Collichio, Midland Thermal, Inc.



WELCOME TO THE NEW AND RETURNING NIA COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP!

2027 Convention Committee

- **Chair:** Lee Stuckenschmidt, Systems Undercover

Associates

- **Chair:** Ginny Gier, Owens Corning
- **Vice Chair:** Jennifer Ball, Integrated Marketing Group
- **Secretary:** Andrew Hiatt, Polyguard Products, Inc.

Distributor/Fabricator

- **Chair:** Brian Blazek, Specialty Products & Insulation
- **Vice Chair:** Kenneth Cole, Insul-Therm International, Inc.

Education & Training

- **Chair:** Rick Baptista, Irex Contracting Group
- **Vice Chair:** Vacant

Health and Safety

- **Chair:** Mike Hill, Performance Contracting, Inc.
- **Vice Chair:** Bill McCaffrey, Irex Contracting Group

Membership (positions assigned as stated in NIA Bylaws)

- **Chair:** Louis Walton, Proto Corp.
- **Vice Chair:** Russ Huff, Bay Insulation Supply

Merit Contractors

- **Chair:** Mike McCowan, L.C. Insulations, Inc.
- **Vice Chair:** Jordan Fiske, Anchor Insulation

Metal Building Laminators

- **Chair:** Dave Tomchak, Bay Insulation Systems, Inc.
- **Vice Chair:** Chris Barton, Silvercote, A Service Partners Co.

Technical Information

- **Chair:** Doug Fast, Owens Corning
- **Vice Chair:** Chris Bullock, Tru-Fit Products
- **Secretary:** Bill Gregg, Promat, Inc.

Union Contractors

- **Chair:** Matt Stillitano, Insul-Tech, Inc.
- **Vice Chair:** Rick Baptista, Irex Contracting Group

Young Professionals Advisory

- **Chair:** Nicole Barwick, Irex Argus Contracting
- **Vice Chair:** Pip Hall, Johns Manville
- **Secretary:** Lyndsey Ercan, Distribution International

NIA Committees typically meet twice a year in person, at both the Annual Convention and Fall Summit. However, several Committees also meet virtually throughout the year. If you are interested in joining a committee, please contact membership@insulation.org.



Golf Winners

Closest to the Pin

Noah Collichio

Longest Drive

Nick Stevens

1st Place

Rob Prinz, Gary Thompson,
John Stevens, Adam Baker

2nd Place

Bill McCaffrey, Sean Goodrich,
Shaun Ekert, Kenneth Cole

3rd Place

Jamie Karubas, Nick Stevens,
Jeff Semkowski, Chris Duncan

THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 SPONSORS!



John Stevens Is NIA's New President

John Stevens stepped into his role as NIA's 2026–2027 President at the end of the 70th Annual Convention. As the Vice President of JT THORPE, he brings more than 4 decades of experience in mechanical insulation, scaffolding, and industrial contracting. A respected leader known for his deep industry knowledge and commitment to excellence, he has built a career grounded in both technical expertise and strong relationships across the field.

During his term, he will champion the theme *Honoring the Craft*, a message that underscores the vital role of skilled professionals in driving the industry forward. With a focus on workforce development, safety, and pride in workmanship, his leadership will highlight the importance of investing in people while preserving the standards and expertise that define the mechanical insulation industry.

2026
RECIPIENT

NATIONAL INSULATION ASSOCIATION®
**PREMIER INDUSTRY
MANUFACTURER**

NIA Recognizes Seven Premier Industry Manufacturers

NIA is honored to work alongside so many exemplary companies that seek to advance the mechanical insulation industry. Through NIA's Premier Industry Manufacturer™ awards, companies demonstrate to their customers, employees, and peers that they are industry advocates and leaders.

At NIA's 70th Annual Convention in Puerto Rico, Michele M. Jones, NIA's Executive Vice President/CEO, said, "These exemplary organizations continue to champion the power of the insulation industry through their dedication to our mission, their leadership, and their active participation and support of NIA's initiatives. Their passion to advance our shared goals helps strengthen the association and highlights the critical role insulation plays in energy efficiency and sustainability. We're thrilled to celebrate their accomplishments throughout 2026 and the example they set for the industry."

Leading the Way for the Industry and NIA

This award was first presented 7 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. To learn more about these companies, visit their websites.



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

The 2026 Premier Industry Manufacturers are:

Aeroflex USA
www.aeroflexusa.com



Armacell
www.armacell.us



Johns Manville
www.jm.com



Knauf
www.knaufinsulation.us



Owens Corning
www.owenscorning.com



Proto Corporation
www.protocorporation.com



ROCKWOOL
Technical Insulation
www.rockwool.com



2025
RECIPIENT

NATIONAL INSULATION ASSOCIATION®
**NIA'S SAFETY
EXCELLENCE AWARD**

Superior Safety:

NIA Announces the 2025 Safety Excellence Award Winners

NIA announced 40 company winners of the 2025 Safety Excellence Award during its 70th Annual Convention in Puerto Rico. NIA's Safety Excellence Award is the only national award for outstanding safety performance in the mechanical insulation industry. Created over 20 years ago, 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.

