
JOHN HINSON: AWCII'S PRESIDENT RECAP

Posted by John Hinson on August 3, 2016



My initial interest in Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry was sparked years ago, when vendors occasionally spoke of Bill Marek's role as president of the AWCII back in the 1980s. I asked Stan Marek if I could attend a meeting or two to see what it was all about. It was just supposed to be a fact finding trip to gather pertinent information to share with my teammates. It never crossed my mind that I would get accepted to the Board of Directors, participate in the

executive seats, and eventually serve as our industry's association president.

On my very first trip, the construction TECHNOLOGY committees lured me in and sold me on continuing to attend future meetings. It was one place where I could sit in one room surrounded by other contractors, vendors and manufacturers and learn about the latest activities affecting our trade. Not just new products, but also what issues affected contractors across the nation: their problems, inspectors, lawsuits and quality issues. I would sit and listen to manufacturers and contractors discuss how the ICC (International Code Council) changes would impact our practices, knowing that if it affects them, it will eventually affect us here.

After a few trips over a couple of years, it became apparent that the MAREK name was very well recognized and respected across the nation. It was firmly established by the family's relationships with the industry professionals and history of Bill Marek's participation in the association. In fact, in 1976 Bill was influential in combining the long standing iaWCC and the GDCI. (International association of Walls and Ceilings Contractors and Gypsum Drywall Contractors International) into one successful association now known as AWCI. He went on to serve as President of the AWCI in 1984 (the year I started at Marek right out of college).

"John Hinson" was not a recognizable name, it was "MAREK" on the badge that drew people's attention. It was a few years later that I actively started participating and contributing in AWCI once the labor market started to change. When the unscrupulous labor brokers, undocumented workers, and misclassified employees started violating the labor laws and infiltrated the commercial business environment here in Texas, it was time to act. It was time to go to work in the association to spread the word and gain support against these thieves. The unscrupulous treatment of craftsmen is against everything the MAREK family and I believe in. I had an opportunity to address it, and I jumped on it.

It was my job to help our industry succeed in building a sustainable workforce, where our craftsmen have careers, growth opportunities, insurance and retirement plans. I am pleased to say that some of our members agreed and in the end, the Board of Directors of the AWCI passed our policy on Immigration that can be found here . In addition to this policy position, the Foundation of Walls and Ceilings Industry published their research series on the topic titled Immigration: A Solution to Workforce Shortage anticipated delivery for summer 2016.

It's my opinion that Marek's active participation in the AWCI has helped us promote our company's core values and influenced others' treatment of craftsmen. I believe it is necessary for us to continue our involvement in future AWCI endeavors to advance our company and protect our industry.

The AWCI CARES program is an ANGEL to our industry, watching over those that need help the most. We must continue contributions and marketing to our industry's employees so they can benefit. Also, the association shall enhance the recognition of its industry AWARD winners in 2017 by publishing results in various industry magazines such as ENR and AIA Architectural Magazines to further promote successful member companies. And finally the continued efforts in improving our educational programs, such as EIFS - Doing It Right , Steel - Doing It Right and On-Demand AWCI Project Managers learning series.

These were not my goals when I started my journey. These were ideas that were generated by multiple people and continue to grow and develop and change.... not a goal of mine, these were reactions to the influences of our time and we have responded with reasonable solutions. It was not me, it was a lot of smart, like-minded, influential people in our businesses that acted and responded accordingly, and we should thank all of them for their continued support of this association.

My goal was recently acknowledged when I received a very nice note from a new AWCI member that said, "Thanks for the leadership, enthusiasm, hospitality, and including me." So, to think that I may have helped one person or company make a good move or a positive decision for themselves and their workers and helped our own company a little bit along the way; well then I guess I am good with that. I feel like I gained more than I gave.
