President Jeff DeGraaf and his wife, Jan, wish to extend a warm MICA invitation to you to join them as our association engages in “Working Together to Improve our Industry”. 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 17 – 20, 2012, at the four-star, four-diamond Omni Interlocken Resort, in Broomfield, Colorado. Our 55th Annual Spring Convention will be a special event, and one that you do not want to miss! The convention will follow a Sunday to Wednesday pattern. 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 Denver/Boulder area, coupled with the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, is ideal for a family getaway. The Omni Interlocken Resort is a first-class departure into another world. Escape to a sanctuary of refined elegance, a welcome retreat into modern luxury. This year-round retreat provides all the comforts for the 21st century traveler. The resort, with its 27 holes of championship golf will bring your game to a whole new level. Discover luxury at its best, all wrapped in pure mountain serenity. The resort sits in the foothills of the Flatiron Range of the Rocky Mountains and is centrally located from a variety of area attractions. Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park are a short 28-mile scenic drive away. The Chautauqua National Historic District offers a playground, hiking trails, breathtaking views, and entertainment. Children and adults alike will find plenty of excitement at Denver’s Six Flags Elitch Gardens.

Indulge yourself in luxury at the Omni Interlocken Resort. Come prepared for some special pampering during your stay. We have reserved a block of rooms at the Omni. Our convention rate is $159 per night plus tax, single or double occupancy. **It is highly suggested that you book your hotel reservations now!** Call the reservations office at 800-843-6664 and ask for the Midwest Insulation Contractors Block, Reference Number 15300035702. 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 15, 2012,** but if you wait until May 15th, the block of rooms will be filled, and we may not be able to accommodate your needs.

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 deviate from our normal keynote speaker for our opening breakfast session. We have asked Mr. Cliff Brewis with McGraw-Hill Construction to give both our members and spouses an update on what we can expect the construction trends to be in the last half of 2012 as the election year kicks into high gear. McGraw-Hill Construction is the leading provider of construction information in the industry, and Cliff Brewis, Senior Director Editorial Operations is responsible for the newsgathering operation of McGraw-Hill Construction/Dodge. He is a frequent speaker on the construction forecast. In addition to his current duties with McGraw-Hill, Cliff is an active member of the Integrated Project Delivery Committee administered by the AIA California Council and AGC California. The diverse group is involved in advancing collaborative construction processes. Cliff has over 30 years experience in construction, including 25 years with McGraw-Hill Construction/Dodge.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

TO: THE MICA MEMBERSHIP

The winter meeting in Key West, Florida, was informative, productive and enjoyable! Two of the primary goals for this meeting were: to review the association’s prior year’s financials and discuss and set the agenda for the upcoming spring convention.

Concerning the first goal, I am happy to report that our organization is financially solid. The membership is strong, meetings are well attended and the individuals in charge of investments are diligently looking out for MICA’s best interests. MICA is a very strong association, and I am proud to be a member; I’m sure you are, too!

The second goal; discussion for setting the agenda for the spring meeting was just as successful. We began with an open forum, the MICA board met with current members, and we went to work discussing possible speakers and materials interesting and relevant to our members. One of the big issues that became apparent in this discussion was how to determine present workload and predicting for the future. I’m sure you’d agree that the ability to accurately project your company’s sales is the building block to determining where a company is heading and assists in decision making for future growth. This raises other questions; with future growth, will you need to add people and/or equipment or will you try to manage the job with your current staffing and inventory? With these questions in mind, we decided to bring in a speaker who can address some of these issues and will also discuss the current and future economic outlook for our industry, including oil and gas. We will also include a presentation by the DOE that should provide you with information to help your customers pay for their insulation needs. This should be a great sales tool for you to bring into a meeting!

Another priority for the conference will be to allot time to discuss the various materials utilized on jobs. Many times there are changes to these materials, and it can be difficult to stay “up-to-date” on new materials that have become available. It can also be frustrating to have new products show up in the specifications and you aren’t familiar with them. Or find out that a product you have been using has changed and no longer provides all the benefits you were used to using for the job. With this in mind, we have selected a group of products with some issues or recent changes and will provide training and discussion about these matters. I believe that the more knowledge we have about our products, the better suited we are to provide quality work to our customers.

