

August 22, 2025

Written by: **Brian Fraser, Todd Harman & Laurie Honnigford (IAGI)**

## ***Celebrating IAGI's 30-Year Legacy and History***

As the geosynthetics industry reflects back on five decades of remarkable innovation and growth, it is important to honor the individuals and organizations that have shaped our journey. Among these key contributors is the **International Association of Geosynthetics Installers (IAGI)**, which proudly celebrates its 30th anniversary milestone that highlights its pivotal role in advancing installation standards and supporting industry professionals worldwide.

### **The Birth of IAGI**

Founded in 1995, IAGI was established to represent geomembrane material installers and associated industry partners including material manufactures, equipment suppliers and consulting engineers. The idea for the association was first discussed at **Geosynthetics 1995**, held at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee in early 1995. Some of the founding members and early industry pioneers included:

- ◆ **Bob Denis** (Solmax)
- ◆ **Eric Snow** (Foster Wheeler / Tetra Tech)
- ◆ **Fred Rohe** (EPI)
- ◆ **Mark Cadwallader** (formerly of Gundler)
- ◆ **Frank Taylor** (Atlantic Lining)
- ◆ **Martha Barnes** (IFAI)



*Photo courtesy of SIGSA - Panama*

Their vision was to create a professional body that would support installers, promote best practices, and elevate the standards of the industry. As the association grew, other notable industry leaders stepped up and began building the foundation of IAGI.

- ◆ **“Demo” Dave McLaury** (Demtech)
- ◆ **John “Robbie” Robinson** (Engineered Textile Products)
- ◆ **Robert Haddox** (PLS Construction)
- ◆ **John Heap** (Colorado Lining International)
- ◆ **Laurie Honnigford** (IAGI)
- ◆ **Anne Steacy** (Poly-Flex Construction) / AGRU

## **Raising the Bar: The CWT Program**

One of IAGI's most significant contributions is the **Certified Welding Technician (CWT)** program. This initiative was designed to:

- Define standards of proficiency
- Recognize installer knowledge and experience
- Reward qualified professionals with industry certification

The program includes certifications for:

- HDPE & LLDPE
- PVC Unreinforced
- Reinforced geomembranes

The CWT program was sparked by **Frank Taylor (ALCO)** during a brainstorming session in 2002 aimed at improving upon the NICET certification, which was developed by **Dr. Robert Koerner**. While NICET, a highly regarded program focused more on theoretical knowledge and mathematical skills, it lacked practical firsthand welding and CQA assessment. **Frank Taylor, Laurie Honnigford, “Demo” Dave McLaury**, and others helped develop the hands-on approach that defines the CWT program today—now the industry standard.

## **Approved Installation Contractor Program (AIC)**

The mission of the AIC program is to establish criteria for recognizing the geosynthetic installation companies that meet a minimum level of professionalism, experience and business practices. The program's goal is to promote better quality workmanship in the geomembrane installation industry. This program recognizes those companies who have made a commitment to implement a business strategy that strives to get the job done right the first time.

## **Global Expansion and Industry Engagement**

IAGI's influence has grown well beyond North America, with successful expansion into many regions of the world. Key historical regions for IAGI include:

- **Australia** – Led by **Max Brady (DDT)**
- **South Africa** – Led by **Piet Meyer (Aquatant)**
- **Central America** – Led by **Nicky Araujo (SIGSA)**
- **Indonesia** – Led by **Hartanto Legowo**

## GeoGames: A Showcase of Skill

A unique and engaging initiative, GeoGames started in Houston in 2019 as an in-person technician challenge. Since then, it has been further enhanced by **Philip Denis and Vincent Mondoux**. Held biennially at geosynthetics conferences, the games highlight installer skills in a fun and competitive format.

## Looking Ahead

IAGI's continued success is built on the dedication of countless professionals who have generously contributed their time, expertise, and passion to the industry. Under the leadership of **President Todd Harman (Hallaton)**, today, IAGI remains committed to advancing the profession and supporting its members.

- **Enhancing member support**
- **Advancing welding techniques**
- **Improving quality control and safety standards**
- **Serving as a trusted resource for materials, equipment, and installation practices**

IAGI's commitment to excellence remains unwavering as it looks to the future.

## Honoring IAGI's Pioneers

We are proud to recognize the following individuals for their outstanding contributions to IAGI and the geosynthetics industry. While this list is not exhaustive, it reflects the spirit and leadership that have defined our journey. There have been so many strong contributors to IAGI since its inception. If someone was unintentionally left out, please let us know. Thank you on behalf of all the current and former members of IAGI.

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ◆ <b>Bob Denis – Solmax</b>        | ◆ <b>Demo Dave McLaury – DMS</b>               |
| ◆ <b>Robert Haddox – PLS</b>       | ◆ <b>Max Brady – DDT</b>                       |
| ◆ <b>Frank Taylor – ALCO</b>       | ◆ <b>John Heap – Colorado Lining</b>           |
| ◆ <b>Fred Rohe – EPI</b>           | ◆ <b>Brian McKewon – Clean Air &amp; Water</b> |
| ◆ <b>Eric Snow – Tetra Tech</b>    | ◆ <b>Lee Taylor – Taylor Lining</b>            |
| ◆ <b>Laurie Honnigford - IAGI</b>  | ◆ <b>Piet Meyer – Aquatan</b>                  |
| ◆ <b>Todd Harman – Hallaton</b>    | ◆ <b>Bill Shehane - Seaman</b>                 |
| ◆ <b>Chris Eichelberger (AGRU)</b> | ◆ <b>Nicky Araujo – S.I.G.S.A.</b>             |
| ◆ <b>Dennis O'Brien (MPC)</b>      | ◆ <b>Andrew Sanderson - WTL</b>                |



*Photo Courtesy of Comanco (IAGI Member) - USA*