HOLIDAY GREETINGS

ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDWEST INSULATION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, WE WISH TO EXTEND TO ALL OF YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HANAKAH, AND A MOST JOYOUS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

TO: THE MICA MEMBERSHIP

What a time of the year!!

As 2010 comes to a close and as I prepare for Christmas, is life full or what??

With Holiday activities, parties, gifts to buy and friends and relatives to enjoy, I personally am on overload. The traditional Christmas carols are welcomed into our homes, cars and IPods. Memories come alive of more innocent and simpler times. However, we should consider it all Blessings, as we know how time flies… people to connect with and wish well, children home and today’s memories being framed out. As the old Carly Simon song goes, “these are the good old days”.

It is all too easy to get wrapped up in our own little whirlwind of activities. My heart goes out to those who find the holidays to be painful reminders of what could or should have been.

Aside from the amplified activities and demands for our time throughout the season, business and the usual also clambers for our attention. The phone rings or email arrives from clients or associates that need to get year-end tasks accomplished. It is the inevitable fact in this season, the year end and the pressure is on to deliver the needs for the budgets and the books. After all, our world is basically run by accountants, right Tom? Projects to be built, material to be manufactured and delivered, and get those invoices in before the 31st! Ah, but all this is fine. It was predictable and where would we be without those clients needing us to perform?

So the year comes to a close and we move to 2011. I am not a believer in New Year’s Resolutions. I mean, come on. If it is the right thing to do and will improve us, why wait until January 1st to make it happen? However, I do look at the New Year as opportunity for a new beginning. I always do contemplate both personnel and professional callings that can use some “shaping up”. Some things to consider…

Thank you to those of you who can make it to Austin in January. It will be a good turnout. We have several members who have approached me with great ideas for our spring programs and speakers to build into our meeting in St. Louis. Thank you!

Here’s to a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year to us all!

Sincerely,

James Markham,
MICA President
MICA MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2011

It is time once again to remind the MICA membership of the dues requirement for 2011. Our long-term growth and survival as a professional trade association is dependent upon our ability to solicit and keep active and associate member firms. We need members who have a love for our industry and a genuine desire to improve their business practices. We need members like you, our current members. We have structured our member dues in order to maintain our long-term financial stability and yet be perceived as an association that adds value to our core members and to potential new member firms.

Your Board of Directors has voted to maintain the membership dues for 2011 at last year’s rate. **The fixed annual fee for all contractor members remains at $650 for 2011, while the annual dues for associate member firms is again set at $450.** Your Board feels that it is prudent not to increase the dues structure in 2011. Keeping your dues affordable in uncertain financial times will help your association maintain its membership base and will allow MICA to continue to offer quality programs, conventions, and educational seminars at an affordable cost to you, our valued members. We are confident that you will continue to see value in what MICA does for you, your company, and your industry. We are looking forward to not only 100% renewal, but to a significant increase in our membership base during 2011. Your help in identifying potential new members is always appreciated. Contact the MICA office with your prospective member’s name and address.

A formal dues notice and invoice was sent to each member firm in December. All you need to do is to remit your payment as reflected on the dues invoice.

The MICA office will also be processing renewal notifications for advertising in the MICA Messenger in 2011. Advertising rates will remain the same as last year. Advertising in our monthly newsletter is an excellent way for you to keep your company’s name and product visible to your customers. Remember, if you plan to make any changes to your existing ad, you will need to send the updated ads to the MICA office by January 15, 2011. **Be sure the ad files are sent in either .tif or .jpeg format** to our e-mail address at mica@tconl.com. PDF formatted files do not copy clean. Any pdf formatted ads will have a fuzzy print to them.

Please remember to inform the MICA office of any address or phone number changes, or any changes to the names of your key employees. We need your help in keeping your membership listing up to date.
CONSTRUCTION MARKET TO INCREASE 8 PERCENT IN 2011

McGraw-Hill Construction, part of The McGraw-Hill Companies, has released its 2011 Construction Outlook, which predicts an increase in overall U.S. construction starts for next year. The level of construction starts in 2011 is expected to advance 8 percent to $445.5 billion, following the 2 percent decline predicted for 2010.

“While the economy is still facing headwinds, the stage is being set for construction to see modest improvement in 2011 from this year’s very weak activity,” said Robert A. Murray, vice president of economic affairs at McGraw-Hill Construction, addressing nearly 400 construction executives and professionals at the 72nd annual Outlook 2011 Executive Conference in Washington, D.C. “We’re turning the corner, slowly. 2011 will be the first year of renewed growth for overall construction activity, and 2010 becomes the final year of a very lengthy and unusual construction cycle.”