"For 70 years, NIA members have worked together to build a stronger, safer industry," said NIA's Executive Vice President/CEO Michele M. Jones. "This year's Safety Excellence Award winners represent the very best of that tradition. Of these 40 total winners, we are so proud to have 24 Platinum winners, 15 Gold winners,

and 1 Silver winner. These dedicated organizations earned this recognition through sustained team efforts at every level to continually evaluate and elevate their safety programs. I am proud to be in an industry that always puts safety first."

With the goal to support continuous safety improvement, all applicant companies receive an individualized and detailed Safety Training Analysis Results (STAR) Report™. The STAR Report includes personalized recommendations based on each company's answers to the application questions. NIA's Safety Excellence Award program honors four levels of excellence: Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze for Associates (Manufacturers), Contractors, Distributors/Fabricators, and Metal Building Laminators.

Associate (Manufacturer) Category Winners

Platinum:

Aeroflex USA, Sweetwater, TN

Johns Manville, Denver, CO

Knauf, Shelbyville, IN

Owens Corning, Toledo, OH

ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation, Houston, TX

Gold:

Alkegen, Tonawanda, NY

Armacell, Chapel Hill, NC

Foster Products (HB Fuller Construction Products),

Vadnais Heights, MN

Morgan Advanced Materials Thermal Ceramics, Augusta, GA

Promat, Inc., Maryville, TN

Proto Corporation, Clearwater, FL

Contractor Category Winners

Platinum:

Farwest Insulation Contracting, *Anaheim, CA*
 Gagnon, Inc., *St. Paul, MN*
 Gribbins Insulation & Scaffolding, *Evansville, IN*
 I&I Soft Craft Solutions, *New Orleans, LA*
 International Asbestos Removal, Inc., *Babylon, NY*
 Irex Advanced Industrial, LLC, *Toledo, OH*
 Irex Advanced Specialty, LLC, *Aston, PA*
 Irex Argus Contracting, LP, *Santa Fe Springs, CA*
 Irex Atlantic Contracting, LLC, *Franklin, MA*
 Irex Cornerstone Services, LLC, *Omaha, NE*
 Irex Energy Solutions, LLC, *Quarryville, PA*
 JT THORPE, *Phoenix, AZ*
 Performance Contracting, Inc., *Lenexa, KS*

Gold:

F & H Insulation Sales and Services, Inc., *Kechi, KS*
 Franklin Insulation Group, *Columbus, GA*
 IITI Group, Inc., *Davenport, IA*
 L.C. Insulations, Inc., *Lititz, PA*
 Luse Contracting Group, *Aurora, IL*
 QCI Thermal Systems, Inc., *Iowa City, IA*
 Rival Insulation, LLC, *Troy, MI*
 TBN Associates, Inc., *Lanham, MD*

Silver:

KW Specialty Services, LLC, *St. Paul, MN*

Distributor/Fabricator Category Winners

Platinum:

Bay Insulation Supply, Inc., *Green Bay, WI*
 Distribution International, Inc., *Houston, TX*
 Fit Tight Covers, *Evansville, IN*
 MacArthur Co., *St. Paul, MN*

Gold:

Specialty Products & Insulation, *Charlotte, NC*

Metal Building Laminator Category Winners

Platinum:

Bay Insulation Systems, Inc., *Green Bay, WI*
 Silvercote, A Service Partners Company, *Greenville, SC*

Safety Excellence Award

For more information about the NIA Safety Excellence Program, please contact the NIA office or visit www.insulation.org/membership/safety-award. Applications for the 2026 awards will be available later this summer. An archive of past award winners is available at www.insulation.org/membership/safety-award/award-winners.



2025 Star Volunteer Award Winner

Introduced at the 70th Annual Convention, the NIA Star Volunteer Award was created to recognize and celebrate members who dedicate an extraordinary amount of time and make significant contributions through active participation. NIA is honored to congratulate Scott Sinclair, National Specification Manager, Industrial Insulation, Johns Manville, as the inaugural recipient. He exemplifies the power of member engagement by strengthening NIA's committees, projects, and programs, and helping to foster a strong culture of volunteerism across the association.

NIA Executive Vice President/CEO Michele M. Jones shared, "Our members are the driving force behind NIA's success, and this award was created to recognize those individuals who go above and beyond in their commitment to the association. Scott Sinclair embodies the spirit of volunteerism that strengthens NIA and the mechanical insulation industry. His willingness to share his expertise and contribute his time has made a lasting impact on our association. We offer our gratitude for his ongoing dedication to NIA and the mechanical insulation industry."

