What began as tentative discussions about development of a wood stair standard as far back as the fall of 2016, blossomed into collaborative meetings between the Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) and the Stairbuilders and Manufacturers Association (SMA). On March 1, their efforts culminated in approval by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) of ANSI/AWI SMA 0643-2021—Wood Stair, Handrail, and Guard Systems Standard.

“Great news,” said AWI EVP Doug Hague. “This is exciting to have our first collaborative standard produced and to be able to share with both associations that the standard process has been completed.”

**THEIR GOAL WAS TO DESIGN A MORE ROBUST STANDARD AND BETTER SUIT THE NEEDS OF THE STAIR INDUSTRY.**

**Standard Scope**
AWI SMA 0643 provides standards and tolerances for the quality fabrication and field installation of wood stair, handrail, and guard systems. Further, it addresses common guard infill systems of glass and metal, and establishes minimum aesthetic tolerances and performance requirements intended to provide a well-defined degree of control over a project’s quality of materials, workmanship, and/or fabrication.

“This standard is a crowning achievement for the Stairbuilders and Manufacturers Association and will improve the stair industry as a whole. It reflects our collective knowledge of wood, glass, and steel materials and the laborious efforts of the many who contributed their time to help develop this standard.”

2020 Impacts 2021 CoDBS
By Sebastien DesMarais, AWI President

The 2021 AWI Cost of Doing Business Survey (CoDBS) will definitely be an interesting and important one for AWI members.

Last year was a challenging year for all, and more than ever this is the time to review, research, and reconfigure your financial and HR budgets.

**COVID’s Impact**
Did your business respond adequately and quickly enough when COVID hit? Did you review and adjust your backlog, project and overhead budgets, and forecasted profitability? Did you analyze the impacts that COVID would have on the macroeconomy and on the specific geographic and construction markets that you service?

While we’re all happy to be done with 2020 and moving into a new year, this is a very important time for business owners and leaders to plan for a successful future amidst our new realities, and the AWI CoDBS is a great place to start.

**Call to Action**
**This is a call to action!** And, I strongly encourage all AWI Manufacturing Members to participate in this year’s AWI CoDBS!
CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

By Kristine Cox, AWI SkillsUSA Committee Chair

Nurturing young people in our industry is paramount on all our minds these days—after all, they are our future! There are many ways to get involved with students in woodworking, and AWI provides a perfect one.

Like many things in our COVID world, the SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Championship Conference has gone virtual for 2021. This means that more than ever, volunteers are needed to help produce this vital competition.

Want to help?

We are seeking industry volunteers in most states to assist one day during the week of June 14 to help make the SkillsUSA Cabinetmaking Competition possible. A modest donation of some very basic materials and a bit of your time is all that is required to make a student’s day and support this important endeavor.

Interested in more details? Contact me at kcox@rowlandwoodworking.com.

WORKFORCE

Kristine Cox chairs the AWI SkillsUSA Committee, and is a Past President of AWI (2017). She is Vice President, Administration at Rowland Woodworking in High Point, NC.

2020 IMPACTS 2021 CODBS (cont. from page 1)

Whether it’s you or your team, take the time to complete the survey and discuss your new budgets for 2021. Once the survey results are published, take the time to compare your results with those of the industry and your specific segments. Participate in the webinar that AWI offers with a deep dive into the post-survey results. And most importantly, after reviewing the results and identifying your financial strengths and weaknesses, turn this into action to make improvements for 2021 and beyond. “Strategy is an integrated set of activities that positions a company within an industry for superior returns,” which AWI member Marc Sanderson has shared with members from Harvard Business School.

Action Plan

So, take this opportunity to revisit your Strategy and determine your “position”, i.e., your preferred markets and customers, and review and revise your “integrated set of activities”, i.e., your specific organizational structure and processes, that make your company unique and leads to “superior returns.”

AWI continues to invest in the Cost of Doing Business Survey so that it remains a top benefit for its members.

New in 2021 CoDBS

The following changes have been incorporated into the 2021 CoDBS:

- New industry-specific positions that allow you to get more granularity for benchmarking base and bonus compensation.
- The ability to import base and bonus compensation from Excel into the online CODBS portal (huge time saver!).
- New metrics for revenue by manufacturing and company square footage.
- New breakouts for profitability by industry segment, i.e., commercial vs. residential, casework vs. millwork.
- Special instruction for PPP loan classification within the survey.

Make 2021 your best year, and use AWI’s Cost of Doing Business Survey to make time-relevant, industry-specific and data-driven decisions to guide you to maximum improvement!

Sebastien DesMarais is the president of Hollywood Woodwork, Inc., an employee-owned architectural millwork company based in Hollywood, FL since 1968. As the Chair of AWI’s Financial Management Team, Sebastien has lectured extensively at AWI conventions, conferences and Financial Management Seminars.

