

Shaping THE future



The Roofing Industry **ALLIANCE** for Progress

New Alliance initiatives reaffirm its ongoing commitment to roofing industry excellence

by Alison L. LaValley, CAE

“Never doubt a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

At

138 members strong, including a record number of new members during the past two years, The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress is just that: a diverse, thoughtful and dedicated forum of roofing contractors, manufacturers, suppliers and industry professionals who have committed more than \$11.5 million to help preserve and enhance the U.S. roofing industry’s success and performance.

This group of committed leaders has attracted some of the best and brightest roofing professionals. Together, they select and provide oversight of programs and funding for progressive research that shapes, improves and advances the roofing industry in four key areas: education and training, technology, sustainability and philanthropy.

And because the Alliance is open to all roofing professionals, it has helped unite the industry.

Meet the Alliance

In 1996, The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress was established within the National Roofing Foundation to create an endowment fund to serve as a resource for the roofing industry and its customers. Currently, the Alliance has 138 active members—101 contractors; 34 manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; and three individuals who have pledged significant amounts of money to fund projects that help improve the roofing industry. Membership is open to all roofing professionals.



The Alliance is managed by the Alliance Board of Trustees, a 16-member board that oversees existing projects and considers funding for projects addressing critical industry issues. The Alliance holds two member meetings each year, including its annual meeting, which will be held April 16-19, 2015, in San Francisco, and another held during NRCA's Fall Committee Meetings.

Robert McNamara, president of F.J.A. Christiansen Roofing Co. Inc., a Tecta America company, Milwaukee, Wis., is the Alliance's 2014-15 president; Ken Farrish, president of Atlas Roofing Corp., Atlanta, is vice president; and Jim Barr, president of Barr Roofing, Abilene, Texas, is secretary/treasurer.

The Alliance welcomed seven new members during the past two years: Anderson and Shah Roofing Inc., Joliet, Ill.; Duro-Last Roofing Inc., Saginaw, Mich.; Flynn America LP, Kirkwood, Mo.; Low-Slope Solutions LLC, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Nations Roof LLC, Lithia Springs, Ga.; Ridgeworth Roofing Co. Inc., Frankfort, Ill.; and Tilsen Roofing Co. Inc., Madison, Wis. A list of all Alliance members can be found at www.roofingindustryalliance.net.

For more information about the Alliance, contact Bennett Judson, the Alliance's executive director, at (800) 323-9545, ext. 7513 or bjudson@roofingindustryalliance.net or visit www.roofingindustryalliance.net.

"True to its initial calling, the Alliance has served as a vehicle for industry professionals to join together to undertake projects for the greater good, and I have been privileged to be engaged with it since its inception," says Alliance President Robert McNamara, president of F.J.A. Christiansen Roofing Co. Inc., a Tecta America company, Milwaukee, Wis.

During the past year alone, the Alliance launched its School of Roofing, which includes partnerships with three leading schools of construction management; embarked on an innovative workforce program to create cultural and leadership training programs to educate Latino workers; and continued work on important roofing industry research projects, including RoofPoint™ and air retarder testing.

School of Roofing

In 2014, the Alliance launched its School of Roofing to enhance college students' experiences by exposing them academically and experientially to roofing as a career choice. Through this undertaking, the Alliance formed educational partnerships with the Department of Construction Management at Colorado State University, Fort Collins; McWhorter School of Building Science at Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.; and M.E. Rinker Sr. School of Building Construction at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

Through the partnerships, the universities have agreed to a three-pronged approach that includes incorporating more roofing-specific information and case studies into existing curricula; providing scholarships for construction management students and faculty; and developing industry internship programs with roofing contracting companies, manufacturers and distributors.

Three faculty members received scholarships of \$5,000 each and were asked to collaborate as they developed their recommendations; the outcomes will serve as a model that can be used in other construction management schools throughout the U.S. Ultimately, the plan is to have roofing-specific materials incorporated in the construction management departments beginning in the fall of 2015.

Immediate Former Alliance President Jim MacKimm, president of Beacon Roofing Supply, Peabody, Mass., says: "These partnerships are crucial for the roofing industry. We know we need to do a much better job telling

students about career opportunities in roofing and making sure they understand the importance of roofing even if they pursue other construction-related careers.”

To attain additional classroom exposure, the Alliance is encouraging its members to connect with faculty instructors at their local colleges and universities to present information about roofing products, materials and equipment, and the Alliance has developed talking points for its members to use.

“Our students need opportunities for hands-on roofing experience to better understand materials and methods,” says Mostafa Khatta, Ph.D., Colorado State University’s construction management professor and department head. “It will take time to build relationships and expose the students to the roofing industry, and our faculty partners offer an important avenue toward achieving this goal.”

