As I begin the bitter-sweet process of clearing my office of personal items and mementos of my 43+ years as an association executive, including the last 11 at the MIA, it occurred to me that I should do a couple things. First, I must say thanks to those who have helped me succeed, and second I will share a short final report from someone who has spent 11 years serving a very noble industry that has gone from boom years, through a tragic public relations crisis, into a deep recession, and is now hopefully emerging into a better economy and a revived construction industry.

As an association CEO, I have been extremely fortunate to have had the support and encouragement of a great group of MIA presidents and boards of directors. These men and women have listened to me, counseled me, and supported me in some truly challenging times including the radon/radiation-in-granite-countertops crisis, and in some innovative projects and activities. They have provided the kind of feedback that I needed to succeed in my role. This feedback included encouragement to develop education programs for the industry and for the design community; to grow that education into a CEU program MIA members can use locally; to improve and enhance the MIA website to serve all of the industry's constituencies; to investigate, design, and introduce an industry accreditation program for leading member companies; to produce a series of video training programs as well as videos to educate and inform consumers; to grow the MIA bookstore that supports member efforts to learn and to educate consumers; to initiate an industry safety program and campaign that has included extensive work in the areas of silicosis prevention and safe slab handling and the development of safety training programs for member firms; to expand the MIA awards program to include recognition of the industry's finest craftsmen; to grow membership through outreach and networking; and a whole lot more. The support and encouragement of the MIA's elected leadership has been a key to the MIA's growing reputation, and the boards' willingness to let the MIA staff try new things (and even fail now and then) is key to innovative thinking and in not being afraid of taking some calculated risks.

Any individual is only as good as the men and women behind him or her, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the MIA staff including Jim, Helen, Chuck, Garen, Jeff, Mike, Marcie (now retired), Sarah, our latest hire, Stephanie, and our outside service providers Bill Levy, Sue Myers and Jim Peters. MIA could only deliver what we could envision, then plan and execute. MIA has been blessed with a fine staff dedicated to the natural stone industry
Q: We're having trouble interpreting the tolerances for stone panels. In the thickness tolerance, it says “± 1/8” – is this both directions so that the total tolerance is actually ¼”? And then in the face tolerance, it says “non-cumulative” – what exactly does that mean?

A: Dimensional tolerance is indeed one of the most common areas of questions that we field. Interpretation of them is far from uniform, and trying to reconcile them between different associations and standards writing bodies makes it even more complicated. Then add the conversion factor required because the United States rarely uses SI (International System of Units) units of measure, and we’ve got the perfect recipe for confusion.

Your first question is simple – the thickness tolerance is “bilateral”. Tolerances can be either “unilateral”, in which case the variation can be only one direction from the specified, or “bilateral”, in which case the tolerance can be either direction from the specified. Bilateral tolerances can be symmetrical, in which case the variation from the specified is the same value in both directions, or asymmetrical, in which case the allowable variation in one direction is different than that allowed in the other direction. There are examples of all three types in the Dimension Stone Design Manual. Take for example the panel thickness tolerance of stones from ¾” to 15/8". This is a bilateral tolerance, which is indicated by the “±” symbol. Sometimes you will see it as “+/-”, or sometimes you will see it written out as “plus or minus”. The tolerance is listed at ±1/8”, which means that it can vary from 1/8” below the specified to 1/8” above the specified and still be compliant. So yes, the total window from minimum to maximum is ¼”. Now if you look at the tolerance for Depth of Continuous Kerfs, it reads -1/16", +1/16”. This is an example of an asymmetrical bilateral tolerance. This means it can vary in both directions, but it is allowed more variation in one direction than the other.

Face size tolerances get a bit more complicated. There is a tolerance for dimensional precision, which is simply cutting the stone larger or smaller than the specified dimension, and that is a bilateral tolerance of ±1/16”. There is also a tolerance for the piece being out-of-square, which is also ±1/16”. The clarification of “noncumulative” simply means that the stone cannot be both maximum over/under sized and maximum out-of-square at the same time. The simplest way to think about this is to imagine a “perfect” piece that is perfectly square at exactly the specified dimensions, then draw rectangles both inside of it and outside of it with 1/32” offset (Ref: Figure A). The rectangles that you’ve drawn will represent stones that are oversized by 1/16” and undersized by 1/16”, as depicted in Figure B. It’s quite easy to interpret that perfectly square stones at 1/16” over or 1/16” under would be compliant, as depicted in Figures C and D. It’s equally easy to interpret that a stone of exact length and width dimensions, but 1/16” out-of-square is also compliant, as depicted in Figure E. The complicated part is when we start mixing both dimensional and squareness tolerances on the same piece, which in the real world is going to happen to some degree on every fabricated piece of stone. The interpretation is that if I can lay the stone over the...
HOUSING MARKET SHOULD CONTINUE TO IMPROVE IN 2013 WITH A BIG “IF”

