



Potpourri and Insulation for the Win!

Looking back on the Great Lockdown, we all have memories of how we spent our time hunkered down at home. Some folks learned how to bake bread. Others binged episodes of *Tiger King* on Netflix. A few burned off the banana bread on new Pelotons. And much of the nation jumped on the home improvement bandwagon. As for me, I gravitated toward some serious couch surfing, especially the classic TV game show *Jeopardy!* I am not exactly a *Jeopardy! All-Star*, but I love when the Potpourri category comes up, and I tend to do better given the hodgepodge of clues. So, in tribute to my favorite clue category, I offer a potpourri of topics in this month's Industry Message.

Scenes from SEICA

As I write this message, Trudy and I just returned from our second regional insulation industry event: the Southeastern Insulation Contractors Association (SEICA) meeting at The Breakers in Palm Beach, Florida. I have been a member of SEICA since I moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, back in 2005. Attending this gathering always feels like being with my homies—a gang who genuinely loves our industry. SEICA Executive Director Phil Davenport and their Board of Directors put together a great speaker lineup, especially Anirban Basu of Sage Policy Group, Inc., who never fails to impress me with his wit and perspective on economic data. The best news from his update is that we can look forward to a strong second half of 2021—the “V” on the backside economic recovery is going to be steep! NIA's very own EVP/CEO Michele M. Jones and I got a chance to brief attendees about NIA happenings and training opportunities. During my talk, I went off script and illustrated for the group how future demands for our product bode well for our industry, despite calls for wind and solar renewable electricity.

Do the Math

It is incongruent to think that more solar arrays and wind turbines mean more work and product for those of us who cut our teeth on flat and piping insulation for capital or maintenance work at coal-fired power plants. However, I shared how becoming a truck owner for the first time changed my perspective on carbon reductions and how insulation plays a part in this. The window sticker on my new Ford F-150 said my truck emits 405 grams of CO₂ per mile. Like many of us, I had to convert that to pounds, and 405 grams is just under a pound (453 grams are a pound). So, if I drive that truck 20,000 miles a year, I emit around 9 tons (18,000 pounds) of CO₂ a year. This math problem brings me to the next clue category.

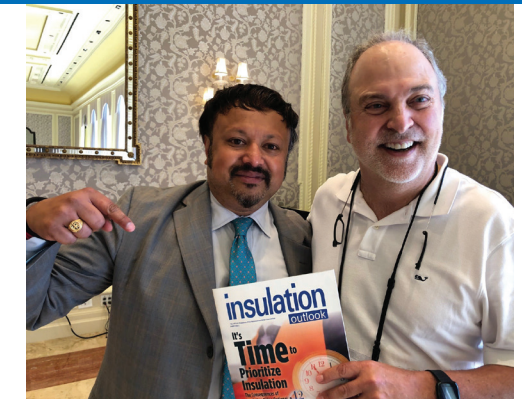
A Riddle: What's Greener than Trees?

Back in 2009, NIA wanted to prove how green insulation is, and our research showed that it is greener than trees.

- A mature tree reduces CO₂ by about 50 pounds per year.
- Switching a 60-watt 2,000-hour usage, incandescent light bulb with a 15-watt compact fluorescent bulb yields CO₂ savings of about 130 pounds a year.



SEICA members at the Spring Meeting, June 28, 2021, in Palm Beach, Florida



Anirban Basu (Sage Policy Group) and Dave Cox at the SEICA Spring Meeting

- Adding 2” of insulation to 1 linear foot of bare 4” pipe operating at 350°F yields CO₂ savings of a whopping 2,308 pounds per year.

So, illustrating the power of insulation—drum roll, please—to offset the carbon of my truck each year, **I can plant 360 trees, change out 139 light bulbs, or insulate around 8 linear feet of bare 350°F pipe.** Insulating delivers a better return on investment than any *Jeopardy! Daily Double* and is a far safer wager! Don't believe me? NIA is revisiting this hypothesis and will report the updated findings in the next issue of *Insulation Outlook*, so stayed tuned!

Rodney Dangerfield

Back in 2007, NIA Past President and Consultant Ron King wrote, “Insulation is the Rodney Dangerfield of the construction industry—it receives very little respect and is taken for granted.” Flash forward to May 2021 and Specialty Products & Insulation Sales Manager Kent Revard picked up the analogy in his editorial on the impact of the lack of insulation during the 2021 Texas winter storm: “Insulation, it gets no respect.” To further illustrate this point, in the June 28 *Engineering News-Record*, I read about an office building going up in Portland, Oregon, that is certified by the Living Building Challenge of the International Living Future Institute. The building is being built to be net-positive on use of water, energy, and waste. The article lists many cutting-edge, green features: systems to turn urine into fertilizer, solar panels, vacuum-flush toilets, rainwater cisterns, composting, operable windows,

etc. Guess what was not listed in the article. *Jeopardy!* buzzer, anyone? Correct answer: “What is insulation?”

As you expect, NIA will be moving with vigor and velocity to promote the outstanding opportunities insulation provides to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions—as well as save on utility bills! Lest you thought I'd neglect to mention it: The cheapest energy is the energy you don't use in the first place—insulation works!

Strike a Pose and Post

Be sure to post your pictures with your copy of *Insulation Outlook* to social media and use the hashtag #NIAmeets. I see more and more of them coming in—check out everyone from the SEICA gathering in this picture!



David J. Cox
President
National Insulation Association

PS: Final *Jeopardy!* round. I'll take Potpourri for \$2,000. “The United States, Liberia, and Myanmar are the only three countries in the world that still mostly or officially use this system of measurement while all other countries use the metric system.” Answer: “What is the imperial system?” I learned this while hunting for grams/pounds and found this fact amazing.