WHAT’S INSIDE THIS MONTH:

- MICA’s 63rd Annual Convention.
- President’s Message.
- MICA Future Meeting Dates.
- U. S. Department of Labor Revises National Emphasis Program to Reduce or Eliminate Worker Exposure to Silica.
- U. S. Department of Labor Publishes Amendments and Technical Corrections to OSHA Standards.
- Welcome to OSHA’s Fall Prevention Campaign.
- National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction; May 4 — 8, 2020.
- Dodge Momentum Index Starts 2020 on the Downside.
- IRS Increases Visits to High Income Taxpayers Who Haven’t Filed Tax Returns.
- NIA’s 65th Annual Convention.
- 2020 CIRT Sentiment Index: First Quarter Report.
- U. S. Department of Labor Launches New Webpage to Observe 50th Anniversary of OSHA.
- IRS Updates Guidance on Business Expense Deductions for Meals and Entertainment.
- Construction Starts Move Lower in January.

MICA’s 63rd ANNUAL CONVENTION

President Matt Hymer and his wife, Holly, wish to extend a warm MICA invitation to you to join them as our association engages in “Moving Forward”. One of the key benefits of belonging to MICA is your ability to work with fellow members to improve your business acumen and to better your industry. Come and participate as we share ideas at our annual convention this June 22 – 25, 2020, at the Lodge of Four Seasons Resort, in Lake Ozark, Missouri. Our 63rd Annual Spring Convention will be a special event, and one that you do not want to miss! The timing and location of this year’s meeting is designed to allow those of you who would like to extend the meeting into a vacation time for the entire family to do so. The Lake of the Ozarks area, coupled with the Lake, is ideal for a family getaway. The Lodge of Four Seasons has been serving guests since 1965. The 3,500-acre community of Four Seasons provides a family tradition of entrepreneurship, hospitality and entertainment to the Lake. In 2016, the full-service, 358-room lodge underwent a complete remodeling with a $15 million renovation that transformed the resort inside and out, offering a contemporary lakefront destination at the Midwest Lake of the Ozarks. Discover the beautiful waterfront resort on the edge of Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. The spectacular lakeside setting combines with warm hospitality and a host of resort amenities to deliver an unparalleled getaway destination. Here you’ll enjoy the best of both worlds from affordable guest rooms to luxury suites, casual eating to American fine-dining and live entertainment, world-class event spaces and a luxury spa. Golfers will delight in 54 holes of championship golf. While their full service Marina provides access to a world of waterfront recreation. The Lodge of Four Seasons will surprise you at every turn. Take in breathtaking lake views, admire the beautiful Japanese Gardens or choose your own thrilling Lake Ozark adventure beyond the resort.

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Lodge. Our convention rate is $179 per night plus tax, single or double occupancy, including the resort fee for run of the house rooms. Specific room types are available upon request. It is highly suggested that you book your hotel reservations now! Call the reservations office at 888-265-5500 and ask for the Midwest Insulation Contractors Block. Please note that we have blocked a limited number of rooms. If you wait until the last minute to reserve your room, you run the risk that our block will be filled, and the hotel will not have any additional rooms available. As we have stated in the past, if you reserve your hotel room now, you can always cancel it later, but you may not be able to reserve a room if you wait too long. We will be monitoring our block and making room adjustments accordingly. Our block of rooms will be released on May 20, 2020. but if you wait (Continued on page 7)
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

TO: THE MICA MEMBERSHIP

OK, we are going to take a break from the Freudian shrink talk of the last few months and catch up on some lighter, fun stuff!

A few weeks ago, Holly and I returned from Key West and the winter planning meeting. Although it was apparently cool according to the local standards, I thought it felt wonderful and it’s hard to come up with a better location than south Florida in early January. Being our first time to Key West, we decided to fly into Miami and drive down Highway 1 through the Keys. For some reason, I had visions of a modern interstate with little viewing options. It was everything but. It’s quite a drive from Miami, but I enjoyed all the scenery and I would have liked to have a couple days to make my way down, stopping at the local marina’s, shops, and maybe a bar or four! Talk about boat and fishing heaven!!

