CRISIS & RECOVERY
FACING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

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• Tribute to Robert McCormick
• NIA Creates Resources to Aid the Industry
• Product Showcase
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- Portable
- Up to 1,000 Welds per Charge
- Weld and Charge at the Same Time

With INP-06 Weld Gun

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Proudly manufacturing the most comprehensive line of Insulation Fasteners and Equipment in the industry since 1961. We have the equipment to meet all Insulation Fastening needs.
On behalf of the Board of Directors of ESICA, I truly hope that everyone is doing well. These past few months have been very difficult for all. The COVID-19 Pandemic has certainly put a strain on our industry, and I hope that all businesses are successfully reopened and working on building back up!

In this volume of the ESICA Review we have a special tribute to a longtime member who we lost in April, Robert McCormick. Bob and his family have been a large part of ESICA for many years and continue to support the organization. He will be greatly missed.

As many of you know, we have decided to cancel our 2020 Fall Conference that was scheduled for September in Boston. We felt it was in the best interest of health and safety to cancel the event. I know many members look forward to their time at our conferences, and it saddens me that 2020 will be a year without ESICA Conferences, but it is for the best. Please visit our website (www.esica.org) as we are continuously gathering and posting helpful upcoming industry webinars.

Please be sure to save the date for our 2021 Spring Conference to take place from May 5th – May 7th at the Myrtle Beach Marriott Resort at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, SC. I greatly look forward to finally seeing everyone there!

Kind Regards,

Scott Grant
ESICA President
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OSHA Launches New COVID-19 Website for Construction Employers and Workers

OSHA has launched a new website dedicated to coronavirus-related guidance for construction employers and workers. The guidance on the webpage includes actions to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus.

OSHA advised employers of workers engaged in construction to remain alert to changing outbreak conditions, as they relate to community spread of the virus and testing availability. The administration advises construction employers implement infection prevention measures in accordance to the changing conditions in their localities.

The new webpage introduces guidance, rather than new standards or regulations, and creates no new legal obligations for construction employers. The resources included are advisory in nature and designed to assist employers in providing the safest and healthiest workplace possible.

The following job hazard analysis was retrieved from the OSHA website: https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/construction.html We have included just a few of the guidelines and recommendations featured on the website for your review.

The table below describes construction work tasks associated with the exposure risk levels in OSHA’s occupational exposure risk pyramid, which may serve as a guide to employers in this sector.

**Construction work tasks associated with exposure risk levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower (caution)</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very High</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tasks that allow employees to remain at least 6 feet apart and involve little contact with the public, visitors, or customers. Note: For activities in the lower (caution) risk category, OSHA’s <a href="https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/construction.html">Interim Guidance for Workers and Employers of Workers at Lower Risk of Exposure</a> may be most appropriate.</td>
<td>• Tasks that require workers to be within 6 feet of one another. • Tasks that require workers to be in close contact (within 6 feet) with customers, visitors, or members of the public.</td>
<td>• Entering an indoor work site occupied by people such as other workers, customers, or residents suspected of having or known to have COVID-19, including when an occupant of the site reports signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Note: Employers may consider delaying this work following the guidance below.</td>
<td>• Category not applicable for most anticipated work tasks. Note: Most construction work tasks are associated with no more than high exposure risk; see the work tasks associated with lower, medium, or high risk on this chart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conducting a job hazard analysis can help you to determine whether work activities require close contact (within 6 feet) between workers and customers, visitors, or other members of the public. When a job hazard analysis identifies activities with higher exposure risks, and those activities are not essential, consider delaying them until they can be performed safely (e.g., when appropriate infection prevention measures, as discussed on this page, can be implemented or once community transmission subsides).

*Be sure to log on to the OSHA construction website at: [https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/construction.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/construction.html) for full analysis and detailed information.*
NIA Is Here to Help Ensure the Health and Prosperity of Contractors and the Industry

As of July 2020, NIA has created more than 65 resources to aid its members facing COVID-19 business decisions, and then went beyond that to offer these resources for free to the entire insulation industry.

A Message from NIA’s EVP/CEO Michele M. Jones

Like you, NIA has changed our approach to daily work to address the current needs of our members. Initially, when COVID-19 came into town and I realized we would be shuttered in place, I thought, “OK, this will last a few weeks and then we will all get back to normal,” but I was wrong! Our world has probably changed forever, and in the midst of these changes, the NIA staff feels even closer to our NIA members than ever before, even without our Annual Convention.

Getting used to this new normal is difficult for many reasons, but the biggest of all is that every day brings a new challenge, and there seems to be little certainty of when we will get back to how things used to be—and if that is even possible. Each and every member is important to us, but our core members are our contractors. We are driven to provide our 177 contractor member companies in 114 branch locations with the resources and knowledge to enhance the security, growth, and productivity of their businesses. Contractors are king and always will be—when our contractor members succeed, so does the rest our industry. In addition, our mission and our passion is to provide all our members with information and education, in a timely way, so that you can adjust and continue your work, keep your employees informed, and stay aware, safe, and healthy in this new environment. The resources we have been creating are done with these membership categories in mind.

Some of you may already be familiar with these activities, but if not, when you have a moment, visit www.insulation.org/covid and see all of the resources we have created to assist you and your business.

