

# A STRONG ALLIANCE

The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress celebrates 20 years of elevating the roofing industry  
by Alison L. LaValley, CAE



The Roofing Industry **ALLIANCE** for Progress

**20<sup>TH</sup>** ANNIVERSARY

“**A** lone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” This powerful statement by Helen Keller conveys the ongoing sentiments and mission of The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress as it celebrates its 20th anniversary. Since its inception in 1996, the Alliance has remained steadfast in its vision to serve as a valuable, effective and influential organization that shapes, improves and advances the future of the roofing industry. After 20 years, the Alliance’s vision has not wavered—and the organization has flourished.

From funding research to providing forward-thinking responses to major economic and technological issues, the Alliance is an advocate for advancing education and enhancing the long-term viability and attractiveness of the industry to roofing workers. With the addition of 20 new member companies from all segments of the roofing industry during the past two years, the Alliance has surpassed 150 members and continues to grow at a rapid pace.

During the past 20 years, the Alliance’s dedicated membership, composed of a group of roofing contractors, material manufacturers, distributors, service providers and industry professionals, has contributed more than \$12.4 million to the Alliance’s endowment fund to help preserve and enhance the U.S. roofing industry’s success and performance. Following are some recent initiatives Alliance members have helped make a reality.

## PARTNERING WITH SCHOOLS

With a keen focus on enhancing college students' experiences by exposing them academically and experientially to roofing as a career choice, the Alliance Board of Trustees approved ongoing project funding to continue advancing educational initiatives with three

of the most well-known construction management schools in the U.S.: the Department of Construction Management at Colorado State University, Fort Collins; McWhorter School of Building Science at Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.; and M.E. Rinker Sr. School of Construction Management at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

The Alliance is focused on fostering its relationships with construction management schools by developing a faculty research program that includes identifying topics of interest and direct benefit to the roofing industry, as well as a systematic approach for connecting member companies with construction management schools nationwide.

"When a school needs a roofing expert to meet with students either in the classroom or on a job site, we want the Alliance

to serve as that resource," says Dennis Conway, NRCA chairman of the board and principal and vice president of Commercial Roofers Inc., Las Vegas. "Talking with students one-on-one about roofing fundamentals and career opportunities, in addition to exposing them to all the different roofing products, materials and systems, is invaluable."

Former Alliance President Jim MacKimm, president of Beacon Roofing Supply, Peabody, Mass., says such partnerships are invaluable.

"These partnerships are crucial for the roofing industry," he says. "We know we need to do a much better job telling students about career opportunities in roofing and making sure they understand the importance of roofing even if they pursue other construction-related careers."

Earlier this year, the Alliance also sponsored its second Construction Management Student Competition, a hallmark competition to promote careers in roofing industry management. In addition to providing a significant learning opportunity, the three-team competition fostered camaraderie, dialogue and team spirit among the students as they met the challenges of demonstrating their roofing knowledge of estimating, project management, safety and related areas for an Orlando County Convention Center reroofing project.

The final portion of the project, oral presentations, was judged by a panel of roofing professionals during the International Roofing Expo® (IRE) in Orlando, Fla. The winning team from the University of Florida included Nick Loewenthal, Eddie San Juan, Caleb Stauss and Drew Winant. In recognition for the team's first-place finish, each team member received a trophy. The school also received a team trophy and a \$5,000 L.B. Conway scholarship during NRCA's Industry Awards Ceremony and Cocktail Reception.

The third student competition will feature a reroofing project on the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas and include six construction management schools, doubling the participation from the previous year. This year's event will include the following schools: Department of Construction Management at Colorado State University; Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge; McWhorter School of Building Science at Auburn University; M.E. Rinker Sr. School of Construction Management at University of Florida; Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Ala.; and University of Cincinnati.

The finalists' oral presentations will be March 2 during the 2017 IRE at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center

## MEET THE ALLIANCE

The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress was established in 1996 within the National Roofing Foundation to create an endowment fund to serve as a resource for the roofing industry and its customers. Currently, the Alliance has 153 active members—112 contractors; 35 manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; two service providers; three individuals; and one supporting member who have pledged significant amounts of money to fund projects that help improve the roofing industry.