The housing market’s fragile recovery should continue into 2013 and beyond if the economy doesn’t fall off the fiscal cliff and there are not further limitations on the availability of mortgage credit.

That was the consensus of economists attending a major conference of realtors. One especially positive outlook was presented by Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the National Association of Realtors, who said that the market really turned around in 2012.

“Existing home sales, new home sales and housing starts are all recording notable gains this year in contrast with suppressed activity in the previous four years. All major home price measures are showing sustained increases,” Yun said. The economist said he saw no threatening signs for inflation in the coming year, but projects it to be in the range of four to six percent by 2015.

“The huge federal budget deficit is likely to push up borrowing costs and raise inflation by well above two percent,” he said. Of particular interest to the stone industry, Yun said new home sales in 2012 are expected to increase to 368,000 this year from a record low of 301,000 in 2011, and grow strongly to 575,000 in 2013. He predicted that housing starts are forecast to grow to 776,000 in 2012, up from 612,000 in 2011, and reach 1.13 million next year. Yun also said existing home sales will climb 8.7 percent in 2013 to 5.05 million units.

As an indicator of the improving market home prices rose in 120 out of 149 markets surveyed by the National Association of Realtors, compared to just 39 rising metro areas a year ago. The median home price is up 7.6 percent from a year ago, the strongest year-over-year increase since the first quarter of 2006. Much of that is due to the shift in sales away from distressed properties, as lenders modify more loans and in some cases write down mortgage principal.

Experts said that the one thing standing in the way of a more robust market recovery is tight credit. The fact is that mortgage rates are at near historic lows, but many home buyers still are unable to get credit due to low credit ratings.

Diana Olick, CNBC real estate writer, asked Jaret Seiberg, senior policy adviser analyst for Guggenheim Partners, how President Obama’s second term will affect the housing market and got this reply:

“The President’s victory is broadly positive for mortgage insurers and broadly negative for banks and home builders.”

Olick noted that household formation is coming back, which is good news for the country’s builders, if they can get the financing they need to build and if their customers can get financing as well. (The U.S. Census Bureau reported that 1.12 million new households were formed over the past year, a turnaround from the post recession years, though not enough to make up for the households lost during the downturn. Household formations fell during the recession as many adults moved back in with their parents, a trend that has begun to turn.)

“That’s where the fiscal cliff comes in and the fear of another recession,” Olick said.

In the meantime, the National Association of Home Builders weighed in by urging the President to work together with Congress to resolve issues in the “fiscal cliff” by extending the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts.

Liz Ann Sonders, chief investment strategist for Charles Schwab, says that just as it helped trigger the Great Recession, housing could also serve as the lynchpin to growth ahead, if the economy doesn’t fall off the cliff.

“It’s vital to avoid the cliff, particularly at a time when housing is improving and as the U.S. can’t depend on developing economies for its growth,” she said.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join Us for the Premier Networking Event of the Year!

Stop by the annual MIA Happy Hour and Silent Auction benefitting the MIA Natural Stone Scholarship Award.

MIA Natural Stone Scholarship

Be sure to thank retiring MIA Executive Vice President, Gary Distelhorst, for his 11 years of service to the stone industry.

Tuesday, January 29
5:00-6:30pm
Mandalay Bay Ballroom D

If you are unable to attend StonExpo 2013, please drop Gary an email: gdistlehorst@marble-institute.com.
Now that the election is over, and President Obama has secured another 4-year term in the White House, private businesses can focus on the very real possibility that the Affordable Care Act (in some form) will be implemented in 2014. Of utmost importance to most businesses are the “shared responsibility” portions of the Act otherwise known as the penalty provisions. All businesses should analyze the Act and the penalty provisions and determine how it could impact them in 2014.