The hotel we stayed in was nice, yet the location was very distracting. Any of you who know me very well, knows that while I am all for anything to do with fishing or boats; my lifelong love and obsession has always been anything that flies. Airplane, helicopter, glider, model aircraft, doesn’t matter. Our hotel was on the flight path of the Key West International Airport as well as a Naval Air Base. Anytime I was outside, I was constantly kinking my neck around looking to see what was coming in next. T-38’s, F-18’s, C-5 Galaxy’s, Cessna Caravans on floats, several Gulfstreams, all sorts of commercial airliners, it was fantastic! We even had several pairs of F-18’s fly right over the whole group as we were eating lunch Friday afternoon! We had a productive meeting, and we have a quality lineup of topics and speakers for the spring meeting in June. The Board will be tweaking that lineup over the next couple of months, but I hope you will join us at Lake of the Ozarks.

KC CHIEFS ARE SUPERBOWL CHAMPIONS!!!!!!

What a game! Admittedly, I was starting to get a bit panicky mid-way through the 4th quarter. Down 10, looks like San Francisco has us figured out, and Patrick is having a bit of a rough game. After that second pick, it was NOT looking good! But then, like Mahomes seems to have a knack for doing, the floodgates opened. 3rd and 15 with 7:30 left in the game, he drops back and effortlessly flicks the ball 57.1 yards down the field to a wide-open Tyreek Hill. Looking at slow motion replays a few days later, I think you can see and hear ALL of the San Francisco fans in a collective sigh of, “Oh sh*t!”. From that point on, it was all over but the crying. I later saw a meme that asked, “Are you heart-healthy enough to watch the Chiefs play football?” After the divisional game against the Texans (down 21 in the first quarter), the Championship game against Tennessee (down yet again!) and then trailing SF by 10 late in the game, that is a very valid question!!

Anyway, bundle up. It’s cold here today but spring is just around the corner!

We will see you in June.

Matt Hymer
MICA President
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until May 20th, the block of rooms will be filled, and we may not be able to accommodate your needs.

All reservations must be guaranteed by a valid major credit card at the time of reservation. Check in time is 4:00 p.m. and check out time is 11:00 a.m. Any guaranteed reservation not cancelled prior to 5 days of arrival will be subject to a one night room and tax cancellation fee. Any reservations that fail to arrive on the scheduled arrival date will be considered a “No-Show” and one night’s room and tax will be posted to the individual’s credit card on file.

The Board of Directors is most excited about the technical topics and speakers for the spring convention. The topics and speakers were selected to help educate and inform you on a variety of industry topics pertinent to our current business climate. We are going to have presentations that cover a wide array of topics that will help you grow your knowledge as a business professional. Our opening keynote speaker is Dan Meers. Dan Meers has been KC Wolf, the mascot of the Kansas City Chiefs, for more than 25 years. In 2006, he was selected as the first NFL mascot inducted into the Mascot Hall of Fame. Dan travels throughout the United States and the world entertaining thousands of people both in and out of costume. He has performed in over 30 states and six different countries.

On November 23, 2013, Dan Meers came within inches of losing his life while practicing a bungee jump and zip line stunt at Arrowhead Stadium... home of the Kansas City Chiefs. What Dan anticipated being the thrill of a lifetime, ended up being the spill of a lifetime. The stunt went terribly wrong, and Dan plummeted 75 feet before crashing into the stadium seats. Miraculously, Dan survived. He spent 9 days in the hospital and got some really big scars. Dan smiles when he says, “Scars are just Tattoos that come with a Cool Story”. During this powerful presentation, Dan shares his incredible story and the important lessons that he learned during his long road to recovery about leadership and about life. His enthusiasm, optimism and love for life are contagious and make Dan an inspiration to all those he meets. Whether you’re a Kansas City Chiefs fan or not, you’ll enjoy Dan Meers as he shares his unique wit and wisdom about life.

