

SPFA's HISTORY PROVES OUR PERSEVERANCE

BY SHANI CALVO

As the group of studious-looking men made their way down the elaborately decorated hall in Chicago at the 1975 event, onlookers might have guessed they were researchers debating an industry presentation or scientists talking about the latest breakthroughs – and they would have been partially right. Their eyes looked intense as they strode purposefully into the conference hall, which was filled with exhibitors, all looking serious... but excited. There was an air of relaxed congeniality among the men, who seemed to erupt in laughter almost as much as they creased their eyebrows in thought or opened their eyes wide in admiration as they investigated the products on display.

It was the first convention for the Urethane Foam Contractors Association, which officially incorporated in 1974 and served as a monumental first step for contractors in the spray polyurethane foam industry looking to congregate, advocate, network and grow. The people at the meeting, called USA Foam Exhibition (UFEX-1), were embarking on a journey that involved new technologies, new chemical mixtures and a completely new field for insulation. It was a mixture that didn't have a known formula and nobody knew exactly what or where their ideas would land them – but they were starting to work on perfecting their “experiments.” It offered them a place geared toward the SPF contractor, addressing aspects of business that might not be touched on by the Polyurethanes Division of the Society of Plastics Industry, which was run by Fran Lichtenburg, an industrial hygienist by profession, from the '80s to around 2001.

The show was two days and consisted of general sessions, speakers and



This photo was taken in 1995 when Mason Knowles (left) started working for PFCD. George Sievert (middle) was executive director, Dan Benedict (right) was assistant director and Mason Knowles was technical director. Dan became executive director a few years later and Mason took over from Dan a few years after that.

even a trade show aspect. “It was very educational and opened my eyes to a lot of things,” said Buddy Cockrell, who credits UFEX-1 as being his first step into the world of UFCA. “I had never been involved in UFCA. I was a young fellow running the small SPF division of a large industrial insulation contracting firm. I got an invitation and approval from my boss to go.” Who knew he would become vice president of UFCA and eventually his own boss, as president of RPC Industries, Inc.?

The first convention was also the first step for Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance, though the path leading to that independent formation was still a couple decades in the making.

THE WHEELS BEHIND THE MOTION

The UFEX meeting was a long time coming, as some of the SPF contractors at that first convention had already been in the business for at least 17 years,

such as Paul Knowles, who owned Gulf Insulation, and Joe Acasta.

“Joe made my father’s first foam machine in 1957 used to pour foam to insulate railroad tank cars for Union Carbide in Baytown, Texas,” said Mason Knowles, who had no idea this convention would also be the first convention for a group that would evolve into SPFA – and that he would fill a role with SPFA as technical director, then becoming its executive director in 2002.

His father Paul, who was one of the founders of UFCA and an integral part of the initial gatherings, shared much of the history with Mason. “As my father told me, the first meetings were held in various cities around the south, starting in Houston around 1973,” said Mason, adding that Skip Low was one of the main organizers.

Bruce Schenke of Premium Spray Products shares a similar background to Mason in that his father was also an early trailblazer with sprayfoam. “In



Roger Morrison and Mason Knowles, working at PFCD's Technical Committee in the late '80s.

1974-75, my father Jerry Schenke of Plas Chem and Dave Moenning of Western Waterproofing installed the first spray-foam roof on the Louisiana Superdome," said Bruce.

Bruce also actively participated in some of the earlier conferences, speaking at UFEK-8 in New Orleans and UFEK-9 in San Antonio, in 1983 and 1984, respectively. During that time, UFCA was also distributing

newsletters to its members, called the *UFCA Monthly*.

Current SPFA Board Member Joe Stockdale of Covestro (formerly Bayer MaterialScience) said foam has been a part of the family for as long as he can remember. "Our father Stocky started our company in 1946 and died in 1960, after which our mother Louise ran it until we got out of college in 1975," said Joe. "She was one of 13 people

to attend a meeting in Chicago in 1974 to set up a meeting in Minneapolis, where everybody got snowed in for three days!" The meeting in Minneapolis was sponsored by Ray Clausen of Great Lakes Systems in Michigan, who was the first president of UFCA. Louise was also on the first leadership committee and acted as secretary for UFCA.

