

International Association of Geosynthetic Installers

IAGI Newsletter

A Note from IAGI's President - Dennis W. O'Brien

As the industry's "busy season" is winding down (well, somewhat), it is paving the way for another sort of business—the months of trade shows, conferences, meetings, and planning sessions. Calendars that were nearly empty a few short months ago are filling up again, white space is becoming scarce in my desk calendar.

Of course, we'd all like to be able to duplicate ourselves at times—just so we wouldn't have to miss that important meeting or to be able to go on that business trip and manage that across-the-country project at the same time.

It's time to stop, take a breath and prioritize.

One conference coming up quickly is Geosynthetics 2007, Jan. 16-19. IAGI will be presenting on one of its most popular new programs, the Approved Installation Contractor (AIC). "What the IAGI Approved Installation Contractor Program can do for you," will be presented on Wednesday, Jan. 17. If you've been curious about participating in this program, this should be a high priority session in your calendar.

IAGI also will hold its General Assembly on Wednesday, Jan 17 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. During the General Assembly, both members and non-members will come together to exchange updates on the current projects of our association, to discuss ideas for the future advancement of IAGI, and to share in industry fellowship that often isn't possible during the year because of our full schedules. I encourage you to stop by the General Assembly and to get in touch with what is happening in our great association.

As 2006 comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank each of our members for making your IAGI membership a priority. Because of you, we have made great strides over this past year, and I am confident



Dennis W. O'Brien, IAGI President

2007 will be filled with just as much opportunity and enthusiasm.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

Dennis W. O'Brien



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Surety Market Shows Positive Signs for Qualified Subcontractors

Used with permission, this article by Marla McIntyre is a reprint from The Contractor's Compass, Fourth Quarter 2006. For more information, visit www.asaonline.com.

The surety industry has rebounded from record losses in recent years, indicating that surety bonding is more readily available to *qualified* subcontractors.

Subcontractors that qualify for performance and payment bonds are more attractive to prime contractors and their sureties, giving them an advantage over lesser quality or unqualified subcontractors.

Availability

Underwriting discipline, portfolio management, adequate pricing, and expense control have contributed to the stabilization of the surety industry and a climate of optimism unseen for several years. Surety industry executives are hopeful that sustained stabilization, along with potential new capital entering the market, will lead to more surety capacity. They say that there is no lack of capacity for small- and middle-market subcontractors and that capacity should be sufficient to meet the demands in the "jumbo" market. Underwriting is expected to remain disciplined, however, as the industry looks to keep this momentum.

Subcontractors seeking the competitive edge of surety capacity should position themselves positively in the eyes of sureties. Sureties look at a number of factors to determine whether a subcontractor is qualified for surety bonding. Sureties evaluate the subcontractor's financial strength, experience and character. They also analyze the subcontract to be bid on, the subcontractor's exposure and progress on other contracts, and the size and location of the work and the subcontractor's ability to perform that work.

This rigorous prequalification process elevates the level of quality of the bonded subcontractors, eliminates problems that may occur with lesser quality or unqualified subcontractors, and protects the prime contractor in the event of subcontractor default.

Claims

Another sign that the surety industry climate has improved is that claims appear to be less frequent and severe. Surety executives attribute this improvement to a strong construction economy, credit scoring in the underwriting process, and the improved selection process. A minimal number of defaults signifies that surety companies have been successful in screening out unqualified contractors. Even so, contractor default is sometimes unavoidable and claims can occur. To protect

itself in the event of contractor default, a subcontractor should obtain a copy of the payment bond form prior to beginning work on a project. A subcontractor also would be prudent to check with the state insurance department to be certain the surety is licensed to do business. Additional qualification of a contractor's surety can be made through a rating company such as A.M. Best, Standard and Poor's, or Moody's, as well as the U.S. Department of the Treasury's *Department Circular 570*, commonly referred to as the "T-List."

The circular, published by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Management Service, is posted online at www.fms.treas.gov/c570/index.html. Listed companies are considered capable of completing federal projects and/or paying subcontractors and suppliers should a bond be called.

