

CAST POLYMER CONNECTION

Summer 2020



COVID-19: The industry faces unprecedented challenges

- Helping our employees cope
- A special award: good news during a difficult time



**PROFILE ON
TYVARIAN**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- 4 How the pandemic has affected ICPA member companies
- 7 A unique perspective on what's happening
- 10 Tyvarian LLC; born from innovation
- 14 SAFE PLANT of the year: IMI

18

Helping employees during the crisis



DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's letter
- 18 The human factor: employee communications
- 23 ICPA news to know
- 26 Index of advertisers

Cover: The year 2020 has brought unusual challenges and massive confusion for much of the business and industrial world because of COVID-19. The magazine collected a few examples of what's happening among ICPA member companies and hopes to continue reporting on developments as they occur. The story begins on page 4. To tell CPC what's happening with your company and in your area of the country, write executive editor Genilee Swope Parente at gsparente@verizon.net.

PRODUCED BY
GSP Publishing

Genilee Swope Parente,
Executive Editor
gsparente@verizon.net

PUBLISHED BY



4949 Old Brownsboro Rd.
Ste. 232
Louisville, KY 40222

Phone: 470-219-8139
www.TheICPA.com

For advertising rates,
please contact
Jennifer Towner at
Jennifer@theicpa.com or
470-219-8139

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Facing the new world



WHEN I AGREED TO STEP IN AS INTERIM PRESIDENT after the departure of Mark Buss, I had no idea what interesting times were ahead. Our industry and our world were about to face a pandemic that would challenge us in ways we'd never seen before. Because of COVID-19 and the various government reactions to what was happening, changes would occur in how things can get done.

Yet I refuse to look at our current situation in a totally negative way. Yes, it's caused us heartache, worry over our own employees, our families and our bottom line. But as Abraham Lincoln once said, "Behind the clouds, the sun is still shining."

We just need to find a way to break through.

What COVID-19 is doing is causing us all to look at our workplaces differently. As the story on page 4 reveals, we've been forced to uncover weaknesses in our operations, our ways of conducting business and in our organization. Many of us are now looking at new possibilities such as strengthening our internet-based business models and finding new channels for marketing our product. We're looking closely at what we can offer our customers and how we can better serve them. Certainly, all of us are studying our emergency response programs—where they've worked for us and where they've failed us.

We have to view that kind of internal review as a positive—a forced evaluation of what we do right and what we do wrong.

As an industry we've certainly seen our share of challenges and problems over the years. This one may be a little more broad-reaching than most, but it's still an opportunity to learn and grow; a time to consider new ideas. Even with our association,

which was forced to make the very difficult decision to cancel our annual get-together, we can see this as the chance to find new avenues such as: Is there an appetite out there for virtual meetings and get-togethers?

We're considering all the possibilities. But

don't think we won't be meeting in person. We rely on each other too much, and we've built strong connections and friendships that won't be affected. Like with most aspects of this pandemic, we have to be patient, we have to try to interpret the guidelines the best we can, we have to set our priorities. But we can also learn.

After you read the story in this issue on COVID-19, turn the pages for other

learning opportunities. A profile on Tyvarian reveals how this company is continuing to grow despite the current challenges. A story about our SAFE PLANT of the year winner IMI outlines how the program has worked for that company. We recognize in one of our features the importance of helping our employees deal with what's happening. Also, don't miss this issue's ICPA news to know because we talk about some of the exciting developments within ICPA.

Keep safe, keep healthy and keep positive.

Luke Haas
Interim President

WHAT COVID-19 IS DOING IS CAUSING US ALL TO LOOK AT OUR WORKPLACES DIFFERENTLY ... MANY OF US ARE NOW LOOKING AT NEW POSSIBILITIES.



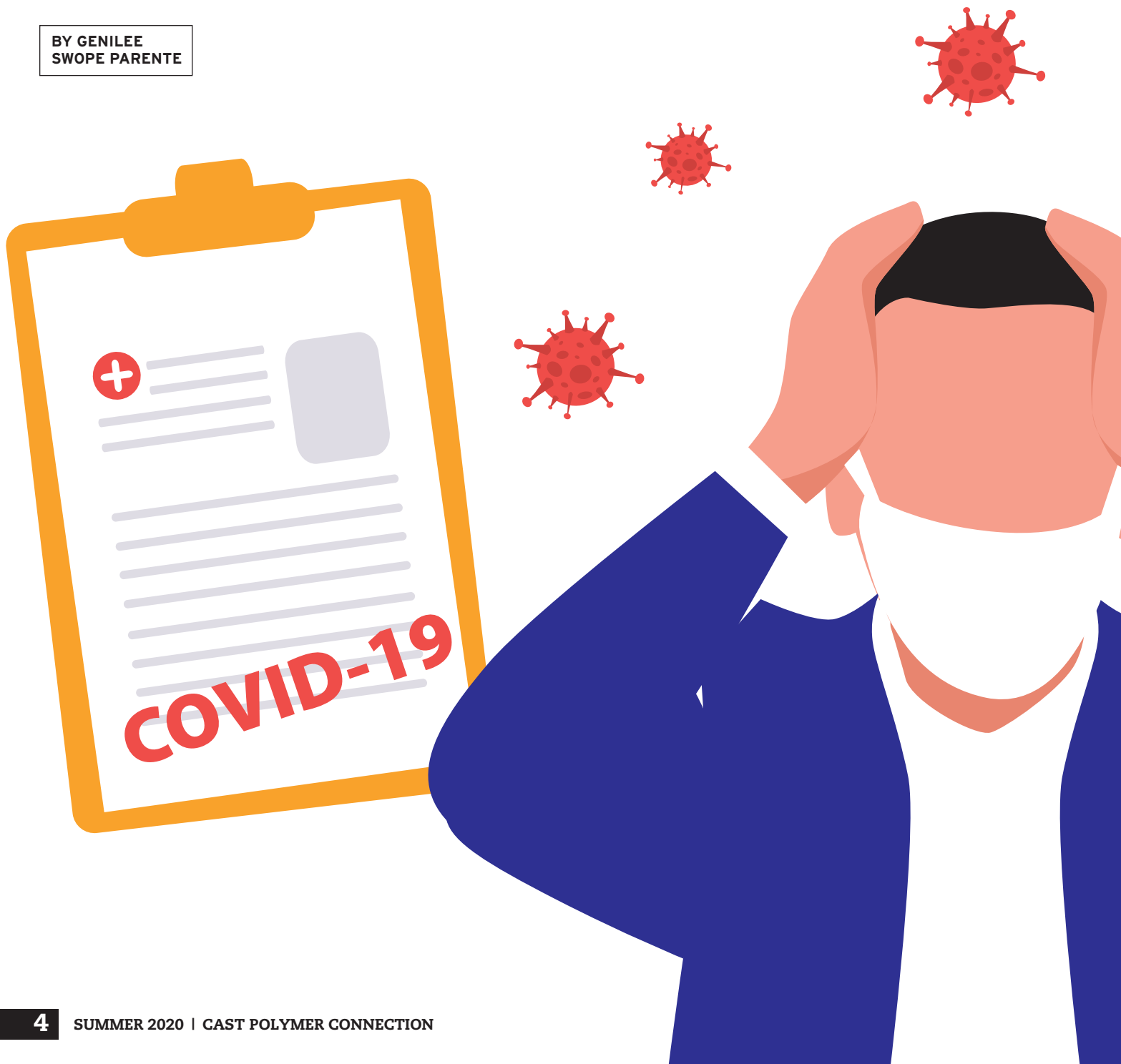
The Look that Makes the Difference.