Based on significant research and in-depth analysis of macro-trends, the 2011 Construction Outlook details the forecasts for each construction sector, as follows:

- Single-family housing in 2011 will climb 27 percent in dollars, corresponding to a 25 percent increase in the number of units to 565,000 (McGraw-Hill Construction basis).

- Multifamily housing will rise 24 percent in dollars and 23 percent in units, continuing to move gradually upward.

- Commercial buildings will increase 16 percent, following a three-year decline, which dropped contracting 62 percent in dollar terms. The levels of activity expected for stores, warehouses, offices and hotels in 2011 will still be quite weak by historical standards.

- The institutional building market will slip an additional 1 percent in 2011, retreating for the third straight year. The difficult fiscal climate for states and localities will continue to dampen school construction, although the healthcare facilities category should see moderate growth.

- Manufacturing buildings will increase 9 percent in dollars and 11 percent in square feet.

- Public works construction will drop 1 percent, given the fading benefits of the federal stimulus act for highway and bridge construction.

- Electric utilities will slide 10 percent, falling for the third year in a row.

In addition to Murray’s Construction Outlook, industry experts delivered forecasts for green building, residential building, building product manufacturers, building materials, technology, and the economy as a whole, shedding light on these crucial sectors.

“The U.S. economy is in the second year of economic expansion,” said Kathleen Camilli, president of Camilli Economics. “While the growth rate is currently modest, momentum is likely to grow as the economy responds to ongoing monetary and fiscal stimulus in the pipeline. Notwithstanding the financial crisis’ impact on residential and nonresidential construction, growth in this sector of the economy will continue to be driven by innovation in building technologies.”

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Representing the National Insulation Association (NIA), Ronald L. King was elected Vice Chair of the National Institute of Building Sciences Consultative Council (NIBS-CC) at its meeting on December 7, 2010. The Consultative Council assembles high-level building community representatives to make recommendations directly to the executive and legislative branches of government to improve our nation's buildings and infrastructure.

“This is an important position, which will enable NIA to have a voice and a leadership role during high-level briefings and position papers within various government programs and initiatives,” said Michele M. Jones, NIA’s Executive Vice President/CEO. “NIA is honored by the chance to not only serve its members but also represent the mechanical insulation industry through its work on this council.”

One of the current areas of importance to the mechanical insulation industry is the Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act of 2010, recently signed into law. NIBS, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and the High Performance Building Congressional Caucus Coalition (HPBCCC) were strong supporters of this bill, which directs federal agencies to identify core competencies, certifications, and other aspects of facility management of high-performance buildings. NIBS-CC is working with those groups and others on the overall process, which will help NIA understand the core competency identification process and advocate for the inclusion of mechanical insulation.

NIBS-CC has identified six building industry topics for initial examination in 2010-2011, which topical committees will address following an open consensus-based process. The topics are:

- Defining High-Performance/Common Metrics
- Energy and Water Efficiency
- Education and Training
- Codes and Standards Adoption and Enforcement
- Sustainability
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To learn more about NIBS-CC, visit www.nibs.org/ index.php/cc.
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WELCOME NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER FIRM

Please welcome our latest associate member firm, MIDWEST FASTENERS. Barry Threlkeld, sales and marketing manager for Midwest Fasteners, attended the fall business meeting of MICA and was impressed with the quality of the technical programs offered. Midwest Fasteners is a full line, single-source supplier and manufacturer of insulation fasteners and stud welding products for the insulation industry. Serving contractors and distributors, MIDWEST’s “Made in the USA” products include Pin and Stud Welding Equipment, Weld Pins, Cuphead Weld Pins, Insulation Hangers, Self-Locking Washers, and much more. MIDWEST has a proven commitment to support and innovate for the Insulation trades, with a 40-year history of successful sales service – before, during, and after. (800) 852-8352, or visit their website at www.midwestfasteners.com.

US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR DETERMINES IT WILL NOT ADOPT AN SDOC SYSTEM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced that it will not abandon its system for ensuring that electrical products used in the workplace are safe. The European Union requested that OSHA explore the possibility of adopting its system, known as Supplier’s Declaration of Conformity (“SDoC”). Under the EU system, manufacturers declare that their products meet safety requirements before placing these products on the market, thus requiring EU governments to operate a post-market surveillance system to verify whether products are safety compliant after they already are on the market.

Currently, OSHA requires employers to use electrical devices tested and certified by independent testing companies recognized by OSHA. These companies, known as nationally recognized testing laboratories, conduct tests to

(Continued on page 18)
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determine whether products are safe before manufacturers or distributors place them on the market and employers use them in the workplace.

