

CAST POLYMER

Summer 2022

# CONNECTION

**Tower Industries: A look at one of POLYCON's hosts**



#### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- New ways to prospect
- Today's economic challenges
- Styrene developments
- Attendees praise The Buzz

**POLYCON  
PREVIEW**



- 4 Profile: Tower Industries
- 12 New ways to sell
- 15 The current economic challenges
- 18 How The Buzz fared

10 What's ahead at POLYCON

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's letter
- 21 Regulatory update: Styrene
- 25 ICPA news to know
- 26 Index of advertisers

ON THE COVER:

Attendees will get a chance to see the operations of both of POLYCON 2022 Ohio's hosts: American Marble Industries and Tower Industries. This issue previews not only the event, but one of those companies: Tower Industries. The company has grown from a traditional small company to become a successfully diversified company with products shipped to every state. Pictured on the cover is Owner Todd Werstler (right) and Plant Manager A.A. Cooper (left).

PRODUCED BY  
GSP Publishing  
Genilee Swope Parente,  
Executive Editor  
gsparente@verizon.net

DESIGNED BY  
Inspired 2 Design  
www.inspired2design.com

PUBLISHED BY  
**THE ICPA**  
INTERNATIONAL CAST POLYMER ASSOCIATION

12195 Highway 92  
Ste. 114 #176  
Woodstock, GA 30188  
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

# A great two years



**It's hard to believe my term as ICPA president is drawing to a close.** It's been a monumental few years both as your leader and as a member of an industry hit hard by new challenges brought on by the pandemic as well as distribution and supply issues

and the threat of styrene limits that could be beyond burdensome. I urge you to take the styrene issue very seriously and help us educate the regulatory community about what's realistic. Kelly DeBusk brings us up to date in this issue.

Despite the difficulties of the last two years, it's been exciting to be at the helm to see new developments with the association and with our industry. I was at the recent new event, The Buzz, in Atlanta in April and the enthusiasm was palpable—we haven't gotten together just for the sake of networking in a new area of the country since the days when regional associations were prevalent, and the comments that have flowed in show just how valuable attendees felt the event was.

Also in this issue is a preview of the next event, our annual meeting: POLYCON 2022, which is in Canton, OH September 19-21.

Planners are expecting the attendee list to be the longest in the history of POLYCON, so if you haven't signed up, do so before the hotel block is gone. You do not want to miss the excellent PolyTech sessions now being finalized, the many educational sessions or a very special night planned at the NFL Hall of Fame.

To get you even more excited about this fall, **Cast Polymer Connection** chose to profile one of the two host companies that are making our Canton trip possible. Todd Werstler started Tower Industries (Massillon, OH) with his father Bob more than 25 years ago and the story of what's happened since then is truly inspirational.

Finally, in keeping with the themes for this issue (economic and marketing trends), Dirk De Vuyst, International Marble Industries, wrote a fascinating piece that delves into how the nation, the world and industry have come to be where they are today as far of the economy.

Also, Mark McGraw, the co-author of a great book on the Sandler method of sales, writes about how the pandemic has changed prospecting.

Finally, I want to thank all of the people on the board—including our departing board members—as well as

those within the membership ranks and the ICPA staff for a great few years. Your support has been both appreciated and instrumental.

See you in Canton! ■

**ReBecca Erdmann**  
ICPA President  
Co-owner, Sand & Swirl

I WAS AT THE BUZZ IN ATLANTA IN APRIL AND THE ENTHUSIASM WAS PALPABLE—WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN TOGETHER JUST FOR THE SAKE OF NETWORKING IN A NEW AREA OF THE COUNTRY SINCE THE DAYS WHEN REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WERE PREVALENT, AND THE COMMENTS THAT FLOWED IN SHOW JUST HOW VALUABLE ATTENDEES FELT THE EVENT WAS.



**ACS**  
INTERNATIONAL  
a **dorfner** company

**ONYX PRO 50™**

high translucency alumina tri-hydrate

*Dura Stone*

premium solid surface fillers

*Artistone*

castable engineered granite

**MARBLE-PRO**

low resin demand marble filler

*Featherlite*

weight reducing filler blends

*Poly Stone™*

sprayable granite and solid surface material

photo credit: The Bradley Corporation

**CUSTOMIZE. YOUR.**  
**COLOR.**

For pricing & samples visit [acstone.com](http://acstone.com) or Email: [ACS.Sales@dorfner.com](mailto:ACS.Sales@dorfner.com) 1.800.669.9214

# Tower Industries: *Keeping to its promises*

BY GENILEE SWOPE  
PARENTE

ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO, **CAST POLYMER CONNECTION** TACKLED ONE OF ITS FIRST FEATURES SPOTLIGHTING A MEMBER COMPANY. Communications advisors suggested Tower Industries, Massillon, OH, a mid-size kitchen and bath surfaces company that had succeeded through the mid-2000s industry crisis by being diversified and sticking to the promises made.

What's happened with the industry and the association since that article was published has been monumental, but Tower has stuck to the goals mentioned in that article, which included finding new ways to spread its wings, investigating new avenues of business and learning to operate in ever-more efficient ways. ICPA members will soon get a chance to see the operation for themselves. Tower is one of the hosts at POLYCON 22 Ohio so it will be the site of technical demonstrations and tours of its facilities.

"It's truly amazing that a decade has passed, and it makes



Solid Surface Team Leader Shannon Goodyear getting ready to demold a shower panel that was just cast.

me smile to revisit that time. Yet the words in that article are as accurate today as they were then. We have grown and transformed but the idea of delivering on our promises is still at the core of our business," says Todd Werstler, who co-founded the company with his father Bob Werstler.

**"It truly amazes me to this day that my parents went out on a limb for this idea: they had to use their house as collateral..."**

## A family affair with a twist

Unlike many of the family businesses this magazine has featured over the years, Tower did not start with one generation and then move on as succession occurred. The company began in 1995 as a joint venture between father and son, each of which brought a strength to the company's birth.

Bob Werstler began his career in the plumbing trade, eventually owning first a plumbing shop, then a hardware store. He decided to get out of retail and went to work as a sales representative for a small, cultured marble company.

Meanwhile, Todd grew up and went to college with the idea of pursuing a business degree, then discovered a passion for economics. He took micro- and macroeconomics classes along with business studies. When he graduated, his choices were to pursue a graduate degree in the field of economics or to pursue a job.

"I was ready to get into the work world so I looked for business management opportunities," Todd says. He found that opportunity at Carolina Freight, a North Carolina transportation company that offered a year-long, in-depth training program that covered everything from labor to sales.

Rising quickly through the ranks to district manager, he was asked to open a new facility in the Washington, D.C. area—a task that further refined his business skills. After seven years with the company, Todd decided it was time to pursue his real dream: starting his own company.

"I surmised that if I was going to work upwards of 80 hours a week, I may as well do it for myself," he jokes.

Todd wrote to his father and shared his dream as well as his desire to start that company in partnership with his father. Bob brought sales knowledge, the experience of entrepreneurship and a loyal customer base while Todd could contribute management knowledge and business education.

Still, “He was 60 at the time so it took some convincing to get him to launch a brand new venture,” Todd says. It was his father that came up with the idea of entering the cast polymer industry—Bob was selling cultured marble so he knew the kitchen and bath surfaces industry. However, he thought they should take the business a step further. He had discovered by talking to people in the business that solid surface was increasingly popular and quickly becoming a material of choice for kitchen countertops.

