

INDUSTRY MESSAGE

Scoreboard Gazing and Insulation's Big Picture



Former University of North Carolina (UNC) basketball coach Dean Smith instructed his players to avoid looking at the scoreboard until the final few minutes of the game. Until that point—when he felt it was important to strategize how to best use the final minutes to their advantage—Smith considered “scoreboard gazing,” as he called it, to be a distraction from the fundamentals of playing smart basketball. Instead, he wanted his players to concentrate fully on consistently executing well, which Smith felt paid off not only in the outcome of an individual game, but also in the overall success of the team and, ultimately, of UNC’s basketball program.

As an industry, we should consider how scoreboard gazing can prevent us from keeping our eye on the big picture. Yes, insulation provides an unrivaled return on investment (payback) in the short term, as well as many other benefits; however, properly specified and installed insulation systems have a massive impact on carbon emissions and global sustainability in the extremely long term. Indeed, mechanical insulation continues to be impactful year after year, indefinitely.

As contractors and industry professionals, it is easy to get bogged down in day-to-day details of projects and schedules—our version of scoreboard gazing—and lose track of our long-term value. Our most significant impact will extend well beyond any one year’s budget, bottom line, or return on investment (ROI) analysis. As NIA Past President Dave Cox said in an article in *BIC Magazine* earlier this year, “Tried and true mechanical insulation is not simply low-hanging fruit—it is a bountiful opportunity for stakeholders around the globe to harvest savings and protect the environment.”

Next month, NIA will be releasing the United States and Canada Mechanical Insulation Industry Energy Efficiency - Decarbonization Impact Study, which will provide a comprehensive look at the enormous role our industry can play in decarbonization. Ron King, NIA Past President and Consultant, has been spearheading this study, collecting and analyzing data in collaboration with insulation manufacturers. Ron says, “This study was commissioned by NIA to examine, for the first time in the history of the mechanical insulation industry, the impact mechanical insulation systems can have on reducing the demand for energy and, accordingly, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” Although most of us understand the importance of measuring energy payback and ROI on a project-by-project, annual, or budget-cycle basis, this study, which will be presented this month at the 2023 Fall Summit, will at last demonstrate the benefits of mechanical insulation from a more pulled-back, holistic, and long-term perspective.

As important as it is to understand the value of insulation in tracking carbon emissions and energy savings in the short-term, perhaps to achieve corporate sustainability goals in the coming years, our message as an industry should focus on a much broader environmental impact. And although we will need to continue to monitor the scoreboard in our individual roles, NIA is working diligently to bring awareness from a big-picture perspective. Our industry’s potential to positively impact the world by reducing emissions is limitless, and prioritizing mechanical insulation now will affect future generations.

Let’s be **Better Together**,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LDover', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Laura Dover
President
National Insulation Association