Q: DO THE PENALTY PROVISIONS OF THE ACT APPLY TO ALL BUSINESSES?

A: No – the penalty provisions of the Act only apply to those businesses which have (on average) at least 50 full-time equivalent employees on business days during the prior calendar year. In other words, to determine whether your business will have to worry about the penalty provisions of the Act in 2014, you will look at the average full-time equivalents which you have during 2013.

Q: WHEN DO THE PENALTIES APPLY?

A: The penalties will apply to the business when both the following occur: (i) the business fails to provide employees health insurance coverage (at certain mandated levels); and, (ii) when a full-time equivalent employee of the business applies for medical coverage under the state exchange and qualifies for a premium tax credit or reduced cost savings. The business will obviously be targeted and put on the radar screen of the federal government when the employee applies for coverage under the governmental plan.

Q: IT IS RELATIVELY EASIER TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE

FIRST FACTOR ABOVE IS TRIGGERED, HOWEVER, HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEE QUALIFIES FOR THE PREMIUM TAX CREDIT OR REDUCED COST SAVINGS?

A: It will be income-based. Generally, an employee will qualify if their income does not exceed 400% of the federal poverty level. At 2012 poverty rates, this means $44,680 for a single person and $92,200 for a family of four. Accordingly, most individuals will trigger the second factor which will impose penalties upon the business.

Q: WHAT PENALTIES WILL BE IMPOSED?

A: The business will have to pay up to $2,000 per year for each full-time equivalent employee for failing to provide the mandated minimal essential health care coverage. This is sometimes commonly referred to as the “play or pay penalty.” An alternative penalty which may be imposed is sometimes called the “play and pay penalty.” This penalty is imposed for providing less than adequate health care coverage or coverage that is either: (i) unaffordable; or (ii) provides minimal value to the employee. The penalty for this violation is the lesser of $3,000 for each employee receiving the premium tax credit or cost-sharing reduction or $2,000 per full-time employee (disregarding the first 30 employees).

Attorney’s note: As laws vary substantially from state to state and are constantly changing, only a lawyer can provide you with specific advice to rely upon. This article is being provided to the members of the MIA and readers of the Cutting Edge for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The information provided within this article is not a substitute for an attorney’s advice. If a member or reader has a specific issue dealing with the subject matter of this article it is highly recommended that he/she consult with a licensed attorney in their jurisdiction.

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Q: IT IS RELATIVELY EASIER TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE
ATTENDEE REGISTRATION OPENS FOR
SURFACES | STONEXPO/MARMOMACC AMERICAS

SURFACES | StonExpo/Marmomacc Americas 2013 attendee registration is officially open for the event being held January 29-31 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, NV. Attendees are encouraged to register early as both shows are offering complimentary education registration if they register by the early deadline date of November 29, 2012.

Online registration is available at www.Surfaces.com and www.Stonexpo.com, where information is accessible 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Registering in advance will save attendees not only money, but also time by not having to wait in long on-site registration lines.

“By registering early for the show, attendees have the opportunity to save on Exhibits Only registration plus they’ll receive full access to our unparalleled education program at no additional cost,” said Amie Gilmore, Associate Show Director, SURFACES | StonExpo/Marmomacc Americas. “The registration process is simple and will ensure that attendees receive the most up-to-date show information and a place in the education session of their choice.”

Registration Packages

Exhibits Only Package includes Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday access to both exhibit halls, all on-floor education/demonstrations, and some select classroom sessions. Early pricing is $5 for WFCA and MIA members and $15 for non-members.

Exhibits with Education Package includes the same benefits as the Exhibits Only package and full education program admission Monday, January 28 through Thursday, January 31. Early pricing for this package is $5 for WFCA and MIA members and $15 for non-members.

Pricing for each package will increase after November 29 through January 27, 2013 and again for on-site registration, January 28 through January 31. There are also various other educational opportunities available as an add-on to either package for additional fees.

SURFACES | StonExpo/Marmomacc Americas 2013 will be held January 28-31 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. Exhibits will be open Tuesday – Thursday and the Education Program opens Monday, January 28 and goes through Thursday. For more information on SURFACES | StonExpo/Marmomacc Americas 2013, visit www.Surfaces.com and www.Stonexpo.com.