“We remain positive and are excited about the progress we’ve made with these three construction management schools, as well as the opportunity to build on these experiences to develop new relationships with more construction management programs in the future,” says Dennis Conway, president of Commercial Roofers Inc., Las Vegas, and a graduate of Colorado State University. Conway has played a pivotal role in connecting the Alliance with the university’s unique program.

Through the School of Roofing, the Alliance also is sponsoring the 2015 Construction Management Student Design Competition. Participating student teams from the three partner schools will have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in roofing knowledge, estimating, project management, safety, proposal presentation and related areas for an actual roofing project. Select Alliance members will serve as mentors to answer questions and provide insight, and each team will be judged according to its written proposal’s detail and accuracy and an oral presentation. Six roofing professionals will judge the presentations during the 2015 International Roofing Expo® in February in New Orleans. The winning team will be announced at NRCA’s Awards Ceremony and Cocktail Reception Feb. 25, 2015.

Training initiative

To address the industry’s labor challenges, the Alliance has embarked on a significant and innovative program with Bilingual America, Phoenix, to conduct cultural and leadership training programs for companies with Latino

workers and for Latino workers employed by non-Latino owners. About 20 Alliance members have registered for the company’s six-week training program, which will study best practices within the Latino workforce in the areas of cultural understanding, recruitment, hiring, safety, leadership development and business development.

Following the training, Bilingual America will prepare a formal case study and report that will be shared with Alliance members. The report will include key findings, best practices and a list of challenges the industry must overcome in addition to specific recommendations for workplace improvements that are unique to the roofing industry.

“We decided to participate in the Bilingual America training program because my company recognizes and understands the value in establishing strong relationships with our Latino employees,” says Dave Tilsen, president of Tilsen Roofing Co. Inc., Madison, Wis. “Our goal is to not only grow and strengthen our Latino workforce, but also to learn about the future of the Hispanic workforce from a broader industry perspective provided to us by the Alliance.”

Advancing education

During 2014, the Alliance continued its commitment to education through its Melvin Kruger Endowed Scholarship Program by approving funding to renew seven scholarships totaling \$35,000, as well as three new ones at \$5,000 each.

Named for Melvin Kruger, a former NRCA president and chief executive officer of L.E. Schwartz & Son Inc., Macon, Ga., the Alliance’s first scholarship was awarded in 1986 and since its inception has distributed \$580,000 in scholarship funds to 110 students. The program is available to NRCA contractor and supplier members, their families and their employees who plan to pursue careers in the roofing industry or construction.

Rob Therrien Jr., former president of the Alliance and president of The Melanson Co. Inc., Keene, N.H., believes strongly that the Alliance’s commitment to education improves the lives of the children of the industry.



For articles related to this topic, see:

“Gaining momentum,”
December 2013 issue

“Working together,”
February 2009 issue

Getting involved and giving back

Member participation is vital within the Alliance, and much of the organization's strength comes from its broad base of supportive contributors. The roofing industry has a wonderful history of generosity, and for roofing professionals who would like to be involved with giving back to the industry that has given so much to them, the Alliance provides the perfect opportunity to do so.

The Alliance offers different levels of membership to encourage small-, medium- and large-sized firms to join and have a voice in determining the roofing industry's future. Commitments to the Alliance can be pledged for three- to five-year periods. Public recognition is given in accordance with donors' wishes and levels of commitment and include national public acknowledgement during NRCA's annual convention and other special events and programs. Alliance members also are invited to participate in project task forces established to guide the Alliance's agenda and are invited to the semiannual meetings of the full Alliance.

The Alliance also provides roofing professionals the opportunity to fulfill their philanthropic goals through a variety of planned giving opportunities, including bequests, gifts of real estate or appreciate stock, life insurance policies and retirement plan assets, and charitable trusts.

In addition, roofing professionals are encouraged to support the Melvin Kruger Endowed Scholarship program, which provides financial support for students pursuing careers in the roofing or building construction industries. Gifts to the scholarship program are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law and can be paid during a period of up to and including five years.

For more information about how you can make a commitment to the Alliance and help secure the future of the roofing industry, contact Alison L. LaValley, CAE, NRCA's associate executive director of member services, at (800) 323-9545, ext. 7573 or alavalley@nrca.net or visit www.roofingindustryalliance.net.

"We're doing more than just helping pay for college," Therrien says. "We are making a difference in their lives by investing in their future, which is a great opportunity for students and the industry overall."