The Alliance is managed by the Alliance Board of Trustees, a 16-member board that oversees existing projects and considers funding for projects addressing critical industry issues. The Alliance holds two member meetings per year, including its annual meeting, which will be held April 20-22, 2017, in Coronado, Calif., and another held during NRCA's Fall Committee Meetings.

James Patterson, senior vice president—procurement for Centimark Corp., Canonsburg, Pa., is the Alliance's 2016-17 president; Thomas Saeli, CEO of Duro-Last Roofing Inc., Saginaw, Mich., is vice president; and Jim Barr, president of Barr Roofing, Abilene, Texas, is secretary/treasurer.

Membership is open to all roofing industry professionals. Within the past two years, the Alliance's board of trustees approved two new membership categories to enrich this diverse group of leaders, including a category for service providers and another for local distributors.

In 2016, the Alliance welcomed eight new members: Academy Roofing Inc., Aurora, Colo.; Acme Roofing & Sheet Metal Co. Inc., Dothan, Ala.; Antis Roofing & Waterproofing, Irvine, Calif.; Bennett & Brosseau Roofing Inc., Romeoville, Ill.; Dataforma, York, Pa.; FiberTite Roofing Systems/Seaman Corp., Wooster, Ohio; Georgia-Pacific Gypsum LLC, Atlanta; and R&B Roofing LLC, Garland, Texas. A list of all Alliance members can be found at [www.roofingindustryalliance.net](http://www.roofingindustryalliance.net).

For more information about the Alliance, contact Bennett Judson, the Alliance's executive director, at (800) 323-9545, ext. 7513 or [bjudson@roofingindustryalliance.net](mailto:bjudson@roofingindustryalliance.net), or visit the Alliance's website, [www.roofingindustryalliance.net](http://www.roofingindustryalliance.net).

in Las Vegas. The winning team will be announced during NRCA's Industry Awards Ceremony and Cocktail Reception later that evening.

"As technology advances, government regulation grows, sustainability increases in importance and roof systems become more complex, it is imperative for us to attract professional, knowledgeable students to the roofing industry," says Suzan Boyd, vice president of Academy Roofing, Colorado Springs, Colo. "The exposure our industry receives through our construction management school partnerships is invaluable because the future of our workforce is at stake."

## ADVANCING EDUCATION

In addition to partnering with construction management schools, the Alliance continued to support educational efforts and offer students financial aid through the Melvin Kruger Endowed Scholarship Program by approving funding to renew nine scholarships totaling \$45,000, as well as grant one new \$5,000 scholarship. Drury Poston, son of Jay Poston, contractor for Thomson Roofing and Metal Co., Thomson, Ga., was named the new 2016-17 scholarship recipient. Poston will be pursuing a degree in construction management.

Named for Melvin Kruger, an NRCA former president and CEO of L.E. Schwartz & Son Inc., Macon, Ga., the Alliance's first scholarship was awarded in 1986, and since its inception has distributed \$680,000 in scholarship funds to 117 students. The program is open to NRCA contractor and supplier members, their families and their employees who plan to pursue careers in the roofing industry or building construction.

Applications are being accepted until Jan. 31, 2017, for the 2017-18 scholarship program, and recipients will be selected on the basis of academic record; potential to succeed; leadership and participation in school and community activities; honors; work experience; a statement of career goals and aspirations; and an outside appraisal. Each award is \$5,000 and is renewable for up to three years of undergraduate study or until a bachelor's degree is earned provided recipients renew annually and maintain a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

## WORKFORCE AND TRAINING INITIATIVES

To further address the industry's labor challenges, the Alliance approved \$150,000 in funding at its April meeting to assist NRCA with developing a structured, nationally recognized worker training program that will include 30 training topics and a series of "microcredentials" students may earn. The initiative's goal is to recruit, train and retain a workforce appropriate for the industry's needs in the 21st century. Courses will be available in English and Spanish and will address everything from the basics, including terminology, safety and common roof system design, to system-specific application techniques and be offered in a variety of delivery methods.

"The health, success and future of our industry depends on the current leaders' abilities to attract new talent and future leaders," says Alliance Vice President Thomas Saeli, CEO of Duro-Last Roofing Inc., Saginaw, Mich. "This includes graduates with all levels of education—high school, trade school, college and beyond. It also means attracting more women to the industry. The Alliance is well-positioned to fund and lead this initiative through its construction management school partnerships to ensure a brighter future."