3D Showroom for iPad

Custom iPad application of your company
3DShowroom is the easiest way to have your own custom iPad application that you can distribute for free to your customers! It will be your own 3D kitchen design app that showcases your stone products for countertops, backsplash and floor. Also 3DShowroom saves customers’ contact data and list of their favorite products to your clients’ database.
Don’t waste your time!

Find out more at www.applet3d.com/mia
STONE PANEL TOLERANCES
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

two rectangles that represent maximum and minimum sizing, and if all edges of the stone can be contained in the region between those two boxes, it is compliant with the standard. A stone such as shown in Figure F is compliant, even though it is at maximum dimensional tolerance along two edges and maximum out of square along the other two, because all edges fall within the two boundary rectangles. Stones shown in figures G and H are not compliant, because there is no way to position them that their entire perimeters fall between the boundary rectangles.

Conversion between systems of measurement further confuses the issue due to rounding error. If a United States based customer has a project with a nominal 24" grid and 1/8" joints, a net piece size of 1'-117/8" is required. And if the stone is purchased from an international vendor, that vendor will instruct the factory to cut it based on SI units of measure. Unfortunately, 1'-117/8" converts to 606.425 mm, and since no sane person is going to measure to 1/1000 of a millimeter, this shop will be directed to cut the stones at 606 mm. That means that roughly one third of their allowable undersized tolerance has been consumed by rounding error.

We must also be mindful that these are merely industry standard tolerances. There are situations where this level of precision is either not achievable or simply not necessary, and conversely there are situations where even greater precision is required. These tolerances can be modified to be more or less stringent for any project provided both parties agree to the modified tolerances.

A FOND FAREWELL
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and dedicated to helping MIA members succeed. We’ve also had a lot of fun together planning parties, hosting events, staffing the MIA booth, etc. It is a well known cliché that “people make it possible,” but in the MIA staff’s case, it is very accurate. MIA has a great staff, and they mean a lot to me, to the association, and to the industry.

As I prepare to depart, I look back with pride at what the MIA has grown to be over the last 11 years. When I joined the association I was the only employee and all that I physically moved to Cleveland was a computer, historical files, some office supplies and a small inventory of books—that was it. More importantly, of course, was that MIA had members and MIA had potential, and that is what we started with.

Over the years, we’ve added a lot of member firms, added staff, added services, programs and products, and we’ve added to and improved our image. We’ve valiantly and successfully fought off challenges to the safety of granite. We’ve helped turn StonExpo into a key industry event and meeting point. We’ve helped educate thousands of industry employees and thousands of architects and designers. We’ve promoted the use of stone to a variety of end users. And, the MIA has done, and is doing, a whole lot more.

The table is set, and the opportunities are still out there to continue MIA’s growth and success in service to the natural stone industry. I thank you for your support, your guidance, and your friendship. I wish you all the very best.

Gary Distelhorst
MIA CEU PROGRAM ADDS NEW COURSE FOR ARCHITECTS

“NATURAL STONE TILE: AN OVERVIEW” IS 12TH MIA COURSE APPROVED BY AIA

The Marble Institute of America is proud to announce that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has approved “Natural Stone Tile: An Overview” as a CEU course available to MIA members who are part of the MIA’s CEU Program. The MIA CEU Program helps participating MIA members connect with architects and design professionals by certifying them as approved providers of CEU courses. The MIA works to register these courses with the AIA and ID-CEC (a consortium of interior design associations). “Natural Stone Tile: An Overview” is the 12th such course to be recognized.

“Natural Stone Tile: An Overview” is a one hour course that familiarizes design professionals with the resources available for installation methods and specifying standards for natural stone tile. The course reviews the characteristics of natural stone in order to explain how it may affect your project. The learning objectives are as follows:

- Understand the basic stone types and methods of formation.
- Understand how the intricacies of Stone Tile Installation can impact your project.
- Learn key differences between the installation of Stone Tile and Ceramic/Porcelain Tile.

Six months in development, the new course was developed by the MIA’s Stone Tile Presentation Committee. The committee utilized feedback from a Coverings presentation on this topic conducted by Josh Levinson, Artistic Tile, and expanded the scope of the presentation to fit a CEU format. Several industry leaders were involved on the project which included collaboration with TCNA (Tile Council of North America) to acquire images of methods discussed in the presentation. The new PowerPoint presentation also includes a hand-out specific to the presentation content.