Throughout his years of service, Scott has played a pivotal role in advancing NIA initiatives. He has held leadership positions on multiple committees and long-range plan initiatives, contributed to the review and development of NIA educational programs, and actively participated in the leadership of the NIA/AMPP Joint Mechanical Insulation Standards Committee (SC 27). Scott has also reviewed technical articles for *Insulation Outlook* magazine, contributed to the publication's "Bad Specs" column, and served as a lead instructor for the association's certification courses: NIA's Thermal Insulation Inspector Program™ and NIA's Insulation Energy Appraisal Program™.



Upon receiving NIA's Star Volunteer Award, Scott said, "I have to give credit to NIA Past President Ron King for inviting me to get more involved with NIA, and to my employer, Johns Manville, for recognizing the value of my growing commitment to the association and its benefit to the mechanical insulation industry. From stepping up as a course instructor to taking on a leadership role within NIA committees and initiatives, my work within NIA has aligned deeply with my personal and professional passions in sustainability, decarbonization, training the next generation, and developing industry standards. I only wish I had gotten involved earlier in my career. My advice: Don't wait. Get involved now. The personal reward is profound. There is something truly powerful about knowing you are making a difference for your industry."

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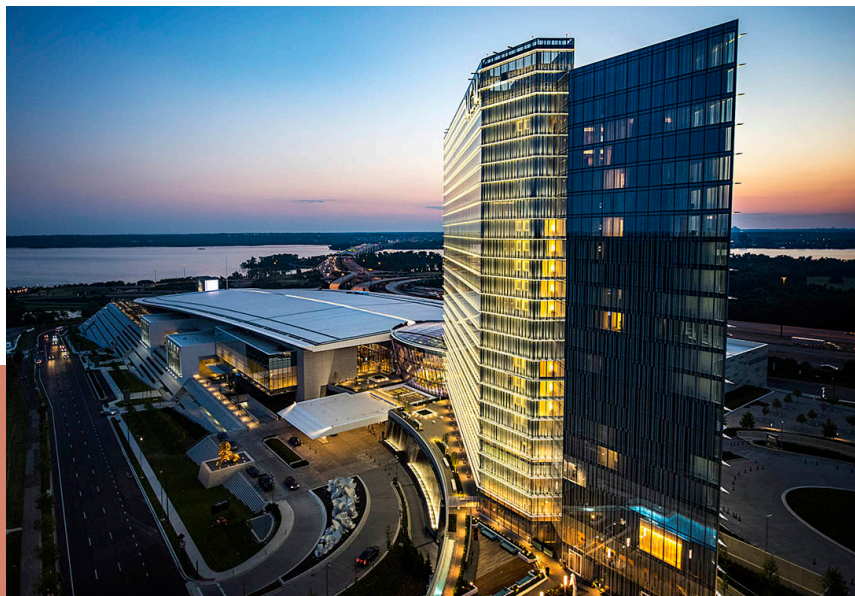


If you are an Engineer, Specifier, or Insulation Professional with experience designing and implementing insulation systems, contact publisher@insulation.org to learn the eligibility requirements to become a paid, published author.

Fall Summit

EDUCATE | ENGAGE | ELEVATE  2026

Registration Open for NIA's Fall Summit 2026



KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

October 6, 2026: Advanced Registration Deadline,
Hotel Registration Deadline

October 13, 2026: Regular Registration Closes

Connect with your network of mechanical insulation experts in National Harbor, Maryland, at NIA's Fall Summit! This annual members-only event will take place at MGM National Harbor on October 28–29, 2026, and will feature education, training, and networking opportunities. The Fall Summit is designed to “Educate, Engage, and Elevate” by delivering actionable content that attendees can immediately apply within their organizations.

Each year, the Fall Summit schedule includes more than 20 hours of education sessions and presentations, 2 networking receptions with open bars, and a networking breakfast. This year's event will include a new networking lunch, giving attendees even more time to connect in the central meeting area.

Education Topics and Speakers Announced

Distributors/Fabricators Session

AI Approaches for Distribution Leaders

Speaker: Anne Balduzzi, Owner, Accelerate Partners



This discussion will unpack how artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the distribution industry and lay out a clear, practical framework to help leaders get started with its adoption. Walk away with real-world strategies to turn AI potential into measurable

impact within your organization. During this session, Anne Balduzzi will also discuss other AI trends that will redefine distribution in the next decade.

Merit Contractors Committee

Regional Roundup

Speaker: Mike McCowan, Merit Contractors Committee Chair, L.C. Insulations, Inc.



Join the Merit Contractors Committee members for a wide-ranging regional discussion led by Committee Chair Michael McCowan of L.C. Insulations, Inc., focusing on market conditions and updates from across the United States.