It is well known that first-aid training saves lives. It is a common component of many companies’ wellness efforts. Yet few organizational leaders choose to educate their workforces about mental illness, a set of conditions that cause more lost workdays and impairment than arthritis, asthma, back pain, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

On average, 1 in 5 U.S. adults will some form of mental illness in their lifetimes. Of those, approximately two-thirds won’t receive treatment, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Among full-time workers, 1 in 10 will be affected by substance abuse, which often occurs in conjunction with a mental health disorder. Employee mental health and substance abuse issues cost U.S. employers between $80 billion and $100 billion a year, according to NIMH. Given these striking statistics, it’s clear that employers are making a mistake if they ignore the psychological well-being of their employees. We will hear from a healthcare specialist on what companies can do to help their employees better understand and address mental illness—which will also improve a company’s health.

Insurance, in its many forms, is a necessary and vital cost for all of us. This is especially true for our businesses. Workers’ comp is one of those forms of insurance that is necessary and, at times, onerous to manage. This can be especially onerous when contractors take projects that take their employees across state lines. This situation alone raises a whole host of questions and concerns such as, “If I am based in state A, but I send my employee to state B to work on a project and he/she gets hurt – which state’s workers’ comp laws will govern any decision on compensability, benefit rates, types of benefits he/she may receive? If the state my employee is sent to work in is an OSHA state plan state and I am based in a federal OSHA state and the state plan state has different safety requirements than federal OSHA, which state’s requirements will I have to comply with? My state does not permit the use of marijuana, but the state my employees will be working in does permit medical and/or recreational marijuana – so can I enforce my drug free workplace program in the state in which my employee will be working?” To help answer these and other questions relating to the difference in state laws that may impact on how you administer your employees in states other than your home state, we will have a presentation from Ms. Vicki Simpson, Sr. Manager Corporate Insurance with Performance Contracting Group.

(Continued on page 10)
FUTURE MICA MEETING DATES

63rd Annual Spring Convention — June 22 — 25, 2020, Lodge of the Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, Missouri.

Fall 2020 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 15 & 16, 2020, Omaha Marriott Downtown, Omaha, NE.

64th Annual Spring Convention — June 21 — 24, 2021, Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort, Bonita Springs, FL.

Fall 2021 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 14 & 15, 2021, Omaha Marriott Downtown, Omaha, NE.

MICA MEMBER ADDRESS/INFO. UPDATES

Be sure to inform the MICA office of any changes or corrections to your listing for either the MICA Directory, e-mail correspondence or mailing address. Even if you update your company listing on the MICA website, please inform the MICA office of the changes. We try to be as current as possible with your help.
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Gary Auman will provide an update on OSHA requirements that will include a presentation on the ever changing landscape of OSHA. Mr. John Lamberton, NIA President for 2020 – 2021, will give us an update on our industry activities at the national level.

We will have a union contractor forum, an open shop contractor forum, and an associate member forum all running simultaneously. This approach allows more of the members to participate in craft issues without being part of a formal committee. You will have the opportunity to interact with other MICA members with similar business concerns.

The New/Young Professionals Committee was established to give those individuals who are new to the insulation industry a forum to meet and discuss issues unique to their position in the industry. Rudy Nigl with L & C Insulation and a member of the Board of Directors, is serving as this year’s chairperson of the committee. This committee will meet on Tuesday morning, June 23, 2020, as part of this year’s spring convention. If you are new to the industry: within 5 years, or under 40 years of age, you qualify for participation in this committee. If you are interested in participating, come to the June convention.

Be sure to contact Rudy Nigl by email at rudyn@lcinsulation.com, or the MICA office at mica@micainsulation.org, and let us know of your interest and that you will be attending the June meeting.

We will recognize those companies that participated in our twelfth annual “Best Practices in Safety” Award. This award was established to formally recognize our member firms’ efforts in safety and safety practices. This year, we again will use the grading system that recognizes each applicant’s achievement in developing a quality safety program. On our second day of meetings, representatives of the participating firms will meet in a roundtable discussion on safety. They will share with us their efforts in promoting safety and establishing best practices in safety.

