The Year Ahead: Aiming to ELEVATE!

By Tyler Cerny, 2020 AWI President

Last fall as we began to think about the majestic mountains in Asheville, NC, the site of our Spring Leadership Conference, and in Lake Tahoe, CA, the locale of the 68th AWI Annual Convention, the theme for the year came to mind — ELEVATE!

The theme ties in with my philosophy to constantly elevate my game, my business and personal self to the next level. That dovetails completely with AWI’s internal strategy of continually improving how our association operates efficiently and innovatively as a non-profit organization.

External Service
In addition to elevating our internal AWI National operations, we will elevate our external service to members, helping architectural woodworkers to up their games for added success and satisfaction.

Areas of Focus
Our focus will be threefold: to increase continuous improvement, strengthen relationships and networking, and optimize technology and engineering. This year we will work to deliver tools that enable our members to ELEVATE their business to the next level.

Challenges Ahead
The forecast by ITR Economics™ we heard from Conor Lokar at the 2019 AWI Convention in Providence, RI, indicates that some businesses will experience a slowdown economically in 2020. On the other hand, we know many companies are experiencing growth, and are confronted with continuous training, particularly of new
Valuable Opportunity

One extremely valuable opportunity is volunteerism to your association. AWI needs member involvement to ensure our association’s perspective is current and relevant. I encourage you to identify areas that you may serve with your talents to advance an entire association. The reward of serving others is invaluable.

New AWI Offerings

In the last month, AWI has launched an exciting new member value tool, the AWI Learning Portal. This digital experience merges education and the new AWI Standards as well as interacts with our online communities and membership database. Staff and volunteers alike with continue to make enhancements to the project and ELEVATE it throughout 2020.

The AWI ANSI Standard initiative continues to advance. AWI received word that ANSI / AWI 0461-2019 – Architectural Casework Standard passed the ANSI balloting process. This new member benefit no longer prescribes how a cabinet must be constructed; rather, it permits members to engineer casework and components allowing for each manufacturer to maximize their own efficiencies. The new standard is based on performance with an understanding that it may be achieved with many possibilities. The official effective date for this standard will be April 10.

Your Membership ROI

As the new leader of AWI, I encourage all of you to extract more from your AWI membership. If you aren’t sure where to start, I strongly recommend attending an AWI function: Education Outreach Seminars, Spring Leadership Conference, Annual Convention, or Chapter Meeting. We as staff are happy to assist anyone trying to find the most appropriate event for them.

As we as an association ELEVATE ourselves in 2020, I look forward to forming new relationships and strengthening the current ones. Staff and I are excited to serve our members and work collaboratively with you to enhance our AWI community.

Thank you all for being on the team! When we all do our part, execution will happen and championships (results) will be felt by all. I am honored to serve you and am looking forward to many great years with AWI.

LEARNING FORUMS

Advanced Estimating Seminar
Host: Heart of America Chapter - April 2-3
Host: West Texas Chapter - September 17-18

Project Management
Host: Chicago Chapter - April 30-May 1
Host: New Jersey Chapter - October 29-30

Financial Management
Host: Open - February 28
Host: Open - November 6

Contracts
Host: New England Chapter – May 15
Host: Great Lakes Chapter - October 16

AWI Chapters that wish to host one of the three open seminars not assigned at press time, should contact AWI Education Coordinator Sue Sicilian at ssicilian@awinet.org. Sign up to assure your hosting opportunity and delivery of a top-notch educational seminar for your members.
Wade Thaxton Joins AWI Senior Staff

AWI announces the appointment of Wade Thaxton as Director of Education, succeeding Doug Hague, who took over Jan. 1 as AWI Executive Vice President. As a new member of the AWI senior staff, Wade will interact extensively with association members. Doing so, he will help the association better serve member interests in an increasingly challenging architectural woodwork industry and thereby help members ELEVATE their knowledge, skills and bottom line.

“I’m hoping to rise to the occasion (i.e. ELEVATE) of trying to walk in Doug Hague’s footsteps. It is with great anticipation and much determination that I’ll tackle this exciting challenge. I look forward to diving in deep on the education offerings and raising the bar for ALL that AWI can be and do for our membership and industry partners.”

Wade has spent the past 6.5 years as an account manager for Flexible Materials working with many AWI members in the Midwest. He’s also served the past 1.5 years as President of the Ohio Valley Chapter of AWI.

Wade has a Master’s of Education from Spalding University and Bachelor of Arts from his beloved Wabash College. He has a multitude of experience in educating, training and coaching students, peers and total strangers. From being a high school English teacher to a middle school tech coordinator to an adjunct professor to a support group leader and facilitator, Wade has served thousands of young and old (and sometimes restless) individuals over the past 18 years.

Doug Hague shared, “We are excited to have Wade join the team. His diverse skillset will be used across many AWI roles. His heart aligns with my mission of unselfishly serving so that others may advance. I look forward to seeing his positive effects on member value.”

Effective Jan. 1, Wade can be reached at wade@awinet.org.
staff. Consequently, our goal is to help members face the challenges ahead by delivering resources for use in improving their business, thereby translating into continuous improvement.