This is just a sampling of what is included in the convention. All in all, I’m confident that the board of directors, with input from the membership, has designed a convention package that is first class. What a pleasure it is for me to work with a group of individuals with so much knowledge of our industry. I genuinely appreciate their willingness to take the time to share that knowledge with others. The spring convention should be fantastic. Don’t miss it!

Additionally, if you haven’t made it a priority to attend a winter meeting, I would like to encourage you to put it on your calendar for next year. This meeting is a smaller venue, and it provides a great opportunity to get to know people in your industry on a closer level. And as a positive side note, we usually try to pick a meeting place that is warm. There is nothing like 75 degree weather in January to help stimulate the thought process!

Sincerely,

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Hill in sales and operations. Cliff gazed into his “crystal ball” last June, and he will be back to provide a second installment on the outlook for construction growth and its impact on our industry. Cliff will also share his views on the impact that the oil shale, sands and huge natural gas reserves recently found in the U.S. will have on our national economy.

Energy efficiency and the need for renewable energy continues to be one of our key success factors as a nation. The importance of insulation in conserving energy cannot be down played or over looked. Ms. Sandy Glatt with the U.S. Department of Energy offers an update on her office’s energy conservation activities. The Advanced Manufacturing Office (AMO) is the lead government program working to develop and deploy new, energy-efficient technologies for manufacturing. (AMO was formerly known as the Industrial Technologies Program). Her office’s goal is to reduce energy consumption of manufactured goods across product life-cycles by 50% over 10 years by targeting the production, use and/or deployment of advanced manufacturing technologies. Sandy will discuss with us how to help promote energy conservation. She will discuss various state policies, programs and initiatives (energy rebates and tax incentives) that we can use to inform and educate our end users.

Insulation and pipe corrosion are not new to our industry. Although the extent and resultant cost of corrosion under insulation (CUI) are not known exactly, it does have a negative impact on our industry. When moisture is trapped between the insulation/vapor retarder and the metal jacket, it can cause corrosion of the jacketing's interior surface. This type of corrosion is not the classic corrosion under insulation (CUI), which is caused by water in direct contact with the pipe or equipment. This is also not corrosion of the edges of the metal jacketing, which can occur with the coated steel type jacketing (aluzinc, galvanized, and aluminized steel). Because this corrosion occurs on the interior surface of the jacketing, it is very hard to detect until it penetrates completely through the metal and leaves visible holes in the jacketing. This interior corrosion can start almost immediately after installation and form holes in as quickly as 6 months. We have asked Jim Young with ITW Insulation Systems to present his research in this area and to provide some guidance on finding solutions to this problem for our industry.

One potential solution to the corrosion problem is the development and use of vapor retarders. Our industry has been aggressively researching and developing improved vapor retarders. Due to some product failures in refrigeration and cold applications, we have seen an increase in the number, types and properties of different vapor retarders offered in our industry. For us to get a better understanding of the technical issues surrounding vapor retarders, their properties and use within our industry, we have asked Mr. Gordon Hart with Artek Engineering, LLC in Shrewsbury, MA, to present this topic at our spring convention.

(Continued on page 5)
Polyisocyanurate foam is an insulation product used in hot and cold applications, and is a good complement with the vapor retarders. Due to EPA regulations and greenhouse gases, this product’s chemical makeup has changed. As a concluding presentation on the issue of corrosion, vapor retarders, and insulation products, we have asked our associate members to provide a panel discussion on the features of polyisocyanurate foam and its many benefits as an insulation product.

Safety and environmental issues for our industry continue to impact how we operate our businesses. OSHA has been very active in both new legislation and enforcement activities. Mr. Gary Auman, MICA’s legal counsel, will update us on legislative initiatives and OSHA activities that directly affect our industry. He will share his view on what you can expect from OSHA enforcement activities and regulations. Gary shares his knowledge and expertise with the membership in order to help you become a better business manager. This is your opportunity to take advantage of Gary’s wealth of knowledge. This will be a session that you cannot afford to miss!

The Board of Directors will be sponsoring a seminar by FMI prior to our 2012 fall business meeting in October. The FMI seminar will be a day-long seminar on various topics that will help you market and sell your business to your clients and customers. As a precursor for the fall seminar, an FMI representative will give us a presentation on our industry. This presentation will help whet your interest for the fall seminar.
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We will have three concurrent forums dealing with member issues. 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. This spring, neither the labor committee nor the merit shop committee will formally meet during the convention. Rather, we will incorporate these items as discussion topics in our concurrent sessions. This format will give each of you the opportunity to interact with other MICA members with similar business concerns. The associate member forum will discuss several issues of interest to our associate members regarding their membership status in MICA.