“He was stunned at the growth in that market in the early 1990s and saw the long-term growth opportunity,” Todd says.

Todd’s last day of work at Carolina Freight was June 17, 1994, the same day the nation was watching O.J. Simpson’s car being chased through the streets of Los Angeles. Todd was single at the time (he married Jennifer in 2000 and the couple now has a son in high school and a daughter in college). He’d also been able to save a chunk of money because of the opportunities Carolina Freight provided.

He moved back to the state where he’d grown up and where his mom (Joyce) and dad still lived: Ohio. With help from a Small Business Loan co-signed by the senior Werstlers, Tower was born.

“It truly amazes me to this day that my parents went out on a limb for this idea: they had to use their house as collateral,” Todd says in admiration.

He also gives “the creative mind of my father” the credit for the company name: it’s the first two letters of Todd’s first name and the first three of the family’s last name.

Joyce helped during the start-up years by providing accounting services, serving as the receptionist “and providing a plethora of moral support for the whole company. It was truly a family business,” Todd says.

## Solid growth all the way

Tower started in 1995 in a 7,000-square-foot leased warehouse in Massillon, OH, a town they chose because of its inexpensive, plentiful space. After only a couple of years, the adjacent space became available and the company doubled in size. Two years later, Tower secured another 7,000 square feet and had tripled where it began. The facility lease expired in 2002 and the building’s owner announced he would be selling the entire warehouse facility. His announcement turned out to be “a blessing in disguise,” Todd says, because Tower purchased its current plant (in 2003), which was about 55,000 square feet on ten acres. The company has since added another 5,000 square feet.

While the building bought in 2003 was already larger than needed at the time, “it allowed us to start a stone countertop operation in 2005,” Todd says.

Meanwhile, the staff grew from four (Todd, his father and mother, and Gary Hand, who had cultured marble experience from running his own shop and who was monumental in helping Tower get started) to the about 60 who work there today.

The company has plans for another physical expansion by 2023—a new stone shop as well as an expansion of its solid surface casting operation.

His father is now 88 and retired, spending winters in Florida, but both Bob and Joyce, his wife of 63 years, are still seen around the plant frequently in the months they are in Canton, OH living in the same house where Todd grew up.

Tower’s business has evolved over the years from being completely focused on the residential market to being one-third residential and two-thirds commercial.

“An important part of our business is still the residential arm where we measure, fabricate and install to local markets. Granite and quartz continue to rule that market with almost no solid surface used in kitchens anymore,” Todd says. “We have a good following of clients in this area,” Todd adds, “but the growth percentage is not consistent.”



Longtime employee Sean Johnson checks an order to ensure products are ready for shipping.



Team member Mike Sitzman is finish-sanding solid surface.

The residential division uses local sales reps, a website and a showroom to market to builders, remodelers, do-it-yourselfers and more.

The commercial side has its own website, which appeals to a wide variety of institutions including schools and hospitals as well as general contractors who work for those institutions. On the commercial side, the most popular product today is solid surface showers.

## More recent developments

With the kind of growth the company has seen, Todd's business acumen and his belief in putting processes in place to oversee expansion have been key not just for getting through hard times such as the recession, but for expansion through the challenges of today: the pandemic, staff, distribution, keeping up with automation.

About three years ago, the company went through a major overhaul when it instituted EOS, the Entrepreneurial Operating System.

EOS is a simple set of principles by which a company is run. It begins with identifying and implementing a set of core values based not on its goals, but on strengths.

"I look at it this way: when you begin as a micro company like we did, you are building a ranch house. You pour a slab of concrete, then build a one-story. As the company grows, you add a second story and are grateful if the first story's

foundation was solid enough to support that growth. We are in the process of adding a third story at Tower. So we have to find a way to make sure our foundation doesn't topple or be creaky from the additional burden," Todd explains.

To get to that, however, requires going back to the foundation and then developing a new base that can carry the weight of new stories.

"That kind of approach forces you to peel back the layers before you add them back again," he says.

To do this, the management team starts with its own employees. Managers identify their star employees, then make lists of why they believe the employee is so good. They get together and identify the crossover traits, ultimately ending up with core values of the people that are the company's best—its foundation, so to speak.

At Tower, that list of values is: "We are kind; we take initiative; we get it done; we make it right; we are humble; and we are enthusiastic," Todd says.

However, identifying values is only the first step. The next step involves developing a rhythm to plan the company around the values. At Tower, that has resulted in 1) quarterly, onsite one-hour meetings of the entire company to communicate where the company is and where it's going, 2) quarterly offsite management meetings to focus specifically on whether the company is on track to meet one-year/three-year/ten-year goals, 3) an offsite two-day annual planning meeting for management to allow for revising old goals and setting new ones.

The only painful part of the process is finding a way to see which staff members match the core values and where



Team member Brandon Moore checks the measurements to make sure they are exact.

mismatches occur—staff members will leave when their match-ability is questioned.

Still, at Tower “Often, the person who sells the most is not the person you want as much as someone who is kind. That’s one of our core values,” Todd says.

**“We are kind; we take initiative; we get it done; we make it right; we are humble; and we are enthusiastic”**

Another recent development involves a new line of products: toilet partitions. With Tower, the toilet partition arm started when the company’s commercial business clients discovered that the same durable attractive materials that make up showers or sink areas in bathrooms can be used to separate stalls.

Although Tower has produced these partitions for projects in the past, the recent development is to create a system for making them in a standardized manner. “Our goal is to be able to mass-market the product,” Todd explains.



Owner Todd Werstler relaxes in front of signs designed to show off the values that guide company actions.

He says he believes such partitions will be increasingly popular not just for their durability, but because the partitions reach higher and lower in a stall, providing more privacy than the standard steel or metal product that has gaps between doors and spaces that can be seen from above and below the toilets.

Todd adds that, “There’s a huge opportunity here in

## 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](http://www.trmoldrelease.com) • [info@trmoldrelease.com](mailto:info@trmoldrelease.com) • Phone 800 243-3272



THE R.J.  
**MARSHALL**  
COMPANY

**Rjmarshall.com**

Customer Care: 888-514-8600

salesinfo@rjmarshall.com

Toll free: 800-338-7900

*“We Seek To Make Our Customers Successful”*

◆ *Get the R.J. Marshall Advantage* ◆

- ◆ *In stock products* ◆ *Short lead times* ◆ *Multiple shipping locations*
- ◆ *Batch to batch consistency* ◆ *Custom color matching & creation* ◆ *Proven problem solvers*
- ◆ *Knowledgeable sales & service staff* ◆ *Competitive pricing*

**A complete line of products for cast polymer manufacturing.**

**TERRAZZO**

*Solid Surface Filler (TRZSB)*

Bold, dramatic, high contrast appearance with large and translucent granules filler.

**Crystalline**

*Solid Surface Filler (CYL)*

Monochromatic, translucent small chip, concrete or textured quartz appearance filler.

**STONE FILL HD**

*(SFHD)*

Castable, large chip granite effect filler for cultured granite.

**STONE FILL**

*(SFL, SFX)*

One bag blends for beautiful cast cultured granite.

**Densified Granite Effect**

*(DGE, LXS, LXX)*

One bag blends for solid surface or cultured granite cast products.

**Spray COAT** *(SCT)*

Decorative and functional coating that provides a monochromatic, small textured quartz appearance.

**StoneRidge** *(SGE)*

*Spray Granite Extreme*

Granule blends for spray applications that results in a coating with a large particulate engineered stone appearance.