NIA Informs

Since March, our biweekly digital newsletter has been full of the latest safety updates, legal advice, legislative changes, and state reopening guidance to help your business navigate the rapidly changing environment and the COVID-19 challenges. As of late July, this digital newsletter will now be published on an as-needed basis. Access the full archives for all the linked resources at www.insulation.org/covid.

During These Times, NIA Offers Free Recorded Webinars & Articles by Experts

To help you make informed business decisions, we have been offering articles with legal guidance and weekly webinars, on the topics shown here, for free to NIA members. More than 3,500 people have participated, and you can watch them at your convenience to learn about the latest COVID-19 updates regarding OSHA, employment law, stimulus updates, and possible new revenue streams. You can watch any of our past webinars at www.vimeo.com/niainfo.
• Addressing Safety Matters Amid COVID-19—A Panel Discussion
• Now & Next: COVID: Contracts, Labor, and Safety
• Sales Strategies during Uncertain Times
• Part 1: Contractors Panel Discussion on Construction Challenges and Opportunities Amid COVID-19
• Part 2: Contractors Panel Discussion on Construction Challenges and Opportunities Amid COVID-19
• OSHA Alliance Webinar on Construction Safety for the Insulation and Construction Industry During COVID-19 (slides are available for this webinar as this webinar was a live-only webinar)
• Top Tips for Contractors to Strengthen Their Strategic Relationships during COVID-19
• Part 1: How Construction Owners Are Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis
• Part 2: New Challenges and Solutions for Contractors
• Economist’s Outlook during COVID-19
• Supply Chain Disruptions: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Trucking Industry
• Engineering and Construction Economic Outlook in the COVID-19 Environment
• Effective Crisis Communications for Business Leaders
• Investment Strategies and Stock Market Outlook
• Pandemic Politics: How Washington Will Respond to the Coronavirus Crisis
• Best Practices for Working Remotely
• Coronavirus—What Construction Industry Employers Need to Know, Part 1
• COVID-19 Stimulus—What Every Construction Employer Needs to Know, Part 2

Understanding COVID-19’s Impact on the Industry
You are not alone. To help understand the impact for insulation contractors and the industry, NIA has partnered with other insulation associations to survey contractors every 2–3 weeks. See the progression from March to the present through the results of 6 surveys, which are available at www.insulation.org/covid.

Access the Latest Information from the CDC and OSHA
So that you can spend your time making business decisions, NIA has done the research for you. The NIA staff has curated the latest updates, videos, resources, and posters from the CDC, OSHA, FEMA, business management, and human resources experts.

NIA’s Educational Center
If you or your employees have time for training, NIA and our partners have created a variety of training and educational resources for the industry. See all options under the resource tab in NIA’s Educational Center or our training and tools section of the website.

New Virtual Training Classes
NIA is now offering online training courses so your employees can learn from anywhere. Choose from the Introduction to Mechanical Insulation (appropriate for most employees) or become a Certified Thermal Insulation Inspector™ through the Thermal Insulation Inspector Certification™ Program (appropriate for experienced employees). NIA is developing several new online training programs, which will be announced via www.Insulation.org in the future.

NIA Members Receive a Free Call with NIA’s Legal Counsel to Discuss Safety
NIA’s Legal Counsel Gary Auman, of Auman, Mahan & Furry, is offering to respond to 1 safety matter question per NIA member company, until August 31.

Questions for NIA?
If there is any way that NIA can be of assistance to your company, let us know. Email membership@insulation.org. These are difficult times, but together we can get through them.
Visit www.insulation.org/covid to access all the resources we have created to assist you and your business.
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PLAN AHEAD!

It’s never too early to start planning for 2021. We’ve got some great events in the works for next year’s conferences, so be sure to mark your calendars for Spring and Fall 2021.

ESICA SPRING CONFERENCE
May 5 - 7, 2021
Myrtle Beach Marriott Resort at Grande Dunes
Myrtle Beach, SC

ESICA CSIA FALL CONFERENCE
September 9 - 11, 2021
The Ritz Carlton, Amelia Island
Amelia Island, FL

Looking forward to seeing all of you soon!
In Memory of Robert McCormick, President of McCormick Insulation and Supply

It is with great sadness and a deep sense of loss that we announce the passing of our dear friend, associate and past ESICA President Robert McCormick.

‘Bob’ or ‘Bobbie’ as he was affectionately known, was an integral part of the insulation industry for over 50 years. He began working in the insulation business as a teenager during vacations and summer breaks. In 1963, while still enrolled in college and following the death of his grandfather Irving McCormick, Bob started working full time in the family business with his father Norvin McCormick. He graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park in 1965 with a degree from the College of Business and Public Administration.

McCormick Insulation was originally located on Woodland Avenue in Baltimore, MD. In 1988, Bob oversaw the building of the new headquarters for the company in Owings Mills, MD, where the business is still operating today. What began as one branch, expanded to 12 branches spanning the east coast from Maryland to Georgia.

Over his 57 years in the business, Bob worked in every position possible and led the company as President until his passing in April. Bob served as President of ESICA and was a member of the National Insulation Association, where he held the position of chairman of the Insurance Committee.

Those close to Bob reflect on his love and dedication to family and friends:

Megan Thompson, Bob’s daughter, speaks about her dad:

“My dad took great pride in working with his children day in and day out over the years. None of his children thought they would go into the family business but over the years, Aimee, Brett, Brenna and myself all began careers in different areas of the company.