The Board of Directors feels that each presentation will add value to your understanding of the technical topics discussed. You will come away from the convention more informed and better prepared to successfully manage your business. It is the Board’s intent to make this convention attractive to our membership in its location, cost and program content. In this light, our registration fee has been adjusted to encourage additional member participation. The registration fee is $625.00 for the first
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attendee from a member company. Registration for all additional attendees from a given company is reduced to $600. The registration fee is $1,200.00 for the first member and spouse registered from a member company. Registration for all additional registered couples from a given company is reduced to $1,150.00. This year we have included a children’s registration for the Welcome Reception and Farewell Brunch events only. The fee is $30.00 to $60.00 per child. The Board is delighted to offer this incentive for multiple attendees from member companies. The benefit of joining an association comes from participating in association activities.

The twenty-second annual “Mick Van Horn Memorial Golf Tournament” is set for Tuesday afternoon, June 23, 2020, at The Lodge’s Cove Golf Course. We will have a box lunch available beginning at 12:00 p.m. followed by a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. A picturesque 18-hole championship golf course showing off stunning lake views, The Cove offers a challenging course for avid golfers. With 72 bunkers, rolling hills and water coming into play on nine of the holes, this par-71 course is anything but tame. In typical RTJ fashion, The Cove is a target golf course putting an emphasis on getting the ball in play off of the tee. Its classic design and breathtaking lakefront setting leave golfers wanting another shot at this legendary golf course. As you would expect, there is plenty of water on the course, so you have a great chance to win the coveted “Fish Award” that was a favorite trophy of Mick’s. The course is located only minutes from our hotel, and the hotel does provide a complimentary shuttle to the course. We still have the four-person scramble format for you to enjoy. This year’s fee is $105.00 per golfer, which includes a box lunch, cart, green fees, complimentary use of practice and range area, and of course, prizes. Please read the golf registration carefully. Payment for golf must accompany the registration fee. Please complete the golf portion of the registration form as fully as possible, especially the handicap information. This is essential for us to properly match the foursomes. You need to register for the golf tournament by May 15, 2020.

The entire program also affords you ample time for fun and relaxation and to interact with your fellow contractors and distributors. We have the traditional opening evening Welcome Reception. This year’s reception is sponsored in part by the contributing associate members. We will feast on hors d’oeuvres, libations, and renew friendships. Our gala dinner and dance will be on Wednesday evening. This year’s gala is casual with a western theme. Jeans and casual western shirts are in order. But please, no shorts and tee shirts.

Complete registration material will be mailed to the general membership early in March. Your cooperation in completing the pre-registration material early and making your hotel reservations early is most appreciated. Your promptness helps us to plan a better, more efficient and effective convention for you. We ask that your registration be completed and payment made to the MICA office no later than May 15, 2020 if you wish to receive a complimentary sport shirt. It is MICA’s policy to refund 90% of your registration fee if we are notified prior to June 1, 2020. We will work with you on refunds if you inform us on a timely basis. Your help and understanding on this matter is most appreciated.

Now is the time to plan for your participation at MICA’s 63rd annual spring convention. Make your hotel reservations today by calling The Lodge’s reservation line at 888-265-5500. Please join Matt, Holly, the entire Board of Directors and fellow MICA members in Lake Ozark, MO, June 22 – 25, 2020, for our annual spring convention and be a part of “Moving Forward”.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REVISES NATIONAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE WORKER EXPOSURE TO SILICA

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has established a revised National Emphasis Program (NEP) to identify and reduce or eliminate worker exposures to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) in general industry, maritime, and construction. The NEP targets specific industries expected to have the highest numbers of workers exposed to silica, and focuses on enforcement of the new silica standards, one for general industry and maritime (29 CFR § 1910.1053) and one for construction (29 CFR § 1926.1153). These standards became effective in June 2016, and construction employers were required to begin complying with their standard as of September 23, 2017, and general industry and maritime employers were required to begin complying with their standard as of June 23, 2018.

(Continued on page 14)
What changes were made to the NEP?