Joe and his brother Ridge have served on the board numerous times over the last 40 years and have been to every UFCA/SPFA conference since its inception in 1975. He said there is one meeting, in particular, that was truly memorable. "In the 1980s we had a regional UFCA meeting at The Convention Center in McAllen, Texas,



SPFA TIMELINE

1974: Urethane Foam Contractors Association incorporated

1975: First USA Foam Exhibition (UFEK) was held in Houston, Texas

1986: UFCA disbanded and reformed as Polyurethane Foam Contractors Division of the Society of the Plastics Industry (PFCD/SPI)

1997: The name changed to Spray Polyurethane Foam Division of SPI (SPFD/SPI)

1999: SPFD/SPI left SPI and joined the American Plastics Council (APC)

1999: Alliance for the Polyurethanes Industry (API) joined the American Plastics Council in 1999 and the name changed to Center for the Polyurethanes Industry (CPI)

2002: APC joined the American Chemistry Council (ACC)



2003: Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance became an independent association



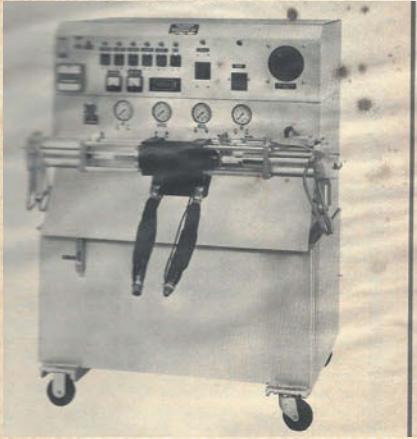
2007: Current SPFA Executive Director Kurt Riesenberg was hired to lead SPFA

2013: SPFA rolled out the SPFA Professional Certification Program (PCP) at the Sprayfoam 2013 Convention & Expo



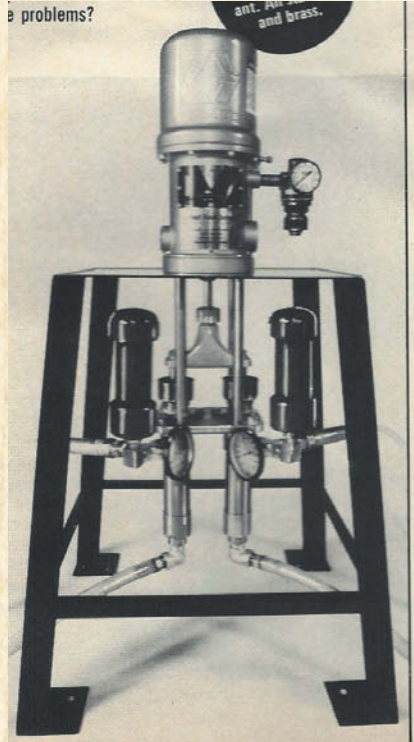
2015: SPFA celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the Contractor Industry Excellence Awards





where the president at the time, Clem Sherek, had an office ... and Gusmer set up an FF in the ballroom and sprayed foam in the Convention Hall!"

In 1986, UFCA disbanded for "a simple reason," according to Buddy, who was vice president of UFCA at the time. "We were a small group of contractors and the supply community's only interest in us was the show we ran that brought all the contractors together for them." Buddy mentioned that the financial collapse of the firm in Ohio (Bell Publicom) that ran UFCA and "our subsequent mismanagement by a tiny firm in Texas meant we had to make a change or die... UFCA had a lot of regulatory issues that were getting ready to slam us. We needed to get some clout and some lobbyists behind us."



Both the Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) and the National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) were considered. "We had a nice meeting with NRCA," said Buddy. "They said they'd love to have us as members." (Remember, at the time and until 1992, SPF was all about roofing, "as wall foam had not yet developed the distribution network to get kits across the country without the freight costing more than the product," explained Joe. "After 1992, wall foam began growing exponentially and by 2010 aggregate wall foam manufacturing surpassed roofing foams.")

However, NRCA said they would not promote one insulation over another and a decision had to be made. So soon thereafter, "George Sievert convinced key members of UFCA that we needed to become part of SPI." The Polyurethane Foam Contractors Division



of the Society of the Plastics Industry (PFCD/SPI) was officially organized at a meeting in St. Louis in June 1986 called for that purpose by SPI, "and we officially became part of SPI," said Buddy. "It was an extremely important move for us." George was offered a job as its first executive director and Buddy became the first division chairman, and therefore a member of the SPI Board. The group moved from Texas to the District of Columbia, and the annual convention continued – UFEX-10 was in Las Vegas with 855 people, UFEX-11 was in Orlando with 710 people, and UFEX-12 was in Phoenix.