Dura Stone® enhances almost any surface with spectacular granite colors and textures. Our products are an excellent choice for use in solid surface galley counter tops, bathroom vanities, shower surrounds, wall panels, and furnishings – which makes it particularly suitable for boatbuilding.

More information at acsinternational.com
and 1-800-669-9214.

The cast polymer industry is challenged by the pandemic

BY GENILEE
SWOPE PARENTE



AS CPC WENT TO PRESS IN MAY, the U.S. was in the grips of uncertainty about most aspects of running a business. The COVID-19 pandemic struck early in the year and quickly took hold, leaving in its wake new issues the corporate and industrial world has never faced.

Residential construction has been hard hit with NAHB reporting by early April's online poll that almost all builders (96%) felt the pandemic had an impact on traffic from prospective buyers and 80% of respondents reporting cancellation or delays in existing remodeling projects. In manufacturing, the National Association of Manufacturers conducted a survey as the crisis was getting heated up (mid-March) that found 78.3% of manufacturers were expecting a financial impact, 53.1% anticipated a change in operations and 35.5% said they faced supply chain disruptions.

The statistics will be outdated by the time this issue goes to press and the situation had already started to calm somewhat, but new concerns and issues will arise over the coming months. The cast polymer industry has lived through other crises, including the mid-2000s housing crash, and come out ahead; but they face a new set of concerns with this pandemic.

Still, the magazine wanted to begin the process of assessing how members were faring since the first of the year, so we sent out a short list of questions at the end of March to some of our manufacturers and suppliers and talked to them about what the issues of the moment were. Here's what we found out.

A universal challenge: Conflicting guidelines

All the companies the magazine talked to said one of the most significant challenges of the COVID-19 situation has been interpreting the various levels of guidelines to determine what to follow and when local regulations trump state or federal declarations.

"We manufacture in Michigan, Alabama, Texas and California, which all have shelter-in-place orders," says Tim Price, vice president of

the R.J. Marshall Co. "All our facilities have been declared essential businesses according to federal and state guidelines. But our biggest issue has been understanding and implementing all the local, state and federal guidelines to ensure the health and safety of our own employees," he adds.

R.J. Marshall obtained legal advice "to make sure we are doing all we can do to comply with guidelines and employee safety."

CounterTek, which is based in Pennsylvania, faces that state's tough set of guidelines, and the company agrees that trying to interpret how to react has been the main concern.

"The most significant challenge for us during this whole thing is that there is no real understanding of the rules for businesses. Everything seems to be arbitrary," says owner Ray Roux.

"We've reacted by doing our very best to stay up-to-date with guidelines and with following all the precautions we possibly can," he adds.

Because cast polymer manufacturers are in multiple states, supplier company Sanco, which is headquartered in Georgia, had the same type of reaction regarding its customers.

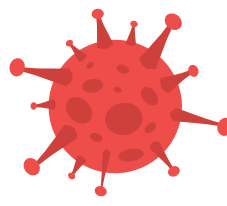
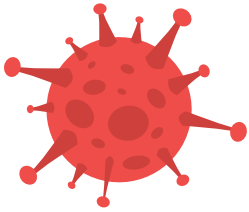
"So far, we have not experienced any huge setbacks or challenges in our own business. Our biggest issue has been wondering what individual state responses would be and how this would affect our customers," says Jonathan Taylor, technical sales manager from Sanco, who heads up Cast Polymer Radio (see page 24).

The level of business

CPC has learned of only a few cast polymer businesses that had to shutter completely, and some of them are back online. Others found ways to work around state or local restrictive orders that required shutting down some of their business.

For example, Manstone, LLC in Colorado Springs, CO, began taking temperatures of employees and doing daily health checks in mid-March as a proactive response to the developing COVID-19 situation before a state-wide restriction was issued. The company also began asking residential customers if they were in good health before visiting their homes, staggering office and showroom coverage so employees could keep a safe distance and conducting a daily cleaning and sanitizing schedule including disinfecting after any customer left the showroom.

On March 26, the governor of Colorado issued a stay-at-home order and the company began contacting any customers that had pending jobs scheduled from March 27 through the end of May to let them know they wouldn't be completing their projects until the order was lifted.



“SOME OF OUR OLDER EMPLOYEES HAD HEALTH CONCERNS; WE ALLOWED VOLUNTARY FURLOUGHS FROM THE BEGINNING IF AN EMPLOYEE WAS AFRAID TO COME TO WORK.

— DAVID HENRICKSON, PLANT MANAGER, INPRO CORPORATION

“All of our customers were supportive, understanding and thankful for this decision,” J.D. Sauer, general manager of Manstone, says.

While the state was under the stay-at-home order, management worked from home and a skeleton crew worked the few commercial projects that were deemed “critical/essential” projects (hospitals, assisted living, etc.) Meanwhile, the company paid all its employees and was able to return to work at its plant on April 27 when the order was lifted.

“Within three days of coming back, we had rescheduled all outstanding jobs to the satisfaction of our customers,” April Sauer, marketing/sales manager, explains.

Other companies report a decrease in outside sales or a decrease in their own capacity in the plant, but many of them are also on the way to being up to speed.

Sanco says that, “We rotated some of our personnel during the early part of April, but are operating at full capacity now that the state of Georgia has opened back up,” Taylor reports.

Pennsylvania manufacturer CounterTek reported that it was operating at a diminished capacity as this magazine went to press due to a “slack in business,” but Roux was optimistic that the setback would right itself when people could get out more easily and building became a priority again.

In more remote areas, such as in the state of Utah, companies said they were seeing a slight drop in business because of customer concerns, but the fall wasn’t significant.

“We were up 30% year to date when COVID hit the news,” explains ReBecca Erdmann, co-owner of Sand & Swirl, Ogden. “We had an installer who got sick, which cut our capabilities. But we’d only had six individual homeowners who postponed their jobs (as of the end of April), and it was because they got laid off,” she adds.

Many companies have said traffic in the showroom has fallen off or that showrooms themselves have been closed because they are too public. Sand & Swirl said its customers fell from an average of 13 a day to 5 per day so it reduced its showroom hours but never shut down completely.

Meanwhile, “Construction was deemed essential in Utah because of the shortage of homes so the contractors that we do work for remain very busy. At this time, we feel very fortunate to still be busy and struggling to keep up,” she adds.

Tyvarian, which is located in Lindon, Utah, (see page 10 for a profile) said it’s doing well during this time, partly because of a new distributorship program, which began early this year and hit two milestones in order levels for March.

“Both those milestones were significant considering the climate we were operating in. As far as general operations, we’ve seen the need to increase lead times by as much as five business days, but that hasn’t seemed to be a deterrent for most of our customer base,” says Doug Tibbitts, president and general manager of Tyvarian, who is in charge of that new program.

Reassuring employees/customers

By far one of the most significant concerns for both manufacturer and supplier ICPA member companies is how to handle their employees and customers. That includes not only keeping them free of the virus but also keeping up morale and abolishing the fear. The key has been constant communications, companies say.

“The prevailing concern when the crisis became serious was job security,” says David Henrickson, plant manager of Apollo South Operations, Inpro Corporation, which is based out of Wisconsin. That state was under a “Safer at Home” order by March 18 that was struck down in mid-May by the

state's supreme court.

At the time the order was issued, "Some of our older employees had health concerns; we allowed voluntary furloughs from the beginning if an employee was afraid to come to work," he says.

The employee would lose some pay and not be eligible for unemployment benefits, but their job stayed secure and their health insurance was guaranteed.

