AWI VIRTUAL CONVENTION DELIVERED!

AWI’s first-ever virtual convention, Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 2020, brought together members in a unique—and ELEVATING—way to bolster connections among members during challenging times. COVID-19 was not going to prevent the annual event—just change it.

The convention was filled with provocative speakers, networking, an emotional leadership transition, and some unfortunate technical difficulties. But, the show went on and our members were very complimentary about the unique experiences they had.

If you missed the convention and you didn’t attend the “Friday Family Gathering – It’s a Wrap!” on Oct. 9 you didn’t gain access to the recorded presentations. We’ll offer a few nuggets from the lineup of speakers, except for Inspirational Speaker, Travis Mills, Retired US Army Staff Sergeant, 82nd Airborne Division, whose presentation was not released.

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Volunteer Appreciation

Without our dedicated volunteers, AWI could not productively advance the quality and relevance of its services for members. We thank the following volunteers in 2020 who were faced with an unusual challenge brought about by COVID-19.

While many activities were trimmed in 2020, AWI laid the foundation of a new three-year Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, which will be introduced in the December edition of NewsBriefs.

THE AWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OTHER DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS ARE INTEGRAL TO THE PROCESS OF ADAPTING TO THE TIMES. AWI THANKS THE VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR SERVICE IN 2020.

(continues on page 2)
AWI NEWS

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteer Appreciation (cont. from page 1)

2020 AWI CHAPTER OFFICER COUNCIL LEADERS

Chair: Liz Ingebrigtsen, Sprovieri’s Custom Counters, Chicago Chapter
Vice Chair: Katie Shaw, Riverside Construction Services, Inc., Ohio Valley Chapter

2020 AWI COMMITTEES AND TEAMS

Audit Committee
Skip Heidler, Chair, Heidler Hardwood & Lumber Co.

Bylaws and Policy Committee
• Skip Heidler, Chair, Heidler Hardwood & Lumber Co.
• Erik Fetzer, Fetzer Architectural Woodwork
• Tyler Cerny, Strata Design
• Dustin Giffin, Giffin Interior & Fixture, Inc.

Finance Committee
• Tyler Cerny, Chair, Strata Design
• Skip Heidler, Heidler Hardwood Lumber Co.
• Mike Coticchio, Siteline Interior Carpentry, Inc.
• Sebastien DesMarais, Hollywood Woodwork, Inc.
• Dustin Giffin, Giffin Interior & Fixture, Inc.

Insurance and Safety Committee
• Dustin Giffin, Chair, Giffin Interior & Fixture, Inc.
• Kimberly Holms, Great in Counters
• Michael McNulty, Sr., Cambio Plywood division of The Pearwood Group
• Jack West, Federated Insurance

Nominating Committee
• Sebastien DesMarais, Chair, Hollywood Woodwork, Inc.
• Kristine Cox, Rowland Woodworking, Inc.
• Liz Ingebrigtsen, Sprovieri’s Custom Counters
• Michael McNulty, Sr., Cambio Plywood division of The Pearwood Group
• Larry Musil, M. Bohlke Veneer Corporation

Past Presidents Committee
• Greg Lutz, Chair, Lutz Woodworks, Inc.

Skills USA Committee
• Kristine Cox, Chair, Rowland Woodworking, Inc.
• Tony Aubin, Aubin Woodworking, Inc.
• John Volpe, Volpe Millwork Inc.
• Ted Robinson, Technique Manufacturing, Inc.

Technical Committee
• Greg Lutz, Chair, Lutz Woodworks, Inc.
• Jordan Backs, Pittsburgh State University
• Cory Bittner, TMI Systems Corporation
• Michael McNulty, Sr., Cambio Plywood division of The Pearwood Group
• William Munyan, R&M Group Architects
• Randy Jensen, Leonard Peterson & Company, Inc.
• Greg Parham, Quality Certification Corporation

Marketing Committee
• Barry Strozier, Chair, Remmert & Company
• Kent Asleson, Navy Island, Inc.
• Christel Benson, Pittsburgh State University
• Dustin Giffin, Giffin Interior & Fixture, Inc.
• Skip Heidler, Heidler Hardwood & Lumber Co.