"The goal of the contractor community goal was to have a serious trade association backing us, access to their Washington technical and lobbying staff," said Buddy, with the reminder that, at the time, chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) blowing agents were being banned with no substitutes on line. Buddy was to become a big part of the lobbying efforts, as well, to his surprise.

"Buddy and our other contractor members who could get to D.C., such as Ed Lundin and Bob Henderson, were our 'secret weapons' against some government regulations," said Mason. "During the Clinton and Bush administrations,

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RECORDS?

If history seems tough to follow, try doing it with no paper records! That is the case with UFCA. According to Buddy Cockrell, part of the reason there are no old records is due to UFCA's transition to SPI. "When we merged with SPI, which was a major turning point for the group, we had a big collection of boxes with our historical records in Texas. However, when we asked about shipping them to the new offices, we were told absolutely not. The legal position SPI took was to have no connection to UFCA; Polyurethane Foam Contractors Division of the Society of the Plastics Industry (PFCD/SPI) was a completely separate entity."

SPFA MISSION

Founded in 1987 originally as the Polyurethane Foam Contractors Division, the Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance (SPFA) is the collective voice, along with the educational and technical resource, for the spray polyurethane foam industry. SPFA develops tools designed to educate and influence the construction industry with the positive benefits of spray polyurethane foam roofing, insulation, coatings, and specialty installations. Although the SPFA is a completely independent trade association, it has a strong relationship with the American Chemistry Council's (ACC) Center for Polyurethanes Industry (CPI), along with the Spray Foam Coalition. These groups have assisted the SPFA to better serve the spray polyurethane foam industry's business needs on local, state and national issues.

small business concerns had a larger influence on government regulators and congressional staffers than lobbyists from large chemical companies. So, when our government affairs department at SPI or APC could get a meeting on our issue with pertinent government folks, we called up our contractor members like Buddy who would go to the congressional staffers and say, "This will put us out of business!" It worked pretty good," said Mason. "We even got EPA to give us a \$375,000 grant one time to help assist in transitioning to next generation blowing agents."

Buddy agreed. "It was effective; I testified in front of a Congressional committee on the issue in 1987 together with vice presidents of DuPont and Allied Chemical. I also made a presentation about our industry (spray contractors) at an international polyurethanes conference in Aachen, Germany in 1987."

"We started to get a little bit of respect from the chemical community after we joined SPI," said Buddy.

The first accreditation program was started by PFCD – with both George and Clem Sherek of South Texas Urethane pushing for it strongly, explained both Mason and Buddy. "Clem was a small contractor, very sharp. He strongly felt we needed an accreditation program, that we needed to train our people," said Buddy. While it was a fight to get it going, the first classes were held in 1987 at the sprayfoam conference and were managed by the American Management Association. For the first few years, each class participant could receive certificates from AMA and from PFCD. By 1998, SPFC took the programs in-house and stopped using AMA.

In 1989, Dan Benedict was hired and, in 1995, Mason joined the group, George retired and Dan became the director. Mason became heavily involved in the research while Dan was credited with helping the group grow and encouraging the industry to participate in standard and code making bodies. According to a paper posted by www.rci-online.org, "Benedict brought a contractor's experience to the job that enabled him to identify key issues and take appropriate action... His consensus building and networking efforts enabled the SPF industry to gain greater recognition and cooperation from other trade groups. Benedict helped to develop working committees that represent the entire SPF industry, from roofing to insulation to sealants and adhesives, including suppliers, contractors, chemical producers, equipment manufacturers, inspection companies, and other service oriented businesses. These committees produced dozens of technical documents, research projects, educational courses,

and promotional tools that have enabled the SPF industry to prosper."

In 1997, the name changed to Spray Polyurethane Foam Division of SPI, as the membership now consisted of not just contractors, but suppliers as well, explained Mason. Around the same time, the group started to get closer to American Plastics Council, which had put together an ad campaign, Plastics Make It Possible. "The plastics industry group was starting to lean more toward original equipment manufacturing (OEM) finished goods instead of building and construction issues. As APC could address the issues for the building and construction end of it, the SPFD separated from the SPI and joined the APC in 1999," explained Mason. "If there was an issue that was going to be a threat to the industry, they had folks they could contact. There would also be meetings to address specific issues, such as federal regulations coming out or other important issues."