Committee member Vincent Moiso had this to say about the program, “For me this presentation is an essential addition to the Marble-Institute’s CEU program. It takes the Stone Design I and II presentations to the next level. It provides insight to proper stone tile installation methods and really promotes setting the proper customer expectations. I’ve already used it internally as a training tool and I’m excited to add it to the many options I now have as a speaker!”

Committee Chair Josh Levinson added, “Natural stone is prized for its aesthetic beauty, timeless appeal and sense of permanence. In order to meet the expectations of the end user, this new CEU strives to educate the market on the nuances of installing natural stone tiles, and differentiate it’s application from man made products, at a time when these differences have been brought to the forefront by the inclusion of stone tile installation methods in the TCNA Handbook for Ceramic, Glass, and Stone Tile Installation.”

For more information on this particular course, or the MIA CEU program in general, please visit www.marble-institute.com/ceu or email ceuadministrator@marble-institute.com.

ACCOMPLISH MORE BY DOING LESS

BY: JOHN BRADBERRY

It’s a common work experience. You’re great at your job, and you are rewarded with more duties. As your responsibilities grow, so does your list of to-dos and concerns. You work furiously to keep up, but there’s not enough of you to go around. Like the person who hogs the TV remote but won’t settle on one channel, you touch too many things, none of them very deeply. Rather than lifting your team’s productivity, you are actually standing in the way.

You’ve become the Bottleneck-in-Chief.

If you want to accelerate the growth of your business and your progress as a leader, you’ll need to spend less time “doing” and a lot more time managing. Simply defined, managing is the art of getting things done through others. Whether you’re a corporate manager, director of a non-profit or a budding entrepreneur, here are a few management principles to help you greatly expand your impact.

1. Appreciate the Challenge
3. Avoid “Monkeys”
   Learning to delegate is only half the battle. Most of us fall prey to the phenomenon of reverse delegation when we accept responsibility for burdens that rightly belong to someone else.
4. Look Further into the Future
5. Surround Yourself With Great People
6. Let Others Shine
   Great managers multiply their power by taking this principle even further. They do care who gets the credit—they insist that their team, their partners and their bosses stand squarely in the spotlight.
Each month, the MIA profiles an employee from one of our member companies. This month, we welcome Kostas Kioleidis from K & K Marble Importers in Bethpage, NY, to the Cutting Edge profile page.

Q: Kostas, could you tell us a little bit about your company?

A: Michelangelo was born from an idea and a belief: "There must be a better way to run our business." Michelangelo is the creation of Nicola Maganuco, former CEO of Stone Capital, a stone yard in Long Island NY, and I. Michelangelo was developed to simplify and expedite our work-flow; to boost our productivity; to help our clients more effectively, engage them in the design process; to close more deals faster; to improve communication channels within our teams and to track every aspect of our business from anywhere, anytime.

Q: What is Michelangelo?

A: Michelangelo Lite is the first super realistic, virtual, 3D showroom for iPad that helps you visualize your dreams and bring them to life. Michelangelo Lite takes the guessing out of the equation by bringing innovation where there once was none. Being able to visualize your dream kitchen or bathroom, with this tile or that countertop, will not only save you money, but also a lot of time and aggravation. With just a few flicks of your finger you can browse thousands of products from renowned, international brands, from anywhere, anytime. For the first time ever you will be able to receive quotes based on the products you have selected and on your project dimensions, without ever having to leave your home.

Q: How long have you been involved in the stone industry?

A: Ever since I can remember my family has been involved in the marble industry. I practically grew up with it. We were one of the first, if not the first company to introduce Greek marble to the United States.

Q: Has your business been affected by the economic downturn?

A: Yes, banks are not lending money and consumers are always looking for the best bargain out there. Inevitably this has forced us to look deeper into consumer’s behavior and led us to take a significant departure in the way we run our business.

Q: How have you reacted to the downturn?

A: As business owners in the granite and marble industry, we have helped thousands of clients over the years. We have also struggled in helping them choose the right product for their remodeling project; and we wished there was a better way. We looked for solutions, and having not found one, we decided to take matters into our own hands.

Q: What is the next big thing in technology that will affect stone industry advertising and promotion?

A: It won't happen overnight, but it will be fast. First, iPad will succeed in replacing our desktops. These devices are tremendous assets, capable of saving you time and increase productivity. They can serve as indispensable selling tools, and they are capable of dramatically improving communication channels within your company. It's a revolution, it will change everything and already has. We are counting and investing on this computer evolution process, by developing apps, such as Michelangelo to redefine the way companies run and operate their business.