"We even paid the employee portion of the premium as a short-term loan that could be paid off over time through payroll deductions when they returned to work, Henrickson says.

As far as the Inpro staff who chose to remain at work, "We meet formally as a group to answer questions and discuss ways to keep healthy and keep those who are healthy on the job. Our approach has been a team effort—If we stay healthy together, we will protect our jobs and our health," he adds.

For many companies, handling employees has meant being transparent about what was happening with the company and keeping in constant contact.

CounterTek's owner Ray Roux says that, "The main point we wanted to get across to everyone is that we will get through this. We have kept morale going throughout our

Seeing members' pain from a unique perspective

Trying to weigh what's happening with COVID-19 and how it affects the cast polymer industry is a monumental task—what each company faces is geographically specific based on the action the state's governor has taken, instances in which regional courts get involved, what local health officials are saying and in some cases, how counties and cities are reacting to edicts from their state government and federal regulatory agencies.

If you're someone like Kelly DeBusk, owner of Composites Compliance, who has clients in most states, tracking what's happening is a constant process these days. DeBusk is spending most of her hours interpreting federal and state guidelines, talking to clients, and helping them to craft the documents they need to get by. Like much of what has happened in this pandemic, she says there have been many unsettling developments.

"I've been working with these companies for 21 years directly and with other industrial companies years before that. In all that time, I've never had a company call me in a panic because local law enforcement was literally knocking at the door," she says. DeBusk had a client calling from Pennsylvania, a state that had shut down by mid-March. The police were at the client's plant questioning why the company was open. To help, DeBusk had to email local law enforcement to send proof that the company fell under the Standard Iden-

tification Classification code that allowed them to stay open in that particular state.

"Just a few miles down the road, one of my other Pennsylvania customers told me the company had made the difficult decision to close down completely for the time being because of the hassles of keeping up with all that's happening," she adds. In that second case, it was a small family business with older owners who didn't feel the effort was worth staying open, something she's seen happening in several areas of the country.

"In addition to everything businesses today are having to face because of COVID-19, they face the uncertainty of how regulators and enforcement are going to react," she explains. "Companies were nervous enough in the days when compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) were the major concerns. I can't imagine them having to face this additional stress," she says.

The way things are done is changing rapidly and many work policies have had to be rewritten quickly to bring companies up to speed.

"Companies have needed to change their medical policies to reflect what happens if someone gets sick," she says. To do it right, those companies must continually monitor federal and local guidelines, as well as local health department notifica-

tions because everything has changed frequently and is still being modified. For example, early on, issues arose about taking employee temperatures because most places don't allow such action in non-pandemic times, except by registered medical personnel. They've also changed policy on advising employees to seek medical attention before returning to work.

That last factor occurred partly because in many areas of the country, especially in the hot spots of infection, the concern has been about overwhelming the medical system. That has slowed over the months in some regions so that now most companies can ask an employee to get medical diagnoses when they can, DeBusk explains.

Still, every time a new guideline comes out, employers have to change their policies.

What surprised her the most, however, were new documents and papers that needed creating, including travel papers for employers located in stricter states such as New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and California.

"I never dreamed that someday I'd be asked to help cast polymer companies create travel documents so that an employee stopped on their way to work has a piece of paper that explains that their company is considered 'essential' under that area's laws," she says.

"Companies have had to come with some very creative ways to keep their doors open," she says.

Tracking opinions on trends

With all that's happened in the last few months, it's good to stop worrying about the immediate future long enough to look at what the experts say may be longer-term trends created by this pandemic.

Here's what some people are saying:

A recent news story on CNBC's news site predicts that commercial offices will look different going forward. The high-walled cubicles of the 1980s and 90s are about to make a comeback, along with: antimicrobial materials for construction, wider corridors, better air filtration, touchless elevators and videoconferencing even when people are in the office. The article, which was written by Jane Wells, also predicts that the "health cops" are about to be born: someone assigned within companies to monitor compliance with distancing.

An article on realtor.com by Jennifer Kelly Geddes predicts home design will change in several critical ways including: More bathrooms to keep germs in their place; better mudrooms that separate access from the outside to the inside (the coronavirus has been found to cling to muddy shoes); more need for big pantries and freezers (presumably to load up on supplies); increased use of bidets (to help with future bathroom tissue scarcity); more closed off flexible spaces to use as offices and school work areas; hands-free everything (faucets, light switches, etc.) and more.

A Purdue University study and resulting whitepaper says that manufacturing in the post-pandemic years will include new technologies and popularizing of existing technologies such as robotics. Drones will be used for counting and checking inventory; co-bots will help with tasks that normally require more than one person, and cleaning robots are already in use. Companies are also testing new protective measures such as wristbands Ford has studied for alerting an employee when they are within six feet of another person.



Will robotics become more common?

LENNY KUHN

company by communicating constantly. Through this whole thing, we have told employees the truth about what is going on and how we are handling it," he says.

That communication has also occurred with customers and suppliers.

"We have reached out to and are in constant contact not only with employees but with our customers and our vendors," Roux adds.

Tower Industries in Massillon, OH also reached out very early in the process to both customers and employees.

Tower owner Todd Werstler says businesses in that state had the advantage of a governor who acted early. Governor Mike DeWine declared a state of emergency March 9 and began holding daily press conferences. He started closing down certain businesses such as barbershops by March 18 and declared a stay-at-home order by March 22.

"The governor of Ohio was way ahead of most other officials in talking about and taking drastic measures. He hinted a lot about what might happen, and I think he did that because he was trying to allow business to prepare without scaring people," he says.

Tower's management started in early March reading everything they could get their hands on and crafting communications in mid-March to employees and customers—creating multiple versions for use in two scenarios: closing the factory or remaining operational.

Instituting safety procedures

Every company the magazine talked to for this story that has remained open and operating has instituted the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC's) recommendations of social distancing, constant cleaning and disinfecting and face-covering/personal protection equipment (PPE) measures.

Because Tower had already been preparing, the company was able to act within hours of when the governor shut down the state. During those hours, management poured over the state announcement and finally concluded that it qualified to stay open.

"The stay-at-home order was issued on a Sunday and went into place that following Tuesday," Kerry Klodt, the company's director of operations, says. Employees knew within two hours of the state announcement that Tower's doors would remain open and the company had one day to prepare.

The emergency plan was already put together. To keep everyone safe, the company went from one shift to three shifts so that social distancing could be implemented, spending the last half hour of each shift cleaning and allowing staggered breaks and mealtimes. Most office staff started working from home.

Still, at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Tower got an unpleasant surprise: a call from the local health department.

"I thought they might be calling to ask us what our safety precautions were. We were so prepared that I figured it would be like a pat on the back," Klodt says. "It wasn't. They wanted to know why we were still open, and they were not very nice about it," she adds.

But Tower had done its research, changed its procedures to protect people, prepared for the worst. It had even acted early enough that it had plenty of masks, protective equipment, disinfecting wipes and other supplies on hand. The only change made because of the health department's call was that the company became stricter about jobs that required home visits. It had already begun limiting those visits before the shutdown order and rescheduling any projects it could. The visits ceased almost completely after the shutdown except in unoccupied homes. The showroom also shut down completely until the stay-at-home order was lifted (May 4).

Back to normal?

As this story was being finalized, many of the states, including Ohio and Colorado, had lifted some of their restrictions. However, plants with safety precautions in place have maintained their vigilance.

