

# Remembering Where We Came From



In this fast-paced world, it gets harder and harder to remember the past. It seems like the only thing that matters is this quarter. But without occasionally taking the time to stop and reflect on the past and where we came from, we tend to lose perspective.

It was Jan. 19, 1929, when a group of furnace manufacturer's met in Pittsburgh, Pa., to form an organization. Initially called the Industrial Furnace Manufacturer's Association (IFMA), there were seven founding members: Chapman Stein Company, Costello Engineering Co., George J. Hagan Company, Holcroft & Company, Rust Engineering Company, Surface Combustion Co. and William Swindell & Bros.

F.W. Manker of Surface Combustion was the association's first president. Total receipts of the association in 1929 were \$800! Expenses for 1929 were \$75.75! It was a really tough time to start anything, yet these companies had the vision to work together and form an association that would serve the industrial heating marketplace in the U.S.

In 1933, a meeting was held to study and discuss a proposed code under the National Recovery Act of 1933. In 1934, there was a hearing on the proposed code, which was approved by the industry. The purpose of the code was to promote cooperative action among businesses to achieve fair competition and provide for national planning and a second section establishing a national public works program,

which was ultimately signed by President Roosevelt on June 16, 1933.

At that point, 52 companies were reporting sales data to the IFMA Code Authority. Between 1933 and 1936, however, membership and activities hit a low ebb when Stewart Clarkson donated his time to rejuvenate IFMA.

In the ensuing years, IFMA served as a mediator for potential patent suits among members, and the Army Ordnance specifications for furnaces were reviewed by IFMA committee members. When World War II came along, IFMA represented the industry in Washington, D.C. Membership doubled during that time. The IFMA also compiled a list of labor contract clauses that could be used by member companies.

By the late 1940s, the association was promoting articles to appear in the trade press, getting 105 articles published between 1947 and 1948. This was also the time frame that the association permitted associate memberships.

It was November 1954 that an official name change was made to the Industrial Heating Equipment Association (IHEA). In the years since, IHEA has served the industry by providing a wide variety of educational opportunities, being an unbiased representative to NFPA codes and influencing governmental agencies on behalf of the membership. 2019 also marks the 50th IHEA Annual Combustion Seminar.

Times have certainly changed in the 90 years since IHEA was founded. Communication is now instantaneous, responses are expected almost as quickly, mobile devices are now nearly an appendage for most people and many individuals find it difficult to disconnect. Ninety years of history, meetings, minutes, photos, committees and people have gone into making IHEA the resource for the thermal-processing industry that it is today.

As IHEA celebrates these milestone anniversaries, we hope that we aren't too busy to stop and reflect on where we came from and allow that to guide us to where we want to go as an industry. We hope everyone will celebrate with us as we turn 90 and work with us to further the mission of the industry started by our founding members on that long-ago January day.



IHEA's Board of Directors and officers in 1959