“Dad also worked with some of his best friends, including lifelong buddies Jack and Patti Schunk and of course his wife of 51 years, Jane, who came to work after their youngest daughter was born in the 80s.

“I think my dad was best known for holding court by the pool at ESICA and NIA conventions with friends and colleagues, sharing a meal and just talking business. He made some of his greatest friends through the industry, including Bob Tise and Bob Elsey. He was very passionate and often spoke his mind.
“Outside of the business he was an avid reader and enjoyed spending time at the beach with his family, working with wood and having good meals with family and friends. For years he coached his daughters in soccer, sponsoring the team the MISFITS and rooting for USA Women’s soccer team. He adored any time he got to spend with his 11 grandkids, including going to water polo games and the occasional swim meet, teaching them how to work with tools and making them laugh. He also liked traveling with his wife and going on River Boat cruises with a small group of friends or spending long weekends in St. Michaels, MD with the Tises.

“My dad taught me valuable lessons in business. He instilled in me the importance of customer service before I even started my first job. I have carried that with me through my other careers and I make it a priority here at McCormick too. He taught me the importance of hard work and not being complacent. I strive now to make him proud in everything I do.”

Bob Tise remembers his friend and associate:

“As all of us who knew Bob would agree, he was one of a kind! I first met Bob at an ESICA conference in Annapolis, MD, some 34 years ago. I remember that day like it was yesterday. I was very nervous meeting a man I heard so much about -- an Industry legend -- and a man, who I was told, didn’t like many people. I expected I would meet Bob and I would be on that list of his.

“To my surprise we hit it off and over the years I became such good, close friends not only with Bob but with the entire McCormick Family. They are all very special to me and I am so happy our paths crossed.

“People who didn’t know Bob that well surely missed out on a true treasure. Outside, he came across as a difficult person, but that was not Bob to those of us who knew him well! Inside he had a heart of gold, was very intelligent, an Industry Leader, and an avid reader. Bob would always tell you the way it was and never sugarcoated anything. To me that was his charm.

“Bob taught me so much about our industry, life, and family. He was an Icon to me and I will never forget all the good times we had with he and his wife Jane over the years. There is a big void in my life with the passing of Bob. I always think of him and I’m so sorry that because of the Covid-19 we could not say good bye to a very special person and close friend.

“How I miss our Pool Committee Meetings we had at every ESICA and NIA Meeting! To this day I believe our Meetings are still talked about and a memory that I will always have!”

(continued on page 17)
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Jack Schunk remembers his lifelong friend & business partner

What do I say or where do I begin? I could write volumes about our escapades over the 72 years of friendship. I met Robbie when we were 5 years old, believe it or not, in Sunday School. We did a stint in the Cub Scouts, went to high school together, then to The University of Maryland where we were roommates and shared an off-campus apartment.

Robbie’s grandfather would take him to the office on Saturday to check the mail. Following their visits to the office, Robbie would have on a new pair of shoes. That is because he would purposely put on an old tattered pair of shoes with gaping holes for his weekly office visit and his grandfather would say, “Boy, don’t you have anything better to wear?” Then it was off to the store they would go to purchase a new pair of shoes.

I worked at the family business temporarily waiting to get my orders from the Army in 1964. After I returned from basic training, Robbie asked me if I would work with him full time, a partnership that would last 51 years. During those years there were trials and tribulations which ended in triumphs.

In 1965 Robbie stood as my best man when I married Patti, who also worked for the company for 45 years. Robbie met Patti’s best friend from childhood at our wedding and four years later Robbie and Janie were married, when I was his best man and Patti was Janie’s matron of honor. Shortly thereafter we started McCormick Insulation Supply. I know that Robbie’s children, who were taught by the very best, will succeed in all of their future endeavors.

I am extremely proud to have been Robbie’s friend and business associate. Many fond memories were made over the years and I will miss him.

Beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend, Bob McCormick will be missed by all who knew him.

We will remember Bob for his generosity, dedication and hard work on behalf of all of us at ESICA.
Thank you for
40 years of partnership.

Since 1980, Proto Corporation has been working hard to earn the trust of our customers, manufacture the highest quality products and deliver the industry’s best service. Thank you for your continued support.
FIT TIGHT COVERS JOINS THE ESICA FAMILY

ESICA extends a warm welcome to Calvin Brasel and Fit Tight Covers, manufacturers of custom removable and reusable thermal insulation covers for commercial and industrial mechanical piping and equipment. With facilities located in Evansville, Indiana, Fit Tight Covers serves industries across the country including power, chemical, refining, and pharmaceutical as well as hospitals, colleges, and large business campuses.

“We are proud to be owned, managed, and staffed locally,” reports Calvin Brasel, General Manager. “With over 10,000 square feet of space and an experienced team of full-time Union International Association of Heat, Frost & Insulation fabricators, we can quickly and accurately fulfill nationwide demands for any type of removable cover.”

Calvin was well acquainted with the ESICA organization through his association with CSIA. When Fit Tight Covers began increasing their presence on the East Coast, most recently completing a large powerhouse job in Pennsylvania, Calvin knew it was time to join our organization.

“As a new Associate Member of ESICA, we expect to develop many great relationships within the organization,” emphasizes Calvin. “I’ve been in this business for 33 years and I truly believe I can bring in-depth knowledge and understanding of removable insulation covers to our ESICA contractors.”

