

NIA's Jones: Mechanical insulation brings value to facilities

As executive vice president and CEO of the National Insulation Association (NIA), Michele Jones is driven by the respect she has for the industry and its membership.

"Their dedication to this industry and their desire to improve energy efficiency in the industrial and commercial environment make each day rewarding and fulfilling," explained Jones.

NIA was founded in 1953 with the mission of promoting the benefits of mechanical insulation and supporting its members in growing their businesses. Its 325 member companies — comprised of contractors, distributors, fabricators, laminators and manufacturers — serve the commercial and industrial insulation industry and represent the entire supply chain of products.

"We have member companies that have been with us since the beginning: family businesses that have grown with NIA; some who have been attending our conventions for 30-plus years; and friendships that span decades," said Jones. "It's part of what makes this industry and the people who represent it so special."

NIA is focused on the needs of its mem-

bers and addressing the need for an increased understanding of insulation's benefits. Its programs and resources help members train their staff, stay current on industry-related news and events, grow their businesses and educate their customers. NIA has numerous print and online resources that address the overall understanding of insulation, tools to calculate energy savings with insulation, videos explaining insulation applications and installation practices, and more. NIA also has a certification program that produces hundreds of certified insulation energy appraisers ready to provide guidance and analysis through DOE-verified software to determine the optimal insulation thickness and corresponding energy and dollar savings for a project. The appraisal provides the end user with concrete proof of the dollar and performance value of properly specific and maintained insulation systems.

Together, NIA and its members work to promote the value of insulation and educate end users (system designers, engineers, architects and specifiers) on insulation's ability to deliver cost and energy savings, reduce emissions and environmental

impact, protect personnel, enhance system process control, provide fire protection, reduce noise levels, extend equipment life and improve process performance.

Part of advancing their industry is working to change how insulation is perceived.

"With the nature of our products being 'old' technology, we compete with the newer, shiny, 'sexier' technologies that tout themselves as the latest and greatest energy savers," explained Jones. "Our technology is tried and true, and the value mechanical insulation brings to a facility is indisputable."

"We fight and compete for capital dollars in the maintenance arena, while insulation's energy and cost-saving benefits are reaped by the operations department. Insulation performs the moment it is installed, and it has an excellent shelf life compared to other energy-saving technologies. If an area within the insulation system is damaged from normal facility use, the rest of the system continues to perform."

NIA's research has shown between 10-30 percent of insulation in a normal system becomes damaged or is removed within 1-3 years.

"Unfortunately, insulation is rarely



Michele Jones, executive vice president and CEO, National Insulation Association.

replaced on a routine basis," said Jones. "Both the amount of energy lost and the additional fuel consumed — creating more noxious gases — can be enormous."

Jones invites industry to get involved and learn more about insulation at the association's 2017 events, including its annual convention in Phoenix March 29-April 1.

For more information, visit www.insulation.org or call (703) 464-6422. •

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