Young Professional Advisory Committee Peer-to-Peer Summit Sessions

Connect with fellow young professionals during interactive roundtable discussions that are designed to spark new ideas. Explore the pillars of career growth—from mentorship and leadership to the impact of new tech—through guided group discussions. Bring your challenges and your tips to build a stronger network and gain fresh perspectives on the industry.

Attend a Committee Meeting

NIA's committees address current issues affecting all segments of the commercial and industrial insulation industry, and give members an opportunity to share industry knowledge and advance the objectives of each committee. You do not have to be a committee member to attend any of these meetings, and your participation is welcome and encouraged. To view the open committee meetings and their committee purposes, please [click here](#).

Questions?

For the latest details on speakers, schedules, and everything related to this event, visit www.insulation.org/fallsummit2026, or email events@insulation.org.



Optimize Your Schedule

Wednesday, October 28, 2026

10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Executive Committee Meeting and Lunch (closed meeting)
1:00–5:15 p.m.	Registration
1:30–4:00 p.m.	NIA's Board of Directors Meeting (closed meeting)
4:00–5:15 p.m.	Membership Committee (closed meeting)
6:00–7:00 p.m.	Network Social Hour
	Open Time for Dinner with Clients

Thursday, October 29, 2026

7:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.	Registration
7:15–9:15 a.m.	Foundation Board of Directors Meeting and Breakfast (closed meeting)
7:45–9:15 a.m.	Young Professional Advisory Committee (open to members under 40 years of age or new to the industry)
8:00–9:15 a.m.	Networking Breakfast
9:15–10:45 a.m.	Keynote Presentation
10:50 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Union Contractors Subcommittee (open only to signatory contractors of the International)
10:50 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Distributors/Fabricators Session
10:50 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Merit Contractors Session
10:50 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Associates (Manufacturers) Session
10:50 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Metal Building Laminator Committee
12:30–1:00 p.m.	Union Contractors Session
12:45–1:45 p.m.	Networking Lunch
2:00–4:00 p.m.	Health & Safety Session
2:00–4:00 p.m.	Technical Information Session
4:15–5:30 p.m.	Keynote Presentation
5:30–6:30 p.m.	Network Social Hour
	Open Time for Dinner with Clients

Friday, October 30, 2026

8:00–9:00 a.m.	Council of Committees and Board of Directors Meeting and Breakfast (closed meeting)
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Board of Directors Meeting (closed meeting)

Coming This Fall: Certifications for Insulation Professionals



Insulation Energy Appraisal Program™ on November 4–5

Register by October 9

Training Level: Certification Level

Course Length: 2 days

This certification-level virtual 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.



Thermal Insulation Inspector Certification™ on December 8–9

Register by November 17

Training Level: Certification Level

Course Length: 2 days

This certification-level virtual 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.



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#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.



Build Skills and Strengthen Teams with NIA's Education Center

NIA's Education Center is a go-to resource for practical, industry-specific training designed to meet the evolving needs of today's workforce. With more than 100 expert-developed courses spanning safety, leadership, business operations, and more, professionals at every level can find relevant content to sharpen their skills and support their teams. The platform's flexible, on-demand format makes it easy to fit learning into even the busiest schedules, whether it's a quick refresher or a deeper dive into new topics.

Explore what's new and see how NIA's education resources can help you strengthen your workforce and stay competitive in a changing industry.

New Benefits for Premier Training Subscribers

NIA's Education Center continues to evolve, bringing even more value to Premier Training Subscribers. These new benefits are designed to help your company elevate its expertise, expand its visibility, and maximize your training investment. NIA's Education Center is powered by Knauf, and NIA values their support as an education partner.

As a Premier Training Subscriber, you now receive:

- **Exclusive Promotional Opportunity:** Showcase your expertise by promoting one 10-minute webinar or microlearning module each year.
- **Insulation Estimator's Handbook Access:** Receive a digital version of NIA's *Insulation Estimator's Handbook* for convenient, on-demand reference.
- **On-Demand Training Discount:** Enjoy a 10% discount on NIA's Understanding Mechanical Insulation on-demand course.
- **Industry Education Leader Recognition:** Gain recognition as an industry education leader, highlighting your company's commitment to training and professional development.