Once again, all of us at ESICA welcome Calvin Brasel and Fit Tight Covers to our growing organization!
ESICA MEMBERS FACE THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19: STRICT COMPLIANCE, SAFETY AND RESILIENCE PREVAIL

The dramatic spread of COVID-19 has disrupted all of our lives.

Manufacturers, distributors and contractors are creating innovative programs and protocols to minimize the impact of coronavirus on the health of their employees, all the while working diligently to minimize disruptions to their businesses.

We’re pleased to present the ways in which our members have overcome the challenges of this crisis and are navigating the months ahead for the safe return of their people to the workplace.

Owens Corning Takes a Thoughtful and Safe Approach in All Areas of Operation

“The health and safety of our employees, their families, and all of our stakeholders remains our top priority as we work together to provide essential products to our customers,” said Chief Executive Officer Brian Chambers. “In the face of rapidly changing market conditions, we will continue to adjust our operations to meet near-term demand shifts while ensuring we are positioned for long-term success.”

Brian Chambers, Chief Executive Officer, Owens Corning

Owens Corning and the products we make are critical for the continued and immediate operation of other essential businesses and infrastructures including roads and bridges, commercial and residential building construction, wind energy, transportation, and other necessities of life. Our products protect and maintain hospitals, medical labs, schools, military housing, grocery stores, pharmacies and others actively providing critical care and resources to people in need of assistance as well as for building and repair of low-income and multifamily housing.

As an essential business, we must assure the safety and well-being of our employees. OC has implemented many enhanced operating protocols, including robust cleaning procedures, use of personal protective equipment, social distancing, employee health screenings, restrictions, and work-from-home requirements at all of its locations consistent with the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, and local state and government mandates. In addition, the company has enhanced sick leave and other healthcare benefits for employees to provide enhanced assistance.

For Brad Power, Sr. Regional Manager, Foamglas, work-from-home requirements means ‘business as usual’ with constant contact via phone and computer in place of face-to-face meetings. “We have used Zoom and Skype a ton more to answer questions and show our products via PowerPoint presentations,” reports Brad. “I have been in contact with all my customers, addressing questions and concerns such as inventory inquiries … making sure we have enough material available when everyone returns to work. Another sector of my customer base is the engineering community. They have been working remotely as well with questions about applications during this transition. The work is still there … especially if it’s deemed essential!”

Four-Level Operating Framework

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and many countries and regions begin to reopen, Owens Corning has implemented a four-level operating framework, detailing how employees will return to the workplace as restrictions are lifted. The OC Operating Level for a country or state is determined by a combination of both
external and internal factors including local regulations and requirements which supersede OC recommenda-
tions and must be followed.

Many OC sites recently shifted to Operating Level 3, while others are quickly moving in that direction. These
levels may change at any time based on external and on-site conditions.

The OC Operating Level 3 Guidance & Restrictions serve as a comprehensive resource for how the company
is conducting business. Given the dynamic nature of the situation, these are updated regularly with the most
current version posted for employees on the COVID-19 Guidance site on the myOC intranet. Current operating
level 3 encompass guidelines and restrictions covering a wide variety functions ranging from business travel,
events and meetings... to safety protocols including face protection, social distancing, health screenings and
temperature checks, to name just a few. Owens Corning continues to monitor COVID-19 and make adjust-
ments to these materials as needed.

“Level 4, which was total lockdown, is now in our rear-view mirror,” says Brad Power. “When this first started,
there were many questions and we had to learn to be patient and accept the reality of the situation. We are all
looking forward to Level 2, where we can get out there in person, with restrictions of course, and ultimately to
Level 1, a return to normal activity levels. Our safety comes first and OC has put that on top of the priority list.
They have always put us first before business. Once we adapted to the restrictions and made a business plan
we then turned our attention to our customers.”

“These are extraordinary times that remind us of the power of the human spirit,” concludes CEO Brian
Chambers. “Together, we will get through this. As the world comes together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic,
Owens Corning remains steadfast in our support of our colleagues, customers, partners and the communities
in which we live and work.”

Johns Manville Plays a Critical Role in Serving
Essential Businesses

“Many people think of insulation as material only for residential or commercial office buildings; however,
it actually plays a critical role in many essential industries, like hospitals, health care facilities and data
centers. These types of facilities were especially taxed during the COVID-19 outbreak and shelter-in-place
orders, and JM quickly adapted to ensure that we could safely meet the needs of the essential businesses
we help serve while still protecting our employees.”

Dave Skelly, General Manager, Performance Materials, Johns Manville

As COVID-19 spread across the U.S., JM responded quickly to protect our employees while still remaining
operational as an essential business. Based on the guidelines set forth by the local governments at each
of our locations, as well as those established by the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health
Organization, JM mandated that employees who could work from home do so, in order to limit the
number of employees in the plants and offices.
Custom-designed to fit all mechanical systems and equipment
Reduce energy costs
Simplify access to components
Can be measured, fabricated, and shipped globally

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However, remaining operational as an essential business came with calculated risks, and we had our first positive COVID-19 case in our Edison, New Jersey PVC plant in late March. JM responded quickly and quarantined the employee as well as those who were in close contact with him at the facility, and then conducted deep cleaning protocols. This allowed us to contain what could have potentially been an outbreak at one of our facilities. Rather than experiencing a devastating loss, JM was responsive and decisive at this facility, and we used our learnings from this scenario to shape our planning and responses for future cases at other facilities.