When SPFD left SPI so did the Polyurethane Division. They became the Alliance of the Polyurethane Industry (API). When APC merged with ACC, API became the Center for Polyurethane Industry (CPI). After Fran Lichtenberg, Dick Mericle was director for a couple of years, then Neeva Candelori, who had worked for the group since the SPI days. After Neeva came Lee Salamone, who is the senior director of CPI today, said Mason.

In 2002, the APC decided to join with the American Chemistry Council. "They

YES, IT HAS BEEN THAT LONG!

While the first UFEX conference was not until 1975, contractors have been spraying foam and overcoming the naysayers for much longer! In the '60s, companies such as Gulf Insulation were spraying foam on everything from railroad tank cars to pipes in the Panama Canal and Gusmer started selling its first FF foam machine and the model C spraygun. It was also when the SPF industry had its first big challenge – changing from TDI to MDI. Addressing the Federal Trade Commission's 1972 investigation of foam plastics and fire became its first real threat, however this concern was extinguished before the entire industry went up in flames.

Want to know more about SPF's largest challenges, opportunities and other issues that helped form our industry? Even more important, do you want to know how we overcame them and why they occurred to begin with? "History has a way of repeating itself when we fail to record and present it," said SPFA Executive Director Kurt Riesenbergh, which is why we'll be sharing some of the industry's most historical events in our next issue of *SPRAYFOAM Professional*.

are all involved in making the chemicals, not what is done with them downstream," said Mason. "So, they had a different focus, not as much of advocacy for building and construction. So, some of the groups left, including SPF." One of the main reasons for leaving, however, was that "they didn't want us doing the accreditation programs. They felt it was too much liability for an association."

In 2003, the independent group, Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance (SPFA), was born. Based out of Fairfax, Virginia, and thanks to the articles of

incorporation and bylaws written by Mason with the approval of the Board, it became incorporated as an official 501(c)(6) nonprofit trade organization.

Wasting no time, SPFA began solidifying and growing its accreditation programs. And, in response to overwhelming demand, the SPFA Professional Certification Program (PCP) had its debut at Sprayfoam 2013. The certification program was built on the base of SPFA's accreditation program as a way to formalize the educational program as an ISO-certified program. Many

of the same people who were involved in the accreditation program – such as Bonnie Strickler – were involved in developing the content of the certification program, said Mason. "Bonnie Strickler, especially, is the unsung hero of both the accreditation and certification classes, spending thousands of hours working on

the development and presentation of both programs over the last 25 years." Kelly Marcavage, who is in charge of overseeing the certification program at SPFA, has also been instrumental in the development and growth of the PCP.

The industry is increasingly in the spotlight – due to various energy efficiency initiatives, the certification program, construction safety updates, etc. – and it is how we address these topics that will decide where SPF and SPFA will land when the dust settles. The SPFA PCP is in the midst of such an event in New Mexico, where the Construction Industries Commission is debating how to fix SPF-related problems and has tentatively incorporated SPFA PCP into its regulations. This is one of many opportunities and challenges that will present themselves as our industry continues its skyrocketing growth and is faced with some tough questions and decisions. As a group, we can rally together and use these as stepping stones. As a team of like-minded professionals, we can use them to make our industry invaluable, profitable and successful.

As SPFA President Dennis Vandewater of Sadler Coating Systems so perfectly said, "Few if any of us expect to ever have our name panned in a history book for some significant achievement but all of us can become part of the continuing legacy of SPFA. Just the fact that we can leave something behind that the next person continues to build on and make better is indeed significant." O



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INDUSTRY'S CHALLENGES SHAPE OUR EVOLUTION

HISTORY OF SPFA, PART 2

BY JEFFREY REED

Editor's note: This article is a continuation of an article about SPFA history that ran in the Winter 2015 issue of *SPRAYFOAM Professional* magazine.

Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw once quipped, "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

The Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance (SPFA) wasn't even a twinkle in the eye of Shaw when he crafted his prose. But his words ring true today as the alliance looks to its past to understand the present, and prepare for the future. And if there's one constant about the sprayfoam industry, it is change – and the struggle to overcome change for the better of the industry.