- Revised application to the lower permissible exposure limit for respirable crystalline silica to 50 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) as an 8-hour time-weighted average in general industry, maritime, and construction;
- Updated list of target industries, as listed in the appendix of the NEP; from this list, area offices will develop randomized establishment lists of employers in their local jurisdictions for targeted inspections;
- Compliance safety and health officers will refer to current enforcement guidance for RCS inspection procedures;
- All OSHA regional and area offices must comply with this NEP, but they are not required to develop and implement corresponding regional or local emphasis programs; and
- State Plans must participate because of the nationwide exposures to silica.

OSHA will conduct 90 days of compliance assistance for stakeholders prior to beginning programmed inspections for the NEP.

Respirable crystalline silica consists of small silica particles that are generated by cutting, sawing, grinding, drilling, and crushing materials such as stone, rock, concrete, brick, block, and mortar. Inhaling the dust created during these operations can cause silicosis, an incurable lung disease, lung cancer, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. For more information on the health effects from silica exposure, and how employers can protect workers, visit OSHA’s Safety and Health Topics webpage on Crystalline Silica.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PUBLISHES AMENDMENTS AND TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO OSHA STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently published technical corrections and amendments to 27 OSHA standards and regulations. This administrative rulemaking corrects minor misprints, omissions, outdated references, and tabular and graphic inaccuracies. The revisions apply to several industry sectors, including general industry, construction, shipyard employment and longshoring. Some revisions may reduce employer costs, and none expand employer obligations or impose new costs.
WELCOME TO OSHA’S FALL PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

FALLS ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN CONSTRUCTION. In 2017, there were 366 fatal falls to a lower level out of 971 construction fatalities (BLS data). These deaths are preventable.

Since 2012, OSHA has partnered with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) - Construction Sector on the Fall Prevention Campaign to raise awareness among workers and employers about common fall hazards in construction, and how falls from ladders, scaffolds and roofs can be prevented.

PLAN ahead to get the job done safely
When working from heights, employers must plan projects to ensure that the job is done safely. Begin by deciding how the job will be done, what tasks will be involved, and what safety equipment may be needed to complete each task.

When estimating the cost of a job, employers should include safety equipment, and plan to have all the necessary equipment and tools available at the construction site. For example, in a roofing job, think about all of the different fall hazards, such as holes or skylights and leading edges, then plan and select fall protection suitable to that work, such as personal fall arrest systems (PFAS).

PROVIDE the right equipment
Workers who are six feet or more above lower levels are at risk for serious injury or death if they should fall. To protect these workers, employers must provide fall protection and the right equipment for the job, including the right kinds of ladders, scaffolds, and safety gear.

Use the right ladder or scaffold to get the job done safely. For roof work, if workers use personal fall arrest systems (PFAS), provide a harness for each worker who needs to tie off to the anchor. Make sure the PFAS fits, and regularly inspect it for safe use.

TRAIN everyone to use the equipment safely
Every worker should be trained on proper set-up and safe use of equipment they use on the job. Employers must train workers in recognizing hazards on the job. See educational materials and resources page for posters, fact-sheets, and other training materials at OSHA’s website; https://www.osha.gov/stopfalls/edresources.html. 
NATIONAL SAFETY STAND-DOWN TO PREVENT FALLS IN CONSTRUCTION; MAY 4 – 8, 2020

What is a Safety Stand-Down

A Safety Stand-Down is a voluntary event for employers to talk directly to employees about safety. Any workplace can hold a stand-down by taking a break to focus on "Fall Hazards" and reinforcing the importance of "Fall Prevention". Employers of companies not exposed to fall hazards, can also use this opportunity to have a conversation with employees about the other job hazards they face, protective methods, and the company's safety policies and goals. It can also be an opportunity for employees to talk to management about fall and other job hazards they see.

Who Can Participate

Anyone who wants to prevent hazards in the workplace can participate in the Stand-Down. In past years, participants included commercial construction companies of all sizes, residential construction contractors, sub- and independent contractors, highway construction companies, general industry employers, the U.S. Military, other government participants, unions, employer's trade associations, institutes, employee interest organizations, and safety equipment manufacturers.