"We are continuing to perform daily health evaluations on employees, cleaning and sanitizing all facilities, asking homeowners to keep a safe distance from our employees, wearing proper PPE in people's homes," says Manstone's J.D. Sauer. "We also instituted appointments for showrooms, and we have begun asking all customers to wear masks. We continue to stagger office and showroom coverage by employees," he adds.

Tower has returned to one shift, but implemented longer, staggered shifts and a closed plant on Fridays.

Inpro has maintained its social distancing practices and in cases where that's not possible, required masks be worn in addition to PPE.

Still, one reality has not fully hit home for anyone because it can't yet be measured: the financial impact of the pandemic.

"Beyond the immediate health concerns, our biggest challenge has been having enough business to keep everyone employed," Werstler explains. "Because we were able to act early, we applied for and obtained a PPP [payment protection program] loan on the first round," Werstler says. "But no one knows the full effect on our markets."

Kerry Klodt adds that: "We feel fortunate that no one in our company had to be quarantined or came down with the virus, and we believe that's it partly due to the measures we

The influence of past pandemics

According to a recent Architectural Digest article, several major home design changes came about because of past pandemics. Bioethicist Dr. Elizabeth Yuko wrote that two of those changes were:

All-white kitchens. Yuko says in the article that white tiles started showing up heavily in the early 1900s as scientists were beginning to understand and publicize how infectious diseases spread. Builders started creating white surfaces for public places as a way to see the dirt better, and even some restaurants got into the groove, creating a white look that made people feel safer when foodborne diseases such as typhoid, botulism and trichinosis were becoming public health concerns. The trend eventually made it into the kitchen as people began to believe it was easier to clean and sanitize.

The half bath. People began to create a separate room near the entrance to the home in the early 20th century as a way to prevent spreading infectious diseases. Those were in the days when Amazon didn't drop something off, ring the doorbell and leave. Workers such as coal deliverers or icemen came into the home on almost a daily basis so the powder room was created as a way to provide facilities for the visitors as well as a place to wash hands for the receivers of those deliveries.

took. Hopefully, that will help us recover business quickly."

Also, the practices organizations have put in place have had another positive effect: they've served as an emergency response exercise.

"Amid the health scare, we followed and enforced all the CDC guidelines such as frequent cleaning, handwashing, and social distancing. We haven't really changed how we market to customers other than there is not much marketing taking place at the moment," says CounterTek owner Ray Roux.

However, "While we have been looking to the future, we don't believe that this is the 'new normal.' Eventually, things will get back to the way they were. This doesn't mean, however, that we will not be prepared for a similar occurrence in the future," he says. ■

GENILEE SWOPE PARENTE is executive editor of **Cast Polymer Connection**. She'll be doing follow up stories as developments occur. Please contact her with what's happened at your company at gsparente@verizon.net.

Tyvarian:

A company born from innovation

BY GENILEE
SWOPE PARENTE

OF ALL THE COMPANIES THAT BELONG TO ICPA, none illustrates how inventive the cast polymer industry can be quite like Tyvarian International, Lindon UT. The company spun off from a more traditional cultured marble company to become its own entity: the maker and seller of an image transfer process that can create hundreds of new looks and designs that rival stone, marble, onyx and many other natural and man-made surface finishes.

Tyvarian's process has now been adopted by many manufacturing companies, who have signed up to be manufacturer dealers; most recently, the company began pursuing a second channel: a distributor network model. Meanwhile, it has its own manufacturing plant, which makes shower walls and floors, vanity tops, backsplashes and other bathroom products.

The road from creation of the process to international sales has been paved with innovation.

Creation of the Tyvarian process

Tyvarian is a spinoff of Whitewater Kitchen and Bath, which still makes Tyvarian and other products. Whitewater started life in 1977 as Mountain West Marble, a traditional cultured marble company that was purchased by Kirk Williamson in 1987 and renamed Whitewater.

In 2005, a new process was created for the cultured marble industry that uses photo sublimation—transfer of a digital image onto a countertop surface through a process of heat and pressure.

“Whitewater was a test company for that process, and we loved the results,” says Kirk Williamson, CEO, and primary owner of both Whitewater and Tyvarian.

The problem was, the process was not very durable. The resulting product faded from exposure to ultraviolet light, and the surface didn't hold up well to scratches.

Tyvarian put its research and development specialist Doug Thompson on the job. After many months of planning, more than 200 experiments and a year to put the new

methods into place, the new Tyvarian process was created.

“We faced many challenges such as finding ways to make the surface durable, getting inks to adhere to the surface polymer, where to insert the images in the process, when to apply the image, how much ink was needed to achieve desired results, how to create the right background colors. Then we needed to achieve passing results for industry testing,” Williamson explains.

However, “the demand for a new visage for cultured marble was undeniable,” he adds. The company took the new product to market in 2008.

“At the time, cultured marble sales were trending lower and most companies in the industry needed a hook to bring in new business. This product was so successful for White-

Tyvarian's showroom reveals to visitors how many looks can be created from the process.



An installer seals the base and the flange for a shower project.



water that demand for information on it grew to the point it became its own entity,” Williamson says.

Tyvarian today

Tyvarian currently has a variety of customers: 40 active manufacturer dealers, 15 distributor dealers and many individual contractors that call with requirements for special projects.

“We’re also pretty fortunate to be diversified between remodel jobs, new construction and specialty applications,” Williamson says.

That diversification and client mix have come about over the years through an evolutionary process, he says.

“Any time you introduce a new product line or even a variation of an existing product, your customer base will evolve,” he says. “For us, one company started the ball rolling [with the Tyvarian product]. We then began targeting remodeling companies and individual contractors and finally moved into new construction as an upgrade homeowners could choose. Once that happened, it was a small step to make Tyvarian a standard option for some of our contractors and developers,” he says.

Besides selling direct to contractors, the company offers two types of partnerships: dealership and distribution. Manufacturing dealers decide what parts or colors they will offer

to their customers and at what price, and Tyvarian supplies the support.

“They purchase raw materials from us such as surface resin, printed media, casting molds and other hard materials needed for creating Tyvarian, and they get training as part of the process,” says Williamson.

In 2019, the company began offering a new business model: distributorships.

“Knowing that we had a solid manufacturing base, but also knowing that standing still means you’re actually going backward, we determined through research that we needed to offer distributing as the next step in our evolution,” says Doug Tibbitts, president and general manager of Tyvarian.

He explains how distributors work.

“A distributing dealer has a Resale Product Catalog from which the company orders finished parts. The dealer has options such as prepaid freight, volume pricing incentives, training videos for distribution to sellers of the product and more. In other words, the dealer still dictates the price of the product, but doesn’t have the costs of manufacturing,” he says.

The advantage of becoming a manufacturer is the ability to offer a unique product that can be customized. Since it’s a custom product, it sells at a higher price point.



A panel sample board is finished so that it shows off the beauty of the product.



This shower looks like it was crafted by nature.

“Distributors, on the other hand, typically buy in large volume, which may bring the price down; however, the product is sold in sheets and the dealer itself doesn’t have the ability to offer custom-sized parts or vanities,” Tibbitts says.

The process of becoming either type of dealer often begins with a simple questionnaire on Whitewater’s or Tyvarian’s websites.

“We then do a little research of our own to qualify a potential candidate and determine if they are truly capable of taking on the onus of production or distribution,” Tibbitts says.

Today, Tyvarian is made both in the Whitewater plant and a second site, which is currently under renovation. The company employs 11-15 people depending on seasonal needs, but since it works with Whitewater, it also can pull employees from the Whitewater staff when needed.

Tibbitts says that two of the top sellers today for the company are subway tile and a stone color called Calcutta Brown.