“I’m thrilled to say that the employee in question is healthy and back at work, helping to deliver the JM experience for our customers every day,” reports Dave Skelly. “Beyond that, to date, we have had a limited number of cases at our facilities because of the safety measures we have implemented to help protect our employees.”

Remaining Present and Available to Customers and Markets

Over the last several years, we have been honing and developing our competencies in digital communication, electronic market outreach, and e-learning platforms – and this was absolutely pivotal during the shutdown. We used this time to deliver more webinars than ever before, serving as a resource for customers who were working from home and looking to capitalize on their “down time” to further educate themselves.

We delivered ten webinars in a month, on topics ranging from “The Health and Safety of Fiberglass and Mineral Wool” to “Insulation Systems for LNG Piping”. The attendance rates at these educational webinars increased significantly during the months people were working from home. Due to this increased attendance, we began producing additional educational content to help meet the demand of the market. Even though face-to-face interactions with customers are limited right now, that certainly doesn’t mean communication and support has stopped. We are leveraging our leadership position on these digital platforms to help address customers’ needs, questions, and concerns remotely.

Adapting to Accommodate Changes in Operations

By streamlining areas such as the supply chain, manufacturing operations, and transportation logistics, we have been able to largely ensure that service to customers has not been disrupted. The practices we have put in place to accomplish this will continue to be components of JM’s operations going forward as they have helped to streamline and optimize operations. Additionally, we will continue to focus on e-learning and providing digital resources for customers and the industry.

Our new best practices also include communication rhythms with our employees. Almost overnight, we had to shift to a work-from-home environment, transitioning entirely to digital communication. Our team adapted to working from home very well, and part of that was led by managers staying engaged with their teams. We quickly saw employees and managers utilizing the digital communication tools available to them. This included things such as recurring check-in calls, virtual happy hours, and an expanded use of collaboration software. Many of us, for the first time, had meetings on camera in order to better connect with each other while practicing social distancing.

Despite the fact that many of our employees continue to work from home, our product development projects have continued to march forward. Our product team is effectively utilizing all the resources available to them to ensure that projects in the innovation pipeline have continued to progress. Since our travel has been significantly restricted, we have learned to take new approaches to successfully completing these projects.
IMC Avoids Layoffs Despite Construction Slowdowns

“While many industrial and commercial jobs shut down in the early days of the pandemic, IMC was able to weather the storm. As a full-service distributor and fabricator with a diversified customer base, we were able to stay busy enough to retain our entire staff.”

Marc Napolitano, Vice President and General Manager, Insulation Materials Corporation (IMC)

The construction slowdowns definitely impacted workflow for our employees. We worked in shifts, putting half of our people to work half the time, the others the other half in order to maintain safe social distances. This went on for quite a while, and while it was difficult, we are delighted to say we had no layoffs at IMC.

We are a family business, with a “people first” mindset. We really did not want to see our employees at home without paychecks and the security of knowing they had a job. As we told everyone, ‘If you are willing to come to work, we’ll keep you working.’ I am so proud that we were able to make good on that promise to our dedicated employees.

My cell phone and laptop proved to be vital for me to communicate with employees and customers every day; however, as a distributor/fabricator, many of our employees needed to be in our offices, warehouses and fabrication shops every day during a very uncertain and uneasy time. We understood the dedication they demonstrated by showing up every day. I travelled to branches when possible to talk to our people and keep up morale. Our management made sure to be with them every day, getting through the pandemic together. It was amazing to see every employee pull together and do their part to get through this crisis.

One of the more positive aspects of this crisis is the increased communication between our upper level management and the branch managers and employees. I have been speaking to my managers and local supervisors much more often than I ever did, checking on them to make sure that they had all the support and supplies needed at each branch. This has absolutely brought us closer together as a company and as people.

Fastest Inc., Naturally Adapts To Shelter-in-Place Guidelines

Fortunately, since we are a software company that operates in both the U.S. and Canada, we are setup to easily operate remotely with support and training through online meetings and phone calls. During this crisis our customers were able to make the transition from the office to home without missing a beat or missing a bid.

Gretchen Postiglione, Director of Marketing, FastEST, Inc.

Luckily flexibility and the ability to make quick changes on jobs has always been key to survival in the construction industry. Now, this flexibility must extend to where we work as well. This movement away from everyone being in one location, expands the potential for more people to work remotely.

Often, members of our team will travel for training or conferences, making consistent staff meetings hard. During the shelter-in-place, we started using online video conferencing to touch base once a week with everyone in the office. This helped keep us all abreast of new changes and updates that were being made to our software. Now back in the office, we continue this practice to keep contact between employees to a minimum. Even after social distancing isn’t necessary, we will continue weekly online staff meetings to keep traveling employees engaged.

When we needed to quickly let customers know that we were offering free in-home licenses for use during shelter-in-place orders, we added an alert to our software. This was crucial in getting that information in front of our software users when they needed it most. We have also used email, social media and our website as secondary outlets for communication.

Software Technology allows all users, no matter their location, to access their jobs and bids from their computer. And in this climate and industry, where every dollar counts, companies that can adjust and change quickly will be the ones that thrive.

Read on and discover how four ESICA Contractors -- Scott Grant, John Lamberton, Jerry McCaffrey and Ray Levesque – have met the challenges of the coronavirus crisis over these past months.
ESICA Contractors Meet the Challenges of a Changing Workplace

It’s a whole new world out there and ESICA contractors are showing amazing resilience and strength at every turn.