At its April meeting, the Alliance also approved startup funding for National Women in Roofing (NWIR), a volunteer-based organization whose goal is to provide networking, recruiting, mentoring and education for women roofing professionals. NWIR strives to provide opportunities for new and established women in the roofing industry to excel and find ongoing success working together in the industry. The Alliance will play a critical role with fulfilling these goals.

TO ADDRESS THE  
INDUSTRY'S LABOR  
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PROGRAM

## GET INVOLVED; LEAVE A LEGACY

To make the Alliance work, member participation is vital, and the Alliance is continually seeking new members. To meet and encourage participation, the Alliance offers varying levels of membership to encourage small-, medium- and large-sized firms to join and have a voice in determining the roofing industry's future.

Commitments to the Alliance can be pledged for three- to five-year periods. Public recognition is given in accordance with donors' wishes and levels of commitment and include national public acknowledgement during NRCA's annual convention and other special events and programs. Alliance members also are invited to participate on committees and task forces established to guide the Alliance's agenda and are invited to the semiannual meetings and networking events of the full Alliance.

In addition, roofing professionals are encouraged to support the Melvin Kruger Endowed Scholarship program, which provides financial support for students pursuing 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 during a period of up to and including five years.

The Alliance also provides roofing professionals the opportunity to fulfill their philanthropic goals through its formal Planned Giving Program. Planned giving investments, such as bequests, gifts of real estate or appreciate stock, life insurance policies and retirement plan assets, and charitable trusts from individuals will go a long way to fund research and programs that advance and shape the roofing industry for years to come.

The Alliance deeply appreciates the generous gifts already provided by William and Lacy Collins, Berwyn, Pa.; Dennis Conway, Commercial Roofers Inc., Las Vegas; John Gooding, GSM Roofing, Ephrata, Pa.; and Kelly and Lance Van Winkle, King of Texas Roofing Co. LP, Grand Prairie.

The roofing industry has a wonderful history of generosity, and for all roofing professionals who would like to be involved with giving back to the industry that has given so much to them, the Alliance provides the perfect opportunity to do so.

For more information about how you can make a commitment to the Alliance and leave a legacy to help secure the future of the roofing industry, contact Alison L. LaValley, CAE, NRCA's vice president of member services and development, at (800) 323-9545, ext. 7573 or [alavalley@nrca.net](mailto:alavalley@nrca.net), or visit the Alliance's website, [www.roofingindustryalliance.net](http://www.roofingindustryalliance.net).

In addition, the Alliance also distributed the final report of its work with Bilingual America, Atlanta, a leadership training company that conducts cultural and leadership training for companies with Latino workers. Key findings, best practices and a list of challenges the industry must overcome, as well as specific recommendations for workplace improvements unique to the roofing industry, were provided to all members.

"Simply knowing our investment is providing opportunities for construction management students to learn more about the roofing industry has been satisfying, not to mention the valuable funding of requests for programs such as National Women in Roofing, Bilingual America and NRCA's national training initiative," says Marc Cameron, operations manager for Diamond Roofing, Manhattan, Kan.

## HONORING WORKERS

Each year, the Alliance sponsors the roofing industry's Most Valuable Player (MVP) Awards Program, which identifies and honors exceptional roofing workers from roofing contracting, distributor and supplier firms who demonstrate excellence, dedication, enthusiasm and teamwork. Since its inception in 1999, 554 employees have been nominated, and 209 have been honored as winners and finalists.

MVP Awards winners are chosen based on outstanding on-the-job performance; attracting new roofing workers and helping to retain existing ones; contributions to a team effort; community service and volunteerism; and other noteworthy contributions and activities.

The MVP Awards Program recognizes a maximum of 10 workers, and one winner is chosen to be *Professional Roofing's* Best of the Best, an elite recognition and award co-sponsored by OMG Roofing Products, Agawam, Mass. The Best of the Best winner receives an additional prize awarded by OMG Roofing Products and is featured in a *Professional Roofing* cover story.