*Spray Granite Advantage* *(SGA, SGL)*

Granule blends for spray application that results in a beautiful, durable granite effect coating.



**MARSHALL GRUBER**  
COMPANY

Marshallgruber.com  
toll free: 866-260-6457  
info@marshall-gruber.com

Offering an extensive range of supplies & accessories for the manufacturing of cast polymer.

- *Molds & Equipment* - *Granatex®*
- *Mold Setup & Care* - *Waxes & Clays*
- *Adhesives & Sealants*
- *Abrasives* - *Shop Products*



places like colleges or convention centers, airports or offices, where so many planners are seeking ways to create gender-neutral bathrooms.”

A third area Tower sees for growth is to broaden its geographic reach. Tower has been traditionally a company whose clients were close to the plant, but offering the partitions and other standardized products allows them to appeal to states all across the nation.

“A great opportunity exists to expand geographically in ways where the product does not have to include installation. Since we started down this expansion road, we have been called upon to ship a shower to every state including Alaska and Hawaii,” Todd says.

### Sticking to what they do best

Despite new areas of focus and newer opportunities and products, Todd says the same principle that guided Tower when the last **Cast Polymer Connection** feature was done guides the company today: delivering on promises.

“We are not the least expensive, but those who use us know that we come through and that if an issue arises, it will be overcome,” Todd says.

To stay to this course requires several realities, all of which require sufficient capital.

“First of all, you have to be able to invest in a bench—a team of people you have confidence in that you know will get done what needs to be done. If you’re not profitable, you can’t afford the bench,” Todd says.

Another requirement is to be able to keep up with what’s happening with automation and line processes. Tower started the company with a vacuum mixing vessel that



Division Manager Brad Andears organizes shower bases ready to be shipped to the customer.

would mix the solid surface material, an open-air mixing vessel to mix cultured marble, a plethora of molds, a stationary wide belt sander for solid surfaces and a large array of solid surface fabrication tools. “That quarter of a million dollars we had to start the company went quickly,” Todd quips.

Today, the sophistication and breadth of equipment is constantly changing and includes such automation as a robot that makes the shower walls. But Todd says that just as important as automation is investing in efficiency. Most recently, the company “reset our entire solid surface line and added a second line so we can have back-to-back autocasters,” Todd says.

For those ICPA members who come to the factory this fall during POLYCON, Todd says they can expect to see “an organized and efficiently run factory floor.”

What they cannot see is that the backbone of the company’s success is still the same as it was in 1995, as well as ten years ago when the feature was done.

“The words, ‘we always deliver’ are more important now than ever,” Todd says. “All of us in today’s world are frustrated with the fact that so few companies deliver on time or even deliver on what they promised,” Todd says.

“Being able to provide what you promise sets Tower and those businesses that come through apart from the competition. It’s why people keep coming back to Tower,” he says. ■



Team members Matt Grisez and C.J. Warrick are changing sanding belts on a wide-belt sander.

GENILEE SWOPE PARENTE is executive editor of **Cast Polymer Connection**. She welcomes ideas on companies to profile. She can be reached at [gsparente@verizon.net](mailto:gsparente@verizon.net).

# POLYCON 22:

## Canton event offers learning,

**POLYCON TRAVELS AROUND THE COUNTRY TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE** from different areas to visit and vacation in places they haven't been. The 2022 event is in the midwest in a state known for agriculture, industry, big cities and tiny villages, and a love for sports, including football. Planners of this year's event have kept that passion in mind. POLYCON 2022 Ohio is in Canton, with the general session and rooms available at the DoubleTree by Hilton Canton Downtown, and tours and technical sessions at two, nearby ICPA member companies.

### Our hosts

Hosting the PolyTech training sessions this years are Tower Industries and American Marble Industries. Tower is a family-owned business in Massillon, OH with a 60,000-square foot plant that has a large commercial customer base as well as solid grounding in residential business (see profile on page 4).

American Marble Industries, Canton, OH is a family-owned manufacturer in business since 1980 with a 53,000-square-foot fully integrated factory and showroom. The company designs products, makes its own molds, manufactures, fabricates and installs products. It also has a proprietary offering under a private label for national and international clients.

Attendees will get a chance to see both facilities when they travel there during POLYCON PolyTech training sessions Monday (Tower) and Wednesday (American Marble.)

### PolyTech training sessions

One of the most important aspects of POLYCON has always been the hands on demonstrations and technical learning sessions held during PolyTech training sessions. Here's a sample of what's planned this year, and the list is still growing and being refined:

On Monday, September 19:

- 3D laser measuring and how it can be used in shower

installations and more

- A 5-axis demonstration of CNS
- V-grooves for outside showers corners
- Shower pan and wall installations

Also at Tower will be a tour of the production area. Jonathan Taylor, host of the Cast Polymer radio show will be onsite at Tower talking to members and broadcasting for his podcast.

On Wednesday, September 21:

- Chem-Trend Mold preparation methods
- Demonstrations on Tyvarian methods including setting up for textured shower pan molds and square drain installation.
- The Graco Gel coat spray system
- Lineal veining
- Demonstrations of tool set-up and care and mixing and measuring for matrixes by Andrew Pokelwalt, American Composites Manufacturers Association technical expert
- A demonstration of Hi-HDT (high definition technology) gel coat additive use.

### A day of education ... and fun

On Tuesday, September 20, attendees will start the educational process early in the morning with a general session



Past POLYCON events: Attendees gather knowledge through special program sessions, technical presentations, hands-on demonstrations and social networking opportunities.

## networking...and football fun

and continue throughout the day as attendees learn tips and tricks, get updated on the latest trends and issues and visit with vendors.

The day begins with the exhibit floor opening at 7:30 a.m. Jennifer Towner, ICPA executive director, will open the general session with a welcome followed by an update on the association's status and goals by the new ICPA president. ICPA Treasurer Matt Pulliam will give a financial report, and ICPA's Membership Coordinator Beth Kubinec will share the status of the association's growing membership ranks.

Lisa Ryan is keynote speaker. Ryan, a well-received speaker at the POLYCON 2019 event, will bring her audience up to date on personnel issues, including how the pandemic has affected the current workforce and how companies can address the growing crisis of employee retention and attraction. Ryan is an author and speaker who has talked to industrial audiences for many years on motivating employees and creating the right workplace culture. Complimentary copies of her latest book, *THANK YOU VERY MUCH – Gratitude Strategies to Create a Workplace Culture that Rocks!*, will be available to all POLYCON attendees.

Another well-known person, John Schweitzer, senior executive at American Composites Manufacturers Association, will update attendees on the regulatory picture.

After a luncheon hosted by The R.J. Marshall Company, attendees break for several rounds of presentations and roundtable sessions on topics such as industry regulatory issues, marketing techniques, employment management and scheduling software.

Like the last POLYCON, a roundtable for women actively involved in the daily operations of the business is scheduled.

New this year is a reception for new ICPA members. Attendees from companies joining in the last two years will be invited to attend to meet with association leadership and other new members, ask questions and learn how to make the most out of membership.

The exhibit floor is open from early in the morning throughout the day giving attendees plenty of time for visiting with the suppliers that provide essential products and services to the cast polymer industry. Additional time for visiting the exhibit floor sponsors has been added to this year's schedule.

Tuesday night, attendees board a bus for an exciting evening spent at the NFL Hall of Fame.

### **An evening at the Hall of Fame**

The gala celebration at POLYCON is always a special treat for attendees, who socialize as they're wined and dined, then help the association celebrate special awards given to people who have served the association. This year promises to be an exceptionally fun and different event.