Q: Can you describe your experiences with the MIA?

A: I've been a proud member since 1978 and its been an extremely gratifying experience to work with leading industry experts such as MIA.

Q: What is next for your businesses?

A: We believe Michelangelo Lite is the best representation of what's to come. It's inevitable. This is the information Age, consumers are going online to educate themselves and to look for the best possible deals. Michelangelo Lite is the only place where homeowners can compare quotes from multiple nearby professionals, visualize the finished project, and therefore, save time, and money. Best of all it's free.

Q: Any final thoughts on the state of the industry, your business, etc?

A: Michelangelo apps were designed and developed by industry experts for industry experts. These apps are unique and powerful tools, featuring patented pending technologies, that will prove to be indispensable for homeowners, business owners, interior designers, and general contractors. We encourage everyone to download a free copy of Michelangelo Lite from our site and to keep an eye open for Michelangelo PRO which is to be released sometime in December.
2013 Regional Education Series Announced
The Marble Institute of America (MIA) and Stone World magazine have announced the stone industry’s regional education schedule for 2013:

- February 21, 2013 - Orange, CA
- March 21, 2013 - Houston, TX
- April 18, 2013 - Columbus, OH
- May 16, 2013 - Boston, MA
- June 19, 2013 - Salt Lake City, UT
- July 18, 2013 - Seattle, WA
- September 19, 2013 - TBD
- October 17, 2013 - Atlanta, GA
- November 7, 2013 - Pompano Beach, FL

Look for more details about these events online at www.stoneindustryeducation.com.

StonExpo - How to Introduce CEU Classes to Connect with the Design Community
For several months you have been reading about how MIA members can gain access to architects and designers by providing CEU classes. In fact, on page 7 we highlighted the newest CEU class now available. If you are going to StonExpo and would like to know more about this program, we encourage two sessions:

Tuesday, January 29th | 10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.
How to Introduce CEU Classes to Connect with the Design Community - This session is on the StonExpo conference program and is a free session with an exhibits pass, but registration is required and space is limited. This CEU 101 session will showcase how the CEU program works and how to position your company as the leading expert on natural stone in your marketplace, how the various CEU programs work (AIA, ASID, IDC, IDEC, IIDA, NKBA and others) and how to get started giving presentations.

Wednesday, January 30th | 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
MIA CEU Workshop – This is where existing and new CEU speakers meet to network and share best practices. This session provides a great overview of the MIA’s turn-key CEU program, as well as provide speakers with an opportunity to collaborate about how to gain access to the design community. Please RSVP by email to ceuadministrator@marble-institute.com.

Networking with Architects – Use the MIA’s Illustrated Glossary of Stone Industry Terms
Architectural sales reps are always looking for a reason to call on an architect. It is even easier when you have a good reference guide to share with them. Consider picking up a couple dozen of the MIA’s new glossary to share when making a sales call. See the attached order form.

Seventy stone professionals gathered on November 8th for the Dallas Stone Summit. This event was hosted by M S International.
starting to come back to membership! The MIA is also now represented in 52 countries.

- 3 iPad Apps were introduced for both the design community and stone professionals. These applications keep the stone industry on pace with technology advances.
- 3334 inquiries were fielded by the MIA’s technical support team, but that number doesn’t include the hundreds of leads and questions we pass on to MIA members.
- 3 new CEU courses were developed (a total of 11 classes are now available) for members to provide stone classes to architects and designers. In fact, the number of classes presented this year is up 60% over last year.
- 18 safety training outlines are now available FREE to members online thanks to the efforts of the MIA safety committee. These are just a few of the many new resources available online (including the renown Dimension Stone Design Manual) when the MIA re-launched it’s website at the start of the year.
- Entries into the MIA’s coveted Pinnacle Awards program reached an all-time high and more awards will be presented in January than in previous years.
- 2 consumer brochures received major revisions to assure that we continue to keep our educational pieces both educational and contemporary.