New Featured Content: Leadership Development 102

Available now to Premier Training Subscribers, the [Leadership Development 102 Track](#) is designed for individuals who have successfully navigated the initial transition into leadership. Building on the fundamentals outlines in [Leadership Development 101](#), this track provides a deep dive into collaborative leadership and strategic thinking, and includes the following courses:

- **Increasing Collaboration on Your Team:** This course empowers you to design a custom collaborative culture and an actionable plan for your team.
- **How to Tactfully Facilitate Difficult Conversations:** Navigating difficult workplace discussions requires skill and composure. This course provides tools to address sensitive topics and lead challenging colleague interactions with increased tact and professional confidence.
- **Delegation Strategies for People Leaders:** After completing this course, you will be able to recognize the overarching value and impact of delegation on leadership success and organizational outcomes, and you'll be able to apply strategies to successfully delegate within your leadership role.
- **Identify and Unleash Potential in Your Employees:** This course provides tools to identify growth mindsets and transition from fixing weaknesses to leveraging strengths for maximum organizational impact.
- **Leading Strategically:** This course provides the framework you need to align individual and team goals for sustainable results.

Now Available: New Courses for Premier Training Subscribers

- **Contractor Employment Law: Top Mistakes and Solutions**

Learn practical strategies to minimize liability, including proper independent contract classification, effective severance agreement, and robust documentation practices. Discover how to protect your company from employee claims and navigate wage and hour regulations, including travel pay.

- **Scaffold Safety Essentials**

This course provides a comprehensive overview of common and specialized scaffold hazards. Participants will learn how to identify unsafe conditions and implement the protective measures necessary for a safe worksite.

- **Writing Emails People Want to Read**

Email remains the largest professional messaging platform, which is why composing email messages is a vital skill to master. In this course, expert Sam Bennett teaches how to write impactful emails that leave a positive impression and drive results.

Available for All NIA Members: The Value of Distribution

This course helps individuals better understand the strategic role distributors play in the insulation supply chain and how leveraging distributor partnerships can improve efficiency, reliability, and project outcomes.

Explore all of the latest additions to NIA's Education Center, available to Premier Training Subscribers and NIA members.



You can check out NIA's Education Center tips and tricks video to learn more about how to navigate the platform, track your courses, and download certificates. For more information, or to become a Premier Training Subscriber, visit www.insulation.org/training-tools/naeducationcenter, or email training@insulation.org.



Education Industry Leaders

NIA's Education Center Premier Training Subscribers are investing in training, professional development, and the future of the mechanical insulation industry. Through their commitment to continuous learning, they help strengthen the workforce and elevate industry standards.

Thank you to the following member companies:

Acousta Therm Corporation	Irex Advanced Industrial, LLC
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Insulation Technologies, 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) Board of Directors met in March to review the Foundation's current areas of support for ongoing and new initiatives.

The Foundation is continuing its financial support for the development of mechanical insulation installation standard practices/guidelines (see [page 22](#)) and new course content for NIA's Education Center (see [page 19](#)). In addition, efforts to advance insulation education across industry sectors continue, with presentations and abstracts being developed for organizations such as the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), DOE, Kiewit, American Petroleum Institute (API), and others. Highlights include:

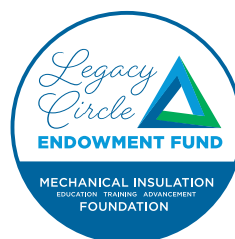
- **NASEO:** Presented the benefits of industrial insulation during a panel presentation on industrial energy efficiency and energy management.
- **DOE:** Creating a course and supplemental education materials for several of the Better Plants initiatives and trainings.
- **Kiewit:** Supplied "Insulation 101" educational content for a NIA member company to use in their presentation to Kiewit.
- **API:** Will present "Optimized Thermal Insulation Systems Today – Reduced Energy Consumption and GHG Emissions Tomorrow" at API's 2026 Inspection and Mechanical Integrity Summit, July 20–23, in San Antonio, Texas.
- **International Refining and Petrochemical Conference:** Submitted an abstract entitled "Achieve Peak Performance: Why the Next Era Depends on Insulation System Optimization, Inspection, and Maintenance."

The Foundation's work depends on the generous support of companies that share in the commitment to advancing the mechanical insulation industry. All industry stakeholders are

encouraged to consider contributing to help sustain and expand these vital educational and outreach initiatives. During its most recent Board meeting, NIA pledged \$50,000 toward the work of the Foundation.

If your company would like to become a Foundation contributor, please visit www.insulation.org/foundation/contribute or contact foundation@insulation.org for more information.

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 anyone 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 individual industry contributions and service. All contributions, including the Legacy Circle donations, are fully tax-deductible donations. (Minimum contribution is \$2,000.)

To learn more about this contribution opportunity, and to review the full list of contributors, please visit www.insulation.org/foundation/contribute/endowment/.

To learn more about or contribute to the Foundation or Legacy Circle Endowment Fund and the programs they support, please contact Kristin V. DiDomenico or Michele M. Jones at foundation@insulation.org. The Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) organization and is managed by the NIA professional staff.



National Insulation Installation Standard Practices/Guidelines Update

The joint NIA and Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP) Standards Committee (SC) 27, Mechanical Insulation, convened on March 16, 2026. The meeting was held in conjunction with AMPP's Annual Conference and Expo in Houston, Texas.