The evening begins with a reception sponsored by Interplastic followed by dinner and the awards ceremony in the ballroom at the Hall of Fame. After dinner, ICPA members will be treated to a private tour of the facility, which was opened in 1963 and has grown tremendously in both size and stature since then. (More than 10 million fans have visited). One of the most emotional stops on the tour is a gallery that houses bronzed busts of each hall of famer (there currently are 354) and displays of their stories. Other displays

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 22



# SELLING TODAY:

## Six ways prospecting has changed since the pandemic

BY MARK MCGRAW

THE WORLD CHANGED IRREVOCABLY FOR SALESPEOPLE IN EARLY 2020...

and the professionals who earn their living selling products or services, those who supervise that sales force and those who own businesses that rely on good sales had to change as well.

The most successful salespeople still follow the core advice of setting up a prospecting behavioral plan, a “cook-book” that identifies the specific daily, weekly and monthly activities that have proven their worth in supporting income goals. But what we are seeing today is this: what shows up on that plan is very different from what showed up there a few years back. Here are six noteworthy shifts we are seeing in prospecting behaviors among top sales teams. They are of interest not just to salespeople, but also to sales leaders and owners of companies.

### **Behavioral change #1: Facility tours have become virtual meet-and-greets—with strong production values.**

It used to be that a good tool for some companies was to bring key decision-makers for prospective clients into a location so they could walk around the place and learn what the newest products and processes looked like—in person. The thinking around travel budgets and in-person visits has changed dramatically since 2020, however, as have the expectations of what can be accomplished during a video conference.

As a result, many of the companies we’re working with as consultants on sales have seen strong payback on travel investments and investments in spurring in-person tours that would have been seen as extravagant before the pandemic. We’ve also seen miniature branded studios designed exclusively for top-tier Zoom calls that introduce prospective buyers (typically contacts generated via referrals) to the latest new offerings. If you and your salespeople are not doing this and your competition is, you may assume that you are operating at a competitive disadvantage.

### **Behavioral change #2: A systematic referral-generation process is now non-negotiable.**

In reality, referral generation systems were always non-negotiable. However, since early 2020, many more sales professionals and companies are grasping how important these systems are. For an overview of the kind of step-by-step conversation you now want to be sure you are initiating with every single current customer and live lead, see the book John Rosso and I wrote, (details below). While we are on the subject of referrals, I also want to point out how critical the people who have already sent customers your way are in today’s environment. What have you done recently to acknowledge them and thank them?

You want to make a point of doing this for every individual who has ever sent a good referral your way as well those that are not in direct need of your services at the moment. It’s obvious that when your company has received a referral that’s directly related to your products and services, you need to make a direct connection immediately. But what else can you do for those who do the referring? You need to look at how you can create a touch point with them, regardless of how long ago they passed an important introduction your way. This touch point might be a handwritten note or card; a gift subscription to a magazine that fits their interests; or a call just to say thanks—with no other ulterior motive.

It’s up to you to find these ways to connect. But you should never just let them drop. You’ll build or strengthen a long-lasting bond with anyone you help. They’ll appreciate the thank yous or the help, and they’ll look for additional ways to show that appreciation. At some point, you’ll get a call from them and hear them say, “I thought about somebody else I think you can help.” That’s how the referral tree grows and blossoms.

### **Behavioral change #3: LinkedIn Navigator is now a must.**

There’s nothing wrong with the free version of LinkedIn. But the salespeople we work with today who are consistently





exceeding their income targets now tend to have daily use of Navigator as a common trait. That only makes sense: Navigator gives you a ton more criteria you can search against, and it enables you to do more refined, more powerful searches on a particular person that give you ideas for pathways to connect to that person.

#### **Behavioral change #4: You must reach out concisely to people who engage with your content.**

This highly effective strategy works when you make a habit of posting content on LinkedIn and other social media channels. There should be content there that consistently speaks to one or more of the typical business pains your ideal customer encounters.

Here's how the strategy works. Someone reads an article by your company or watches a how-to or advice video and engages with it in a positive way. You then must find a way to send that person an extremely short private message. If you're already connected on LinkedIn and you're using Sales Navigator that's pretty easy to do. If it's another social media channel, you may need to be a bit more creative or aware to find a way to accomplish this. Either way, your message should have the heading "Quick question" and should read something like this:

*Hey, Yvonne, thanks so much for liking our video. Question. Are you or your organization actively involved with our company on a project?*

The magic of using the technique lies in brevity. You should think of this like composing a text message: If you keep it simple and execute a strategy that is short and sweet, you will start a zero-pressure back-and-forth digital dialogue with Yvonne, one that can point you toward a voice-to-voice conversation about whether it makes sense to do business together. (The same powerful technique can be adapted to situations where someone visits your website, takes advantage of a special offer, or does something else that fits the profile of your targeted buyer.)

#### **Behavioral change #5: Personalizing is a must.**

Regardless of what platforms you use to engage with buyers—and you will want to engage on multiple platforms—one rule always holds true: People appreciate things that

are personal, unexpected and significant to them. In today's world of information overload, this is more important than ever. Yet there is a balancing act to master here.

We often find salespeople spend way too much time doing research on potential buyers before reaching out to them. A little bit of research is favorable, but salespeople who find themselves doing a huge amount of research to prepare for each and every outreach should be asking themselves: "Am I doing creative avoidance?"

For example, if you discover a potential customer or a referral recently wrote a white paper, gave a presentation or got a promotion, you can use that information. You might note when the white paper came out and what the topic is, but let's face it, you don't have time to read all 40 pages. Likewise, you should be interested in the title of a presentation a person delivered, but it probably doesn't make sense for you to invest 90 minutes of your precious time watching it on YouTube. Also, if it's possible to do so, you might want to figure out, in broad terms, what a potential client is responsible for in his or her new position, but you don't need to memorize the company organizational chart.

#### **Behavioral change #6: Who knew? More person-to-person phone calls.**

Over the past decade, many salespeople have leaned away from voice-to-voice initial contact and focused more heavily on digital messaging. Today, we are seeing top performers reclaim the behavior of the so-called "cold call," although the majority of effective calls placed might be called "warm" because they arise from personal referrals. (See behavioral change #2, above.)

John and I have made a habit lately of asking large groups of CEOs and executives this question: "How many of you have been receiving prospecting by written text messages or emails over the past ten days?" Every hand goes up. Then we ask, "How many have received a respectable business phone call from a salesperson?" Hardly any hands go up. Today, we are seeing top salespeople taking advantage of this state of affairs and using carefully targeted direct phone contact as a way to stand out from the pack—especially in situations where their goal is rekindling relationships and recapturing opportunities. Maybe you could do the same. What's the old saying? Everything old is new again! ■ © 2022 Sandler Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.