2020 AWI Annual Sponsors
AWI thanks the 2020 annual sponsors for their additional support throughout the year, which helps to fund the association’s programs, publications and other services for members. AWI Manufacturing Members are encouraged to connect with these suppliers anytime at www.awinet.org whenever a need arises for their services. Contact AWI if you would like to join this elite group of sponsors.
Member Engagement Committee
- Kim Alsup, Chair, Milestone Cabinetry & Millwork
- Mike Coticchio, Siteline Interior Cabinetry, Inc.
- Cassy Gibson, INNERGY
- Travis Gingery, Custom Woodworks, Ltd.
- Moriah Jones, Parenti & Raffaelli, Ltd.
- Greg Lutz, Lutz Woodworks, LLC

Online Communities Committee
- Michael DeBruyn, Chair, Great Lakes Stainless, Inc.
- Whitney Pyle, Advanced Cabinet Systems

Education Committee
- Bob Krejci, Chair, Riverside Architectural Millwork
- David Lock, Conley Caseworks
- Scott Markwood, Hafele America Company
- John VanErem, USA Millwork

Advanced Estimating Team
- Luke Remmert, Lead, Remmert & Company
- Greg Rawlings, INNERGY
- Juan Soto, Casework Solutions, LLC
- John VanErem, USA Millwork

Contracts Team
- Sandy Sandburg, Lead, Granite Mills

Finance Management Team
- Lauren Bourland, Custom Source Woodworking, Inc.
- Gordon Giffin, Giffin Interior & Fixture, Inc.
- Tim Northup, Stiles Machinery, Inc.

Project Management Team
- Bob Krejci, Lead, Riverside Architectural Millwork
- Craig Johnson, Siewert Cabinet
- Randy Lange, Lange Bros Woodwork Co., Inc.
- John Maffett, Coastal Millwork

Standards, QCP, Testing Committee
- David Rafinski, Chair, One Source Fabrication, LLC
- Philip Bowers, Advanced Cabinet Systems
- Randy Lange, Lange Bros Woodwork Co., Inc.
- Greg Lutz, Lutz Woodworks, Inc.
- Whitney Pyle, Advanced Cabinet Systems

Subject Matter Experts Committee
- Eric Fetzer, Chair, Fetzer Architectural Woodwork
- Kent Gilchrist, AWI Past President
- Geoffrey Athey, Focused Leadership, LLC
- Doug Mock, Mock Woodworking Company

New AWI Members

Manufacturers
ATLANTA CABINET SHOP
BUFORD, GA
JJ CUSTOM CABINETS & MILLWORK
LAS VEGAS, NV
LIBERTY CASEWORK, LLC
TACOMA, WA
NAUHAUS INDUSTRIES
ENGLEWOOD, CO

Note: These new members joined AWI in September 2020.

Use the online Directory of AWI Manufacturing and Supplier Members at www.awinet.org for contact information and access to the websites of these and other AWI members. The resource is open 24/7 for use in seeking manufacturers and suppliers of architectural woodwork.

AWI NEWS
One can immerse oneself in the core principles of Kaizen or one can simplify the process of eliminating waste and streamlining operations, but there’s one thing that cannot be short-circuited. Continuous Improvement...daily, forever, by your entire team!

Kaizen is a Japanese word that translates closely to “continuous improvement” in English. In Japanese culture, Kaizen has been around for thousands of years. The Toyota Production System allows employees to STOP an assembly line to fix a problem. The reaches of Kaizen extend not just to manufacturing, but also to healthcare, government and other industries.

Fix What Bugs You

AWI Convention Opening Speaker Paul Akers of FastCap, regaled his audience about successes gained at his company, which was started in Paul’s garage in 1997 when he simply “fixed what bugged him” and developed his first product: the FastCap Cover Cap. From humble beginnings and no MBA, FastCap has thousands of distributors worldwide in over 40 countries.