“OSHA’s current system is a reliable and cost-effective approach to ensuring the safety of American workers,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. “A request for information did not reveal compelling evidence to abandon this system.”

In 2008, in response to the EU’s request for the U.S. to adopt an SDoC system, OSHA issued a request for information ("RFI"). It was the second RFI on this issue published by OSHA in the last five years. By statute, OSHA must demonstrate, based on substantial evidence, that its safety regulations and standards will provide or maintain a high degree of protection for U.S. workers. After reviewing comments submitted in response to the RFI, OSHA determined that the burden required for OSHA to revise its standards was not met.

OSHA also is not convinced that the cost of administering such a system is compatible with its current budget. Based on limited information obtained from post-market surveillance costs of two EU countries, OSHA estimated that implementing an SDoC system throughout the U.S. would cost hundreds of millions of dollars. OSHA also currently lacks explicit legislative authority to implement the enforcement powers required for an effective SDoC system, including issuing product recalls and bans, assessing fines, and imposing criminal penalties.

MECHANICAL INSULATION AND MID-TERM ELECTIONS

The following article is from Michele Jones, CMP, Executive Vice President/CEO

With Thanksgiving behind us and the holiday season in full swing, we cannot forget that it was only earlier this month that the country saw a vibrant day of voting on November 2. The mid-term elections brought a major shift to Washington and the composition of the U.S. Congress. With a change in House leadership, a near flip of the Democrat to Republican member ratio on Congressional committees, and a Republican pick up of six seats in the Senate, those in Washington—including NIA—will be looking to build relationships with at least 13 new senators and 93 new representatives.

Despite the tumultuous election outcome, we are pleased to report that our bill sponsor of S. 3716, Senator Gillibrand (D-NY), will be returning to Congress along with (Continued from page 13)
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co-sponsors Senators Rockefeller (D-WV) and Johanns (R-NE). Our newest co-sponsor and mechanical insulation supporter Senator Stabenow (D-MI) will also be returning next year. And while we were sad to learn that our H.R. 4296 sponsor and champion Representative Halvorson (D-IL) lost her reelection bid, at least 47 of our 65 co-sponsors will be returning, and we look forward to leveraging those relationships further next year.

In the upcoming weeks of the remaining Congressional session (known as "lame duck"), we will find out which members will serve on House and Senate committees, including those that handle the issues most relevant to our priorities and future efforts: energy and tax policy. Armed with this information, we can better develop our long-term outreach and education strategy for the 112th Congress, which will no doubt depend on the continued strong support of our members.

In the meantime, we are monitoring the lame duck session and continue to advocate our NIA priorities. Members of Congress have just arrived back in D.C. following the Thanksgiving break and are expected to debate major issues, including the expiring 2001 and 2003 tax cuts and the Fiscal Year 2011 spending bills. Both of these issues are likely to be contentious, and we can expect to see plenty of politicking in the remaining session.

Although legislative members will be largely focused on these broader issues, we are also working with our Congressional champions on further progress before this Congress adjourns, likely by December 17. Our priorities include enactment of the Mechanical Insulation Installation Incentive Act and pursuing an omnibus appropriations bill to enable the continuation of $500,000 for the Mechanical Insulation Education and Awareness Campaign (MIC). Given the crowded Congressional calendar and the change in political dynamics caused by the midterm elections, it is unlikely that either the tax deduction bill or an omnibus appropriations bill will be signed into law before the end of the year. Regardless of the lame duck outcome, however, our efforts now will help build a strong foundation for support in the next Congress.

While the mid-term elections have caused a major shift in Washington, we have made significant strides this year in improving awareness of our industry. Armed with a recognized DOE ITP program, existing tax bill language, a winning issue, and your support, I am confident that we can use this opportunity to reach new heights in sharing the importance of mechanical insulation. I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving, and I look forward to reporting the outcomes of this Congress and our progress next month.
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FMI RELEASES NONRESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION INDEX (NRCI) FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER, 2010

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FMI, the largest provider of management consulting, investment banking and research to the engineering and construction industry, reported that as of the 4th quarter, the NRCI has been in positive territory for three quarters in a row, but only slightly positive. Most of the major components are down, but expectations for markets are improving slightly.

As we begin the new year, nonresidential contractors will focus less on chasing stimulus projects and more on finding private work to fill their backlogs. When asked if the ARRA stimulus helped the construction industry, 44 percent of panelist said it had not. Panelists do not expect there to be another stimulus bill when the new Congress is seated. For 2011, we can expect a continued period of slow growth before any signs that the private sector is significantly growing again.