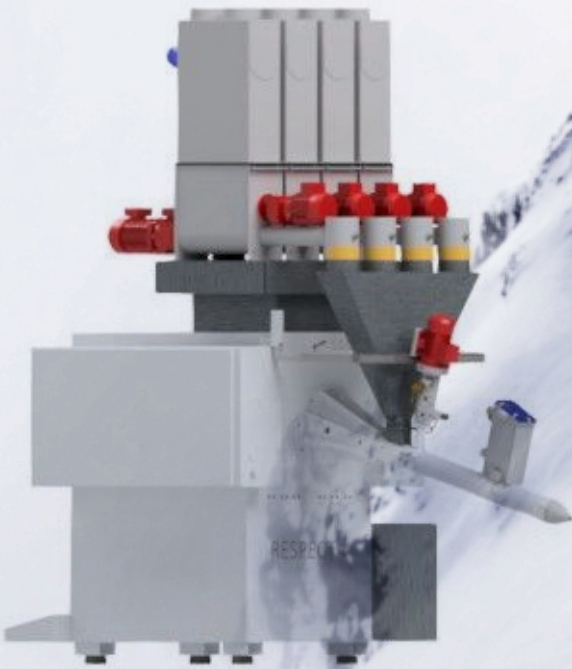
MARK MCGRAW is co-author, with John Rosso, of 21st Century Prospecting: The Authoritative Playbook For New Business Development. He is a Sandler Trainer. Sandler and Sandler Training are registered service marks of Sandler Systems, Inc. McGraw was also a featured speaker on Cast Polymer Radio (episode 119—[www.castpolymer.com](http://www.castpolymer.com)). For information about the book, visit [www.sandler.com/resources/sandler-books](http://www.sandler.com/resources/sandler-books)

# The peak of production technology?

## Right here:



RESPECTA®

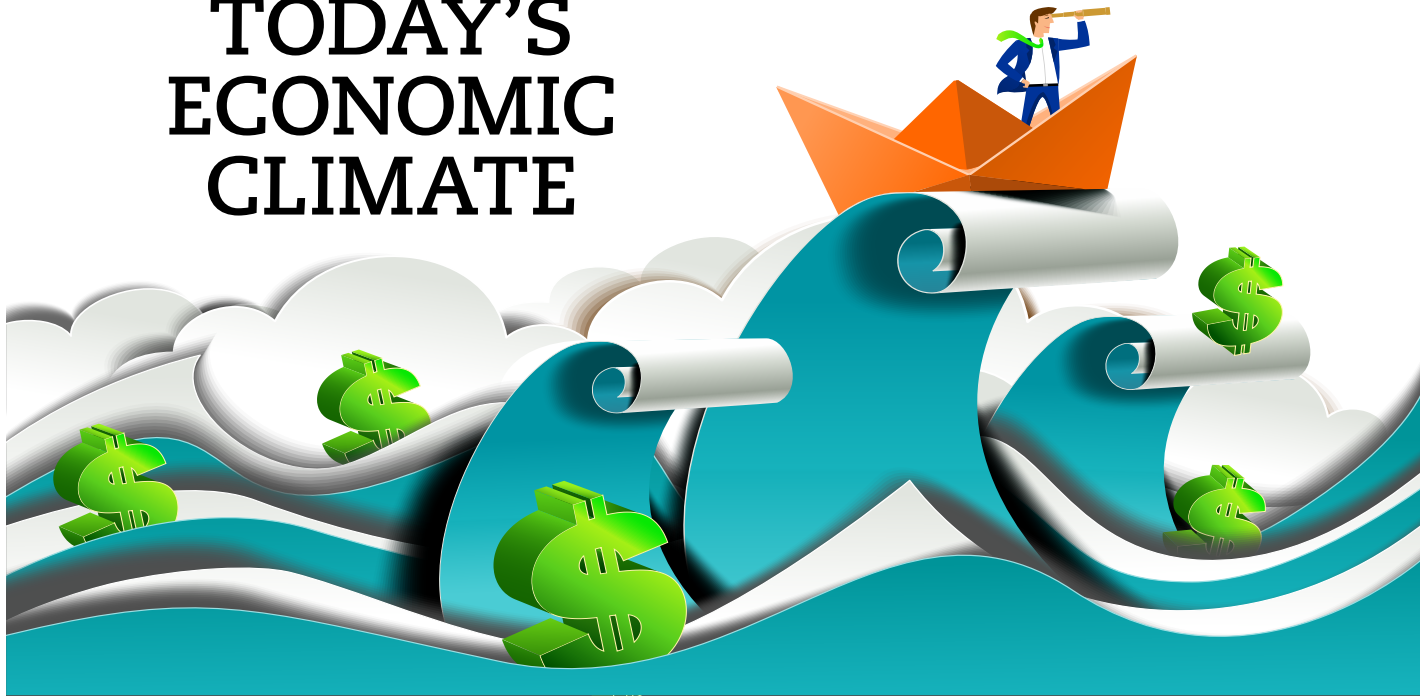


- **Solid Surface**
- **Cultured Marble**

**Cast Polymer and Composites Manufacturing**

**[www.respecta.com](http://www.respecta.com) / [jfk@respecta.com](mailto:jfk@respecta.com)**

# TODAY'S ECONOMIC CLIMATE



## Turbulent times caused by unusual spending behavior

BY DIRK DE VUYST

**FOR MANY YEARS, WE ENJOYED AN ECONOMIC EXPANSION** that lasted

well beyond a normal cycle of this type. Logic told us that a worldwide pandemic in 2020 would bring unparalleled pain to the economy and our businesses, and we've seen that reality occur. As a result, the larger, western world economies threw trillions of dollars of support at the problem. Meanwhile, we were already dealing with the large price tag (a whopping \$750 billion) of the Troubled Assets Recovery Program (TARP), which was passed with great effort in 2009 to curb the effects of the Great Recession.

On top of that, the U.S. government pumped more money into the financial markets through its quantitative easing program (QE2). In layman's terms, this means Treasury has bought \$7 trillion in obligations from the nation's financial institutions. The program allows these institutions to remove liabilities from balance sheets (by shifting them to the U.S. Treasury), which in turn allows the institutions to loan out more funds. QE2 policies increase liquidity into the financial markets, which keeps money flowing and interest rates low, which in turn results in economic growth.

Granted, we are in new territory for policymakers, economists and ... business owners. Never before in modern history has a super-expansive economic policy faced a vigorous and deadly (worldwide) pandemic as well as an armed conflict (the war in Ukraine) at the same time.

With hindsight, we all see the simple reality of this situation, which is that there is way too much money

sloshing around in the economy. When the world economies came to a standstill in the second quarter of 2020, followed by the world population sequestered at home for more than a year, we started to see everything differently. Humans took a different look at recreation. Spending shifted from travel, commuting and vacations to making the home office and the house more comfortable and pleasant to spend that extra time in. The trillions of support dollars caused demand for most tangible products to surge to unseen levels. The logistics chain (getting those products to those buying them) was the first to crumble. Next in line were the factories, which could not staff production lines adequately and had trouble finding the materials to churn out more products.

During 2021, prices for commodities and assets also started to rise. Inflation was showing its ugly head for a simple reason: too many dollars chasing too few products. The U.S. economy has not seen serious inflation since the Reagan era 40 years ago. Since Alan Greenspan became Chair of the Federal Reserve in 1987, manipulating short-term interest rates has become the economic policy tool of choice.

This has led to almost four decades of easy money policies with the government many times bailing out the institutions that abused these same policies: If corporations were "too big to fail," they had a get-out-of-jail card in the form of a bailout check.

As a result, the financial industry and large corporations never seemed to learn from prior mistakes.

## The current dilemma

So where do we go from here?

Correcting a spoiled child in adulthood is painful—both for the child and the parents. Why would this be any different with our economy? Normal economic cycles typically last seven years, but thanks to multiple massive government interventions and bailouts, we have shortened the last three downturns to two to three years each. Treasury is out of arrows in its quiver. Interest rates must go up to cool down an overheated economy. Consumers have less disposable income which puts a crimp in the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Over time, supply chain shortages should balance out as fewer products are purchased.

