The Aluminum Extruders Council (AEC) and the ET Foundation are proud to be offering ET ’22, the 12th International Aluminum Extrusion Technology seminar and exhibition. This truly unique industry event will be held May 3-5, 2022 in Orlando, FL, providing an outstanding experience, rich with critical extrusion knowledge and valuable networking opportunities.

The inaugural ET was held in St. Louis, MO, in 1969, with 2019 marking 50 years of industry insight and learning through this monumental seminar series. Over the years, ET has grown and evolved to become the most important extrusion event for learning industry insights, discovering best practices, and preparing extrusion companies for the future. Following the first two ETs in 1969 and 1977, the series has followed a four-year schedule well suited to the pace of technology development—which meant that the 12th ET was originally planned for 2020. However, the pandemic caused the schedule to be pushed back to 2022. Despite the delay, ET will still celebrate its 50th anniversary at the ET ’22 in Orlando.

As chairman of ET ’22 and a long-time attendee and volunteer for many ETs over the years, I’m thrilled to see this event—which has had such an impact on my career and friendships—return in 2022. I know that I’m not alone in feeling that it has been too long since the last ET gathering in 2016. The purpose of this article is to provide guidance to both new and seasoned industry professionals on the value and benefits of ET and how to best plan for the upcoming show.

Continuing the ET Legacy

The ET seminar series is the longest-running educational event solely devoted to all facets of the aluminum extrusion industry. This is the seminar the world relies on to disseminate knowledge on the entire scope of the aluminum extrusion process, from billet sourcing, scrap processing, and log and billet casting to extruding, handling, and aging of profiles, and on through to fabrication, finishing, and assembly. It is the ideal place to learn, share ideas and experiences, mentor new talent, develop new and seasoned team members, and perfect strategic plans aimed at meeting tough challenges today and for the future. An overview of the seminar, workshops, and special events planned for ET ’22 is presented here.

Seminar: The ET ’22 seminar is organized by ET Seminar Committee volunteers and AEC staff. The program will include both general and technical sessions, featuring over 110 peer-reviewed technical papers. The general sessions will present important ET ’22 communications, industry updates, and fascinating motivational speakers.

The heart of the ET program are the technical sessions (Figure 1), which are presented in six concurrent tracks—BP – Billet Process and Equipment, EE – Extrusion Equipment, EP – Extrusion Practical, TH – Extrusion Theoretical, VA – Value Added, and MI – Management Issues. Organizing the technical sessions into tracks ensures that every aspect of the extrusion industry is highlighted.

Led by a track chair, committee members who are assigned to each track will select a Best of Track paper—and from this selection of papers, the entire ET volunteer team will select the Best of ET paper. As in past years, the Best of ET paper will be presented during the opening general session on the first day of the event.

One very important change has been made to the ET ’22 program—the Best of Track papers will now be presented during the general sessions. Previously, the Best of Track papers were slotted in with the technical sessions, a situation that meant that these excellent papers were competing with other presentations in the same time slot. By moving the Best of Track papers to the general sessions, the attendees will be able to enjoy access to all of the “Best of” presentations and all the authors will receive a level of recognition in line with their research and hard work.

Exhibition and Showcase: A second critical element of ET ’22 is the exhibition hall (Figure 2), which will host more than 100 exhibitors specifically focused on aluminum extrusion and related processes. The exhibition is an important networking component, creating the ideal venue for attendees and suppliers to meet for discussions. Additional evening reception events will be held within the exhibition hall in order to further facilitate and encourage conversation and networking.

Networking at ET is also extended to the Extrusion Showcase, which highlights creative extrusion designs that have been applied to practical products. Centrally...
located just outside the exhibition hall, the showcase is where designers, extruders, and others attendees will gather to converse and become inspired by the great designs on display.

**Training and Workshops:** As with past events, ET ’22 will incorporate in-conjunction training opportunities before and after the formal seminar program. These popular educational classes and workshops are available on a limited-space basis for an additional fee, enabling individuals and/or their teams to further leverage the travel costs associated with attending ET. The following classes are offered during ET Week:

- **Process Analysis and Optimization Workshop**, presented by Professor Wojtek Misiorek, director of the Loewy Institute at Lehigh University
- **Anodizing Essentials**, presented by experts from the Aluminum Anodizers Council
- **AEC Paint & Powder Coating Workshop**, presented by extrusion industry experts
- **AEC Die Clinic**, presented by members of AEC’s Die & Tooling Team (offered for the first time to nonmembers of the AEC)
- **Extrusion Excellence: Applied Fundamentals for Aluminum Extruders**, presented by Professor Wojtek Misiorek, from the University of Bologna, Italy
- **Tomesani**, from the Manufacturing Technologies Group at the University of Bologna, Italy
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**Special Events:** To commemorate the 50th anniversary of ET, a series of special events will be held, including a special anniversary celebration dinner, a founders golf outing, and a tour of the Kennedy Space Center. These events require an extra fee and are very worthwhile additions to the full ET ’22 experience.

**Health and Safety**

At the time of this article’s publication, the COVID-19 pandemic remains a worldwide issue, with ongoing developments regarding vaccination rates, protocols for travel, social distancing, mask wearing, testing, and other measures. With more than 1,500 total delegates from over 50 countries expected to attend ET ’22, the AEC board of directors and the ET leadership team and seminar committee are committed to shaping a safe and enjoyable experience for presenters, attendees, and exhibitors during all of ET.

Currently, it is too early to predict how the pandemic and its effects will develop over the next five months. ET leadership is prepared to put in place any and all necessary protocols in line with international regulations in order to ensure a healthy and safe event for all delegates. This may include requirements such as the wearing of approved masks, social distancing, proof of vaccination status, and conveniently located hand sanitizer stations. ET staff and hired security will be present onsite to make certain that only registered delegates and personnel attend functions, as well as to evaluate and take action if the health and safety rules are not being adhered to. This may include temporary or permanent removal of noncompliant attendees from ET functions or the entire event. As the opening date for ET ’22 moves closer, we will have a better idea of what exact protocols will be required to attend the event.

**Planning Ahead**

ET is the only place where education, networking, and benchmarking information specifically for the aluminum extrusion industry is available. This is a not-to-be-missed opportunity, and in order to get the most of the experience, it is important to plan ahead.

During the last three months of 2021, it is critically important for extrusion companies and all those looking to attend ET to begin to put together a plan of attack. At this stage, companies should begin by putting together a budget for the event and deciding how many personnel will be in attendance. From data and conversations with independent extruders and large companies, it is not uncommon for progressive extruders to take a team approach with ET, sending as many as 10-20 personnel or more to the event. Using a team approach at ET ensures a commonality of experience and enables the company to achieve full coverage across all six technical tracks.

Before the end of the year, it is recommended to register for ET ’22. Sign up for any in-conjunction training sessions that may be of interest as soon as possible, as workshops or classes tend to fill up very quickly. In addition, it is also recommended to book hotel rooms as soon as possible to ensure that you are located in a comfortable lodging at or very close to the event venue.

In the February 2022 issue of Light Metal Age, I will follow up with a second article on ET, which will provide an overview of the technical sessions, highlighting some of the presentations that will occur. The article will also offer advice for how to sift through the many fascinating presentations and decide on a course of action in order to get the most value out of ET ’22.

In closing, I offer a sincere thanks to all of the many authors, suppliers, volunteers, and staff members for their hard work and continued support during these challenging times in the industry and the world. Together, this team has crafted an ET ’22 event that will uphold and improve upon the excellent legacy of previous ETs. This will be an ET to remember.

**Figure 2. Industry professionals gather within the exhibition hall at ET ’16.**