In June, we will recognize those companies that participated in our seventh 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 have made significant changes to the “Best Practices in Safety” Award program. We are no longer going to recognize a winning company’s safety program. Rather, as a way of encouraging greater participation so more members can reap the benefits of the awards program, we will be using a grading system that recognizes each applicant’s achievement in developing a quality safety program. With this new system, companies will not compete against each other for awards. Instead each applicant will try to achieve the highest award level where multiple applicants can receive the same award level. This change in the award level will not change the judging process. 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 $450.00 for the first attendee from a member company. Registration for a second attendee from a given company is reduced to $425. Registration for all additional attendees is $400 per attendee. The registration fee is $825.00 for the first member and spouse registered from a member company. Registration for a second registered couple from a given company is reduced to $800. Registration for all additional registered couples is $775 per couple. This year we have included a children’s registration for the Welcome Reception and Farewell Brunch events only. The fee is $75.00 per child. The Board is delighted to offer this new incentive for multiple attendees from member companies. The benefit of joining an association comes from participating in association activities.
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Fall 2012 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 17 & 18, 2012, Embassy Suites Downtown, Omaha, NE.


Fall 2013 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 16 & 17, 2013, Embassy Suites Downtown, Omaha, NE.

MICA MEMBER ADDRESS/INFO. UPDATES

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The fourteenth annual “Mick Van Horn Memorial Golf Tournament” is set for Monday afternoon, June 18, 2012, at the Omni Interlocken Golf Club. We have a lunch cookout beginning at 12:00 p.m. followed by a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. Enjoy golf as it was meant to be played at this stunning, links-style course. The Vista nine sits atop the highest point between Denver and Boulder, delivering breathtaking views of Denver and the Front Range. Each golf cart is equipped with the GPS system. The system takes the guesswork out of the yardage, but it does not hit the ball for you. You still need to bring your swing! 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 $150.00 per golfer, which includes a 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 25, 2012.

The 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 friendships. We will honor Ray Stuckenschmidt with Systems Undercover, Inc. with the “William R. Heaston Outstanding Member” award. Ray exemplifies the virtues reflected in Bill Heaston and of selfless service to MICA and the insulation industry. The recognition ceremony will take place during our Tuesday evening gala.

You will be receiving a formal spring convention registration packet 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 you complete and mail your registration material along with payment to the MICA office no later than May 25, 2012. It is MICA’s policy to refund 90% of your registration fee if we are notified prior to June 1, 2012. Once we have committed to the hotel with meal guarantees, we are then obligated to pay these guarantees. 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. Make plans to bring your family to the MICA convention and extend your business to include some quality family time. Now is the time to plan for your participation at MICA’s 55th annual spring convention. Make your hotel reservations today by calling the Omni reservation line at 800-843-6664. Please join Jeff, Jan, the entire Board of Directors and fellow MICA members in Colorado, June 17 – 20, 2012, for our annual spring convention and be a part of “Working Together to Improve our Industry”.

(Continued from page 10)
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Construction materials prices rise moderately in January but show signs of accelerating; contractors urge prompt enactment of funding bills

The cost of construction materials is showing signs of accelerating after moderating in January, according to an analysis of producer price index figures and recent market information released today by the Associated General Contractors of America. Ongoing price increases underscore the urgency of funding public construction projects promptly, association officials said.

"Cost increases have slowed in recent months but haven’t disappeared,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “In fact, today’s producer price index report may be the low point, as manufacturers and commodities markets are signaling that bigger increases may be just around the bend.”

Simonson noted that the price index for construction inputs — a weighted average of all materials used in construction plus items consumed by contractors, such as diesel fuel and tires on equipment — rose 0.4 percent from December to January and 4.5 percent over the past 12 months. Those increases were slightly higher than the rise in the overall producer price index for finished goods and the smallest year-over-year change for construction materials since 2010.

“Unfortunately, this slowdown has already ended for some key materials,” Simonson warned. “Crude oil and diesel prices have moved up significantly since the January price index data were collected. Producers of plastic pipe have notified customers of 8 percent increases, effective March 1. And copper futures have jumped from levels of a few weeks ago, making increases in pipe and wiring prices likely.”