But expansive financial policies have made our nation vulnerable. Our national debt jumped from 108% of GDP (2019) to 133% of GDP (2022)—a 20% jump. Interest rates to carry this debt are rising rapidly. (For those who wonder why it took the Federal Reserve so long to respond to the threat of inflation, here is their answer: the same rate increases that carry the debt make it more expensive for the U.S. government to repay its national debt.) The U.S. is now in the top 10 list of nations with the highest debt-to-GDP ratio, a list led by Japan (238% debt-to-equity). By contrast, Germany, the largest European economy, sports a 59% debt-to-equity ratio.

In the late 1990s, Japan put policies in place similar to what's in the U.S.: bailout of financial institutions and insurers while flooding the market with easy money. A long period of stagflation followed—stagnating growth and stubborn inflation. Japan has not been able to climb out of the debt hole. Yet before the Japanese stock market crash, industrialized nations were hailing the Japanese economy and its production systems such as Just in Time, Kaizen, Six Sigma, etc. as the next world wonder.

Germany, on the other hand, has seen its infrastructure destroyed during two world wars, in 1914-1918 and again in 1940-1944. Germans are known to be industrious, hard-working money pinchers with an unrivaled work ethic. The German government also was instrumental in financially bailing out the failing economies of Greece, Spain, Italy and Ireland. (Incidentally, those last four countries are also on the top 10 list of high-debt nations.)

Over the first four months of 2022, the toxic combination of higher home prices and increasing mortgage rates also has made homeownership unaffordable for a growing segment of the population. Resale sales have already slowed

down. While the U.S. under built houses for the last 10 years, the profile of the homeowner is changing from “Joe Average” to “The Housing Corporation, LLC,” which are well-financed private equity investors owning entire subdivisions for rent to the same Joe. Meanwhile, multi-family homes are here to stay as evidenced by what's going on in Europe where large apartment communities are as omnipresent as subdivisions are in the U.S.

For a nation to pay down massive debts (as related to GDP), it must increase either its economic output (GDP) or its income. To increase the GDP, we need a better manufacturing infrastructure, more raw materials and more labor.

As examples, look at the Tesla Gigafactory in Texas and in Nevada or what SpaceX is doing in Boca Chica, TX: these are massive, brand new, super-efficient factories to support game-changing industries. Still... we would need a lot more visionaries like Elon Musk to make a dent in this nation's manufacturing prowess.

Meanwhile, the U.S. remains short on raw materials for new industries such as battery-making for the electronic vehicle industry or chip production for the technology field. We already have too few workers to staff today's production lines, a situation compounded by the fact the U.S. population birth rate is declining. Many say we should consider allowing more immigration to achieve needed population growth.

Generating more income for the government means raising taxes of all kinds; a situation that has never been good for the platforms of aspiring politicians. That leaves our nation with learning how to live within our means. In Europe, this situation is called a public policy of austerity. It has not been very successful in the past 40 years, but it has resulted in higher, direct and indirect consumer taxes and, for most countries, more manageable debt-to-GDP ratios.

Clearly, we face unprecedented economic times: hyperinflation, lack of labor, torrid consumer demand, coupled with policy tools that are not fit to answer these challenges. Pulling the candy bowl away from the long-time sugar addict will be very painful.

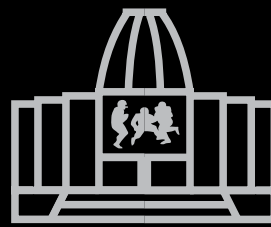
Industry leaders and policymakers currently are struggling with this unusual mix. Add in an armed conflict in the western world after years of peace, and we can all see: This is our most challenging time in a generation. ■

---

DIRK DE VUYST is president of International Marble Industries ([www.imitoday.com](http://www.imitoday.com)) and a long-time ICPA Board Member. He can be reached at [dirk@imitoday.com](mailto:dirk@imitoday.com).







# OHIO

# POLYCON

## BUILDING A SOLID FUTURE TOGETHER

# SEPTEMBER 19-21 2022

POLYCON 2022 will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Canton Downtown  
PolyTech Training will be hosted by manufacturer members:

Tower Industries in Massillon, Ohio &  
American Marble Industries in Canton, Ohio

### JOIN US IN CANTON, OHIO!

- Business Development & Networking
- Vendor Exhibits & Presentations
- Exclusive, Member-ONLY Sessions
- Plant Tours & Demos
- Industry Regulatory Updates
- Business Impact Keynote Address
- Women in the Industry Roundtable
- Breakouts & Round-table Discussions
- Event dinner at NFL Hall of Fame
- And so much more!

2022 Platinum Sponsors



# REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

[www.POLYCONevent.com](http://www.POLYCONevent.com)



# Socializing provides great connections

## THE ICPA'S SPRING NETWORKING EVENT

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF BELONGING TO AN ORGANIZATION IS THE ABILITY TO NETWORK WITH PEERS. ICPA members have a great opportunity to do that at the annual POLYCON meeting (see pages 10-11). However, it's only once a year, which creates a challenge for companies and individuals that might not be able to make the event.

ICPA decided to do something about the situation this year by creating The Buzz. To balance out last year's west coast POLYCON location, the first-ever event was held in Atlanta, GA at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Atlanta Galleria on April 29 and 30.

"Our goal for the meeting was not to create a mini-annual meeting. It was to provide an additional opportunity for learning and exchanging information with other people in the industry," ICPA Executive Director Jennifer Towner



explains.

The additional learning came in the form of breakout and roundtable discussions on topics such as business strategies, employee issues, plant floor tips and tricks, styrene and more. But the real worth of the event was the face-

to-face meetings with other people in the industry.

"Comments we've received indicate we accomplished that goal beautifully. What we didn't know when we began planning was how many people might come to an additional meeting," Towner says.

Sixty-four people registered for the event and though a few ran into COVID difficulties and couldn't make it, the turnout was more than expected.

"This gives us the incentive to look into additional events in the future," Towner says.

For manufacturers, the event provided an opportunity



The Buzz saw many new faces as well as familiar ones such as Larry Branan (standing), R.J. Marshall Company, who has led many ICPA session discussions.

for focusing on current issues in a less structured atmosphere.

“We found the meeting very informative and specific to our industry,” says Kimberly Peek, general manager of Synar & Castech. “It was a pleasure meeting other manufacturers and members in a less formal environment where we could just relax and discuss different aspects of each others’ companies.”

For suppliers, one of the benefits of the format used for The Buzz was that, instead of an exhibit hall, everyone mixed with everyone else during the discussion periods as well as during a popular Top Golf event on Saturday and two receptions. Vendors were not stuck behind a table.

**“The purpose was to network, and the environment encouraged and enabled that perfectly.”**

“The event in Atlanta provided a much more loose schedule and laid back atmosphere compared to a POLYCON event,” says Brian Ruether, CCT, north central district sales manager for The R.J. Marshall Company.

“It allowed participants to interact freely and not worry about a tight schedule. The purpose was to network, and the environment encouraged and enabled that perfectly,” he adds.

Chris Hurdleston, ACS International’s regional technical sales manager-East, agreed with that assessment.

“The Buzz was a strong format for having longer conversations with customers and industry partners in a more casual atmosphere, as well as having no real time constraints. What better way to understand current challenges and become part of a solution,” he says.

Angel Kuse, regional sales manager for J.M. Huber Corporation, said that the social atmosphere is exactly the point of such meetings.