2021 AWI PARTNERS

AWI thanks the 26 members listed at right and welcomes them to the new AWI Partner Program. Their additional support throughout the year helps to fund the association’s programs, publications and other services for members. AWI Manufacturing Members are encouraged to connect with these partners anytime at www.awinet.org whenever a need arises for their services. To learn more about the program for AWI members contact AWI Director of Marketing & Membership Katie Allen at kallen@awinet.org.
and further shows the professionalism that is among our membership. This practical resource establishes a standard by setting clear expectations of quality and quantifies the materials specifications for everyone from the consumer to the designer, to the manufacturer, to the stairbuilder,” said SMA Executive Director Terra Erb.

History
One of the two significant differences of 0643 from previous standards is that for the first time, it was a collaborative effort combining the expertise of the two associations. “It took several years until the standard draft was ready to begin the ANSI process in the summer of 2020,” said AWI Technical Director Hunter Morrison. Perseverance and diligence culminated in the second significant difference of 0643, which is an ANSI-accredited standard, whereas in AWI’s case, Section 7 of the Architectural Woodwork Standards – Edition 2 (2014), which it replaces, was not. It is the first standard of its kind for SMA.

Process
The new standard was developed jointly by AWI’s Technical Committee and SMA’s Quality Standards Committee in conformance with the ANSI process. Their goal was to design a more robust standard and better suit the needs of the stair industry. As part of the ANSI accreditation process, the standard was subject to public review and a balloting process. Input from manufacturers of stairs was integral to the development process.

Content Highlights
The new 0643 Standard includes sections on shop and field fabrication and additional materials that were not previously covered in the AWS, Edition 2. The new AWI/SMA Standard is comprised of: stairs, which encompass stringers, risers, treads and landings; handrails; and guard systems, which are part of the assembly of stairway components.

STANDARDS
There is a structural section referencing the International Code Council’s International Building Code and International Residential Code. “It pairs well with other SMA resources, such as the Visual Interpretation of the Stair Building Code,” according to Ms. Erb. The Wood Stair, Handrail, and Guard Systems Standard contains NO Duty Levels but DOES include Aesthetic Grades (Premium, Custom, Economy).

Replaces AWS
In AWI's case, ANSI/AWI SMA 0643 supersedes, replaces, and supplants Section 7 of AWS, Edition 2 (2014) as the most current version of the AWI Standard for wood stair, handrail and guard systems.

Availability
The effective date of the 0643 Standard will be determined within six months subsequent to publication by ANSI. Stay tuned for more details in upcoming announcements.

The Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) has produced and collaborated on the development of standards in accordance with its mission since its founding in 1953 to the present day. AWI is an ANSI-accredited Standards Developer Organization.

The Stairway Manufacturers’ Association (SMA) was formed in 1988 to insure the growth and prosperity of the stair industry and craft. In 2014 the name of the association was changed to the Stairbuilders and Manufacturers Association to more clearly reflect its constituency of more than 70% professional Stairbuilding companies.

Founded in 1918, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is a private non-profit organization that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standardization and conformity assessment system and is committed to strengthening its impact, both domestically and internationally. ANSI represents the diverse interests of more than 270,000 companies and organizations, and 30 million professionals.
AWI Schedules Seminars for Spring Delivery

AWI News Briefs is a newsletter that provides updates on the Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) and its members. It contains information about seminars, events, and other activities related to architectural woodwork. This issue features the announcement of virtual seminars for spring delivery, offering cost savings and added benefits without incurring travel and accommodation expenses. More of your relevant staff members can attend, share insights afterwards, and support each other on the job, in addition to adding fellow AWI members to their list of resources.

**AWI Events**

AWI is pleased to announce that its four core education programs will be VIRTUAL, offering added benefits that in-person seminars do not, such as cost savings without incurring travel and accommodation expenses, while saving time. Consequently, more of your relevant staff members can attend, share insights afterwards, and support each other on the job, in addition to adding fellow AWI members to their list of resources.

**Advanced Estimating**
May 10-12

**Contracts**
May 24-25

**Project Management**
May 17-20

Registration for each seminar is open at www.awinet.org!

*An AWI Financial Management Seminar was held March 24-26.

**New AWI Members**

**Manufacturers**

- FORUST CORPORATION
  BURLINGTON, MA

- PROFESSIONAL CARPENTRY, INC.
  OMAHA, NE

- RIVERSIDE MILLWORK
  WEST HAVERSTRAW, NY

- SAVANNAH INDUSTRIAL SOLUTIONS, LLC
  SAVANNAH, TN

- THE THOMAS RILEY ARTISANS' GUILD
  NAPLES, FL

- WEDGWOOD CABINETRY
  LOUISVILLE, CO

- WOOD & METAL W.L.L.
  DOHA, QATAR

**Suppliers**

- EGGER WOOD PRODUCTS, LLC
  LINWOOD, NC

- VECOPLAN, LLC
  ARCHDALE, NC

**Industry**

- H2I GROUP
  ENGLEWOOD, CO

NOTE: These new members joined AWI in February 2021.

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.