We recently spoke with four contractors who were eager to share their insights on the impact of the crisis on their business and the different ways they are coping. From embracing new technologies to working remotely... from strict cleaning protocols to enhanced protective equipment, these contractors continue to overcome difficult challenges and move forward.

Here are the experiences of Scott Grant, President of Insultech, John Lamberton, COO of Irex Contracting Group, Jerry McCaffrey, Treasurer and Partner at Thermal Solutions, and Ray Levesque, VP of Operations, B.C. Flynn Contracting.

ESICA: What are the challenges and opportunities you have faced during this crisis?

Scott: We were very fortunate – we never had to shut down operations. In the early months we altered our work crew schedules on larger jobs, splitting the crew to 10 men at a time on a 20 men crew. That went on for two weeks. Now we are almost busier than before the crisis. I think that owners were afraid of job shutdowns, so they pushed to get things done.

John: We have felt the impact of Covid-19 in just about every market. Some, like NY and the NE were hit especially hard. Revenues in those markets were down in excess of 50%, but have since rebounded to near pre-Covid levels. Other areas that rely heavily on the petrochemical markets remain soft and are likely to stay soft for the foreseeable future. Covid has also forced us all to work remotely and to establish new procedures for when offices reopen. Fortunately, the Irex companies were already quite far along when it came to remote working and the use of the cloud.

Jerry: We have been very lucky. We only lost 1 week in the beginning of the crisis. At the time, we were in the middle of many hospital projects that have continued on. Hospitals needed to get up and running, and we are essential to that. By the end of the first week I had five people come back ... the third week another five with 10 people at various locations. Many entrances at the hospitals were shut down, with only one entrance open for patients. We were working in mechanical rooms, at a distance from those who were ill. While some of our workers were reluctant to come back, by the end of the third week everyone returned with the addition of 6 new hires.

Ray: We found it very difficult to get the protective equipment we needed or to restock when supplies ran out. We normally keep respirators as part of our PPE to send out to a jobsite. Hand sanitizers and wipes—the items project managers were requesting -- were getting more and more scarce. On the other hand, the empty public schools provided us with an opportunity for additional construction time—

(continued on page 27)
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our teams could now start working in the schools in March, not July, so this helped get things moving. The federal stimulus package actually was an early hurdle as workers were making as much money remaining home as coming back to work. It became more and more difficult to get people to the jobsite, limiting available manpower during the first few months of the pandemic.

**ESICA: With limited face-to-face contact, how are you communicating to associates & customers during this crisis?**

**Scott:** Our communications have gone to the virtual world. In-person meetings are not like they were. Zoom, Go to Meeting, Suite – we are using them all. Even though I am old school and I like to see people face-to-face, these virtual communications tools work.

**John:** In such uncertain times communications is even more critical than it has ever been. Working from home can sound great but in practice it has its challenges. The biggest being communications and social isolation. Right from the onset we established a “new routine” of regularly scheduled conference calls and video conferencing. In the beginning these calls were daily. Just trying to figure out how to implement our disaster recovery and business continuity plans in the midst of a pandemic were things I hope not to ever have to do again. For a business that hadn’t developed such plans, this challenge must have been overwhelming. Today we have settled into the “new routine” and embraced the use of technology such as Skype, Teams and Zoom. We had been using these platforms for sometime but not to the level we do now. I am on some form of video conferencing at least once a day, every day.

**Jerry:** We communicate almost entirely via email, text and phone calls. Before the crisis, I was in my customers’ offices twice a week, even if it was just to say hello. This all had to stop. I still went into my office with a mask after the first few weeks. Caution was the key word. Unknowns made people very nervous. I zoomed and did video conferencing with business associates, family, and friends.

**Ray:** As some people are more tech savvy than others, we sometimes ran into technical issues when communicating with associates and customers. Internally, we are doing far more phone conferences than ever before and we’ve done meetings on zoom. We recently just had a zoom related meeting with ESICA. Naturally, the biggest drop off is face-to-face meeting and job walks. In the past, there would be four or five contractors on a job walk at the same time. Now it’s one company at a time.

**ESICA: What are some of the practices you have put into play that might be adopted in the future?**

**Scott:** We have had to make adjustments to almost all aspects of the way we do business from how we order and receive materials at the jobsite to how we social distance and reconfigured our office space. We do most of our jobsite business by teleconferences and videos rather than being able to go to the job for meetings or to walk the jobs. PPE is not optional so we also have to make sure we always have enough respirators, masks, shields, etc. on hand for our employees to safely work. I think that after getting used to these new practices the majority of them will stick around for awhile.

**John:** I think working remotely and to some degree video conferencing are here to stay. We developed a new cash flow modeling program, as a result of Covid, that we will continue to use as a permanent part of our business. We are likely to see more ways to use cloud services and other yet to-be invented ways to communicate. Where we end up a year from now will depend on the scientific community’s ability to develop treatments and a successful vaccine.
Jerry: Caution will be here for a very long while. But truthfully, I pride myself on friendship, familiarity, and face-to-face meetings. I hope it all goes back to the way it was!

Ray: Protection, caution, and social distancing will be around for awhile. Certainly for contractors in the Northeast, who were hit harder. Getting around – how we work, shop and dine – will all be impacted. I think the ways we are manning jobs for additional PPE, respirators, face shields – and tackling jobs to completion -- these considerations will remain.