“The subway tile is very popular because of its outstanding replication of an actual subway tile wall. These panels even have textured grout lines, but they are mold cast as a

solid sheet of material that is antimicrobial, easy to clean, durable and warranted for life,” he says.

Calcutta is popular because it blends the currently popular colors of white and gray with an earth tone brown, which gives it good design possibilities for tub surrounds and accent walls.

The library of Tyvarian images contains 200 possibilities and that number is growing almost daily. Creative Director Shauna Boothe has been tasked with coming up with new choices, which she bases on studies of trends, working with designers, going to shows and getting feedback from entities willing to share what they see as new directions for the market.

Boothe also recently introduced a new feature on the website: a “design studio” where consumers, dealers and contractors can insert Tyvarian finishes and colors into a specific application.

“This allows our company to ‘show,’ not just talk about how great the look of the product is and how it can enhance a special room in a home. For manufacturers, it can help them determine if they want to offer a new color or to get an idea of what the actual stone looks like in a full panel,” Boothe says.



A Tyvarian installer trims a shower base to fit a project.



The company uses a three-sided mobile display rack in its showrooms or at home shows so buyers can view full panels.

The website where the studio is housed is Tyvarian's most important tool for marketing the product and the company, Boothe says. Although the company does a limited amount of advertising, the site and word of mouth are much more crucial than other marketing tools, she adds.

"When you are a supply company that other companies depend upon for information, your website and your reputation are your primary sources for bringing in business," she explains. As far as the website, "when dealers can point their own clients to our site, it instills confidence in the product. The dealer gains both confidence in the supplier and a good source of answers to the questions that inevitably come up with a product like this," she says.

Today's challenges

As with most manufacturing companies today, one of Tyvarian's greatest challenges is finding and retaining the skilled workers needed to produce a quality product.

"It's tough out there right now to find the people willing to be dedicated to their job," Williamson explains. Tyvarian tackles the challenge in several ways.

"We hire people we believe have integrity, a good work ethic and commitment, start them in smaller operations, then gradually move them up. In other words, we train, incentivize and promote individuals from within whenever possible," Williamson says.

"But probably even more important, we try to find ways to show that as a company, we genuinely care about our employees and their families," he says.

That approach works for one solid reason, a reason that is really coming to light right now with what's going on in the nation: "The most important aspect of most people's lives are their families," Williamson says. "We all have problems that need to be dealt with in a variety of ways. If employees aren't worried about how they can take care of loved ones, they can devote themselves to the task at hand knowing their employer will help them deal with life's ups and downs." ■

GENILEE SWOPE PARENTE is executive editor of **Cast Polymer Connection**. Send your suggestions on companies to profile to gsparente@verizon.net.

Something to celebrate: SAFE PLANT of the Year



WHEN CAST POLYMER CONNECTION PROFILED INTERNATIONAL MARBLE INDUSTRIES (IMI) FIVE YEARS AGO, the business was in a period of rapid expansion, feeling the effects of the recovering construction industry and getting into new types of products and clients. It was an exciting time, but one that also presented a new challenge: how to maximize productivity while keeping facilities and employees as safe as possible.

“Our sales grew a lot over the last five years and our production followed suit,” company owner Dirk DeVuyst explains. “More production meant increased output per worker so we felt we needed to institute some rigorous methods to avoid costly accidents,” he says.

This was happening at the same time ICPA was creating

its SAFE PLANT program, so IMI jumped on board, one of the first to commit to the program. This year, in the midst of a pandemic that has the entire industry and nation feeling shaky and uncertain, IMI got some good news: the company became the first recipient of the SAFE PLANT of the Year award.

So how did the company achieve this milestone? DeVuyst said the key was creating a program the whole facility could get behind.

Instituting the program

The first step in putting together a safety and health program is to set goals for what the organization wants to accomplish.

For IMI, the main goals were to prevent hazards wherever possible and increase employees' awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

"In particular, we wanted to look at how to avoid accidents and reduce stress injuries," DeVuyst explains. In a plant, "doing the same thing all the time causes the body to wear out faster, to tire more quickly," he explains. Tired team members are more prone to accidents, he adds.

The company then needed to identify specific areas of hazards or danger. IMI worked with a safety consultant as well as with its insurance loss control inspector to accomplish this. On an ongoing basis, IMI's inhouse plant engineer is the de facto safety manager who checks daily, weekly and monthly on certain safety factors as the program dictates. The monthly visits by the safety consultant yield an action plan for that plant engineer to follow up on. For example, when a new piece of equipment is installed, it might call for new electrical needs. Lockout/tag-out processes may need adjusting, and workers trained.

A vital part of the whole process was buy-in, which was a naturally evolving process as employees began to see the benefits of new ways of doing things as well as the practicalities involved.

"Our staff loved those practical aspects before they understood the safety consequences," DeVuyst explains. For example, the company created a safety yellow T-shirt that's highly visible and worn by all employees. "This allowed staff

to use IMI-supplied clothing rather than having to worry about what to wear each day to work. Meanwhile, they could see very easily how effective that bright yellow is in spotting fellow employees," DeVuyst explains.

Supervisors were engaged very early in the process of creating the program because they were the channel to explain the safety program. By showing their support, those supervisors gained the acceptance of their individual team members.

Through it all, a vital aspect of success was being open and honest about what was happening and communicating the goals and reasoning, DeVuyst says.

"Any effective safety program is a continuous process of communication and positive reinforcement of what needs to happen to ensure all employees stay safe," he says.

Resources required

One of the main resources required for an effective program is time—staff time, managers' time, management's time. Constantly evaluating the job site to look for unsafe situations "is a full-time job in itself," DeVuyst says, not to mention the time required to communicate everything in two languages (which IMI does).

"But the hours spent are worth every second because it translates into a happier, healthier workforce," he adds.

The physical resources IMI needed to put into place included the safety yellow t-shirts, as well as thicker chemical

The new yellow t-shirts make employees stand out and are a popular addition to the plant floor.



gloves, mandatory demolding-type gloves, steel toe boots, back braces and other equipment. Special facilities were built for storing hazardous materials 60 feet away from the main building. A chemical shed was constructed to safely house all materials that are flammable or combustible. Hazardous storage cabinets (the so-called “yellow OSHA cabinets”) were repositioned in the plant and operators trained on their use. Updated training occurred for larger capacity, more powerful forklifts with longer forks. All yard personnel were required to use OSHA safety vests and were provided two-way radios. Last but not least, the hazardous waste accumulation and storage areas were repositioned, and operators trained in how to handle what goes there.

All of this also meant new record-keeping methods to prepare for inspections.

“We all have the best intentions; we train the workers that handle the products. But at inspection time, we need to provide proof: the training log with signed-off training sheets. That part is often overlooked,” DeVuyst explains.

The program called for a good deal of that training, including creating a spotter instruction program for all people involved with the trucks coming in and out of the facility. The spotters work in the yard specifically to ensure that on- and off-loading occurs in a safe manner, that the yards are clear of trailers and that traffic is smooth and incident-free. IMI also expanded its forklift certification program and created a documentation process for unloading raw materials.

“Unloading wood, resin and various types of fillers from bulk trucks is a potentially dangerous activity with raw materials flowing at a high rate, trucks jockeying for position, forklifts maneuvering in between the trucks. IMI’s plant now

A spotting program helps IMI keep traffic moving safely on the grounds of the plant.



Employees are encouraged to use support such as braces for helping with lifting and other tasks that challenge the back or other body parts.

has a process that guards against harm that may come from those challenges,” DeVuyst says.