“The ICPA is an intimate group I am proud to serve,” Kuse said (she’s been in the industry for almost 30 years). “I’ve made lifelong friendships with other suppliers and with customers. This event was great for encouraging such interaction and meetings like this are why I believe social settings work well for building our connections.” ■



Socialization and networking were key to the event’s success.



Both manufacturers and suppliers enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere. Pictured here (from left) are Brad Crutchleo, Custom Marble; Chris Hurdleston, ACS; and Zach Goeke, Custom Marble.



Many Buzz attendees enjoyed an afternoon spent at Top Golf.

For further information about our functional filler systems please visit:  
[www.dorfner-composites.com](http://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](http://www.dorfner-composites.com)

  
together more future®  
**dorfner**

# STYRENE: Do NOT wait to get involved!

BY KELLY DEBUSK

By now many of you have heard the term TSCA in your business or at industry events. TSCA is the acronym for the Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976. Those fairly new to what's happening usually wonder: So why is something passed in 1976 just now affecting my business?

In 2016, President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Act into law. The law is an amendment to TSCA that creates a mandatory requirement for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a risk-based assessment for chemicals starting with those listed in the 2014 chemical substance work plan. That list includes styrene, which means styrene will be reviewed under TSCA as early as this year and no later than 2028 if EPA keeps to congressionally mandated

deadlines. The act is enforced through the federal EPA but the agency can grant enforcement rights to states with authorized programs.

The cast polymer and related industries have been aware of the new TSCA rule and have been monitoring closely the rule-making process for current chemicals to prepare for the styrene review. Members of the regulatory community have spent the last several months studying all styrene reports published worldwide to try to anticipate the consequences of the styrene risk assessment. The community is doing so because the TSCA process will include a review of many of these same documents.

One study on hearing loss is of particular interest. It was conducted over a 20-year period and outside factors such as lifestyle and general aging were not considered in the research. The study concluded that over 20 years, test subjects showed a slight hearing loss at 20 parts per million (ppm). Should the risk assessment process zero in on this study, styrene limits within the plant could be mandated to a level so low it would be detrimental to most manufacturers. We all want our employees safe, but we don't want to use

flawed science to determine unnecessary regulation.

To gather data and determine potential impacts of lowered permissible exposure limits (PEL) on the cultured marble industry, ICPA has begun styrene testing at eight member facilities. The association will continue testing within mem-

ber facilities and compile a comprehensive study available to all member companies. The data will be anonymous while being beneficial in determining the effects of a potential new regulation.

TSCA is unique in that it considers not just worker exposure but also environmental impacts and "environmental justice." According to the EPA, environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implemen-

tation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- The same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and
- Equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work.

This means that meeting a TSCA standard may not be as simple as extra ventilation for facilities. Ventilation only solves the inside air quality part of the problem.

The industry is studying the modeling used in the first TSCA risk-management standard (just published this year). We all recognize that chemicals are not all the same so a boilerplate modeling application should not be used across all chemicals in the TSCA process. The industry's modeling study has just begun and updates will be given as they are available.

The cast polymer and related industries are in the beginning stages of drafting an advocacy plan for this process. Some elements included in the draft plan are

- Enlisting the help of expert counsel



Plant tours to gather information are part of the draft plan to advocate for more realistic styrene levels.

# Ask us how to #LIVEGROUTFREE



## Live Join the **GROUT FREE** Campaign

*The ICPA's Consumer-Facing Marketing Campaign*

### How to Join the Campaign:

Place the Live Grout Free logo on your company website and link it back to [www.livegroutfree.com](http://www.livegroutfree.com).

And you receive a link-back, #LiveGroutFree T-shirts, and a feature on Social Media!

### Got Questions?

Email [Jennifer@TheICPA.com](mailto:Jennifer@TheICPA.com)

- Continuing to monitor the TSCA program
- Setting up plant tours to gather information and data
- Conducting a Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act review
- Studying the economic impacts of potential regulations
- Reaching out to congressional and executive entities

Be sure to check out past **Cast Polymer Connection** issues ([www.theicpa.com](http://www.theicpa.com)) as well as future magazine issues and episodes of Cast Polymer Radio ([www.castpolymer.com](http://www.castpolymer.com)) for more information on styrene regulations.

Now is the time to get involved, readers! Waiting until after a rule is passed is too late.

Ways you can do that include: attend POLYCON, where styrene will be a major point of discussion; join a regulatory committee meeting; volunteer for testing or site visits at your facility; or share existing data you already have. Ask questions, voice your concerns and stay informed. A new styrene rule will affect everyone in the industry. ■

ICPA Board Member KELLY DEBUSK is the owner of Composites Compliance ([www.compositescompliance.com](http://www.compositescompliance.com).) She can be reached at [k\\_debusk@compositescompliance.com](mailto:k_debusk@compositescompliance.com).

### **POLYCON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11**

that are popular include a holographic, multi-sensory exhibit that shows visitors how important football has been to Americans, a gallery that explores contemporary themes and milestones in football's history and an interactive area that includes a video game suite and more.

Attendees should prepare for multiple photo opportunities as they go through the facility.

### **Lodging & logistics**

The newly renovated DoubleTree by Hilton, where much of the event is located is in downtown Canton, which offers art galleries, shops and many restaurants. The hotel is located minutes away from the Akron/Canton airport and one hour from Cleveland's main airport.

For information on hotel discounts and other logistics, go to [www.POLYCONevent.com](http://www.POLYCONevent.com). ■

### **Thank you POLYCON sponsors**

ICPA and POLYCON planners owe a special thanks for making this event spectacular to the major companies sponsoring the event:

- The R.J. Marshall Company
- Interplastic Corporation
- Composites One



enhanced  
by Omya

# Omyasphere® 300 Series

The Omyasphere® 300 Series is the latest in advanced lightweight minerals for cast polymers

Omyasphere 300 Series reduces the weight of cast polymer products by up to 40% and reduces formulation costs while at the same time maintaining impact strength, dimensional stability, and has no effect on gel time.

[info.polymers@omya.com](mailto:info.polymers@omya.com)



THINKING OF TOMORROW

# Laying the **COURSE** for Moving Forward with Forward Thinking

We're giving members opportunities to:

- Make & maintain vital connections
- Establish new business relationships
- Join in on various training opportunities
- Maintain safe work environments
- Participate in marketing campaigns
- Stay informed on the latest standards

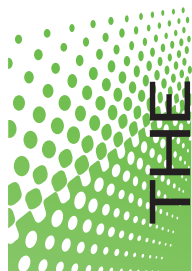
~ **SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2022** ~

IN CANTON, OHIO

**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](mailto:Jennifer@TheICPA.com)

[www.TheICPA.com](http://www.TheICPA.com)





## A shout out for living grout free

The Live Grout Free campaign is rapidly spreading as evidenced by the blue t-shirts popping up across the nation. ICPA Executive Director Jennifer Towner gives out



Manstone Custom Bath Surfaces shows off the shirts.

those shirts free to member companies who commit to the campaign. She has encouraged those companies to send her photos of staff in the shirts. The photos will be shared on ICPA communication platforms to inspire more companies to join the effort.

The Live Grout Free program is designed to spread the

## Superior Color Systems Since 1975

Almost a half century ago American Colors began formulating colorants for the Cast Polymer Industry. Thousands of color matches and timeless beauty are the result. When you have a color idea, call American Colors. Let's make your dream a reality.



Sandusky OH | Gallatin TN | Lebanon TN  
Seguin TX | Shanghai PRC  
[www.AmericanColors.com](http://www.AmericanColors.com)

word in the online marketplace on the benefits of cast polymer products installed without the use of porous grout.