How to Conduct a Safety Stand-Down

Companies can conduct a Safety Stand-Down by taking a break to have a toolbox talk or another safety activity such as conducting safety equipment inspections, developing rescue plans, or discussing job specific hazards. Managers are encouraged to plan a stand-down that works best for their workplace anytime. See Suggestions to Prepare for a Successful "Stand-Down" and Highlights from the Past Stand-Downs. OSHA also hosts an Events page with events that are free and open to the public to help employers and employees find events in your area.

If you plan to host a free event that is open to the public, contact your Regional Stand-Down Coordinator.

Certificate of Participation

Employers will be able to provide feedback about their Stand-Down and download a Certificate of Participation following the Stand-Down. The certificate pages will be active on May 4, 2020, for employers to enter their information and print their certificate.

Information regarding OSHA’s Stand-Down program may be found on OSHA’s website at https://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown/index.html

DODGE MOMENTUM INDEX STARTS 2020 ON THE DOWNSIDE

HAMILTON, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--The Dodge Momentum Index fell 2.7% in January to 152.5 (2000=100) from the revised December reading of 156.7, snapping a four-month streak of gains. The Momentum Index, issued by Dodge Data & Analytics, is a monthly measure of the first (or initial) report for nonresidential building projects in planning, which have been shown to lead construction spending for nonresidential buildings by a full year. The decline in the overall Momentum Index was the result of an 11.0% drop in the institutional component, more than offsetting a 2.7% gain in the commercial component.

A similar pattern exists when comparing year-over-year growth in the components of the Index. The institutional component was down 7.4% when compared to January 2019 while the commercial component was 17.4% higher than a year ago. These conflicting trends pushed the overall Momentum Index up 7.1% from January 2019.

In January, ten projects each with a value of $100 million or more entered planning. The leading commercial projects were a $200 million parking garage in the Bronx NY and the $160 million first phase of the Palomino Business Park in Norco CA. The leading institutional projects were the $500 million Good Samaritan Hospital expansion in West Islip NY and the $250 million Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora CO.

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<th>DODGE MOMENTUM INDEX</th>
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<td>122.4</td>
<td>137.5</td>
<td>-11.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dodge Data & Analytics
“The plant reaches out and shakes your hand.”

Tim Blanch
P.E., LEED AP S.C. Herman & Associates

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For the current tax season, the IRS reminds taxpayers that everyone should file their 2019 tax return by the April 15 filing deadline regardless of whether they can pay in full. Six-month filing extensions are also available, although that does not extend the April deadline for paying any taxes owed.

“Taxpayers having delinquent filing or payment obligations should consult a competent tax advisor before waiting to be contacted by an IRS revenue officer, Mamo said. “It is always worthwhile to take advantage of various methods of getting back into filing or payment compliance before being personally contacted by the IRS.”

For the new visits taking place, high-income non-filers taxpayers are those who generally received income in excess of $100,000 during a tax year and did not file a tax return with the IRS. Taxpayers who exercise their best efforts in filing their tax returns and paying or entering into agreements to pay their taxes deserve to know that the IRS is aggressively pursuing others who have failed to satisfy their filing and payment obligations.

During the visits, IRS revenue officers will share information and work with the taxpayer to hopefully resolve

(Continued on page 26)
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About NIA’s 65th Annual Convention
The National Insulation Association (NIA) invites you to join your industry colleagues April 15–17, 2020, at the JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona.

NIA's 65th Annual Convention brings together freshly updated networking, educational, and entertainment events that you look forward to each year! The Convention theme—Let’s Make It Happen—will be woven into the education and networking elements, with each new action and commitment multiplying and moving us forward. We at NIA are excited to welcome attendees from all segments of the mechanical insulation industry to Scottsdale!