An important ingredient both in getting the program started and keeping it going and updated is regular meetings, DeVuyst says. Safety issues are discussed every morning during a regular 15-minute plant briefing. Every Tuesday, the company’s safety captains gather to discuss issues and how they can communicate what they need to communicate to employees so that proper safety procedures trickle down to the staff that must implement them.

As far as changes in practice, operational improvements have come about as issues were discovered and addressed. Some of the main areas where changes have occurred have been in how molds are moved from one area to the next, how trucks move into and out of the yard and are loaded and unloaded, where forklifts are used in the plant to relieve employee lifting burdens and how certain pieces of equipment such as high-pressure lines and high-horsepower electrical motors are handled.

“We have made changes throughout as needed, and we continue to improve as we learn. Our motto is that no incident, near incident or crisis, no matter how large or small, should go to waste—it should serve as a lesson on how to make things better. We see lemons and we turn it into lemonade,” DeVuyst says. ■

GENILEE SWOPE PARENTE is executive editor of **Cast Polymer Connection**. She welcomes story ideas. Write to gsparente@verizon.net.

For further information about our functional filler systems please visit:
www.dorfner-composites.com



FOR BIG IDEAS.

Our functional filler systems for composites offer numerous opportunities in technology and design. Discover our diversity.

US-Distribution through
ACS International Products

ACS
INTERNATIONAL
a **dorfner** company

Please call 1-800-669-9214 for further information.

Gebrüder Dorfner GmbH & Co.
Kaolin- und Kristallquarzsand-Werke KG

Scharhof 1
92242 Hirschau
Germany

www.dorfner-composites.com


together more future[®]
dorfner

Changing the conversation: employee relations in turbulent times



BY LISA RYAN

THIS PANDEMIC IS LIKE NOTHING ANY OF US HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE:

some companies have had to shut down, furlough employees or cut back on salaries or hours. Most are having to find ways to deal with employees whose children are out of school. Meanwhile, we listen daily to grim reports of how quickly COVID-19 is spreading, how many deaths or new cases occur each day, when a second wave may hit, what we should be doing to keep our distance and disinfect everything.

Is it any wonder our employees are frightened, stressed and confused?

If there's any good coming out of this pandemic, it's that the situation is forcing us to look at our businesses in a different light. Once we return to operating conditions that more closely resemble the past, we'll see we now have a new way of looking at things. If we hope to make our employees comfortable in that "new normal," we need to find ways to

help them now.

We can't go back to where we were before this began, but that reality can be looked at in a positive way—as long as we can enlist the support and ideas of our own employees.

The wrong reaction

I give motivational speeches around the country on both the wrong and right way to do things basing my thoughts on my consulting experience helping many different types of industrial companies.

What I'm seeing at present is that, in light of current developments, companies are now wondering if what they've been doing might be wrong in some areas. Take the airlines and how they treat customers as an example. Many of the major ones in recent years started charging for luggage and any changes or cancellations in flights—in many cases, consumers considered what they were doing

price gouging, but ticket buyers had very few alternatives. Most flyers learned to accept the fees. Meanwhile, a few smaller, customer-service-oriented airlines learned to take advantage of consumer unhappiness by offering no baggage fees or not charging huge penalties for changes.

The restrictions on travel changed what's happening, and some of the airlines are now looking to those customer-service-oriented airlines as examples of what might be a better way to keep customers. As a result, I can now get onto my preferred airline and simply click "cancel" to have my flight gone, no questions asked. At the opposite end of that spectrum, one of my subscribers recently wrote about a trip he scheduled for Italy on a major foreign transport company. That company refused to give him any refunds on his canceled trip despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and ever since then, he's been bad-mouthing them on social media. He will never use that airline again, and more importantly, who knows what damage his comments are doing.

It's the companies that find ways to take care of their customers as well as their employees during these times of need that will thrive. They'll build lasting relationships

and loyal employees. These businesses are considering the lifetime value of a person, instead of the immediate cost of a piece of luggage or a day off of work. They can use what they learn in the process to incorporate new ways of thinking into the new normal.

Dealing with employees

So how does this translate to how we're handling our own employees today?

First of all, we have to find ways to be transparent and honest with them. That includes being straight about how the pandemic is affecting our business' bottom line. Although some close-minded executives might see this as showing "vulnerability," I see it as making a basic human connection. Everyone has family and friends affected by what's happening. Everyone has fears about what will happen to them.

Showing your staff, and if you're a contractor, your customers, the honest truth about how operations and the bottom-line is affected can go a long way toward getting them on your side. For staff, this kind of open-book leadership

FOR ALL YOUR MOLD RELEASE REQUIREMENTS



Professional Quality Materials

Formulated Exclusively for the Reinforced Composites and Cast Polymer Industries



Paste Wax ★ Liquid Wax ★ Semi-Permanent ★ Polishing Compounds



www.trmoldrelease.com ★ info@trmoldrelease.com ★ Phone 800 243-3272

style can both win their immediate support and educate them for the long run on the realities of your business. It can provide them with financial literacy that will last beyond this crisis. Your staff will have more understanding of where the money goes and what challenges the company faces to earn a profit. I've seen many instances over the years of such transparency paying off—situations in which employees who see the truth voluntarily take time off or give up vacations to help their coworkers.

As far as transparency, you don't need to go as far as reporting what different people's salaries are, but if you can give your staff more understanding of what the business costs are, what types of challenges there are in making a profit, and even what your worries are, it will help you take the next step, which is to create a two-way street.

If you're going to get through this crisis, you need to make your employees part of the solution. It only makes sense.

Many of your managers and the people that are on the front line dealing with the everyday aspects of the business may be able to help you find your new normal. They may be able to look at what can be done in the plants or with the supply chain, with technology or with materials handling, even how customers and the public could be handled. They may provide that new way of thinking you need as part of the new way of doing business.

You have to show your employees that you need and appreciate their help as well.

Flexibility and aid

If we're going to come to an understanding with our employees that we are all in this together, we have to throw any "us versus them" mentality out the window—and that goes both ways. You have to make your employees understand that the top people in the company don't live in mansions with gold toilets and make a gazillion dollars from profits.

As I said, we all have families, we all have bills to pay. If you want your employees to understand this about you, you have to find ways to show them you understand this about them. You have to ask about their families and personal challenges—ask them what they need. You also have to find new methods for providing it. This may be in the form of scheduling flexibility. With the situation we are currently facing, some of your policies on tardiness and absenteeism may need to disappear or get a major overhaul. The manufacturing industry faces a really tough challenge here because not many of your employees can telecommute. They have to be on hand to make the products happen. You have

to find ways to keep them safe while they do so.

Those of you lucky or creative enough to find a way to help them financially might consider loan programs or some other type of financial support. But your company can help in smaller ways as well, such as getting employees access to some of the scarcer commodities or food supplies or keeping their spirits up. You definitely need to find ways to help them through this unusual period where all the children are off school early. Could you provide daycare or let them bring the kids to work? If you could, you get an added benefit: bringing family members into the plant could give them a glimpse of what their loved ones do every day. You can help the younger ones understand what mom or dad does and how important that is.

As far as helping them with their state of mind, you might be able to put into place wellness programs at work such as offering a mindfulness or a breathing exercise class or offering healthy snacks. All of this shows you look at each individual as a whole person instead of a means to get the job done.

The main issue here is to let employees know you want to help and you want them to help you as well. This needs to be a give and take process based on the realities of what's happening.

You also need to engage your managers, especially those who make solid connections with the employees under their supervision. We have many different personality types in the business world, but with supervisors, it's the ones who realize the value of telling an employee what a good job they're doing that can help to create the two-way street you need.

