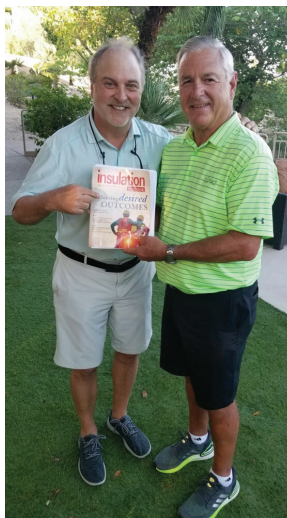
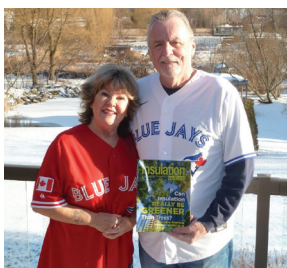


I take insulation back in time to visit Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch in 1896 at Montpelier, Idaho.



During the WICA meeting, Dave and Dick Mitchell, who retired from SPI, caught up on their insulation news.



The trees may not be green up in Toronto, Canada right now but the insulation is still working! Nella and Mike McLaughlin (retired from Rockwool Technical Insulation) spread the word during a Toronto Blue Jays' game.

## The Power of Insulation—Saving Energy, Money, the Environment ... and Water!

In last month's message, I mentioned saying goodbye to wasted BTUs. Taking yet another trip down music memory lane . . . A one-hit wonder group provides the backdrop to this month's message. Steam's 1969 song "Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye" has been used across the world of sports—particularly in relation to player ejections and strutting post-victory celebrations. This song got its big break when a DJ in Georgia played it, requests came in for replays, and other stations picked it up.

Leveraging a page from today's "influencers" playbook, Mercury Records bought 100,000 copies of its own record to put it on the *Billboard* hit chart. Radio stations in other states took note of the *Billboard* effect, today's version of "going viral" snowballed, and the song reached number one on *Billboard's* Top 100 in the United States for 2 weeks in December 1969.

How does this relate to NIA? Like Mercury Records, your association is working to put the value of insulation high "on the charts." Readers of this column know we have been expounding on the positive aspects of mechanical insulation: process control, energy savings, personnel protection, acoustics, condensation control, fire protection, greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, and sustainability. What if I add one more beneficial ingredient to this recipe: water savings?

As of this writing, the first-ever Colorado River water shortage has been declared. Battered by 20 years of drought, flows have been consistently dropping in the river that 40 million people depend upon. The water level in Lake Mead—the largest reservoir in the United States, located on the Arizona-Nevada border—also is at a historic low, at just 36% capacity. That is the lowest level since the Hoover Dam was built in 1935, and it affects drinking water, power, and irrigation abilities. Shrinking water levels in Lake Mead also mean that the Hoover Dam's generating power has been reduced by 25% at today's lake levels. With every foot the lake drops, about 6 megawatts of power-generating capacity is lost.

No one wants to waste water. But did you know that industrial insulation can play a part in helping to conserve water? We can illustrate this by getting back to steam—not the rock band, but water vapor! Let's review how industrial insulation can conserve water usage in systems relying on steam to power processes. For instance, New York City is home to the world's biggest steam-generation system, pumping steam into hundreds of buildings in Manhattan from seven cogeneration plants. In generation of steam, water use is largely dependent on how much of the condensate is returned and reused. If no condensate is returned—the worst-case scenario—a single uninsulated pump can waste thousands of gallons of water in a year, which adds to steam load and steam usage. Readers might ask, is the pump leaking, causing this water loss? That is possible, but in this example, if condensate is not returned to the boiler, the steam system must make up the loss with cold, untreated, raw water (called "makeup water") that must be prepared for boiler



Billy Weatherspoon from Mathias Metal Systems, LLC/Tru-Fit Products, LLC; Darren Gast of Performance Contracting Inc.; and Steve Gorman from Owens Corning all believe its time to prioritize insulation.



Mark and Kathy Horvat, Distribution International, enjoying a beach read at Boca Grande Beach on Gasparilla Island in Florida.



Armaceil's Kathy Crawford and Nicki Landry promoting insulation's many benefits at SWICA.

operation. This preparation has a cost. The benchmark fraction of condensate return is as high as 90%; however, these measures can be less and vary, impacting steam and water use.

Where industrial insulation comes into play is quite simple: BTUs saved = steam saved = water saved. Since a pound of steam equals a pound of water, any BTU savings will have an impact on water usage and sustainability, depending on the fraction of condensate return.

There is good news. Our insulation industry will benefit from water infrastructure spending as part of the recent federal infrastructure bill. The Bureau of Reclamation, which manages water supplies in the West, now gets \$20 million a year from Congress for desalination projects, and another \$65 million for water recycling. With passage of the legislation, those numbers will skyrocket. The bill includes \$250 million for desalination over 5 years, and \$1 billion for water recycling and reuse—the process of treating wastewater to make it available for new uses, such as irrigation.

### The Growing Need for Insulation Solutions

A new report published January 10, 2022, by the Rhodium Group showed that "Progress in reducing US GHG gas emissions was reversed in 2021, moving from 22.2% below 2005 levels in 2020 to only 17.4% in 2021, putting the US even further off track

from achieving its 2025 and 2030 climate targets."<sup>1</sup> NIA has been messaging that mechanical insulation is an efficient and cost-effective way to help entities hit their GHG reduction goals, and this only makes insulation more important.

### Keep the Pictures Coming!

NIA appreciates the pictures we receive of our members posing with *Insulation Outlook* magazine. Keep them coming and be featured at the Annual Convention next month in San Antonio, Texas. Speaking of Convention—make plans to attend now, as it will sell out! Learn more at [www.insulation.org/convention2022](http://www.insulation.org/convention2022).

My thanks to NIA member Frank Kovacs from Shannon Global Energy Solutions for his input on steam to help me shape this message.

David J. Cox  
President  
National Insulation Association

### SOURCE:

- <https://rhg.com/research/preliminary-us-emissions-2021/#:~:text=Based%20on%20preliminary%20data%20for,year%20GDP%20growth%20at%205.7%25.>