SC 27 is led by Chair Jeff DeGraaf (NIA Consultant), Vice Chair Scott Sinclair (Johns Manville), and Secretary Michael Pardo (S&B Engineers and Constructors). This leadership team brings together expertise from consulting, manufacturing, and engineering construction, reflecting the committee's commitment to representing the full spectrum of the mechanical insulation industry.

About the Joint NIA/AMPP SC 27 Committee and Its Mission

Mechanical insulation plays a critical role in industrial and commercial facilities, conserving energy, controlling process temperatures, preventing condensation, and protecting personnel and equipment. However, the quality and longevity of an insulation system depend heavily on proper installation. SC 27 was established as a joint initiative between NIA and AMPP to develop rigorous,

industry-consensus standards that recommend best practices for mechanical insulation installation—helping ensure consistent, high-quality outcomes across the industry.

AMPP's Standard Practices (SPs) serve as authoritative technical documents that define the requirements and recommendations for the selection, design, installation, or operation of a material or system. They provide detailed descriptions of quality requirements for products and processes, and are commonly incorporated directly into procurement and construction documents—giving them real-world weight in project specifications and contractor accountability.

NIA/AMPP SC 27 Meeting/NIA Working Group Highlights

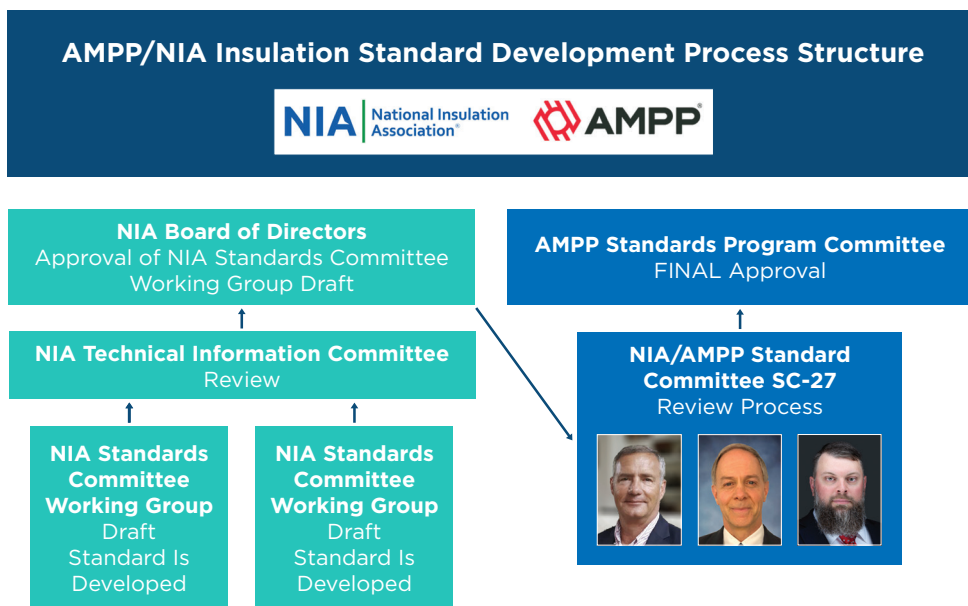
At the March meeting, SC 27 reviewed and discussed the following:

- AMPP Standards Committee processes and procedures (see *Figure 1*), ensuring all working groups are aligned with AMPP's established framework for developing and balloting new standards.

Figure 1. Insulation Standard Practice Development Process

Through a joint working agreement between NIA and AMPP, the mechanical insulation standards will be:

- Developed through NIA's Standards Working Groups,
- Approved by NIA's TIC and Board,
- Submitted to the NIA/AMPP SC 27 Committee, and
- Reviewed by the AMPP Standards Program Committee for final approval.



- Progress reports for working groups formed within NIA for the Standard Practices and Guidelines currently under development, including:
 - Pipe Supports, led by Darrell Peil, Knauf—Addressing best practices for selecting pipe supports that allow for a continuous insulation system through the support, taking into account insulation compression, thermal bridging, and future damage.
 - Damaged Insulation, led by Scott Sinclair, Johns Manville—Establishing recommended standards/guidelines for identifying, assessing, and repairing compromised insulation systems to restore performance and extend service life.
 - Flanges, led by Lee Stuckenschmidt, Systems Undercover, Inc.—Developing installation standards/guidelines for insulating flanges, which are particularly vulnerable to heat loss, condensation, and corrosion under insulation.
 - Vapor Retarders and Vapor Stops, led by Erica Schneider, Bartelt Insulation Supply, Inc.—Covering the proper installation of vapor control layers that are essential for preventing moisture infiltration and protecting the integrity of below-ambient insulation systems.