When we hand someone a paycheck, we create a moment. The payee may think, oh yea, that'll take care of the electric bill or give me money for some video games, but the moment doesn't stay with them. It leaves when the money leaves.

However, it's been proven many times that if you and your supervisors can find ways to say "you did an excellent job, and I'm proud of what you've accomplished," it will stay with that staff member for a long time.

We are all facing a world we've never seen before. If we focus, however, on looking at our businesses in a different way, finding new ways to give our employees what they need, we can create a positive new normal. ■

IF YOU'RE GOING TO GET THROUGH THIS CRISIS, YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR EMPLOYEES PART OF THE SOLUTION.

LISA RYAN, CSP, is chief appreciation strategist at Grategy. She works with industrial organizations to help them keep their best people from becoming someone else's. Learn more at www.LisaRyanSpeaks.com.



THE R.J.
MARSHALL
COMPANY

www.Rjmarshall.com

Customer Care: 888-514-8600

salesinfo@rjmarshall.com

Toll free: 800-338-7900

PROlite™

Lightweight Filler System

Prolite Uses Less Resin AND Reduces More Weight than the Competition

Prolite's unique particle-packed design makes it the most efficient and economical lightweight filler on the market today. No other filler saves you resin and reduces the weight of your parts quite like Prolite.

The advantages of using less resin

- ◆ Lower cost
- ◆ Less shrinkage
- ◆ Lower VOC emissions
- ◆ Reduced chance of stress fractures & cracking during cure
- ◆ Decreased chance of warping

The advantages of lighter parts

- ◆ Less labor used in manufacturing, handling & installation
- ◆ Lower shipping & distribution cost
- ◆ Less potential for part damage during installation

Manufacturing Locations



Prolite Provides Superior Wet-out, Flow and Air Release

Conventional lightweight fillers can be difficult to wet out and require extra mixing time. Resulting matrixes are often dense and "stiff"; resisting flow and inhibiting air release. This is not the case with Prolite.

Prolite Improves Thermal Shock Resistance

Independent testing has proven that products made with R.J. Marshall Company lightweight fillers perform better than conventional marble fillers; up to three times better in many cases. When casting according to standard marble manufacturing procedures, Prolite fillers exceed all ANSI certification standards.

Direct Replacement for Calcium Carbonate

Prolite 15 and Prolite 25 can be used as a direct, one to one, replacement for calcium carbonate.

Typical Physical Properties	Prolite 15	Prolite 25	Prolite 35	Prolite 50	Prolite 50FGA	Prolite FR50
Resin % required in matrix*	23 - 24	27 - 28	32 - 33	42 - 43	45 - 46	47 - 48
Loose bulk density (lbs./cu.ft.)	65	58	46	29	29	28
Specific gravity	2.3	1.8	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Free moisture content	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%

*Resin % recommendations are based on an 800-1000 cps casting resin at 70° F.

"We Seek To Make Our Customers Successful"

SAFE PLANT = FREE + STRAIGHTFORWARD + CUSTOMIZABLE



PREVENT
workplace injuries and illnesses



IMPROVE
compliance with regulations & laws



INCREASE
productivity and enhance overall business operations



SAFE PLANT
THE INTERNATIONAL CAST POLYMER ASSOCIATION



REDUCE
costs including worker's comp premiums



ENGAGE
workers



ENHANCE
social responsibility goals

SHOW YOUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY!

SAFE PLANT includes management leadership, worker participation, tools/resources, and a systematic process for finding and fixing hazards.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

POLYCON canceled for 2020

POLYCON Park City 2020 has been officially canceled. When the COVID-19 pandemic first began to create concerns about traveling, the ICPA board of directors considered just moving the event to an October 2020 timeframe. However, with continued unknown health risks, as well as uncertainty over the economic impacts the pandemic will have on the nation and its businesses, the board determined that rescheduling for the fall was not a viable option.

“This was a difficult decision for ICPA to make. POLYCON is the highlight of the membership year. However, the ICPA leadership decided the top priority right now needs to be ensuring the meeting can be held safely and the content can be valuable and up to date,” Jennifer Towner, ICPA executive director, said.

ICPA Interim President Luke Haas added that, “We’ve seen this event grow more and more successful as the years have gone by so I’m confident that when we do meet again, we will be able to provide members a top-notch avenue of learning and networking as well as a place for all of us to reconnect and share our concerns and our stories.”

Dates and location of POLYCON 2021 will be announced early this summer.

New leaders for ICPA

ICPA’s membership voted in new leaders for the 2020-2021 membership year.

Heading up the association will be **ReBecca Erdmann**, co-owner of Sand & Swirl, Ogden, UT. Other board members are: **Scott Byers**, Majestic Kitchen & Bath Creations; **April Sauer**, Manstone LLC; and, **Doug Tibbetts**, Whitewater/Tyvarian.


In other board news, the association thanked **Bobby Medlin**, Majestic Kitchen & Bath Creations, and **Sean Jacobs**, MPL Company, who are stepping down after many years of service to the board. The association also thanks board member **Luke Haas**, Elite Marble Company, for acting as interim president for 2019-2020 when Mark Buss left the industry.

Social media channels help cast polymer industry

ICPA and its members have several tools in their arsenal for promoting the industry and sharing information.

A new Facebook page called Grout Free Designs (@groutfreedesigns) has been created to promote the industry’s products. The page is a place people can go to learn about how cast polymer products can be used to create a huge variety of shapes, styles and colors for bathroom vanities, seamless sink bowls and countertops,





ICPA welcomes these new members:

Pro Marble LLC, Rupert ID
www.promarblellc.com

Amercast, LLC in St. Louis, MI
www.amercastllc.com

tubs, shower pans, enclosures and more.

Members can connect with each other, with potential customers and with the general public on the site to pose and answers questions, share information, showcase photographs of and talk about the advantages of the product.

Connected to the Grout Free Designs Facebook page is a new Instagram account, @grout-free-designs. As part of this year’s marketing plan, that platform will be used to expand the presence and the visibility of cast polymer products. Hundreds of millions of people are on Instagram daily, so like Facebook, it can be a powerful tool for promoting the beauty and quality of the product using photos, videos and graphics.



CCT-Cast Polymer training to be offered this summer

Training to become a Certified Composite Technician–Cast Polymer, which has occurred during the last two years of POLYCON, will be offered this summer via online channels. The courses will be facilitated by Andrew Pokelwaldt, director of certifications for the American Composites Manufacturing Association.

Materials for the classes will be delivered to participants online, including review materials in between sessions. The training will take place through three sessions of 1.5 hours each over a three-week period.

Candidates can enroll at no cost through an existing code for ICPA members. Visit www.theicpa.com for more information.

Cast Polymer Radio now a popular channel

The new industry podcast station, Cast Polymer Radio, now has hundreds of listeners tuning in to hear its programs. The station, which is run and managed by Jonathan Taylor of Sanco, has been instrumental in getting information out on what's happening with the cast polymer industry, including issues related to COVID-19. All of the episodes (which numbered 25 at press time) are available as downloads.



A few samples from recent weeks include:

- Multicolor Gelcoat Spray Technology with Bill Rice of Magnum Venus Products
- Leading in Times of Crisis with Dirk DeVuyst, International Marble Industries
- How to Increase Sales in the Showroom with ReBecca Erdmann of Sand & Swirl
- The Latest on EIDL and PPP Loans for Small Business with Ben Burke, Snappy Tax

We Custom Formulate

American Colors manufactures the world's finest Liquid Pigment Systems.

