EIMA Annual Meeting Delivers Balanced Program with Focus on Contractors

The 2017 EIMA Annual Meeting in Las Vegas on March 27 - 29 featured a non-stop schedule of events that was balanced among educational sessions, solid networking opportunities, and recreation. All of the value-packed sessions were held at the luxurious Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino with the exception of the golf event. The theme for this year’s meeting was “Be a Hero”, which coincides with EIMA’s strategic marketing campaign. The overall slant of the sessions was oriented to EIFS contractors.

The Opening General Session on the afternoon of March 27 was gavelled to order by EIMA President Mike Murphy. Leading off was a presentation by EIMA’s strategic marketing consulting firm, Function. Next, the keynote address was presented by Dr. Tom Schleifer of Arizona State University that was entitled “Be a Hero: Choose Only Profitable Work.”

Sandwiched among all of the informative sessions, 44 golfers teed off in this year’s version of the Duncan Crowther Golf Tournament sponsored by Dow Construction Chemicals. Held under crystal blue skies at one of the best public courses in Las Vegas, Bear’s Best, the conditions were close to ideal.

The Closing General Session highlighted all the meaningful work that EIMA’s productive committees are doing for the benefit of the EIFS industry.

Over 150 were registered for the 2017 Annual Meeting. With so many activities jammed into such a short program, it was difficult for registrants to dedicate time to attend them all.

Keynote Schleifer is a Hero; Shows how to Choose Only Profitable Work

Dr. Schleifer said that he spent years identifying and measuring the causes of construction firm failures. He added that it is almost impossible to overcome a setback to a project once it has happened and it is difficult to minimize costs thereafter. The causes of project failures are inexperience with the exact type of work, project, or process involved. How can a construction firm, therefore, gain needed experience to succeed on most projects? His answer is 1) a firm can buy experience, 2) manage the risk by starting small, 3) finish the first project before starting another, and 4) attempt only what you can afford to lose.

He went through his checklist, which provides a roadmap of how to avoid unprofitable work.

The video of Dr. Schleifer’s presentation can be found on EIMA’s website: www.eima.com.
**Function PR Highlights Strategic Marketing Initiative**

Since being brought on board in late 2015, Function PR has focused on getting the benefits of EIFS in front of building industry decision-makers. With the launch of the Hero campaign, the case was made that EIFS can compete on any playing field. Function’s presentation included a recap of the ‘Hero’ campaign which was launched in the spring of 2016, and the educational Cladding Conundrum series which showcases the advantages of EIFS over other exterior wall systems. Larger numbers were shared about the website traffic that has followed these pieces, and next steps for how they’ll be used.

Looking to the future, Mesh Matters, a campaign on the proper use and importance of reinforcing mesh, was introduced. Both campaigns will continue to grow in 2017, with advertisements, direct mail, infographics, and videos, so stay tuned.

**Subcontractor Bid Listing Panel Shows Strong Emotions on Issue**

Should the general contractor list with the GC’s bid to the owner the name of the subcontracting firm whose bid the GC relied on to develop the bid? This was the question addressed during a special panel presentation on subcontractor bid listing. Speaking in favor of listing of the subcontractor’s bid was John McNerney, general counsel of the Mechanical Contractors Association of America, who outlined solid reasons for listing. On the other side of the issue was Dr. Tom Schleifer, a former general contractor from New Jersey, who presented methodical reasoning why the subcontracting firm should not be included. The panel was moderated by EIMA’s general counsel, Jeff Gilmore of the Akerman law firm.

Mr. McNerney generalized that without bid listing, the subcontractor procurement process was akin to an auction, with little regard to the details of the work to be accomplished. He noted ‘bid shopping’ by the general contractor only creates ill will and distrust on the worksite. Dr. Schleifer purported that very few subcontractors are willing to standup and oppose bid shopping and participate in it reluctantly. He said that by requiring bid listing, the procurement process would be unwieldy.

**Contractors Breakfast Focuses On Tips For EIFS Installation Success**

For the second consecutive EIMA Annual Meeting, the EIFS Contractors Committee Breakfast was held to provide EIFS contractors with an exclusive setting to raise issues about the state of the EIFS industry and directly engage with representatives of the four EIMA manufacturing members. The breakfast also featured a special panel presentation on the “Attributes of a Good EIFS Applicator” from four technical experts of the EIMA manufacturing members: Bill Egan of BASF; Peter Harrison of ParexUSA, Inc.; Bill Preston of Dryvit Systems, Inc.; and Terry Viness of Sto Corp. The presentation focused on key factors to consider during an EIFS project, and addressed topics such as the significance of treating EIFS as a tested system, the responsibilities of the EIFS manufacturer, the value of pre-project conferences, and the importance of a structurally sound substrate.
Technical Experts from EIMA Manufacturing Members Tackle Third Party Inspection

Following a presentation at the EIFS Contractors Committee Breakfast, the technical experts from the four EIMA manufacturing members were back at it later that morning with a special presentation on how third party inspections of EIFS projects can contribute to the success of an EIFS application. During the presentation, Bill Egan of BASF; Peter Harrison of Parex-USA, Inc.; Bill Preston of Dryvit Systems, Inc.; and Terry Viness of Sto Corp gave an overview of third party inspection best practices and code requirements for EIFS applications, elements of the project to inspect, and the roles and responsibilities of the key players involved with EIFS applications.