Each working group has convened multiple times and is actively engaged in developing outlines, drafts, content organization, and standard/guideline rationale statements, which is the foundational work necessary to produce documents that will ultimately go through AMPP's formal balloting and approval process.

NIA Working Groups—Get Involved

With nearly 50 NIA members, engineers, facility owners, and industry stakeholders already enrolled in NIA's working groups, momentum is building. Participation in these working groups is open to all interested industry professionals, and involvement at this stage offers a direct opportunity to shape standards that will influence insulation installation practices for years to come.

NIA Consultant and SC 27 Chair Jeff DeGraaf noted, "As we begin creating these standards, I am inspired by the depth of knowledge and diversity within the group. Each member brings unique skills and perspectives. I am eager to see the final products as they near completion, with owners, manufacturers, fabricators, and contractors collaborating to provide a new level of standards for our industry."

To join one or more working group(s), please sign up here: <https://forms.gle/bg7x5b8SmvRZJgQU6>

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NORTH AMERICAN COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL INSULATION STANDARDS

The *North American Commercial & Industrial Insulation Standards* manual is developed by the Midwest Insulation Contractors Association (MICA) to serve as a useful resource for commercial and industrial insulation professionals. Widely accepted as industry standards, the manual is a "must-have" guide for contractors, engineers, architects, and specifiers.

This latest edition includes: updates to existing plates, several new plates, a new flashing section, and updated information for material specifications and standards. The 9th Edition is available both in printed and interactive PDF versions. The digital version includes the manual in a PDF eBook plus the 121 MICA Insulation Plates in an interactive format useful for job submittals. Each version is a one-time cost.

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Safety Corner: Hot off the Press

By Gary Auman

It seems appropriate to use this article to update NIA members on heat illness prevention. First, remember that the OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Standard is still pending at OSHA. As you may recall, virtual public hearings were held on this proposed standard in July 2025. As a result, the record was opened for anyone to submit written comments until October 30, 2025. OSHA established a National Emphasis Program (NEP) for heat illness prevention that was set to—and did—expire April 8, 2026. However, on April 10, 2026, OSHA established a new NEP for 5 more years. In so doing, OSHA reminded employers and employees that it takes heat illness and the injuries it can cause very seriously.

In the new NEP, OSHA has updated targeted industries using current data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and its own organization. The target industries for heat illness prevention enforcement have been identified as residential building construction; non-residential building construction; foundation, structure, and building exterior contractors; building finishing contractors; and other specialty trade contractors. It would appear that this covers just about any employer in any area of construction.

OSHA also provided information on points that an OSHA Compliance Safety and Health Official (CSHO) is to consider when evaluating an employer's heat illness prevention program. These include:

1. Is there a heat illness prevention program in place that is effectively communicated to employees?
2. How does the employer monitor the ambient temperature and levels of work exertion at the worksite? With this, OSHA is emphasizing that the concern for heat illness is not the temperature or heat index alone. OSHA expects you, as an employer, to consider the work effort (labor) expended by your employees; and how that, coupled with the heat index, creates a significant safety hazard.
3. Were there sufficient amounts of cool water easily accessible to employees on the jobsite? Did the employer allow additional breaks for hydration? And were there scheduled rest breaks? The key question to be answered is whether you communicated to your employees that they can take breaks as needed (in addition to scheduled breaks) to hydrate. Also, have you established a schedule of rest breaks commensurate with your conclusions drawn for your efforts in paragraph 2?

4. The compliance officer also is to question whether there was access to a shaded area. While no further details are provided in the OSHA instruction, when selecting a shaded area, you should always consider the possibility and amount of radiant heat that will impact the effectiveness of shade.
5. Compliance officers are also asked to ensure the employer provided an acclimatization schedule for new and returning workers.
6. Another question to be answered is whether the employer applied administrative controls, such as using earlier start times and adjusting the workload, to limit heat exposure.
7. Compliance officers also are to determine whether employees and supervisors understand the heat illness prevention program.
8. Additionally, CSHOs will need to determine whether the employer provided training on heat illness signs, how to report signs and symptoms, first aid, how to contact emergency personnel, prevention, and the importance of hydration to employees.
9. Finally—and I believe this is a new requirement/expectation by OSHA—consider whether the company's heat program is properly implemented by a "designated heat safety representative."

The new OSHA instruction also provides citation guidance. The compliance officer is reminded that any citations issued will be General Duty Clause violations. This is not good news for employers, as Area Directors will not usually reclassify a General Duty citation to Occupational Training and Supply. This leaves employers with two options:

- 1) Accept the citation and try to lower the penalty, or
- 2) File a Notice of Contest and place the citation before the Review Commission.