“At FastCap, we have been able to build a strong culture of lean thinkers by implementing a daily morning meeting. During the meeting, team members will be shown what waste looks like, how to eliminate it, and what continuous improvement looks like,” Paul said.

To achieve ultimate efficiency, Paul recommended “putting responsibility for solving a problem to those closest to it. Turn your people into process engineers.” A Total Production System is an accumulation of small ideas from everyone. “A Lean thinker looks at a process and fixes what bugs him/her.”

Paul said the most important improvement you can make is right now. “Look at your operation and find the biggest bottleneck. Set an improvement goal of 1% every day.”

8 Deadly Wastes

Paul shared his insights about deadly wastes and highly recommends addressing them.

• Over production
• Transportation
• Excess inventory
• Defects
• Over processing
• Wasted motion
• Waiting time
• Wasted potential

“Create a culture where you admit mistakes. When management works side-by-side on the shop floor, it gives employees an incentive to fix a problem.”

Details about Paul’s book, 2 Second Lean, as well as other publications are available at https://paulakers.net.

CREATE A CULTURE WHERE YOU ADMIT MISTAKES.

Turn your people into process engineers.
Lean Is Continuous!

DON’T STOP!

AWI convention attendees learned first-hand about the Lean journey two AWI members have been taking for many years in their shops and offices. Lean is a process that continues on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis.

Embracing the value of Lean has produced results for Fetzer Architectural Woodwork and USA Millwork’s Mission Bell Division. Here are some highlights of a tracking tool and shop tour shared by Erik Fetzer and Glen Ripley.

Erik Fetzer
Fetzer Architectural Woodwork started its Lean journey in 2003 when it hired consultants and toured factories. They learned about such processes as single batch flow and elimination of waste.

“The journey was a rough ride at times during our training sessions and early efforts,” Erik said. Some personnel left the company because they chose not to embrace the concept.

Erik, who is CEO of Fetzer’s, shared a spreadsheet that the company uses to track improvements. “The majority of ideas for improvement evolve from the team,” he said.

Glen Ripley
In 2000, the Mission Bell team brought in some professionals to help it institute Lean. “However, it evolved into resistance, as we struggled with not having a culture of continuous improvement. Then from 2014-2017, we used Paul Aker’s 2 Second Lean format and were very engaged.

It helped to transform our company culture. While it’s not a perfect process, there have been numerous examples of small improvements recommended by plant personnel,” company President Glen Ripley said.

Glen also noted that the eight categories of waste identified by Paul Akers can be transformative, as it was at Mission Bell. Our employees used the principles to identify and recommend solutions for waste in their particular areas. We created about 300 videos of minor changes made throughout the company. “Our people were motivated and energized about their own improvements on the shop floor.”

Both of these AWI members are testament to the success one can have employing Lean principles in their operations. They agreed that once embraced, it is a continuous journey of improvement.

The Silent Epidemic

Retired basketball Coach Mark Potter relayed a real, relevant, and raw story of his personal experience with severe depression. The goal of Coach Potter and his wife, Nanette, is to improve understanding about the importance of opening up about mental health issues to save lives. “One out of four people every year will have some struggles about mental health,” he said. Coach Potter imparted a message of “hope.”

“Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 45.” According to a poll Mark quoted, “One of every four 18 to 24-year-olds has thought about suicide since COVID started.”

There is a stigma attached to mental health, Mark said. He emphasized that “It’s okay to talk about your struggles.” Mark’s message was so powerful that multiple AWI members reached out to him following his presentation.

Nanette spoke from the caregiver or family perspective which is the often-forgotten side of mental illness. She shared practical suggestions to understand and assist in the situation.

Coach Potter invited AWI members to reach out to him at 316-640-9059 or at www.d2up.org.

THE EIGHT CATEGORIES OF WASTE IDENTIFIED BY PAUL AKERS CAN BE TRANSFORMATIVE.
AWI chapter leaders gathered virtually for the first time ever, the AWI Chapter Officers Council (COC) was held online Sept. 30, just before the start of the 68th AWI Annual Convention. Sixty-two Chapter Leaders traveled from their chair to their screen to learn about each other, see what’s new for AWI Chapters and elect new officers for 2021.