**Standards & Education**

We are also aware that the rollout of new AWI Standards will present learning challenges for all of us, including our customers who also use these valuable guidelines.

Toward this end, AWI made an investment in software to produce a new Digital Learning Portal that ties together standards and education and benefits both our members and the association. The powerful new AWI web platform officially launched on Dec. 9, 2019. (See article on page 6 for details.)

**Learning as We Go**

This promises to be a year of learning, adapting, and effecting change which fits into our internal continuous improvement loop.

Following the “Plan, Do, Check, Act” process will allow the board and staff to adapt to the needs of the association, the membership and the industry.

**Strategic Plan & Survey**

In conjunction with the ELEVATE theme, we will dive back into our strategic plan and survey members and nonmembers to assure that our direction is aligned with the need. Once confirmed, our Staff will gain direction and marching orders to operate as efficiently as possible.

Please be sure to share your views in the Membership Survey when it is distributed. This is an important transition year for you to speak out.

Michael McNulty (2019 AWI President) Doug Hague (AWI Executive VP) and I will learn from association management best practices, using resources to assist the Board of Directors to become more efficient in setting policies.

**Change is Healthy**

I look forward to change, even to the point of seeking it out. If we stay the same, we are not improving. In my view, it is okay to fail, as long as we learn from it. My leadership style is to always seek wise counsel. I like to create healthy open discussion about issues and challenges, because it is critical to examine them from all angles. I will play a contrarian role if needed to stimulate discussion, and I welcome member input at every opportunity available. I also look forward to playing a supporting and coaching role as our former Director of Education Doug Hague begins his tenure as our new Executive Vice President.

Tyler Cerny is President of Strata Design in Traverse City, MI, which was founded in 1988, and changed ownership in 2008 when Tyler and his wife Jen purchased the firm. Strata Design has been an AWI Manufacturing Member since 1990, is a QCP Licensee and holds FSC Chain of Custody Certification. Strata Design produces casework, countertops and displays for the medical, financial, educational, retail, office and sports markets.

**Our Focus Will Be Threefold:**

to increase continuous improvement, strengthen relationships and networking, and optimize technology and engineering.
I envision 2020 as a year of building on AWI’s investments in technology & education tools that enable AWI to better assess the resources most needed and desired by members.

Tyler has been active in the architectural woodwork industry for eight years, and in AWI from 2015–2016 as a board member, in 2016 as Director Delegate of the Strategic Implementation Group, and in 2014 as a member of the Nominating Committee. He has been a presenter at the AWI Spring Leadership Conference and the AWI Annual Convention, and has served as AWI National VP and President-elect prior to his succession to the presidency of AWI this year. Tyler is also a member of AWI Best Practice Group No. 3. A Founding Director of the NW Michigan Manufacturing Council, Tyler is a trainer in the disciplines of Lean Manufacturing and Lean Process Implementation. The AWI Great Lakes Chapter won the AWI Chapter of the Year honors in 2015 when Tyler served as its president.

2020 AWI Leadership

Meet the Officers and Directors who will serve your interests in 2020. These volunteer leaders will be your voice in setting policies and overseeing programs, publications, and other services that meet your needs.

To reach these 2020 AWI leaders, visit www.awinet.org, scroll down to the bottom of the home page and then click on “Board.”

OFFICERS

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Traverse City, MI

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Whitney Pyle,
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Marion, IN
Back when the AWI / ANSI Standards Development process began, the AWI Technical Committee knew that the educational material previously found both in the Quality Standards Illustrated, Edition 8 and Architectural Woodwork Standards, Edition 2 would not be incorporated into the new performance-based AWI Standards.

The rich educational material didn’t wind up on the cutting-room floor; rather, it was held in abeyance. Now, the relevant resources can be found in AWI’s new Digital Learning Portal which debuted on Dec. 9.

AWI Executive VP Doug Hague told NewsBriefs that, “The goal of creating the integrated web platform was spawned by the change in AWI’s ANSI-approved Standards, which are exclusively performance and test-driven. We needed to take the valuable information acquired over time and give it new life.

“Thanks to the vision and commitment of the AWI Board of Directors, who approved the initial concept in the spring of 2018, over $560,000 was allocated for a robust platform incorporating cutting-edge technology. The long-term investment will allow the service to grow for many years to come.”

**PLATFORM FEATURES**
- **A powerful search engine** that links AWI Standards, educational content, AWI Community discussions, and member specialization via the AWI Member Profile information from the online database.
- **Personalization** – bookmark and flag capability for quick/easy access to frequently used information.
- **Easy sharing of information** via email by clicking a button, eliminating the former cumbersome process of sharing data from hard copies of the AWS2.
- **Online accessibility** from mobile devices, tablets and computers.