VELA Insurance Briefs EIMA Members on Progress Made on Insurance Availability for EIFS

Following last year’s highly successful EIFS Insurance Symposium, the representatives from Vela Insurance returned to this year’s EIMA Annual Meeting to update EIMA members on the continuing progress being made to increase the availability of general liability insurance for EIFS contractors. The panel, which was moderated by Buck Buchanan of PAREX USA, Inc., included three EIFS insurance experts from Vela Insurance: Joe Palumbo, Kathie Olson, and Rob Lager. The panelists acknowledged that more insurance companies are coming to view general liability insurance for EIFS contractors as a growing market opportunity as a result of the dramatic decline in litigation claims over the last decade. They also noted that they are seeing progress being made within the insurance industry on the removal of the EIFS Exclusion from general liability insurance policies. Once again, this year’s insurance symposium will be available for viewing in the coming weeks on the EIMA website.

Educational Forums Available Online

Continuing with an activity started in 2016, EIMA is making the educational forums from the 2017 EIMA Annual Meeting available for everyone online. Over the next two weeks, several different sections of the meeting will be published for you to view and share with co-workers and customers. The Opening General Session, “Be a Hero – Choose Only Profitable Work” by Dr. Schleifer, Subcontract Bid Listing: Yes or No?, Building on Progress: EIFS Insurance Forum by Vela Insurance Services, and Factors for Achieving a Successful EIFS Application, presented by the EIMA Technical and Research Steering Committee, will all be available on the EIMA YouTube page. While nothing can beat the actual experience of being part of these forums, this is your only other chance to witness them.
VELA Associate Member of the Year: Dow Construction Chemicals

Dow Construction Chemicals was named the 2016 Associate Member of the Year. The award was handed out during the Opening General Session and continues to be sponsored by VELA Insurance Services. The selection of Dow makes them the first repeat recipient of the award, since its inception in 2013. With this award, EIMA leadership acknowledges the untiring efforts that Dow puts forward for the EIFS industry, showcasing their growing involvement on a yearly basis.

Between 2013 and today, four different associate member companies have received the coveted recognition. The award will continue to be handed out during the yearly gathering of the EIMA Annual Meeting.

At right is Bill Wagner of Dow, accepting the award from Joe Palumbo of Vela and Mike Murphy, President of EIMA.

Networking Reception Dives Into March Madness

Attendees that weren’t already in the college basketball spirit were thrust into the excitement during the March Madness Cocktail Reception. Again this year, the gathering offered the best opportunity to mingle outside of the informational and educational forums. From the themed cocktail to the basketball shooting challenge, there was plenty to keep guests from worrying about any busted brackets. If the reception’s photography is any indication of the fun everyone was having, this event will continue to be a favorite in future years. The only remaining question is whether or not you won in the basketball shooting challenge?

VELA Insurance Sponsors Associate Members Dinner

The Associate Members Dinner has become a staple of the EIMA Annual Meeting. Once again, VELA Insurance Services stepped up as the sole sponsor of the dinner, further cementing themselves as one of the most loyal supporters to EIMA.

This year’s dinner was held at Charlie Palmer Steak, and continued to build upon previous year’s guest lists. Special thanks goes out to VELA Insurance Services for their continual contributions to the entire industry and association.
HIGHLY COMPETITIVE GOLF TOURNAMENT REVELS ON TOP COURSE

While there were plenty of long putts and straight drives to brag about, the most common statements revolved around the gorgeous location of this year’s Duncan Crowther Memorial Golf Tournament. The Bear’s Best course was full of sunshine and memorable mountains in the distance. The wind had been forecasted to complicate playing conditions, but when everyone arrived at the course there were far from any complaints. Participants universally shared their pleasure in playing the course.

Special thanks to DOW for being the lead sponsor, and Georgia-Pacific for sponsoring the 19th hole beverages. To add suspense, the scores were kept secret until the Closing General Session, when the foursome of David Boivin, Bill Doehring, Mark Kennedy and Gary Barnson was awarded the EIMA Cup.
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