Back by Popular Demand!
- **Updated registration rates for kids:** children 5 or younger may now come to Convention for FREE! Additional discounted registration rates are available for children under 17 years of age. We hope that your whole family will be able to join us in Scottsdale!
- **The Wednesday–Friday schedule** gives attendees the option to stay longer for some personal time or head home to get back to your family and your business sooner.

Who Should Attend
Convention attendees represent all segments of the mechanical insulation industry: merit and union contractors, distributors, fabricators, laminators, and manufacturers. This broad representation of the industry allows attendees many opportunities to gain new business contacts, network, and build relationships. Spouses, guests, and children are encouraged to attend.

Registration Now Open
Go to the NIA website at https://insulation.org/convention2020/ and sign up today.
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Don’t be confused: Visits are not a scam
For this new initiative, these high-income taxpayers have typically received numerous letters from the IRS over an extended period of time, so they generally realize they have a tax issue.

2020 CIRT SENTIMENT INDEX: FIRST QUARTER REPORT

The first quarter of 2020 showed an increase in both the Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT) Sentiment Index and Design Index. The CIRT Sentiment Index grew from 57.6 in the fourth quarter of 2019 to 63.6 in the first quarter of 2020. Higher index scores suggest broadened optimism across participating firms going into 2020.

This quarter’s current issues questions polled CIRT membership on a variety of key internal metrics, including backlogs, firm capacity and hiring goals. The survey also captured open responses on challenges facing each firm in 2020.

Nearly three-quarters of participating firms reported 2019 year-end backlogs between 12 and 24 months, with just under half of respondents in the range of 12 to 18 months. Comparing backlog estimates to the prior year, most members (~57%) suggested an increase, one-third (~33%) reported little to no change, and only 10% reported decline. Similarly, more than two-thirds of CIRT member respondents indicated that their firms would be operating over 80% capacity through 2020, with the largest segment of respondents (37%) suggesting firm capacity would exceed 90%. Comparing 2019 year-end hiring goals to the prior year, most survey participants were split between increasing hiring goals or keeping them about the same (both groups at approximately ~46%). Very few respondents (8%) suggested lowering hiring goals through 2020.

Last, among the current issues topics, CIRT members were questioned about significant issues they believe will challenge their firms in 2020. Nearly two-thirds of respondents suggested labor-related concerns, with frequent mentions that attracting and hiring quality talent would be the greatest challenges. Alternatively, approximately one-third of respondents identified technology and economic/political-related challenges. Common technological themes included cyberterrorism, data analytics, prefabrication and operational optimization. Recurring economic and political themes included the 2020 election, passing of a federal infrastructure bill and increased risk of an economic downturn.

Among the segments and industries represented by CIRT’s member base, health care is projected to experience the most short-term growth across the broader construction industry, whereas industrial, transportation and manufacturing are all expected to exhibit healthy growth over the long term. Secondary segments that all stand out over the next year include health care, public works and education. Design respondents expect health care, pre-design and transportation to outperform over the next quarter and foresee long-term opportunities in transportation, industrial and health care.

Overall, respondents believe that the industrial, manufacturing and transportation construction sectors will show the most promise long-term. Public works will remain steady, and office, lodging and commercial will start to decline over the next year. Within the design industry, respondents believe that international, commercial, education and consulting planning will decline; residential will remain stable; and heavy/civil will experience growth over the long term.

Access to the full report is available from the FMI website at https://cirt.org/Business-News/8752300.
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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has launched a new webpage marking the 50th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the landmark worker safety and health law that led to the creation of OSHA.

The webpage highlights transformative workplace improvements over the past half century, from OSHA’s first standards and whistleblower protections, to assistance programs for small businesses, and the creation of training centers and education grants to help everyone understand and comply with the law.

Visit www.osha.gov/osha50 to find 50th anniversary events and information on OSHA’s efforts to protect America’s workforce.

IRS UPDATES GUIDANCE ON BUSINESS EXPENSE DEDUCTIONS FOR MEALS AND ENTERTAINMENT

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service issued proposed regulations on the business expense deduction for meals and entertainment following changes made by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).

