

ASC is helping members look and plan ahead and stay focused on delivering business value



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Sticking to core values

ASC is looking to the future and remains focused on delivering value and growth opportunities for members through its updated long-range plan for 2018-2020

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Sixty years since its inception and the Adhesive and Sealants Council (ASC) is certainly not resting on its laurels. It has a feature-packed programme planned for its annual Spring Convention and is now implementing its latest long-range plan.

The three-day meeting in Miami, Florida, promises speeches, seminars and networking opportunities, as well as valuable insight into the most pressing issues facing the industry.

“This year is a big milestone for us as it’s our 60th anniversary. We’ve come a very long way and the future’s very bright for ASC,” says president Bill Allmond.

Registrations are up and the response to ASC’s decision last year to combine its two conventions has been extremely positive, he notes. “Our members are now getting everything they need in one large annual meeting – all the value is there in one packed programme,” says Allmond. “We had a record

number attend last year with more than 700 people but we’re confident we’ll have even more in Miami.”

The move has been welcomed by vendors too, with all exhibition spaces at this year’s EXPO now allocated. Over 110 companies are due to showcase their products and services during the event, he adds.

“The industry is in a really good place right now and we’re making avenues in all the growth industries like automotive, aerospace and electronics,” says Chuck Williams, association chairman and technical director of Avery Dennison’s Adhesive Center of Excellence.

“But technologies are changing at the speed of light – and we need to be ready. Our recent industry surveys have identified the critical issues that ASC needs to be addressing and we’re looking at what we can do to help our members be proactive and stay ahead of these challenges.”

ASC’s priorities remain the same, he says – to support and promote the adhesive and sealants

market and its member businesses by concentrating on six key areas: education, community knowledge, innovation, industry voice, growth, and organisational effectiveness.

These strategic objectives form the foundation of the association’s latest long-range plan – a three-year programme that launched in January and runs through 2020.

REFRESHED STRATEGY

“Our areas of focus haven’t changed but we refresh our strategic plan every few years to ensure we provide the latest updates and address the new challenges facing our industry, whatever they may be,” notes Williams.

“In the past we’ve focused on marketing and the technical side but we recognise that the operations aspect also plays a huge role in what we do. We have some world-leading companies in our industry and we’re looking to share their best practices. We want to build that network within the operations community so we’re seen as an industry that goes above and beyond in what we do, that we work safely,

and are committed to the environment.

“We’re trying to take a holistic approach and look at our member companies’ needs. This all comes from member feedback – these are the issues that they’ve raised, so we’ve worked them into our long-range plan.”

Opening the event, head basketball coach at the University of Miami, Jim Larranaga, will turn his attention away from the court and lay up his views on the importance of developing and retaining talent in his keynote speech. Larranaga, who has earned a reputation for nurturing skills, improving performance and creating a better working environment, will share the secrets of his success on how to build a winning team.

TALKING TACTICS ON EDUCATION

“The education theme is very important to us,” says Williams. “We’re aware that as the baby boomers start to retire there will be a knowledge drain in our industry. As an association, we’re interested in attracting and retaining young talent.

“We’re looking at the challenges facing the future workforce and making sure they have the tools they need to be effective and have a successful career in adhesives and sealants. It’s important for our growth as an industry that we focus on recruitment and education.”

Williams is particularly proud of ASC’s Training Academy, which continues to go from strength to strength. The response to its certificate programme has far exceeded expectations since its launch in 2017, he says.

“Our webinars are great value and very highly thought of. Anybody can sign up to them and they’re free for the members of the Academy. They’ve been created by ASC to make it as easy as possible to go online and get training that would otherwise take years to do. We have 12 really good courses – covering

BILL ALLMOND
President, ASC

“We’re very happy to be able to support students who will someday become the future”



everything from market information to very high level technical information.”

The feedback has been fantastic, says Williams, and the numbers attending the sessions continue to grow. “We’ve built this platform as a key member benefit – we want to give back to the industry. We’re getting a lot more involvement now than in the past and now get about 50-80 people at every webinar. These are not only people from our industry but customers and vendors are attending

them now too.”

ASC is currently working on training for marketeers and sales people, he adds, which provides guidance and best practice about how to negotiate, publicise and develop new business. “Our vision is to create more of these for the various disciplines within our member companies,” notes Allmond.

“We started with the fundamentals and the technical side, and we’re now moving towards marketing and business development. Perhaps in the future, we’ll focus more on processing and operations. We’re really trying to diversify and offer opportunities into education and career development through ASC’s certificate programme.”

In little over a year, there have been more than 170 graduates from its Training Academy Certificate programme, the latest of whom will be recognised for their efforts during the convention.

During the event, delegates will also be able to choose from two popular training seminars. The first of the two-day courses focuses on the hot melt adhesive market and includes formulation strategies based on application and performance requirements for this burgeoning sector.

Alternatively, seminars on polyurethanes provide insight into the chemistry and technology behind the hugely versatile polymer. Topics covered include markets, raw materials, reactions, formulating, manufacturing and commercial scale up.

“These are two of the most sought-after courses we offer,” says Williams, “and they’ve been updated with new instructors and new information.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As part of ASC’s continued commitment to keeping its members informed about important changes facing the industry, pricing information and growth opportunities, the association continues to develop its in-depth market reports. The top-selling North America report is being relaunched at the convention (see page 16).

“Following member feedback, we’ve updated the report and are adding even more data,” says Allmond. “Historically our report has focused on quantitative data but we’ve extended it to include qualitative as well. We’re now looking at trend analysis, what’s happening in the market and what’s driving it. Rather than just including the numbers, there will now be even more information and more understanding.”

Adhesives and sealants play an intrinsically important role in countless applications across many different end-use markets, and food packaging has been selected as one of the key themes for this year’s meeting.

Food is particularly pertinent given the increasing emphasis on sustainability, the cir-

cular economy and new regulations that are being introduced, adds Allmond.

ASC has invited Michael Okoroafor, vice president of global sustainability and packaging innovation at McCormick & Company to present the keynote speech on the second day of the meeting. He will provide an overview of the industry and market, as well as insight into the future of food packaging and the opportunities for adhesive and sealants producers.

Other presentations will not only look at market trends and supply/demand but the performance of key feedstocks ethylene, propylene and butadiene. There will also be sessions looking at new applications, technologies and regulatory changes.

A unified voice is vital for the industry moving forward, says Allmond, and advocacy

CHUCK WILLIAMS
Chairman, ASC

“The industry is in a really good place right now and we’re making avenues in growth industries”



continues to play a major part in ASC’s plans. As such, overseeing the implementation of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) remains at the top the agenda.

“Clearly one of our big regulatory topics is the Environmental Protection Agency’s TSCA. We’re continuing to monitor it, the impact on our members’ ability to get new chemistries approved, what that process looks like, and how efficient it is.

“We remain continually engaged with our members and the EPA to make sure our members’ perspective is ensured when decisions are made on regulating their businesses.”

Another key element of the long-range plan is continuing a dialogue about chemical management with big box retailers like Walmart, Lowe’s or Home Depot that carry members’ products, he adds.

“We want to ensure that these companies don’t make decisions that would have unexpected consequences and negatively impact our members,” he says.

Also, on the regulatory side, ASC has introduced a members-only work group, offering the chance to meet with colleagues and peers – the perfect forum to discuss new developments and share views about what is happening both in the US and in other regions.

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

Innovation remains a key driver for future growth, and ASC is committed to encouraging the development of new technologies. Among the highlights on the second day of

» the event will be the announcement of the recipients of the 2018 Innovation Awards, recognising the achievements of two companies that have had a significant impact on the marketplace.

“ASC has a role in encouraging innovation within our industry. We’ve decided this year to allow companies who have competed in our annual awards to present their submissions and share them with their peers.”

Another highlight will see the recipients of ASC’s new Scholarship Program announced. Scholarships are awarded based on the field of study, future career aspirations, as well as the candidates’ academic or leadership achievements.

“We launched the scholarship programme last year in memory of one of the best-known technologists in our industry Gene Simmons, and now we’re announcing the first four recipients.”

Simmons passed away in March 2017, having worked in the industry for over 40 years – initially with H.B. Fuller and then Evans Adhesive Corp. The programme has been funded by donations from ASC members and staff and is another example of how the association works with the community, says Allmond.

“We’ve created the scholarship fund for juniors and seniors who are majoring in science and business and had more than a dozen applications. We’ll be announcing those we’ve selected at the event. We’re very happy to be able to support students who will someday become the future of our industry.”

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community is very important to ASC, and the association is proud to again be working on a local project during the convention. This year, volunteers are being invited to help restore the beaches of Crandon Park ravaged by recent storms.

The “ASC Gives Back” initiative selects a worthwhile local project and always proves popular with members, insists Williams.

“In the past we’ve helped clear parks, paint schools, build community gardens in a low-income neighbourhood – and this year, as we’re in Miami, we’re hoping to get some of our members out on the beaches to help with the erosion caused by Hurricane Irma. It’s a great way to build camaraderie, interact and meet people from all the different companies, suppliers and vendors.

“It’s important to ASC that we give back to the community at these events so we’ll be starting the week on a very positive note with a team building exercise,” he says. “We’re all active in our own communities as companies but this is the one time of the year that we can all get together and help.” ■