Although still in its infancy in the grand scheme of things, SPFA (formerly SPI/PFCD) truly is the voice, and educational and technical resource, for the spray polyurethane foam industry. A 501(c)6 trade association, the alliance is composed of contractors, manufacturers, and distributors of polyurethane foam, related equipment, and protective coatings, inspections, surface preparations, and other services. The organization supports the best practices and the growth of the industry through a number of core initiatives, which include

educational programs and events, the SPFA Professional Certification Program, technical literature and guidelines, legislative advocacy, research and networking opportunities.

And although SPFA is a completely independent trade association, it has a strong relationship with the American Chemistry Council's (ACC) Center for Polyurethanes Industry (CPI), along with the Sprayfoam Coalition. As history shows, these groups have assisted SPFA to better serve the spray polyurethane foam industry's business needs on local, state and national issues.

In less than 30 years, SPFA already boasts a history bursting with industry advances, and concurrently an embracing of change. But it hasn't always come easy. In the Winter 2015 edition of *SPRAYFOAM Professional*, Shani Calvo chronicled the history of SPFA. This time around, it's time to take a closer look at how the

association and its members have overcome challenges, and at the evolution of certification and its own maturity.

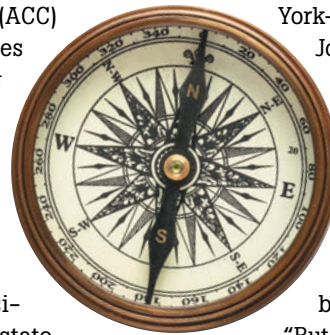
FINDING AN IDENTITY

Even in its early days, SPFA struggled to find its identity, according to Bob Henderson of Syracuse, New York-headquartered Henderson-Johnson Company Co., Inc.

"We were challenged early because we were just a small group of contractors, trying to get manufacturers involved with our industry. It took a lot of time and work to get them on board," explained Henderson.

"But once they were on board, we bettered financially, and we had some manpower, and were able to make some inroads on some legislative issues."

"In the late-1960s and in the 1970s, spray polyurethane foam overcame its first challenge: equipment," explained industry trailblazer Bruce Schenke of Accella (formerly Premium Spray Products) in Marietta, Georgia. "We could apply insulation material in a continuous manner, using equipment that allowed curing in seconds and opening up roofing, wall insulation and an enormous amount of applications. Everyone thought it was like magic, and the spray polyurethane



foam industry really began to build upon itself."

"Blowing agents were our first big challenges," said Brad Houlden, President, Houlden Contracting of Lincoln, Nebraska. "As the Montreal Protocol took effect, the entire industry was not as prepared as it should have been. There was a real learning curve, and it hurt the industry because there were some poor applications."

However, much good came out of this change, according to Houlden. He said disappointment and anger would eventually help drive SPFA membership to greater numbers, since quality amongst a more unified association was first and foremost on the minds of sprayfoam professionals.

Another important figure within the industry's development, Bonnie Strickler, Chair of the SPFA certification committee, and President and Owner of PUFF, Inc. in Charlottesville, Virginia cited the blowing agent issue as an eventual "positive and a negative. The banning of CFCs forced us to go to an entirely different chemistry. It forced us to reformulate our foams. That was a big challenge."

According to Schenke, as SPFA moved through the 1990s with a new blowing agent, in 2005-06 government again demanded a new blowing agent – an issue stemming from the growing demands of advocates fighting global warming.

"We learned from other times when our blowing agent had to be changed, and we learned from the past," said Schenke. "We banded together as an industry."

Until 1992, SPF was all about roofing, as wall foam had not yet been developed the distribution network to get kits across the country without the freight costing more than the product. After 1992, wall foam began growing exponentially and by 2010 aggregate wall foam manufacturing surpassed roofing foams. Concurrently, according to Schenke, the industry needed to figure out how to further promote itself – another challenge of a blossoming group

working with a "fledgling material that was suddenly becoming very popular."

As the sprayfoam industry grew, "People were coming in from everywhere – we used to see a foam machine on every corner," said Strickler. "With that type of influx, we had a workmanship issue, obviously. We had our struggles, but our manufacturers and good contractors did band together. So it was a good and bad problem to have, and luckily the industry pulled itself back out of that hole."

CERTIFICATION: WORK IN PROGRESS

Even today, remaining a unified industry is a struggle at times, according to Strickler. But like Strickler, Houlden believes SPFA continues to pull together to weather any storms that provide challenges.