The 2017 TCJA eliminated the deduction for any expenses related to activities generally considered entertainment, amusement or recreation. It also limited the deduction for expenses related to food and beverages provided by employers to their employees.

These proposed regulations address the elimination of the deduction for expenditures related to entertainment, amusement or recreation activities and provide guidance to determine whether an activity is considered to be entertainment. The proposed regulations also address the limitation on the deduction of food and beverage expenses.

(Continued on page 30)
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The proposed regulations affect taxpayers who pay or incur expenses for meals or entertainment. These proposed regulations generally follow Notice 2018-76, issued on Oct. 15, 2018, which provided transitional guidance on the deductibility of expenses for certain business meals.

Taxpayers affected by this change and other interested parties may submit comments on the proposed regulations. The IRS will hold a public hearing on these proposed regulations on April 7, 2020.

CONSTRUCTION STARTS MOVE LOWER IN JANUARY

Construction starts beginning the year lower across all major sectors

NEW JERSEY — February 18, 2020 — Total construction starts slipped 6% from December to January to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of $759.2 billion. All three major categories moved lower in January — residential building starts fell 8%, nonresidential building lost 6%, and non-building starts moved 2% lower.

With only one, limited month of data available for 2020, it is difficult to ascribe a 2020 trend. Some perspective can be gleaned, however, by examining a 12-month moving total. For the 12 months ending January 2020, total construction starts were 1% higher than during the previous 12-month period. By major category, residential building starts were 1% lower and nonresidential building starts were down by less than a percentage point, but nonbuilding construction was 8% higher during the 12 months that ended in January 2020.

In January, the Dodge Index moved downward to 161 (2000=100) compared to the 171 posted in December 2019 and was 8% lower than its most recent 12-month average.

“Coming in slightly weaker than the previous month, January’s starts did little to change our view that construction starts will remain near their recent highs in 2020 even though they are likely to fall as the economy slows,” stated Richard Branch, Chief Economist of Dodge Data and Analytics.

(Continued from page 28)
Non-building construction starts moved 2% lower in January, falling to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of $167.2 billion. In January, gains were seen in highways and bridges as well as miscellaneous non-building categories, which moved up 15% and 12% respectively. Meanwhile, the utility/gas plant and the environmental public works sectors both pulled back, falling 29% and 10%.

The largest non-building construction project to break ground in January was the $705 million extension of the South Central LRT in Phoenix AZ. Also starting in January was the $575 million Permian Energy Center solar project in Andrews county TX and the $550 million Wheatridge wind and solar project in Lexington OR.

For the twelve months ending January 2020, total non-building starts were up 8% compared to the twelve months ending January 2019. On the plus side, environmental public works were up 4% and the utilities/gas plants were up an impressive 116%. Streets and bridge starts, however, were 8% lower and miscellaneous non-building starts were down 19%.

Nonresidential building starts fell 6% in January to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of $266.6 billion. However, if not for the start of a large manufacturing project nonresidential building starts would have declined 11%. In January, manufacturing starts more than doubled, while commercial building starts slipped 16%, and institutional starts fell 6%.

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The largest nonresidential building project to break ground in January was the $475 million Cree Semiconductor plant in Marcy NY. Also starting was the $476 million BMO Office Tower in Chicago IL and the $400 million Husky Superior refinery in Superior WI.

On a twelve-month total basis, total nonresidential building starts were less than one percentage point lower than they were in the twelve months ending in January 2019. Commercial starts were 5% higher, while institutional starts fell 3% and manufacturing starts were down 10%.

Residential building starts dropped 8% in January to a seasonally adjusted rate of $325.4 billion. During the month single family starts fell 5%, while multifamily starts lost 15%.

The largest multifamily structure to break ground during in January was the $300 million Liberty on the River Apartment Tower in Philadelphia PA. Also starting in January was the $260 million mixed-used building on 10th Avenue in New York NY as well as the $249 million Downtown Fifth Luxury Apartments in Miami FL.

For the 12 months ending in January, total residential starts were 1% lower than the previous 12 months. Single family starts gained 1%, but multifamily building starts were 5% lower.