Association officials said the acceleration in materials costs adds to the urgency of getting a long-term federal highway and transit funding bill enacted. They said Congress and federal officials should join the contractors association and others concerned about transportation infrastructure in making transportation job #1.

“Each month that Congress puts off providing long-term funding for needed infrastructure projects costs taxpayers double,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “They pay now in congested and deteriorated roads, and they’ll pay more when materials are finally purchased. Congress should get a bill to the president without further short-term extensions, and he should sign it.”
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TOOL BOX SAFETY TALKS AVAILABLE IN 2012

The Safety and Environmental Committee of MICA is developing a series of “Tool Box Safety Talks” designed specifically for our industry. These short talks are available to the general membership on MICA’s website beginning in 2012. Each month four new “talks” will be posted to the website. Be sure to check the MICA website each month for the new safety talks. These “talks” are available on the “Members Only” portion of the website. Be sure to renew your membership in 2012 and have access to these talks. This is just one of the many tangible benefits of belonging to MICA.

As part of your 2012 membership dues, you have the opportunity to develop and maintain a company profile. This unique company profile is listed on MICA’s website as part of your company’s directory listing. If you have not yet completed your company’s profile, please visit our website at www.micainsulation.org to see what your fellow members have placed on their profiles. Join MICA today and your company can have its profile posted on our website.

NEW SHORT VIDEOS FROM OSHA PROVIDE TRAINING TO HELP INFORM WORKERS ON THE PROPER USE OF RESPIRATORS

WASHINGTON – The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has posted a series of 17 videos to help workers learn about the proper use of respirators on the job.

These short videos, nine in English and eight in Spanish, provide valuable information to workers in general industry and construction. Topics include OSHA’s Respiratory Standard, respirator use, training, fit-testing and detecting counterfeit respirators. The videos are available with closed captioning for streaming or download from OSHA’s Web site.

OSHA’s Safety and Health topics page on Respiratory Protection also includes additional training materials, information about occupational respiratory hazards in different industries, and details of OSHA’s Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134 and 29 CFR 1926.103).

7th EDITION MANUAL AVAILABLE

A hard copy of the 7th edition of the National Commercial & Industrial Insulation Standards manual is available for purchase from MICA’s website at www.micainsulation.org. The manual sells for $125.00 per copy plus shipping and handling. There is a discount for MICA members of $25.00. The cost to MICA members is only $100.00 plus shipping and handling.

PITTSBURGH CORNING ANNOUNCES MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH WITH NEW 18 X 36 INCH SIZE OF FOAMGLAS® ONE™ INSULATION

PITTSBURGH — Designed to help customers decrease labor and overall costs, Pittsburgh Corning Corporation has expanded the footprint of its FOAMGLAS® ONE™ insulation product by offering 18 x 36 inch sizes in thicknesses up to 7 inches.

The new, expanded size represents an increase of 50 percent over its current 24-inch insulation, allowing customers to increase cost savings without sacrificing thermal or physical properties. Reduction in joint sealant needed with the new size saves additional handling time and cost. Pittsburgh Corning testing demonstrates that labor savings alone on long straight pipe runs may be as much as 30%.

“We’re always looking to develop solutions that make things easier and more cost-effective for our customers,” said Steve Oslica, Director of Marketing at Pittsburgh Corning. “Expanding our current footprint by 12 inches gives customers an opportunity to save a great deal of money in both labor and accessory products. Choosing our new 36-inch insulation may mean savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars in a major installation.”

Like all FOAMGLAS® insulation products, the new 18 x 36-inch product features an all-glass, closed-cell material which eliminates the possibility of moisture without requiring a protective jacket. Impermeable FOAMGLAS® insulation offers high compressive strength and dimensional stability. It is also resistant to rotting, insects, vermin and acids, and will not support the growth of mold, fungi or micro-organisms.

“Anyone who has spent any time in our industry knows of the superior performance and life cycle cost of FOAMGLAS® insulation,” continued Oslica. “But this real breakthrough is our being able to reduce the installed price on the pipes or vessels. Combined with the established life cycle cost, we think this is a win-win for installers and facility owners alike.”

Pittsburgh Corning’s FOAMGLAS® ONE™ insulation products are ideal for cold, cryogenic, petrochemical and chilled water applications.