Since 1975 American Colors has been formulating colorants specifically designed for the Cast Polymer industry. Regardless of the method used by the manufacturer, we developed functioning systems allowing them to create beautiful products that are timeless in appearance and longevity.

American Colors does not up-charge for color matching, viscosity or pigment loading. When you next need colors, call American Colors.

Let us know exactly what you'd like, we'll do our best to create the colorant that works for YOU.



Ohio | Tennessee | People's Republic of China

www.AmericanColors.com

- Continuous Improvement & Innovations with Chris Hurdleston, ACS International
- Preventing Material Waste with Mario Stradley, Powerbalance
- Preparing and Thriving During Economic Downturns with Jonathan Slain, investment consultant and author

For a complete list and to hear the podcasts, go to www.castpolymer.com.

ICPA members have new learning opportunities

In the absence of POLYCON, ICPA will offer a series of webinars and online forums on a variety of topics of interest to those in the cast polymer industry.

The opportunities have been created through some of the excellent programming planned for POLYCON 2020, including several of the technical training sessions. Those technical sessions will be recorded live and made into video programming available to ICPA members for their use as training modules for staff.

One of the first topics to be offered will be Return to Work, a 30-minute session on evaluating facility changes and creating efficiencies to improve business results during slow times. Sessions will also address opportunities for technology use, developing leadership skills and employee profile assessments and post-pandemic workplace safety, set up and implementation.

The videos will be available at theicpa.com/educational-support.

COVID-19 help available through the website

ICPA has made available various resources for help with the pandemic, which have been posted to the SAFE PLANT page of the website. For example, recent postings include:

- CDC Workplace Tools and OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces
- COVID-19 Checklist for Employers and Employees & Toolbox Talk
- The Small Business Owner's Guide to the CARES Act
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) Poster

For information, go to theicpa.com/programsevents/safe-plant-campaign.

Navigating a **NEW PATH** of Moving Forward with Forward Thinking

ICPA Members are...

- Maintaining vital connections
- Establishing new business contacts
- Participating in training opportunities
- Maintaining safe work environments
- Staying informed on the latest standards

~ **RETURNING 2021** ~

Dates & Location to be Announced Soon!

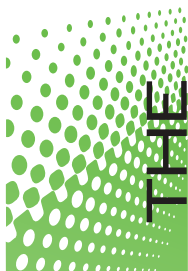
POLYCON

BUILDING A SOLID FUTURE TOGETHER

ICPA Members Receive Substantial Discounts



**STAYING CONNECTED, MOVING FORWARD
AND RISING-UP STRONGER THAN EVER!**



ICPA

INTERNATIONAL CAST POLYMER ASSOCIATION

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Renew online, call 470.219.8139, or email Jennifer@TheICPA.com

www.TheICPA.com



Housing should help in recovery

The National Association of Housing's economic experts recently reported that despite historic declines for the labor market in April, housing demand is showing signs of optimism.

NAHB's mid-May "Eye on the Economy" report said that, while the job loss numbers are staggering, they don't take into account that 18 million people whose jobs have been "lost," were temporarily furloughed.

Positions in construction and remodeling currently stand at 2.54 million, which is the same level as November 2015.

"Unlike the Great Recession, housing enters this downturn underbuilt, with a housing deficit of approximately 1 million residences. This potential demand means that housing is a sector that can provide economic momentum in a recovery," NAHB said.

"It's important to remember that housing held considerable momentum as we began 2020, so any recovery will feature renewed residential construction hiring and economic activity," the association's report said.

The association's more focused "Eye on Housing" report said the industry's share of the GDP has increased. It also reported that the virus crisis is likely to lead to a reversal of recent years' home-size trends and the need for additional office space. It reported that housing affordability will likely be down because of economic losses stemming from the pandemic.

NAM offers COVID-19 help

The National Association of Manufacturers is offering some free advice and information on how to handle certain aspects of the pandemic.

A series of COVID-19 webinars covers a range of topics including:

- Cybersecurity During COVID-19
- Preparing for the "New Normal"
- Employee Wellness and Improving Morale
- Cash Flow, Economics and Best Practices during COVID-19
- CARES Act Tax Provisions
- Best Practices in Cleaning and Public Health and more.

Go to www.nam.org for information. The webinars can be downloaded by filling out a form.

CAMX moving forward as planned

As of press time, the Composites and Advanced Materials Expo (CAMX) 2020 was still scheduled for September 21-24 in Orlando, FL at the Orange County Convention Center.

CAMX, which is a joint show produced by the American Composites Manufacturers Association and the Society for the Advancement of Material and Process Engineering, is North America's biggest gathering of companies, experts and professionals involved in composites and advanced materials.

About 8,000 manufacturers, supplier, distributors, engineers and researchers attended last year's event.

The show includes an extensive educational program of techniques, trends, case studies and development in the advanced composites industry. In addition, hundreds of exhibitors, including several of ICPA's supplier members, show off the latest technologies, techniques, products and services.

For the latest information, go to www.thecamx.org. ■

ADVERTISERS IN THIS ISSUE...

Cast Polymer Connection thanks all the advertisers in this issue for being annual supporters of our publication. Contact Jennifer Towner at Jennifer@TheICPA.com or 470-219-8139 for information on advertising.

3	ACS International	www.acsinternational.com
24	American Colors	www.americancolors.com
27	AOC.....	www.aoc-resins.com
28	Interplastic Corporation.....	www.interplastic.com
17	Gebrüder Dorfner GmbH & Co.....	www.dorfner-composites.com
25	ICPA Membership	www.theicpa.org
22	ICPA SAFE PLANT	www.theicpa.org/safeplant
21	The R.J. Marshall Company	www.rjmarshall.com
19	TR Industries	www.trindustries.com

AOC

Trusted Solutions



**Chroma-Tek**[®]
COLORANTS & ADDITIVES

**Vibrin**[®]
GELCOATS

**Vicast**[®]
CASTING RESINS

AOC resins and gelcoats pair perfectly with Chroma-Tek colorants.

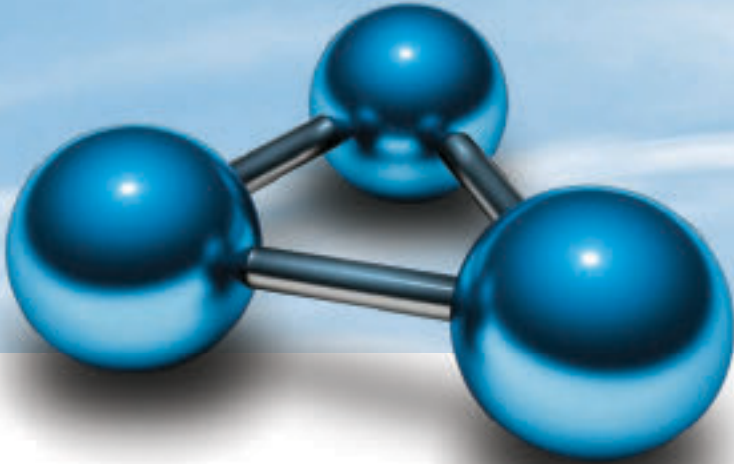
The Colorful Side of AOC

Partner with AOC to find the right solutions for trusted quality, support and innovation.

+1 866 319 8827

www.aocresins.com

 @aocresins



We Have a Formula for your Success

Silmar resins consistently deliver optimum performance, more clears, uniform color and the highest quality. Whatever distinct characteristics you need, we have an innovative solution that exceeds your expectations. Separate your products from the competition with Silmar.

1.800.736.5497
www.interplastic.com