ESICA: How do you see this crisis changing our industry in the near and distant future?

Scott: Even when a cure is found, people will still be skeptical about getting out and returning to the way we all lived, so I think much of the virtual ways will continue and can have different impacts on different regions depending on what the strengths of a regions economy is. In other words, in regions that build data centers the industry will be strong because of all the internet work going on, regions that rely on leasing commercial space may slow down because companies have seen they don't need as many people in offices, petroleum based areas may see a decrease if less people are commuting to work and so forth.

John: I really don’t know the answer to that. It seems that human beings have a short memory and that old habits die hard. That said there will be change. Again, the use of video conferencing rather than in person meetings. Less traveling just for the sake of seeing someone in person. We might see more modular construction, limiting the number of craft workers required to mobilize on a given site. Maybe even the use of robotics in some case replacing people in places we wouldn't expect. I also worry about trade organizations. We’ll have to see how comfortable people will be coming back to large gatherings and whether or not networking with ones peers remains as important to future generations as it does to current and past generations.

Jerry: Lost time for daily testing and spacing of work areas has caused us to lower production by 15% so far. I think everybody will adjust productivity for the future. We are working on a casino and hotel in Philadelphia near the sports complex. We are seeing chips on hard hats at the site. If a worker is in close proximity to another, the chip beeps. If somebody comes back and tests positive they can be identified and others around them notified. Employees have a good feeling about this type of alert system.

Ray: The cost of jobs is going to go up due to the need for extra protection. Based on conversations we’ve had, added personal protection equipment and social distancing are here to stay. Inevitably, it will drive up the cost of doing business.

All of us at ESICA extend a big THANK YOU to Scott, John, Jerry and Ray for sharing your experiences.

We wish you all good health and continued prosperity in these difficult times.
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New Data Shows Construction Activity Returning To Pre-Coronavirus Levels In Many Parts Of The Country As Some Firms Begin To Add Workers

A new survey by the Associated General Contractors of America and data from construction technology firm Procore show that construction activity is returning to pre-coronavirus levels in many parts of the country and some firms are adding workers. The new economic data, however, also shows some future projects are being canceled and many others are being delayed by supply chain issues and labor shortages, underscoring the need for additional federal recovery measures, association officials noted.

“Many of the immediate economic impacts of the coronavirus have passed and, as a result, activity and hiring are up, a bit,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “But while the immediate crisis appears to have passed, we are just now beginning to appreciate some of the longer-term impacts of the pandemic on the industry.”

Construction activity has returned to pre-coronavirus levels in 34 states, based on data on workers’ hours analyzed by Procore. And construction has returned to pre-coronavirus levels in Dallas and Miami, according to Procore’s data on 8 large metro areas. Meanwhile, the association’s survey found that only 8 percent of construction firms were forced to furlough or lay off workers in June while 21 percent report adding employees, compared to one-in-four firms letting workers go between March and May.

“But it is important to remember that construction activity typically increases quite a bit between March 1 and the end of May as the weather improves and more work gets underway,” Simonson commented. “Getting to March 1 levels is a sign of progress, but it doesn’t mean things are back to normal.”

Simonson added that the AGC survey and Procore’s data show the severe toll the pandemic took on the construction industry. For example, 61 percent of firms report having had at least one project halted or canceled because of the pandemic. One in four firms report that construction materials shortages, caused by lock downs and trade disruptions, are causing delays on current projects. Meanwhile, the Procore data found that smaller firms experienced more severe declines in construction activity during the pandemic than larger firms.

“We are living in a time when change seems to be the new norm, but something that will never change is the resilience of the construction industry,” said Kristopher Lengieza, Procore’s Senior Director of Business Development. “To date, a majority of states are experiencing levels of construction activity equal to, or in some cases, much higher than they reported prior to COVID-19.”

Simonson added that, moving forward, only 12 percent of firms report they plan to furlough or lay off staff over the next four weeks while 17 percent anticipate adding to their headcount during that time span. Yet even as more construction firms predict they will expand during the next several weeks, 42 percent do not expect demand will recover to normal levels for at least four months, and most of those firms expect recovery will take longer than six months.
Simonson noted that construction firms are counting on additional federal help to improve demand for construction and make it easier to return people to their payrolls. Fifty-five percent of firms report they are counting on Congress and the Trump administration to enact liability reform that protects firms that are complying with coronavirus safety protocols from litigation. And 33 percent are counting on Congress to boost infrastructure spending to offset declining private-sector demand.

Many firms are also hoping that Congress will not extend the unemployment supplement that is currently set to expire at the end of July. Notably, 34 percent of firms that called back employees who had been furloughed report having some personnel refuse to return to work because of those unemployment supplements. “Extending the supplement will only make it harder for more employers to bring people back onto payrolls,” Simonson cautioned.

“Without additional help from D.C., the few gains this industry has made during the past few weeks will likely be fleeting,” Simonson added. “That is why we will continue to push Congress and the Trump administration to enact the kind of long-term economic recovery measures this industry needs to truly rebound from the coronavirus.”

The association’s new survey is based on responses from over 630 firms collected between June 9 and 17. Procore’s data is based on the transactions logged via the company’s software by tens of thousands of construction firms across the country.

Architects, health experts release strategies, tools for safely reopening buildings

AIA issues three new and enhanced tools for reducing risk of COVID-19 transmission in buildings.

As communities across the US initiate phased reopening plans, The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is releasing new resources today to support employers, public officials and design professionals with re-occupying buildings more safely.