"The biggest hurdle we face, and the one I am most proud of in regards to our association, is that we all pull together. When push comes to shove, and government agencies come down like a thunderstorm, then contractors, manufacturers, chemical companies, equipment people all group together and take care of business. And that's where we are at, with our certification program."

The SPFA PCP is an internationally-recognized, one-of-a-kind program built for those involved in the installation of spray polyurethane foam. Covering both roofing and insulation applications, the program advocates industry best practices and safety. The new SPF Supplier Company Accreditation category is designed to increase the scope of the program, to include additional organizations and individuals which are key to the SPF supply chain, and to provide further distinction for those companies that invest in their people and customers.

The standards-driven program is ISO 17024 compliant and was developed by committees of industry stakeholders in collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), The National Institute for

Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in addition to other federal agencies and external stakeholders. It is offered both domestically and internationally.

Yet, with the advent of a progressive accreditation program comes challenges, according to Kelly Marcavage, SPFA's Certification and Training Director.

"One of the biggest challenges of bringing in a new certification program is, you're doing so within an industry that has been around for a long time. People have been working for many years without the necessity to be certified. So there's a big challenge in getting people to understand the value of the certification program," said Marcavage.

In fact, the process of developing the SPFA PCP was a challenge, according to Marcavage. Strickler said much of this stems from the fact the sprayfoam industry is an extremely diverse industry.

"We categorize ourselves as mostly roofing and insulation, but there are many other facets of our industry, both on the residential and commercial sides. We have waterproofing, subgrade control, floatation and many other unique applications. So you couldn't just create a program for electricians, for example," Strickler explained. "Not every foam contractor is the same. They're all specialized. So we built programs for insulation and roofing, with four individual certification levels in each one. That was a big challenge."

Individual certification levels within the SPFA PCP include SPF Assistant, SPF Installer, SPF Master Installer and SPF Project Manager. An individual can become certified in Insulation and/or Roofing.

Prior to accreditation and certification movements, other committees, including the Literature Review Committee – which





later morphed into the Technical Committee – saw many changes which challenged the industry, according to Mason Knowles, former SPFA Executive Director and current chair of the association’s Consulting Committee. Owner/operator of Mason Knowles Consulting, LLC of Savannah, Georgia, Knowles was Technical Committee chair 1992-95, and staff member from 1995-2007

Knowles cites industry members Bob Zimel, Fred Werner and Don Lenaker as important Equipment Committee members, and Larry Widecome and Jack Jones as Labeling Committee members. Ray Clausen, Irv Steltz and Hubert Coon played key roles on the Cold Storage Committee, while Don Partyka, Keith Coultrap, Jerry Schenke and Ron King were important to the Roofing Committee. All of these committees were UFCA committees from the late ‘70s to the early ‘80s.

The Literature Review Committee, which was a PFCF committee started in 1987, included Dan Benedict, Ed Lundin, Rich Bradley and Don Best. Technical Committee movers and shakers included Bruce Schenke, Jim Andersen, Roger Morrison, Dave Fritzingler, John Courier, Neal Ganser, John Hatfield and Dennis Bigley.

“Bonnie was instrumental in the accreditation process,” said Knowles, also citing Sandra Sievert, Sherry Norman, Kevin Sievert, Jim Andersen,

Jim Patella, Don Lenaker, Bob Jutras and Lela Wright as key players. Each of those efforts saw participants rise to the challenges presented by change, according to Knowles. And according to SPFA President Dennis Vandewater of Sadler Coating Systems in Eagle Grove, Iowa, along with change comes the added challenge of proper training and workmanship.

“When I started in 1987, one of the concerns was to have better trained applicators. That’s when I became involved with the old Accreditation Committee,” said Vandewater. “Of course, any time you have a trade association that involves technical skills for application, it’s always a concern to make sure the product is installed properly, and that quality exists. That has always been one of the challenges that we’ve tried to meet.”

Jim Andersen, retired from BASF (with world headquarters in Ludwigshafen, Germany) has been a member of the sprayfoam industry since 1972. He saw the introduction of the Accreditation Program, and now the SPFA PCP, as huge building blocks towards creating a stronger association. But as always, there are big challenges to be met – and uncertainties to face.

“While first putting together the Accreditation Program, one of the big questions was, if we as an industry solicit and train our people, what’s to keep that from becoming a ‘yellow pages’ – competitive contractors to hire out our people?” explained Andersen. “There was a lot of discussions about that – contractors who perhaps train their people, send them to various schools, see their name become known in the marketplace and then somebody

wants to offer them fifty cents more an hour. They then leave to work for someone else.

“Whenever we do have a gathering of individuals, we make it well known that they are there to learn – not to seek out employment from fellow competitors,” added Andersen. “You are willing to invest money in their education, and make them more successful. If everybody buys into that, then it makes for a good program worth participating in.”

SPRAYFOAM INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO GROW

Key dates continue to see SPFA mature as an industry. In 2003, SPFA became an independent association. Ten years later in 2013, SPFA rolled out the SPFA Professional Certification Program (PCP) at the Sprayfoam 2013 Convention & Expo.

One of the most notable recent events impacting the SPF industry is the National Emphasis Program (NEP) on Isocyanates, published by OSHA June 2013. This Directive is applicable to all industries utilizing isocyanates, and in the case of SPF, specifically Methylene Diphenyl Diisocyanate, or MDI. MDI is an important building block to many polyurethane products, but in the case of SPF it is part of a sprayed mixture and must be handled properly during installation. Isocyanates, the “A” side of SPF materials, are a known sensitizer and exposure may lead to workplace respiratory ailments. It is the job of professionals in this industry to make sure crews and customers are safe, which includes knowing and understanding the requirements for compliance, as described by the NEP.

In 2015, the SPF industry took some notable steps, as did the SPFA and the PCP. SPFA celebrated its 10-year anniversary of the SPFA National Industry Excellence Awards, New Mexico introduced a state requirement calling for SPFA PCP certifications for license (currently under review), NEMA released a new standard for recessed lights based on research SPFA helped complete, SPFA had a complete overhaul of its technical documents, there were additional calls for PCP certifications in job specs,

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— Brad Houlden, Houlden Contracting

PCP certification numbers continued to grow, and the PCP completed a two-day ISO annual audit with exceptional performance and compliments from the ISO team. In addition, the SPFA Safety Committee assembled a model safety program, intended to help member companies that do not currently have a safety program, or for those who have a program but would like to benchmark it against other programs for improvement.

“In recent times, there have been more challenges, because sprayfoam has been more widely used, especially within the interior markets with new homes and commercial,” explained Vandewater. “It has taken a market share from other insulation manufacturing. Sprayfoam has made big strides in capturing a bigger market share. So because of that, we get some flak.”

But once again, Vandewater sees the good in facing a challenge. “We’ve had to battle in recent years with a little bit

“ Not every foam contractor is the same. They’re all specialized. So we built programs for insulation and roofing, with four individual certification levels in each one. That was a big challenge.”

— Bonnie Strickler, Chair, SPFA Certification Committee

more negative media. A lot of it stems from misinformation. But we try to correct that and make sure people understand what sprayfoam is and what it does, then figure out how best to promote it,” Vandewater said.

“There’s definitely room for growth,” added Henderson, citing the rising cost of heating and cooling when he stated, “Insulation is more and more critical in homes and commercial buildings.”

As the sprayfoam industry grows, so, too, has its challenges and opportunities. Many issues cannot be handled by any one company, and thus require a collective approach of SPFA. But when the association and its members closely examines its history, learns from trials and tribulations and applies that learning to present challenges, then future looks very bright – both for the industry and for SPFA. ○

SPFA THANKS SUPPLIERS FOR SUPPORT OF FIELD EXAMS

SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS = FREE FIELD EXAMS AT SPRAYFOAM 2016

The Field Exam Marketing Working Group, Co-Chaired by Joe Stockdale (Covestro) and Will Lorenz (General Coatings), proposed a scholarship program to offset the cost of PCP Field Exams for contractors at Sprayfoam 2016. The Scholarship drive was so successful that Field Exams are FREE at Sprayfoam 2016! These companies were the early adopters and more may join, so please be sure to check the information on-site for the final list of participants and be sure to thank them for their generous support of the professional growth of SPF contractors!

- Accella Spray Products (formerly Premium Spray Products)
- CJ Spray
- Covestro (formerly Bayer Material Science)
- Demilec
- Foam Supplies, Inc.
- General Coatings
- Graco
- IDI
- Progressive
- Spray Foam Distributing, Inc.
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