AWI Chicago Chapter member Liz Ingebriksen, 2020 chair of the COC, was assisted by COC Vice-Chair Katie Shaw, a member of the AWI Ohio Valley Chapter. AWI’s COC delegate to the AWI Board of Directors, Dustin Giffin, lent his expertise to the planning as well as attending the COC’s semi-annual meeting.

During the roll call, each attendee shared important details of their own Chapter and geographic location.

AWI staff members Hunter Morrison and Rex Chappell described their roles and responsibilities. Hunter, who serves AWI’s members as Technical Director, plays a large role in AWI’s new Standards development. He updated the members on the status of the Standards timeline. He encouraged ALL AWI members to contact him with technical questions, especially relating to Standards. Located at AWI’s National Testing Center in Americus, GA, Rex introduced himself as the “boots on the ground.” He outlined the testing process briefly and encouraged AWI members to get in touch with them as their companies move forward with casework testing.

**Federated Insurance**

Jack West of AWI Sustaining Sponsor Federated Insurance, presented a dynamic and eye-opening program on risk management, raising awareness of issues members may likely encounter during COVID-19 restrictions in the workplace and other current safety topics. He also relayed Federated Insurance’s ongoing, strong commitment to AWI Chapters, highlighting their presence in and recent sponsorship by some AWI Chapters.

**Chapter Support**

AWI EVP Doug Hague encouraged participants to continue finding ways to help Chapters thrive, noting that due to local and state COVID-19 restrictions, meeting online through free ZOOM accounts may make it easier for distant members or Chapters with broad geographic territories to meet more frequently. AWI Chapter Staff Liaison Margaret Fisher reminded Chapters that she can help them facilitate online meetings and confirmed that online regular membership meetings DO count as a meeting for points in the Distinguished Chapter Program. Doug also updated the Chapter Leaders on the WIRD Program he mentioned last spring called “Youwood.com,” and encouraged everyone to find ways to engage Chapter members in this outreach program.

**2021 Election Results**

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<th>Chapter Officer Council Directors</th>
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<td><strong>Liz Ingebriksen:</strong></td>
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<td>AWI COC Delegate to the AWI Board of Directors</td>
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<td><strong>Katie Shaw:</strong></td>
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<td>Chapter Officer Council Chair</td>
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<td><strong>Kim Alsup:</strong></td>
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<td>Chapter Officer Council Vice-Chair</td>
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AWI Education Director Wade Thaxton updated attendees on the status of the AWI Education Outreach Program. The AWI Education Department and seminar teams worked hard this summer to prepare the face-to-face education programs for online delivery, four of which took place in October: Contracts, Financial Management, Advanced Estimating and finally Project Management.

Wade also reminded the Chapter Leaders to provide him with the con-
Education Department and seminar teams worked hard this summer to prepare the face-to-face education programs for online delivery.

tact information of the person in each Chapter designated to participate in the task force specifically to determine the cost sharing between AWI Chapters and AWI National.

AWI Chapter Officer Council Delegate to the AWI Board of Directors Dustin Giffin informed the attendees that the AWI board has approved a new association Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2023. He also encouraged everyone to participate in the networking opportunities made possible by virtual AWI Family Gatherings typically scheduled for Friday afternoons, most weeks. If you are not receiving these invites, please contact AWI.

**Distinguished Chapter Program**

AWI Chapter Staff Liaison Margaret Fisher revealed the points earned by each Chapter participating in the 2019 – 2020 Distinguished Chapter Program and congratulated each chapter who qualified. The Chicago Chapter members were also applauded for achieving “AWI Chapter of the Year” honors for the second year in a row.

Margaret encouraged each Chapter Leader to attend or designate someone to attend new monthly “Chapter Workbench” meetings which will be topic specific.