Beyond the actual numbers is the commitment of the MIA to follow our strategic plan, to be the knowledge source for our industry. The bulk of our industry work is driven by specifications from Architects and interior designers. By making sure that they have the best information, assures that our products are continually used in a large array of applications. That is a tall order and is handled very well by the staff and volunteers of the MIA. Without the specification, technical support, literature and guidelines our industry would be left to flounder. In addition we supply our members with the information previously mentioned and a host of other products to assure our members and their clients are getting well educated contractors, stone fabricators distributors and equipment suppliers that understand their products.

Now that I have let you know what we were doing this year to make the MIA stronger, let me take a minute and thank the hundreds of member volunteers that have assisted in every area of the association to help the staff fulfill the needs of our members and the industry at large. These volunteers give thousands of hours of time and money to support what they love, the natural stone industry. My personal thanks to these volunteers cannot adequately reflect my appreciation for what they have done to advance the cause and stature of the stone business.

I would like to personally thank all the board of directors and past presidents who again give time and money to make sure our vision and mission are accomplished. These are some of the best and most dedicated individuals in our industry. It really wasn’t until I was elected to the board that I truly could see the commitment and energy provided by this group of people. I feel so grateful to be a part of such a fine and dedicated group. Remembering that all of these people have full time jobs and even under those stresses they find time to help our industry.

The next group I would like to thank is the MIA staff. This is a small group of extremely dedicated personnel. I have been an employer for over 25 years and believe me you can tell the difference between people that are doing a job and people who have a passion for what they do. Each and every staff person at the MIA has shown me that they have a passion for what they do. Each and every staff person at the MIA has shown me that they have a passion for what they do.

MIA IS HIRING

The MIA is recruiting a person to assume the role of Education Manager. This person will be responsible for implementing services and programs, providing skill development, industry content, educational programs, and professional standards addressing the information and educational needs of the natural stone industry. Responsibilities include directing the development of content for print and video publications, seminars, and eLearning initiatives.

These responsibilities are currently those of MIA’s Jim Hieb who will be transitioning to a new role for the association. Resumes/Inquiries should be directed to: recruitment@marble-institute.com.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

for making our industry association the best it can be. Thank you very much for what you do.

While speaking of the staff, I would be remiss if I did not say a personal thanks to Gary Distelhorst for his leadership and vision for the MIA. As all of you know now, Gary will be retiring at the end of the year, but will be in a CEO emeritus status for the StonExpo. I would like to personally invite everyone to be at StonExpo and help us give Gary a proper sendoff to retirement.

My last thank you would be to all current members. Without you we would not exist as an Association and that makes you the most important of all. When you pay your dues or support an MIA initiative you are helping yourself and our industry. We all can be proud of the MIA and its work to promote the use of Natural stone.

We have accomplished many things this past year, but the thing I am most proud of is that we stayed focused and supported our members. Again, thanks to all the members for being there to support me. I look forward to seeing many of you at StonExpo. Although I will be passing the torch to Jonathan Zanger, Walker Zanger, for 2013; I am committed to stay involved.

Michael A. Twiss
Columbia Stone
MIA Board of Directors President 2012

Stone Industry Calendar
*** Visit the MIA Booth

January 28 - 31, 2013 — StonExpo/Marmomacc Americas 2013***
Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV USA
P: 866.550.6808 or 972.536.6440
W: www.StonExpo.com

January 31 - February 3, 2013 — India Stonemart 2013
Jaipur (Rajasthan), India
Email: info@cdos-india.com
P: +91-141-5122610
F: +91-141-5122610
W: www.stonemart-india.com

February 26 - March 1, 2013 — Vitoria Stone Fair 2012
Brazial
E: info@vitoriastonefair.com.br
P: +55 27 3434 0600
W: www.vitoriastonefair.com.br

March 6 - 9, 2013 — 13th China Xiamen International Stone Fair
Xiamen International Conference & Exhibition Center, Xiamen, China
E: info@stonefair.org.cn
P: 86-592-5959616/5959618
F: 86-592-5959611
W: www.stonefair.org.cn

April 19 - 21, 2013 — KBIS (Kitchen & Bath Show)***
New Orleans Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA USA
P: 800.933.8735
F: 770.777.8700
W: www.kbis.com

April 29 - May 2, 2013 — Coverings 2013***
Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA USA
E: info@coverings.com
P: 866.285.3691
W: www.coverings.com

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We’ll see you
At StonExpo!
January 28-31, 2013, Mandalay Bay
Convention Center, Las Vegas NV

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December 2012

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