“Communities need guidance for reopening buildings safely during the pandemic,” said 2020 AIA President Jane Frederick, FAIA. “This initiative used credible science and current infectious disease data to develop practical strategies that can help businesses reopen their doors more safely during this pandemic.”

AIA’s initiative included a team of architects, public health experts, engineers, and facility managers who developed strategies to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in buildings, promote social distancing standards, and enhance wellbeing in communities transitioning to new lifestyle norms. A comprehensive report of the initiative is available on AIA’s website.

Initial outcomes from the team were used to develop new and enhanced tools that can assist employers, building owners, and design teams with best practices to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public while providing services.

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**IN THE NEWS**

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- **Tool #1 - Risk Management Plan for Buildings** – Provides a comprehensive process for assessing hazards in buildings and reducing risk. This methodology not only can be applied during the pandemic but for all shocks and stresses to create more resilient buildings and businesses.

- **Tool #2 - AIA Re-occupancy Assessment Tool (2.0)** – Provides an enhanced framework of strategies for re-opening buildings, including restaurants, retailers, offices, senior living facilities, schools and housing.

- **Tool #3 - COVID-19 ArchMap** – Architects can now input design strategies that mitigate risk of COVID-19 for any building type to AIA’s map. The map is produced in partnership with the University of Kansas’ Institute of Health + Wellness Design and intended to facilitate design innovation.

Outcomes from the charrettes are also being used to develop tailored strategies and considerations for offices, retailers, schools, and senior living facilities. Individualized reports will be released in phases, in the near future.

AIA’s team used a virtual charrette workshop - a method used to study specific issues in a limited time frame using an intense brainstorming session - to develop the strategies.

As part of the sessions, a group of public, environmental, and occupational health experts and physicians provided an independently developed, 90-minute briefing on SARS-CoV-2 infectious disease transmission, epidemiological models, and insights into the most current research of the virus as of early May.

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**COVID-19 Cases on Construction Sites Prompt Need for Health Screening and Contact Tracing**

**New Apps Streamline Process and Improve Safety**

From California to Maine, newly reopened construction businesses are experiencing rises in COVID-19 cases, prompting the need for robust solutions to avoid exposure and job site closures.

Two health screening apps from BuildCenter, a COBE Construction software spinoff, help construction firms comply with new protocols to reduce the risk of spread on job sites. The Health Screening Free app has been available since May. The new Pro edition targets projects requiring large numbers of workers.

Health Screening Pro has interactive, distributive workforce capabilities such as generating bar codes that let workers self-register on their mobile phones. Simultaneously, it sends information to the on-site screener’s device, creating a pending list that reduces routine data entry and ensures workers get on the job quickly. Data is securely stored on a cloud server, allowing quick “contact tracing” and notification should exposure occur.

“The construction industry is doing its best to adapt to new protocols during this pandemic,” says Shaun Olsen, co-founder of BuildCenter. “These tools make compliance easier and faster.”
Health Screening Pro features include:

**Self-registration.** Workers and visitors scan a QR code at the site screening station. The bar code automatically opens a website where they fill out personal contact information and a health survey.

**Customized Screening.** The administrator can customize the screening questions related to COVID-19 symptoms, including if they have had contact with anyone who has tested positive for the virus. Companies can modify questions and add additional ones tailored to their needs or locale. There also is a place to insert notes such as temperature readings if the company requires it.

**Bulk Entry.** After the initial screening, the app creates a list of individuals who have met the screening requirements. A click on each name gives them fast reentry without more data entry.

**Automated Email Alerts.** If necessary, alerts are sent to the project team automatically, so immediate action can be taken to mitigate risk to other workers on site.

Both Health Screening Pro and Health Screening Free are available on the Apple App Store or Google Play for use on Apple or Android phones and tablets.

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**NIA Announces New 2020–2021 Executive Committee and Board of Directors Officers**

The National Insulation Association (NIA) is pleased to announce its officers for 2020–2021, led by NIA’s new President, John T. Lamberton. The Executive Committee officers assumed their positions on Wednesday, May 27, in conjunction with the NIA Board of Directors meeting that took place virtually. On June 18, the full slate of officers and representatives assumed their positions following a majority vote by the NIA membership during NIA’s special Business Session, which also took place virtually. NIA’s Board of Directors normally assume their new roles at the conclusion of NIA’s Annual Convention, which was scheduled for April and canceled due to COVID-19 safety concerns.

Mr. Lamberton is the Chief Operating Officer of the Irex Contracting Group, which is based in East Petersburg, Pennsylvania. His career at Irex has spanned nearly 40 years, since he began in 1981 as a Construction Foreman in Providence, Rhode Island. In that time span, he advanced to Branch Manager of Atlantic Contracting (a subsidiary of Irex Corporation), then to Area Manager, and President. In 2007, he was promoted to Vice President of Construction Services for Irex Corporation, then Northeast Regional Manager, and in 2018, he assumed his current role.

During his term as NIA’s President, Mr. Lamberton’s theme is Take the Pledge, which encourages NIA members to pledge their support, not only to NIA, but also to other NIA member companies. Now more than ever, it is important to support each other, and it will be our partnerships that will keep our companies and this industry strong. His term concludes at NIA’s 66th Annual Convention, March 17–19, 2021, at the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa in Maui, Hawaii.
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(continued on page 42)
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