She encouraged each Chapter Leader to attend or designate someone to attend new monthly “Chapter Workbench” meetings which will be topic specific. Each 15-20-minute session will explain an essential part of running a Chapter to aid in smoother Chapter business operations. Upcoming topics include: updates to the AWI Distinguished Chapter Program which is being redefined to help Chapters engage, enhance and grow their own Chapter and take more ownership of the program; AWI Leadership Essentials; the required Annual Reporting forms; the revised GPS Manual; taking minutes; communicating with AWI National; budgeting; hosting virtual events and tours; The Chapter of the Future, etc. Margaret encouraged Chapters to poll their members to see what additional topics would be beneficial to them.

**Guidance in an Uncertain Economy**

Effectively managing your business during the “most uncertain economy since 2008/2009” is a formidable challenge. But Conor Lokar, senior forecaster at ITR Economics™, shared trend data about the economy based on indicators. “Leading indicators are on a rising trend,” Conor said. For architectural woodworkers, Conor pointed to a strong indicator in the Architectural Billing Index (ABI) published monthly by the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

**Recovery Underway**

“Recovery is underway as of 3Q 2020, and it is gaining momentum. We anticipate a three-year recovery period.” ITR notes that another business shutdown resulting from another wave of COVID is improbable. And ITR is not expecting a new stimulus package to drive the economy.

“We think the 2020s will be America’s decade,” Conor said. “You must focus on decisions that you can make now that will take you forward. For instance, with a continual decline of nonresidential construction, examine other markets, like housing which is currently hot, to sustain you.”

**Total public construction is expected to decline in 2021 and 2022.** Conor recommended paying attention to state population growth rates as a result of COVID-19. Prepare now for challenges you will face through Q2 of 2021.

**Managing Your Future**

Conor offered the following suggestions for managing your future in an uncertain economy:

1. Be sure cash flow modeling is reliable.
2. Take advantage of various lending programs/lines of credit.

(continue on page 8)
WEBINARS & ONLINE EDUCATION

AWI offers members webinars on topics ranging from education on the AWS to the Cost of Doing Business Survey and many more in between. All are accessible on a complimentary basis to AWI members.

Other webinars, including Friday Family Gatherings, focus on a myriad of timely topics, ranging from COVID-19 assistance, to guest speakers specializing in Lean management, the economy, and leadership. These gatherings are free of charge for AWI members.

In addition to the complimentary webinars, this year AWI's core education programs are being delivered virtually for the first time to safeguard our presenters and attendees from close contact during the pandemic. The online programs feature top tier experts in the fields of Contracts, Project Management, Estimating and Financial Management. These programs are fee-based.

Explore the webinars and other online education to expand your knowledge and perspectives about business management and operations.

Guidance in an Uncertain Economy (cont. from page 7)

3. Know how your suppliers and customers are doing financially.
4. Focus on markets/customers based on recovery rates.
5. Develop your own rates of change; timing is everything.

Ending his comprehensive presentation, Conor invited AWI members to explore ITR's DataCast™ which offers free access for 14 days at www.itreconomics.com/subscriptions. DataCast allows you to compare your company data against ITR's 10,000 indicators.

* AWI reports about ABI trends in e-briefs.

The Power of the Portal Sample Search Results: Drawer Construction

Make AWI's powerful Digital Learning Portal (DLP), www.awinet.org, your “go to” resource for education resources, AWI Standards, AWI member woodwork specializations, AWI publications and other resources, as well as shared industry and technical information from AWI Communities.

Enter the Members Area of the website by signing in with your user login at the top right corner of the home page. Then use the powerful SEARCH feature in the middle of the screen for entry to a wealth of information.

Enter “Drawer Construction” in the SEARCH window. The sample reveals 117 results (everything) comprised of AWI Community discussions, Standards, Education, General and Glossary. The results include:

- Drawer Testing – Revised Sample List
- Balanced Construction
- Box Joint Drawer Boxes
- Maximum Uniform Gap Variance
- Linear Drawer Slides Help
- Inset Overlay
- And more!

You can narrow your search by selecting “Content Type” on the left of the screen.

Get the facts from the DLP and make it your “go to” resource for a wealth of information never before available—or possible—from AWI.