The program's website is a source of information aimed at the general public touting the benefits of those products, listing ICPA member manufacturer companies, answering questions about the products and showcasing images of products and projects. The site is put together and updated from materials by members.

To join the campaign, Towner asks manufacturers to:

- Place the Live Grout Free logo on their company websites then link back to the campaign website.
- Follow and promote the campaign's Facebook and/or Instagram pages, then share posts with others.

Towner will then send out free shirts and feature any company that commits on the "featured manufacturers" page of the site. When a company takes a photo and sends it to her, she'll feature that picture on the ICPA social media sites and newsletter.

The Live Grout Free campaign logo is available via the ICPA website at



www.theicpa.com or by contacting Towner at jennifer@theicpa.com. Links to Instagram and Facebook are also on the site.

## Membership renewal month is June

This year's annual membership renewal drive will be fortified by new updated software that gives the association the ability to renew while updating contact information for companies and its employees. The software should make the process for signing up, renewing and for event registrations simpler. Renewal letters will be sent out in June.



Membership fees are due before July 1 for the coming year. For information on membership benefits and how to renew or sign up, visit the ICPA website at www.theicpa.com or write to ICPA Membership Coordinator Beth Kubinec at Beth@TheICPA.com.

## ICPA board in changeover state

In May, the ICPA board accepted nominations to fill the empty spots on the board. The new board will be announced in June.

Leaving the board after many years of serving ICPA and

its decision-making body are Dirk De Vuyst, International Marble Industries, and Larry Branan, The R.J. Marshall Company. De Vuyst has served in many board roles in the past 20 plus years, including as president, but most recently as secretary (for the last four years). Branan has served the association for the past six years on the Educational/POLYCON Committee. He plans and organizes the PolyTech training sessions for POLYCON. ICPA's leaders thanked both of those men for their level of commitment and the length of their service.

Also leaving the board after serving on the Marketing Committee and Finance Committee is Kay Rehberg, ACS International. Stepping into his empty board slot for ACS will be Chris Hurdleston from that company. Brian Ruether will be the new representative for the R.J. Marshall Company. Both those men will begin two-year terms on July 1.

**Cast Polymer Connection** will announce the full new board in the fall issue.

### Welcome new members

Four members recently joined the association ranks. They include:

- Capstone Surfaces in Jefferson City, MO  
<https://capstonesurfaces.com>
- MTI Baths in Sugar Hill, GA  
<https://mtibaths.com/about-mti/corporate>
- Gruber Systems in Valencia, CA  
<https://grubersystems.com>
- Blue Ridge Marble, LLC in Harrisonburg, VA

Stay tuned to the fall issue of **Cast Polymer Connection** for the first-ever printed full membership directory!

### Register now for POLYCON Ohio 2022

Members are rapidly signing up to attend the association's national educational and networking event, and ICPA



Executive Director Jennifer Towner said she expects this year's registration numbers to be among the highest ever.

Early bird registration ends June 30. The event is September 19-21 in Canton, OH and will include three days of sessions, demonstrations, discussions, exhibits, plant tours, socializing and fun.

The event will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Canton Downtown, which has also reserved a block of rooms at a special rate. A link to the hotel is available on the event website.

PolyTech Training Sessions will be hosted by manufacturer

members Tower Industries (see profile on page 4) and American Marble Industries.

For a preview of this year's event, see page 10 of this issue.

For up-to-date information, scheduling and needed links, go to [www.POLYCONevent.com](http://www.POLYCONevent.com).

### Cast Polymer Radio continues to excite

Members of ICPA and others who are involved in the cast polymer industry are increasingly turning to Cast Polymer Radio to hear podcasts on the latest trends and issues.



The podcast has been around since 2020 and now has an impressive 133 episodes, all of which are available at [www.castpolymer.com](http://www.castpolymer.com).

The show is hosted by Jonathan Taylor, technical sales manager at Sanco, one of the site's sponsors. Other sponsors include AKPA Chemicals and Brooks Molds.

Recent episodes included:

- How companies might prepare for a recession
- What's being done in schools towards encouraging craftsmanship
- How to make tiny connections that keep employees happy
- How to grow business using Google ads
- Mold care and preparations
- A military hero's story of resilience
- Ventilation system upgrades
- Building a remarkable brand.

Turn to page 12 for a special feature from Episode 119's featured speaker Mark McGraw, co-author of a book on 21st century prospecting.

#### 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](mailto:Jennifer@TheICPA.com) or 470-219-8139 for information on advertising.

3	ACS International .....	<a href="http://www.acsinternational.com">www.acsinternational.com</a>
27	AOC Resins .....	<a href="http://www.aocresins.com">www.aocresins.com</a>
25	American Colors .....	<a href="http://www.americancolors.com">www.americancolors.com</a>
20	Gebrüder Dorfner GmbH & Co.....	<a href="http://www.dorfner-composites.com">www.dorfner-composites.com</a>
24	ICPA Join Us!.....	<a href="http://www.theICPA.com">www.theICPA.com</a>
17	ICPA POLYCON .....	<a href="http://www.theICPA.com">www.theICPA.com</a>
22	ICPA Live Grout Free Campaign .....	<a href="http://www.theICPA.com">www.theICPA.com</a>
28	Interplastic Corporation.....	<a href="http://www.interplastic.com">www.interplastic.com</a>
23	Omya Inc. ....	<a href="http://www.omya.com">www.omya.com</a>
14	RESPECTA Maschinenbau GmbH .....	<a href="http://www.respecta.com">www.respecta.com</a>
8	The R.J. Marshall Company .....	<a href="http://www.rjmarshall.com">www.rjmarshall.com</a>
7	TR Industries .....	<a href="http://www.trindustries.com">www.trindustries.com</a>

# AOC

Trusted Solutions



AOC's Vicast resins and Chroma-Tek pigments are specially formulated for cultured marble, onyx, granite, solid surface, and other cast polymer applications.

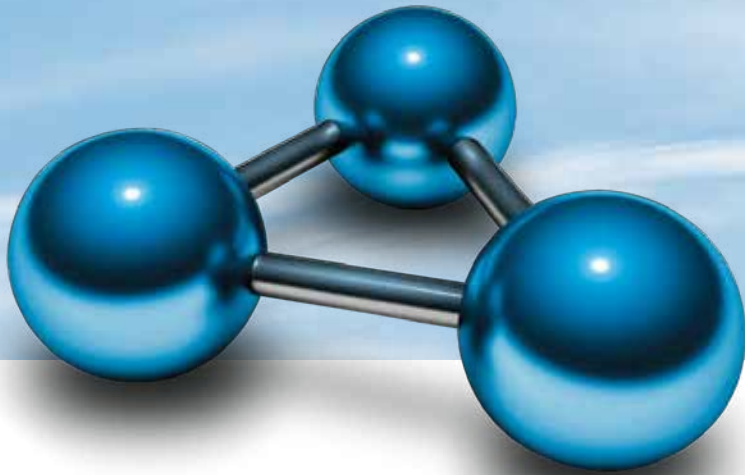
- Consistent color & quality
- Versatility to match any process
- Unmatched technical support

**Vicast**<sup>®</sup>  
CASTING RESINS

**Chroma-Tek**<sup>®</sup>  
COLORANTS & ADDITIVES

[aocresins.com](http://aocresins.com) |  [@AOCresins](https://twitter.com/AOCresins)

+01 866.319.8827



## 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.