**All AWI Standards content is free to everyone, while education and other material is reserved exclusively for members.**

**INITIAL CONTENT ROLL-OUT**
While AWI Standards continue development through the ANSI consensus-process, the following content is currently searchable and linkable via the new AWI search engine. Give it a try at www.awinet.org and discover the interrelated material you can find for the following:
- AWI 100 – Submittals
- AWI 200 – Care & Storage
- AWI 300 – Materials
- ANSI/AWI 0620-2018 – Finish Carpentry/Installation
- Relevant educational material from QSI8 and AWS2
- Relevant AWI Community discussions
- AWI Member Profile information identifying relevant specialties

Call AWI at 571-323-3636, if you need staff assistance using the new tool. Meanwhile, start discovering the power of the new AWI search engine and integrated resources. Your journey will be similar to navigating for a Google search result or an Amazon page. Make AWI’s new search engine your “go to” tool for woodworking standards and educational resources.

“Going forward, content will include illustrative photos and informational videos along with additional educational material from many varied sources,” Doug added.

Watch for announcements about new content, search examples, and more information in upcoming editions of NewsBriefs, e-briefs, as well as other communications avenues.
AWI Website Refreshed, Powerful & Better than Ever!

With the launch of AWI’s new Digital Learning Portal, the entire association website was refreshed to reflect current trends in functionality and design. Take a spin at www.awinet.org!

When you visit www.awinet.org, you’ll encounter a snappy new home page with a horizontal menu bar at the top offering more extensive choices:

- **Standards**: Testing Overview, Submittals, Care & Storage, Materials, Finish Carpentry / Installation and Glossary
- **Education (relating to Standards)**: Overview, Submittals, Materials, Casework
- **Membership**: Membership Overview, Manufacturer, Supplier, Industry, Affiliate, Certification
- **Publications**: Standards, Test Methodologies, CODBS, Design Solutions, NewsBriefs, e-briefs, Store
- **Events**: Upcoming Events, Annual Convention, Spring Leadership, Seminars, Speakers Bureau (All were previously identified as “Education” on the top menu bar.)
- **Contact Us** (An online form for communicating with AWI about issues/questions you may have.)

Some of the information previously listed on the top horizontal menu bar can be found at the very bottom of the home page: About (AWI), Staff, Board, Advertising & Sponsorship, Member Directory, Education Foundation, Chapters and Sponsors.

**Member Access**
Enter the website as a member; login using the access codes you have utilized previously.

Disregard and bypass the membership invitation on the new “public” home page. It features an aggressive membership appeal, offering **trial membership** to those who want access to the Standards and limited Education information.

**Website Highlights**
- More robust search capabilities.
- Full access to ALL education materials relating to Standards and more — a members-only benefit.
- Subsequent easy access to information – the powerful search engine remembers your previous searches.
- Much more!

**Membership Campaign**
The membership campaign is designed to give non-member users a taste of the comprehensive data available exclusively to members. A trial membership will give such users a look-see for a limited time. AWI’s goal is to significantly increase its membership through the power of the new Digital Learning Portal.

**Test Drive**
AWI encourages you to test drive the all-new website capabilities. Try out searches relating to Standards, Education and more. After you drive through the site, tell us what you think!
With the recent approval of the ANSI/AWI 0641-2019 – Architectural Wood Casework Standard, the Architectural Woodwork Institute is preparing the standard for implementation.

Expected to be released in the first quarter of 2020, the standard will provide some exciting benefits for the architectural woodwork industry. As many industry professionals are already aware, the upcoming standard includes performance duty level requirements for casework.

In previous AWI standards, a casework unit’s aesthetic and structural requirements have been lumped together. The ANSI/AWI 0641-2019 – Architectural Wood Casework Standard will give manufacturers and design professionals more freedom to fabricate and specify casework that meets a project’s performance requirements without the added cost of premium aesthetic grade materials.

How can you ensure that casework produced in your manufacturing facility is compliant with the appropriate structural duty level specified in your contract?

The answer is through testing.

Test Methodologies
By having your standard casework construction methodology tested in accordance with AWI’s test methodologies, available at https://www.awinet.org/publications/testmethodologies, you can rest assured that your casework is compliant with whichever structural duty level is specified in the contract documents. Upon completion of the test battery, your casework will be assessed at a specific duty level based upon its performance.

This testing and approval process is intended to give industry professionals the opportunity to use many of the exciting and innovative products that are constantly being developed in the ever-changing architectural woodwork industry.

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Casework Equivalency Statement
AWI has also recently released a Casework Equivalency Statement indicating that casework tested and shown to meet Performance Duty Level 3 will satisfy the requirements of the Architectural Woodwork Standards, Edition 2 (2014).

Having your casework tested is not the only way in which you can ensure that your casework is compliant with the standard, however.

Among the industry benefits that AWI has been working on lately is the updated online portal, available at www.awinet.org. Alongside the online tools that AWI has been offering for years, the new and improved website includes AWI’s Tested and Approved Methods for Casework Construction.

The Tested and Approved Methods for Casework Construction included on the website will provide clear instructions on how to build casework that will comply with Performance Duty Level 3, the standard’s default.

Other new and exciting features of the online portal include:

• Standards presented in an interactive format to help keep the information that you need at your fingertips.
• Smart search function that tailors itself to the information most relevant to each individual user.
• Easy-to-use navigational layout with a complete design refresh.