Marla McIntyre is executive director of the Surety Information Office (SIO), the information source on contract surety bonds in public and private construction. SIO is supported by The Surety & Fidelity Association of America (SFAA) and the National Association of Surety Bond Producers (NASBP). For more information, visit www.sio.org.

Approved Installation Contractor Questions and Answers

Q. What is the purpose of the AIC program?

A. IAGI developed this program based upon dialogs with member installers, member suppliers, outside experts in the containment field, and government officials involved in the geomembrane business who wanted to establish a benchmark for installation contractors. It is believed that AIC status will become an engineer-specified designation over the next few years.

Q. I am interested in applying for my company to achieve AIC status. I'm not sure how to begin the process. Can you help?

A. Congratulations on recognizing the value this program can bring to your company. Approved Installation Contractors must meet requirements in the following areas: corporate history and business practices, insurance verification, safety training, and professional competence and experience. An application form and complete instructions on completing this form are available on IAGI's website, www.iagi.org.

Q. What exactly do I have to provide in the AIC application process?

A. The key elements that must be submitted include:

- Company history and information
- Minimum 500,000 square feet installed annually

- Ability to be bonded
- Proof of general liability insurance
- Proof of worker's compensation insurance
- Proof of automobile liability Insurance
- Safety training program
- Health and safety orientation program
- Drug free work program
- Resumes of key personnel – professional competence/experience
- Fifteen percent of crews must be Certified Welding Technicians
- Two letters of reference from engineers that are dated within the past year
- Two letters of reference from contractors/owners that are dated within the past year
- Two letters of reference from geosynthetic manufacturers that are dated within the past year

Q. That's a lot of private company information – we don't share that amount of detail with just anyone. How will the information be handled? Will it be confidential?

A. After a company officer and notary signs your company's application, all of your information is submitted directly to a third party accountant, Sims & Company CPAs. The third party accountant reviews and verifies the information you provide and keeps all details and documents confidential. The third party accountant determines whether your application is accepted or rejected. Your application information

is not shared with anyone in the industry and is handled with great care.

Q. What companies have achieved or applied for AIC status to date?

A. See Page 8 of this newsletter for a complete update on AIC applications by companies within the industry.

Q. All of this sounds great, but I still want to talk to a live person. Who can I contact?

A. Laurie Honnigford can help you with additional questions or concerns regarding IAGI's AIC program. Contact her at +1-651-554-1895 or e-mail iagi@iagi.org.



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Industry News

GSE Lining Technology receives award from IGS

The International Geosynthetic Society (IGS) at the 8th International Conference on Geosynthetics in Yokohama, Japan, on Sept. 22, 2006 during the IGS General Assembly, awarded GSE Lining Technology the IGS Award for "Comprehensive design guidance for geosynthetic materials."

The award citation is as follows: "The IGS Award is given to IGS corporate member GSE Lining Technology for compiling and publishing a series of manuals that provide design guidance, technical information and instal-



Herman Ng of GSE Thailand accepts the IGS award on GSE's behalf.

lation methodologies for a broad range of geosynthetics applications. This information was compiled in a set of four CDs that are freely available to the geosynthetics community. The technical sections of the manuals were authored by well-recognized geosynthetic experts: Dr. Dhani Narejo, Mr. Greg Corcoran, Dr. J.P. Giroud, Dr. Edward Kavazanjian, Dr. David E. Daniel, Mr. Richard Thiel, Mr. Richard B. Erickson, Dr. Robert C. Bacchus and Dr. Te-Yang Soong. Collectively, the manuals are a valuable resource that organizes a large body of theoretical and practical knowledge, and product information that advances the use of geosynthetics and is of great value to design engineers."

GSE would like to thank all of those who assisted in the development of these manuals and again invites you to access GSE's technical literature via its website at www.gseworld.com.

GSE Lining Technology has new business line manager

Dr. Mengjia Li was promoted to GSE's Business Line Manager for their Drainage and Geotextile product lines.

Dr. Li joined GSE in 2004 as a technical support specialist. He has previously been employed as a civil engineer for the Shanghai Foundation Engineering Company and Jincan Construction Engineering Management.

In his new position, Dr. Li is responsible for the promotion, specification and sales of GSE's specialty drainage products. He will also be instrumental in the release of new drainage materials which GSE plans to make available in 2007.

Dr. Li can be reached at GSE's Houston, TX headquarters. His direct phone line is +1-281-230-6726 and his e-mail address is mli@gseworld.com.

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IAGI General Assembly and presentation at Geosynthetics 2007

Geosynthetics 2007 will be held Jan. 16-19, 2007 at the Hilton Washington, Washington, D.C., preceding the Transportation Research Board's annual meeting, Jan. 21-25, 2007.

The conference will feature more than 100 technical papers and dozens of accredited short courses, workshops, demonstrations, panel discussions, and keynote presentations. The trade show will feature more than 100 companies exhibiting their latest solutions for engineers and the geosynthetics community.

IAGI will hold its General Assembly on Wednesday, Jan. 17 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. IAGI welcomes all members as well as the general public

to attend this meeting.

In order to promote its new installer program, IAGI also will present a paper titled "What the IAGI Approved Installation Contractor Can Do For You." This paper will be presented during the Containment/CQA/CQC session that takes place on Wednesday, Jan. 17 from 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Geosynthetics 2007 is organized by the Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI) and Geosynthetic Materials Association (GMA), held in cooperation with the North American Geosynthetics Society (NAGS) under the auspices of the International Geosynthetics Society (IGS), and the Geosynthetics Institute.

For more information about Geosynthetics 2007, visit www.geoshow.info or contact Jill M. Rutledge, Secretary-General, IFAI, at +1-651-225-6981, geoshow@ifai.com.

For additional information on IAGI's participation in Geosynthetics 2007, contact Laurie Honnigford at +1-651-554-1895 or e-mail iagi@iagi.org.

Yellow offers exhibit shipping tips



Perhaps the most important thing you can do to ensure your exhibit arrives at its destination damage-free is to package it appropriately:

- Pad your display within its container to keep it from shifting during travel.
- Take photographs of your display to help with reassembly.
- Include supplies to help you set up your display, such as markers, tape, cleansers and rags.
- Use a proper container.

Your display type will determine whether you pack it in a crate, a plastic container, on a skid, etc. To ensure your display arrives at the right exhibit hall on time:

- Remove all old shipping labels.
- Make sure shipping labels include full name, address and phone number on the outside and inside of the shipping container.
- Utilize online tracking capabilities to verify your shipment has reached its final destination.
- Consider your deadlines. If time is short, chose a



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provider that offers an expedited service.

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Welders obtain IAGI Certification



Congratulations to **Aquatan Lining Systems** and **Comanco Environmental** who sponsored Certified Welding Technician testing of their employed welding technicians.

IAGI developed a welder's certification program so installers could define stan-

dards of proficiency, recognize the knowledge, experience and skills of installers, and reward those who qualify with industry recognition.

For further information, contact Laurie Honnigford, Managing Director, IAGI at +1-651-554-1895 or e-mail iagi@iagi.org.

How do you prefer to receive your IAGI news?

The IAGI Newsletter is published four times annually and is an important IAGI member benefit. This publication contains the latest news on the work of our association as well as information about what's happening with our member companies and the industry as a whole.

IAGI allocates funds for printing this newsletter when an issue is complete. The printing process takes about a week and then our staff prints labels and mails each issue.

With increasing technology and the need for information to be available where you want it, when you want it, we decided it is time to ask you,

our members, how you prefer to receive your IAGI Newsletter.

If you'd like to continue receiving a hard copy edition of this newsletter as you have in the past, let us know.

If you prefer to receive an e-mail reminder to read your newsletter online, let us know that, too.

We also have capability of sending the newsletter via a pdf attachment in e-mail; however, attachments are less reliable in going through as many are filtered before the message can be delivered.

Please let us know your

thoughts. E-mail kelly@honnigford.com with your preferred IAGI Newsletter format/delivery by Jan. 15, 2007.

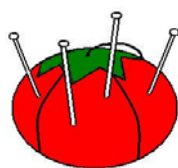
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- C. E-mailed pdf of newsletter.**
- D. Other (Tell us your ideas.)**

Responses will be noted in an upcoming issue. Whether or not that issue is snail mailed or electronic will be up to you. Thank you for taking the time to respond.

Geomembrane CQA—Let's poke some holes: Installment 3

by Glenn T. Darilek, P.E.

This series presents some hopefully thought-provoking



maxims related to geomembrane CQA with the invitation to poke holes in these "pincushions." In the last installment, Dr. Ian Peggs provided a new pincushion and another was presented by the author. Summaries of the responses are presented with two more pincushions for your response.

Pincushion 5

Peggs – CQA is intended to ensure that what was designed is built. It does not ensure that what is built will perform "perfectly". Thus, if the design is bad, CQA will ensure that a bad design is built. An experienced CQA firm will try to get improvements made, or should decline that project.

Darilek – Professional engineers have a duty to notify the affected parties of their concerns about bad designs, and the consequences of overruling or disregarding the concerns. Professional engineering ethics also prevent them from participating in projects with a design that would endanger health, safety, property, or welfare of the public. Merely trying to get improvements made still does not allow professional engineers to participate in the project if endangerment is likely. The difficulty is in

distinguishing between a bad design and a design that would result in endangerment.

Pincushion 6

The only function of a seam is to join the geomembrane so that it will not leak. A seam that has partial (but not total) separation is fully performing that function. So the peel separation pass criteria should be closer to 100 percent maximum incursion length than zero peel.

Peggs – A continuous bond of any width will provide the sealing function of a seam. However, to transfer a shear stress the bonded width of the seam does have to exceed about twice the thickness of the geomembrane, since shear strength is approximately half the tensile strength. But, the reason for requiring no peel separation, at least in HDPE seams, is that in some cases, when separation has occurred, as it could under some field situations, crazes that are precursors of stress cracks have been induced in the separated surfaces. However, if it can now be shown, when using any present resin used to make an HDPE geomembrane, that crazes are not induced in separated weld surfaces, I will feel comfortable in accepting a higher degree of peel separation. Any welder worth his salt can make a weld that does not peel. Allowing peel separation just makes life easier for those who cannot do such a good job.

So far, responses have been

provided by only two persons. Does this mean that readers totally agree with the "pincushions"? We need more viewpoints. As always, responses will remain anonymous if requested. Now here are two new pincushions on which you can comment:

Pincushion 7

For all practical purposes, if a sample passes the peel test, it will always pass the shear test. Eliminating the shear test would save time, allow a smaller sample size and less repair of the sample area, and provide lower cost to the facility owners and rate payers, with no decrease in geomembrane seam performance.

Pincushion 8

Common practice is to use an inferior extrusion weld to replace the intervening seam between the site of a failed destructive test and the locations on each side where the seam passed. This practice is likely to result in having a long extrusion weld with less strength than the dual-track fusion weld it replaced.

Please provide your brief responses to glenn@llsi.com.



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AIC applications—accepted and in the process



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The goal of the Approved Installation Contractor (AIC) program is to promote industry growth and provide better quality workmanship.

The AIC program recognizes geosynthetic installation companies that meet a minimum level of professionalism and business practices.

Below are companies that have *achieved AIC status*:

- ◆ Clean Air and Water Systems
- ◆ Taylor Geosynthetics

Below are companies that have *pending applications for AIC status* (all with expected approval in December 2006):

- ◆ MPC Containment
- ◆ Colorado Lining
- ◆ Hallaton
- ◆ American Environmental

Installation companies interested in applying for what will become an engineer-specified designation, AIC, can now find complete program details and submittal form online at www.iagi.org.

Applying companies submit the required program criteria, which is then reviewed and verified by a third party accounting firm, Sims & Company CPAs.



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