For more information on FOAMGLAS® ONE™ insulation and the complete line of accessory products, or to view an onsite installation video, visit us at www.foamglas.com.
MICA BOARD APPROVES NEW MEMBER FIRMS

The Board of Directors approved the application for memberships for a new associate member company at its January meeting. The newest associate member firm is FASTEST, INC. FastEst, Inc., is located in Wichita, Kansas. The company has been in business for 16 years. It is an estimating software company that has developed estimating program called FastWrap™. The software is geared toward mechanical insulation contractors. Mark Oxler is the President of the company and his brother, Steve, serves as the Sales Director. They are delighted to be a member of MICA and have taken out a quarter-page color ad in our monthly newsletter (see page 5 of this issue).

Please extend a warm MICA welcome to Mark and Steve and note the following address in your MICA directory:

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NIA ANNUAL CONVENTION

The NIA Annual Convention is the premier gathering for the mechanical and industrial insulation industry, so don’t miss this chance to join your colleagues from all segments of the industry. The convention is April 18 – 21, 2012, at the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch, Scottsdale, AZ. You can either register online or download a registration form from the NIA website at www.insulation.org/convention.

Coming to the convention is the best way to keep up to date on the industry and learn what you need to know to succeed. You’ll learn about data and tools you can use, produced by the Mechanical Insulation Education and Awareness Campaign (MIC), funded through the Department of Energy’s Industrial Technologies Program, as well as NIA’s current legislative strategy. Other session topics include the Construction Users Roundtable and managing insurance for your business.

NIA’s Annual Convention provides plenty of valuable chances to build your business relationships. Kick off Convention Wednesday at the Welcome Reception by experiencing a variety of American Culinary Delights. But be sure to save room for the Dessert Hospitality Suites! Get ready for a wild ride at Thursday's Appreciation Night Biker Bash! We'll hit the open road to a desert getaway, then dance the night away. Saturday's President’s Gala Dinner and Dance will be the final networking event of Convention, honoring outgoing president Alec Rexroat for his dedication to NIA and the industry over the year and welcoming the new NIA president, Rick Smith.

HIRING PROSPECTS AND CONSTRUCTION-PUT-IN-PLACE IMPROVE WHILE HEAVY PRICE COMPETITION CONTINUES

FMI (www.fminet.com), the largest provider of management consulting and investment banking to the engineering and construction industry, announces the release of its Nonresidential Construction Index report for the first quarter of 2012.

The NRCI gained 7.8 points over last quarter to 58.1 this quarter. This positive move to start the new year is not exactly the sign of a bull market for construction, but continuing confirmation that panelists believe that the construction activity is following the lead of the slowly improving economy. There are good signs in hiring plans for 2012, as well as construction-put-in-place predictions. However, panelists indicate that low project pricing and high competition are still driving the market place.

Hiring: A five percentage points increase over this time last year, 42 percent of panelists indicated a zero to five percent increase in full-time direct employees. Additionally, fewer panelists indicated a reduction in salaried employees.

Construction Put In Place: Expectations for CPIP are positive but cautious, as 41.3 percent of panelists expect growth of 0.5 to 2.5 percent for 2012.

Overall Economy: The component for the overall economy showed the strongest improvement of all index components with a jump from 43.6 last quarter to 68.7 in the first quarter, a 25 point gain. This score reflects the improvement in many economic indicators including the unemployment rate.

Nonresidential Building Construction Market Where Panelists Do Business: At just 54.9, the local markets for nonresidential construction are inching ahead. However, panelist responses reflect a perception that their own business is performing a bit better than the overall nonresidential construction market. This indicates that local markets are still very competitive.

Cost of Materials: Despite a slow economy, material costs continue to rise, with no panelists indicating material costs were lower than last quarter. The cost of materials component moved down nearly 5 points to 26.2. This factor is a continuing drag on the overall index and is likely to raise the cost of projects while lowering profit margins for contractors.

Cost of Labor: The cost of labor improved just slightly to 41.5, indicating little change over the score of 40.0 last quarter. However, no panelists indicated they were experiencing lower labor costs.

Productivity: Contractors are continuing to make moderate gains in productivity. However, at 52.9, this component is still too weak to offset rising costs for labor and materials.

For reprint permission or to schedule an interview with the author, please contact Sarah Avallone at 919.785.9221 or savallone@fminet.com.

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