This year, the Alliance announced the winners of its 16th annual MVP Awards during NRCA's 129th Annual Convention held Feb. 16-18 in Orlando, Fla. Winners included the following: Isael Casas, foreman for Tecta America Southeast LLC, Sanford, Fla.; Pedro Melendez, superintendent for Centimark Corp., Houston; and Curtis Purvis, superintendent for Chamberlin Roofing and Waterproofing, Farmers Branch, Texas. Purvis also was presented with the Best of the Best award.

"The MVP Awards Program is one of the Alliance's most significant programs," says Alliance President James Patterson, senior vice president—procurement for Centimark Corp., Canonsburg, Pa. "The award recognizes and values our workers and their accomplishments on the job and in the community, which is important and often emotional."

## PHILANTHROPIC OUTREACH

In addition to recognizing workers who help create a thriving industry, the Alliance supports roofing professionals when they need it most.

Through a nomination process, the Alliance helps create sustainable solutions for individuals or families in need who have experienced life-altering events, such as injury, illness, disability or death, through its Helping

Our Own Program. At its April meeting, the Alliance approved an additional \$10,000 contribution to a trust fund established for a member's granddaughter who recently suffered septic shock. The program also has helped families overwhelmed by medical expenses, as well as three roofing workers injured in the 2014 Boston Marathon bombing. Since the program's inception, the Alliance has distributed \$76,917.

"Although the Alliance can't solve all the problems during a time of crisis, collectively, we can make a real difference in the lives of families who have been touched by tragedy," says Nelson Braddy, president of King of Texas Roofing Co. LP, Grand Prairie.

The Alliance also approved funding in April to serve as a partner and sponsor of Rebuilding Together's Building a Healthy Neighborhood campaign, held Sept. 23-24 in Cleveland. More than 600 volunteers worked to provide critical home repairs, energy-efficiency updates and numerous health and safety modifications to 10 neighborhood homes in the historic Slavic Village community. Volunteers also worked on a community space and cleaned up neighboring homes.

"The effort had a tremendous, positive effect on the neighborhood and helped transform the health and safety of the residents," says Bennett Judson, executive director of the Alliance. "It was quite remarkable to see what everyone was able to accomplish in just two short days."

The Alliance also serves as a partner and silver sponsor of the CM Cares program provided through Colorado State University's Department of Construction Management. Students, faculty, staff and industry partners, such as the Alliance, collaborate on construction-related projects for people with special needs and local community service agencies needing assistance that cannot be provided by other sources.

## TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

Since its inception, the Alliance has allocated \$4.6 million to help fund 40 research, educational and technical projects in support of high-quality programs, including roof-reflectivity studies, energy standards and codes, the advancement of high-performance roof systems, rooftop solar installations and sustainable construction, and the development of the Wall of Wind, as well as funding for the development of data necessary to substantiate compliance of nonadhered roof systems (seam-fastened, mechanically attached single-ply membrane roof systems)

with requirements contained in the *International Energy Conservation Code, 2012 Edition*. The latter project was jointly funded by the Alliance, NRCA, the Canadian Roofing Contractors Association and SPRI Inc.

## IMPROVING THE FUTURE

As the Alliance continues to advance education, invest in technology and research and expand its initiatives to include additional philanthropic causes, it remains steadfast in its ongoing commitment to secure the future excellence of the roofing industry for the next 20 years and beyond.

"The Alliance is addressing the critical issues within the industry, such as education, training, technology and sustainability, and we want to be involved and part of the solutions," says Nick Kesslering, director of national accounts for FiberTite Roofing Systems/Seaman Corp., Wooster, Ohio. "The Alliance is a great vehicle to help shape and improve the future of the industry, and we're proud to be part of it."

Roofing professionals who invest in the Alliance not only advance the roofing industry, but they also advance their own careers and businesses.

"There's a lot of momentum right now with the Alliance, which ultimately leads to an interest in funding new projects and attracting new members," says Robert McNamara, president of F.J.A. Christiansen Roofing Co. Inc., a Tecta America company, Milwaukee. "The advances we have made during the past few years are testimonials of how successful we can be when everyone within the industry works together." 🌟🌟

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SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE ALLIANCE HAS ALLOCATED \$4.6 MILLION TO HELP FUND 40 RESEARCH, EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL PROJECTS IN SUPPORT OF HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS