



As you are aware, the U.S. roofing industry is struggling to attract and keep workers, particularly those just entering the workforce. With a nationwide emphasis on sending every child to college, a lack of technology in roofing and unpredictable immigration laws, it is no wonder the industry is suffering.

NRCA has made worker recruitment a priority and spent significant resources developing NRCA ProCertification™ and Training for Roof Application Careers, supporting career and technical education, and understanding the changing demographics of the roofing industry. This type of focus takes time, funding and long-term diligence.

The Roofing Alliance, NRCA's nonprofit 501(c)(3) foundation, has supported NRCA's work and helped fund these initiatives.

The Roofing Alliance's membership includes roofing professionals from the manufacturing, distribution, service provider and contracting sectors and was established within the National Roofing Foundation to create a permanent endowment fund to serve as a highly focused resource for the roofing industry and its customers. The Roofing Alliance's objective is to support and fund research, educational programs and projects, and charitable programs for the betterment of the roofing industry and those in need.

In recent years, the Roofing Alliance has implemented several programs and initiatives focused on recruiting younger workers into the industry.

Student competition

In its sixth year, the Roofing Alliance Construction Management Student Competition is focused on mentoring construction management students and sharing the opportunities and challenges of a roofing career.

In 2013, the Roofing Alliance partnered with McWhorter School of Building Science at Auburn University, the Department of Construction Management at Colorado State University and M.E. Rinker Sr. School of Building Construction at the University of Florida to begin exposing construction management students and faculty to the roofing industry. Roofing Alliance members are working to enhance the overall roofing knowledge of faculty and students in hopes of encouraging students to consider the roofing industry as a viable career option. Part of this effort includes hosting a student competition.

The competition features four-person teams of college and university students who are evaluated for their roofing knowledge and project management, estimating, safety, quality

control and presentation skills. Judges review written proposals and select a maximum of five finalist teams who give oral presentations on the second day of the International Roofing Expo.® The winning teams are announced during NRCA's Industry Awards Ceremony and Cocktail Reception and awarded \$5,000 and \$2,500 scholarships for first and second place, respectively.

For the 2019-20 competition, which will take place in Dallas during NRCA's 133rd Annual Convention. The following teams are participating: Auburn University, Bradley University, Clemson University, Colorado State University, Kennesaw State University, Minnesota State University—Mankato, Ohio State University, Texas A & M University and the University of Florida. Teams will prepare proposals to install a new roof system on The Star, the world headquarters of the Dallas Cowboys, in Frisco, Texas. The Star's roof system originally was installed by KPost Roofing & Waterproofing, Dallas, which has been working with the Roofing Alliance to prepare documents for the competition.

a better future

The Roofing Alliance continues to work for the betterment of the roofing industry

by Heidi Ellsworth

Kyle Thomas, vice president of the Roofing Alliance and vice president of Thomas Roofing Co. Inc., Mobile, Ala., sees the competition as a way to introduce roofing to a new generation.

"We've known for years the students graduating from construction management programs often have limited exposure and education related to roofing," Thomas explains. "This program provides an opportunity for these students to learn about the many facets of the roofing business. We certainly hope some of the students become interested enough to pursue a career in the roofing industry. But even if they work for a general contractor, they will have a much better understanding of the roofing portion of the projects they will be working on."



What surprises Thomas the most is seeing the students' focus and attention to detail as they describe their submitted plans to the competition judges.

"I've found these young folks to be sharp, engaged and professional," he says. "To see them go from essentially little or no knowledge about the commercial roofing business to their oral presentations is quite impressive."

Nick Rubino, faculty coach for the Colorado State University team, agrees.

"After the competition, the students have a better understanding of the industry and are able to look at the skills of roofing and what it takes to execute a high-performing roof," Rubino says. "It

helps them better understand the important role the specialty trades have in the success of the overall project."

The effects of the student competition have been felt beyond the yearly contest. Candace Klein, president of Klein Contracting Corp., Atlanta, watched the student competition for the first time two years ago and was inspired. During the competition, she met a faculty advisor for the Kennesaw State University team.

Klein, who is a Roofing Alliance member and has been in the roofing industry for 26 years, is a second-generation roofing professional.

"When I saw the competition, I knew I wanted to offer the same opportunities and mentoring to young people in our area," Klein says.

So Klein hired an intern, Jazzmin Evans, a student from the Kennesaw State University team who is now a full-time student and full-time employee with Klein Contracting.

"The internship at Klein has given me confidence and experience, allowing me to do estimating full time," Evans says. "Even though I took estimating classes in college, there is nothing like the real thing."

The mentorship that roofing professionals like Klein are offering is making a difference in attracting young people to the roofing industry.

Demographics study

To further support NRCA's efforts to understand the roofing industry's changing demographics, the Roofing Alliance has funded A Study of the U.S. Roofing Industry and Its Workforce by Arizona State University.

The study, which will be available in early 2020, will capture detailed descriptions of the roofing industry workforce, its stakeholders and the work they do. The study also

will present employment and demographic information, including an understanding of the roofing industry's challenges, trends and emerging issues, as well as important statistical data that can be shared with regulatory and federal agencies.

"We know the resulting data from this report not only will be important to NRCA and the Roofing Alliance but also to the industry as a whole," says NRCA CEO Reid Ribble.

The study will play an important role in understanding the demographics of the roofing industry's future workforce, which helps the roofing industry develop programs to attract the next generation of roofing workers.

"It is a critical research project for our roofing industry," says Rod Petrick, immediate former president of the Roofing Alliance and president of Ridgeworth Roofing Co. Inc., Frankfort, Ill. "Understanding even the basics of how roofing contractors, laborers and roofing professionals work every day can fuel advocacy, funding and investment."

SkillsUSA

Formal education has widely been heralded as key to success in today's society, but people are beginning to question the best way(s) to get that education. High school students are considering alternatives to college; the fear of getting a degree with no clear direction and crushing student debt is driving them to find new career paths, which can involve vocational/technical training or apprenticeship programs.

To help address these issues, the Roofing Alliance has funded NRCA's official business partnership with SkillsUSA, an organization serving more than 360,000 career and technical education students and instructors annually to strengthen the skilled trades in the U.S. SkillsUSA helps prepare the next generation of workers with the necessary technical, personal and workplace skills to succeed.

As part of the Roofing Alliance's funding plan, a joint NRCA/Roofing Alliance CTE Outreach Task Force was formed earlier this year and charged with collaborating with industry and national partners to expand the roofing industry's footprint within high schools, vocational schools and trades to establish roofing as a core curriculum and assist members addressing workforce shortages.

SkillsUSA is recognized by the Departments of Education and Labor as integral to career and technical education and hosts an annual weeklong National Leadership and Skills Conference each June with more than 18,000 attendees, including students, teachers and business partners. Through this partnership, NRCA collaborated with the SkillsUSA team to incorporate a roofing component in





GET INVOLVED AND GIVE BACK

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

The Roofing Alliance offers different levels of membership to encourage small-, medium- and large-sized firms to join and have a voice in determining the roofing industry's future. The leadership of the Roofing Alliance includes roofing contractors, roofing material and equipment manufacturers, distributors and service providers, and commitments to the Alliance can be pledged over three- to five-year periods. Public recognition is given in accordance with donors' wishes and levels of commitment and include national public acknowledgement at NRCA's annual convention and other special events and programs. Roofing Alliance members also are invited to participate in the project task forces established to guide the Roofing Alliance's agenda and are invited to the semi-annual meetings of the full Roofing Alliance.

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

Roofing professionals also are encouraged to support The Melvin Kruger Endowed Scholarship program, which provides financial support for students furthering their education to pursue careers in the roofing or building construction industries. Gifts to the scholarship program are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law and can be paid over a period of up to and including five years.

For more information about how you can make a commitment to the Roofing Alliance, contact Bennett Judson, executive director of the Roofing Alliance, at (800) 323-9545, ext. 7513 or bjudson@nrca.net, or visit www.roofingalliance.net.

its 2020 TeamWorks project for the first time since the organization's inception in 1965. TeamWorks project members analyze a project drawing, write an action plan, give a presentation and demonstrate their ability to work as a team to perform skills in residential carpentry, plumbing, electricity and masonry—and now roofing.

"We are excited to engage further with SkillsUSA as we continue our ongoing pursuit to elevate the perception of the roofing industry in students' eyes as a desirable and professional career choice," says NRCA Chairman of the Board Nick Sabino, founder and president of Deer Park Roofing Inc., Cincinnati.

Philanthropy

As members of the Roofing Alliance continue to support workforce initiatives, they also realize they must be diligent in elevating the industry's reputation and professionalism. An example is the Roofing Alliance's partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities,[®] which has gained national exposure for philanthropy while showing the heart of the roofing industry. Through the agreement, Roofing Alliance and NRCA members agree to inspect, maintain, repair and—whenever possible—replace the roofs on the 165 standalone Ronald McDonald Houses throughout the U.S. Roofing Alliance member EagleView Technologies Inc., Kirkland, Wash., provides aerial reports for each of the structure's roofs.

"The roofing industry has always been about giving," Patrick notes. "We want the next generation, other trades, the construction industry overall and our communities to know that as roofing professionals, we are committed to giving back."

Other efforts

In addition to these efforts, the Roofing Alliance has allocated more than \$5 million to fund nearly 50 research, educational, technical and philanthropic programs and projects to support forward-thinking responses to economic and technological issues during its 23-year history. For 2019, about \$270,000 in project funding was approved.

The Roofing Alliance also is currently funding the creation of a roofing-specific college-level course to be taught at Clemson University, Clemson, S.C. Dhaval Gajjar, Ph.D., assistant professor at Clemson University, will develop and implement the course, Principles of Roofing from Design to Installation and Beyond, which will be taught to construction management students to provide an overview of what

roofing professionals do and make them aware of potential career options in the roofing industry.

In addition, to date, the Roofing Alliance has awarded four faculty scholarships. Three went to faculty at each of the three construction management partner schools to develop recommendations about how best to incorporate roofing-related materials into current school curricula. The fourth scholarship was awarded to James Sullivan, director of undergraduate programs for the M.E. Rinker Sr. School of Construction Management at the University of Florida to develop Best Practices for Internship Guidelines and Program Connectivity, a tool roofing contracting companies can use to work with students from construction management schools.

A bright future

For 23 years, the Roofing Alliance has been bringing together roofing contractors, manufacturers and suppliers who are devoted to the roofing industry. And by working together, this group of roofing professionals will continue to add to an already impressive list of achievements. 🌟🌟🌟

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