Scholarship applications are being accepted until Jan. 31, 2015, for the 2015-16 academic year, and recipients will be selected on the basis of academic record; potential to succeed; leadership and participation in school and community activities; honors; work experience; a statement of career goals and aspirations; and an outside appraisal. Each award is \$5,000 and is renewable for up to three years of undergraduate study or until a bachelor's degree is earned provided recipients renew annually and maintain a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

Honoring workers

Each year, the Alliance sponsors the roofing industry's Most Valuable Player (MVP) Awards Program, which recognizes exceptional roofing workers from roofing contracting, distributor and supplier firms. Since its inception in 1999, 561 employees have been nominated, and 123 have been honored.

MVP award winners are chosen based on outstanding on-the-job performance; attracting new roofing workers and helping to retain existing ones; contributions to a team effort; community service and volunteerism; and other noteworthy contributions and activities.

"This award is an especially important and emotional accomplishment for these workers," says Tim Rainey, the Alliance's MVP Task Force chairman and president of Supreme Systems Inc., Dallas. "As an MVP award winner, a worker realizes he or she is valued for being an outstanding performer—not only on the job, but also in his or her community."

The MVP Awards Program recognizes a maximum of 10 workers, and one winner is chosen to be *Professional Roofing's* Best of the Best, an elite recognition and award co-sponsored by OMG Roofing Products, Agawam, Mass. The Best of the Best award winner receives an additional prize awarded by OMG Roofing Products and is featured in a cover story in *Professional Roofing*.

Helping Our Own

Although originally created to fund technical and educational programs, the Alliance's funds also have been used for charitable initiatives, including its Helping Our

Own Program, which helps those in the roofing industry who have experienced life-altering circumstances, such as an injury, illness, disability or death. In 2013, the Alliance disbursed \$36,000 to three roofing workers injured in the Boston Marathon bombing—Marc Fucarile, J.P. Norden and Paul Norden.

All three men were seriously injured in the bombing, and donations from the Alliance and Roofing Industries Marathon Victims Fund, set up by the North/East Roofing Contractors Association, have helped in their recovery efforts, including multiple surgeries, being fitted for prosthetic legs and ongoing physical therapy.

Affecting the industry

In 2013, the Alliance committed an additional \$200,000 in funding for RoofPoint, the Center for Environmental Innovation in Roofing's comprehensive roof rating system for the assessment and selection of sustainable roof systems. Organized around five primary categories of energy management, materials management, water management, durability and life-cycle management, and innovation, RoofPoint provides a detailed road map for achieving sustainable low-slope roof systems. Stakeholders have created more than 450 project applications using the online tool.

As the demand for increased energy efficiency of buildings has grown, so have the demands on programs such as RoofPoint to provide industry stakeholders with best practice information about sustainability, including energy efficiency, longevity and durability. The additional funding from the Alliance was invested in promotional and marketing opportunities, which are key to maintaining the rating system's momentum.

The Alliance also committed \$50,000 during a two-year period to develop the data necessary to substantiate compliance of nonadhered roof systems (seam-fastened, mechanically attached single-ply membrane roof systems) with requirements of the *International Energy Conservation Code*,® 2012 Edition. This project is being jointly funded by the Alliance, NRCA, the Canadian Roofing Contractors Association and SPRI.

In addition, in 2007, the Alliance's \$100,000 investment in support of Miami-based Florida International University's (FIU's) Wall of Wind has helped FIU mitigate hurricane damage by enhancing building codes, validating innovative mitigation technologies and developing

new materials. A full-scale hurricane simulation and destructive testing facility, the Wall of Wind was the first of its kind and allowed researchers, businesses, government agencies and the industry to test and analyze how structures and products perform in hurricane winds up to Category 5 accompanied by wind-driven and flying debris.

The Alliance continues to fund educational and training programs for workers, employers and the public by providing \$100,000 to update NRCA's Roof Application Training Programs. Each program has been updated to include a module addressing effective training skills in addition to training DVDs, instructor guides and student handouts in English and Spanish.

"NRCA's Roof Application Training Programs fulfilled a need for steep- and low-slope roofing contractors when they required it most, and I'm pleased to see these training modules are being revamped to better address current roof systems and safety requirements," McNamara says.

A bright future

For more than 18 years, the Alliance has been bringing together roofing contractors, manufacturers and suppliers who are devoted to the roofing industry. And by working together, this group of roofing professionals will continue to add to an already impressive list of achievements.

"The work of the Alliance is fundamental to the transformation of the roofing industry," says Tom Saeli, CEO of Duro-Last Roofing Inc., Saginaw, Mich. "The organization funds important scholarships, sponsors innovative research to advance the roofing industry and partners with members from all walks of the industry who really care about what the future holds. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?" 🌟🌟🌟

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