In addition, compliance officers are reminded that several other OSHA standards also may be applicable to address worker protection in hot environments. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Recordkeeping Standard at 29 CFR 1904.7(b)(5), which requires recording of any injuries that require treatment

beyond first aid. The CSHO recordkeeping requirement extends to recording if an employee faints, becomes unconscious, or requires the use of oxygen.

- The sanitation standards found at 1910.141 for General Industry and 1926.51 for Construction require employers to provide cool, potable water.

Two more standards often overlooked by employers but that have a direct impact in this situation are 29 CFR 1926.20 and 29 CFR 1926.21. Among other points, remember that these standards cover the requirement for competent person(s) to make frequent visits to jobsites, and they require employers to train employees in the recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions.

Finally, the instructions also remind compliance officers that citations should be expedited so that proposed abatement

measures may be implemented earlier to protect employees.

However you want to view it, this new NEP for heat illness prevention should remind all employers of the significant hazard of heat illness and the fact that OSHA, in spite of the fact that it has not issued a final rule, is taking the hazard very seriously.



GARY AUMAN (www.amfd Dayton.com) is a Partner in the law firm of Auman, Mahan & Furry in Ohio. 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 regional

trade associations in the construction industry and can be reached at gwa@amfd Dayton.com.

New Safety Report Highlights

Industry Progress and Ongoing Gaps

A new industry study shows continued progress in construction safety practices, while also identifying key areas where improvement is still needed. The "Safety Management in the Construction Industry 2026 SmartMarket Report," published by Dodge Construction Network (Dodge) in partnership with The Center for Construction Research and Training, examined current trends in safety management across contractors of all sizes. To explore these topics, Dodge conducted an online survey of general and specialty trade contractors in the United States in the fall of 2025. The respondents were drawn from the Dodge Contractor Panel and database of contractors, but they were also recruited by participating associations, including NIA, the Association of Union Contractors, the Mechanical Contractors Association of America, and the National Electrical Contractors Association. Ultimately, 323 contractors from a diverse range of U.S. company types, sizes, and geographies participated in the survey, including 16 insulation contractors.

A key finding of the report is the increasing commitment to safety among small contractors. Firms with fewer than 20 employees report greater use of online safety training, tend to offer employee assistance programs (EAPs), and implement more strategies to address heat exposure. While larger firms typically lead in adopting formal safety programs, small contractors' rate of improvement is growing.

Preconstruction safety planning has also become a nearly universal standard practice, with 95% of contractors developing

safety plans before work begins. However, only 43% involve a safety professional in the process, despite evidence that this leads to fewer injuries, stronger worker engagement, and improved project outcomes.

Heat risk management continues to evolve, with more than 80% of contractors using core mitigation strategies such as water, rest, shade, training, and monitoring. Yet gaps remain, particularly among small firms, where fewer have formal heat illness prevention plans in place. In fact, only 41% of contractors currently work in states with state-wide heat regulations. (For information on OSHA heat-illness enforcement, turn to [page 24](#).)

The report also highlights an opportunity to expand the use of safety-focused technology. Tools such as predictive analytics, wearable sensors, and virtual reality training remain underutilized, suggesting room for broader adoption to improve jobsite safety. Mental health support also has opportunities for expansion, with only 46% of contractors offering EAPs. The report notes that long commutes and extended travel remain common, contributing to worker fatigue and stress.

Overall, the findings indicate that while safety practices are becoming more widespread and standardized, progress across the industry remains uneven. Look for additional insights from the report's author in the May issue of *Insulation Outlook*.

EVENT CALENDAR



(703) 464-6422

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NIA MEETINGS

Fall Summit 2026

October 28–29, 2026
MGM National Harbor
National Harbor, Maryland
(just outside Washington, DC)

NIA EDUCATION & TRAINING

Insulation Energy Appraisal Program™

November 4–5, 2026
(Virtual)

Thermal Insulation Inspector Certification™

December 8–9, 2026
(Virtual)

NIA News

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Central States Insulation Association (CSIA)

Contact: Rachel Pinkus
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September 2–4, 2026
The Joseph
Nashville, Tennessee

Eastern States Insulation Contractors Association (ESICA)

Contact: John F. DeLillo
(516) 922-7855, www.esica.org
ESICA/CSIA 2026 Fall Conference
September 2–4, 2026
The Joseph
Nashville, Tennessee

Midwest Insulation Contractors Association (MICA)

Contact: Rachel Pinkus
(937) 278-0308, www.micainsulation.org
MICA 69th Annual Conference
June 15–19, 2026
The Everline Resort and Spa,
a Destination by Hyatt Hotel
Olympic Valley, California

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
SWICA Annual Conference
June 7–9, 2026
Cheyenne Mountain Resort
Colorado Springs, Colorado

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 membership
and educational portals are available at:

www.insulation.org/about-nia/makingthemostofyourmembership