The long recession brought about many changes to the industry, and we asked about one trend that could help make the construction business leaner and more efficient, the growth of prefabrication and modular construction. Panelists expect this area to grow faster than the market in general due to a number of drivers including the growing use of BIM, owners wanting projects faster and for lower cost, safety, quality and the shortage of skilled labor once markets return to more normal growth.

With any long recession, business make changes, first in order to survive, then to make companies more competitive and ready for the eventual upturn. For most panelists, the recession has brought about many good changes in their businesses. Some clearly could not see anything good about it, but most described their efforts to become leaner, more productive and efficient. They have been working on systems and processes, improving the quality of their people and reviewing their culture, markets and goals. They are anticipating the end of the slow down for construction, but not sure when that will happen, yet.

FUTURE MICA MEETING DATES

Winter Board and Committee Meetings — January 20 — 23, 2011, Driskill Hotel, Austin, Texas.

54th Annual Spring Convention — June 19 — 22, 2011, The Four Seasons Hotel St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri.

Fall 2011 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 19 & 20, 2011, Embassy Suites Downtown, Omaha, NE.
U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT’S OSHA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced that it is extending by 90 days the official comment period on the proposed interpretation titled “Interpretation of OSHA’s Provisions for Feasible Administrative or Engineering Controls of Occupational Noise,” which was published in the Federal Register on October 19, 2010. Interested parties are encouraged to submit comments by March 21, 2011.

The agency also announced that it will hold a stakeholder meeting before the end of the comment period to listen to the concerns of businesses and workers about the proposed noise interpretation.

“We’re very eager to get input from those parties who would be affected by this proposed interpretation,” said Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health. “We have by no means completed our review of the issue and seek to make an informed decision that is in the best interest of protecting workers, yet sensitive to the operating changes businesses would need to make.”

Thousands of workers every year continue to suffer from preventable hearing loss due to high workplace noise levels. Since 2004, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that more than 125,000 workers have suffered significant, permanent hearing loss. In 2008 alone, BLS reported 22,000 hearing loss cases.

Responding to continuing high levels of hearing loss among employees in the nation's workplaces, the notice proposed to make enforcement of the hearing conservation standard consistent with enforcement of other OSHA standards by clarifying the term “feasible administrative or engineering controls” as used in OSHA’s general industry and construction occupational noise exposure standards.

OSHA’s current enforcement policy for noise exposures less than 100 decibels has not accurately reflected the noise standard’s requirements that feasible engineering and administrative controls be used as the primary means of reducing noise exposure. Instead, OSHA has allowed many employers to rely upon a hearing conservation program, including the use of hearing protectors such as ear plugs.

“There is sufficient evidence that hearing protection alone cannot prevent workers from suffering preventable hearing loss,” said Michaels. “Easily applied administrative or engineering controls can and must be used to protect workers. There are plenty of employers out there who play by the rules and want to do the right thing, and we’re hopeful we can work with them to craft a policy that’s good for all.”

Comments may be submitted online at http://www.regulations.gov. Alternatively, individuals may mail or deliver comments (three copies) to the OSHA Docket Office, Docket No. OSHA-2010-0032, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-2625, 200 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20210. Or, submissions not longer than 10 pages may be faxed to 202-693-1648.

WIN-WIN: PROJECT DELIVERY IN A RECESSION AND BEYOND

Raleigh, N.C., December 20, 2010 – The latest research study “Win-Win: Project Delivery in a Recession and Beyond” from FMI, the largest provider of management consulting and investment banking to the engineering and construction industry, found that the recession has at least temporarily changed the momentum of the trend toward greater use of collaborative delivery methods in favor of low-bid or design/bid/build.

Contractors especially warn that this changing trend may have repercussions in raising the “cost of conflict.” With more contractors chasing fewer projects, owners find themselves in a buyers’ market for construction services. Under pressure to get the lowest price for their project, owners are looking for the lowest bid, and often that means a greater use of the traditional design/bid/build delivery method.

In this new study of construction delivery methods, FMI asked both owners and contractors about changes in delivery methods since the recession. One conclusion of this study is that a solitary focus on low-bid doesn’t always mean lowest overall project cost. However, owners are under pressure to do more for less. According to both owners and contractors, recessionary pressures could be a setback for greater collaboration and cause greater conflict pitting owners against contractors in the bidding game. For contractors, it is still an uphill climb to reduce the perception that low price is the most important factor in construction procurement. While all owners seek the best value for their capital investments, many understand that greater collaboration leads to more project success. In a low bid environment, it is likely that more contractors will go bankrupt. Those that survive will be more productive and efficient in low bid markets and make better use of collaborative and partnering methods to deliver best value.
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