NWIR: The Idea That Grew Into an Industry Movement

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Above: Women in the industry gathered for breakout sessions during the National Women in Roofing Day this past February. The first annual National Women in Roofing Day included a keynote speaker, education sessions, mentoring, and networking.

It is hard to believe that National Women in Roofing (NWIR), a volunteer-based organization that supports and advances the careers of female roofing professionals, just officially launched at the International Roofing Expo (IRE) as recently as 2016. The idea, whose genesis was a conversation on a break at an industry meeting in 2014, has fast become a major movement in roofing. Now with over 1000 members and more than three dozen sponsors, NWIR provides growth opportunities for all women in the industry—from the rooftop to the boardroom: from those just starting their careers to the seasoned manager in the executive suite. Everyone who joins has the shared goal of working together to raise the professionalism of the industry, bring more people into the field, and provide the education and training necessary to ensure its future success.

In 2014, Shari Carlozzi and Heidi Ellsworth, two seasoned veterans in roofing, were sharing experiences. "It literally started on the beach," explained Carlozzi. "Heidi and I were sitting on the beach while attending a Midwest Roofing Contractors Association (MRCA) Advisory Committee meeting, comparing notes on women in the industry. We decided we needed a platform, a place where women could go to talk to someone else without fear of reprisal or being labeled as a troublemaker." The two were brainstorming ideas and Heidi decided to ask Steve Little, then president of MRCA, if the organization would incubate the group, and Women in Roofing began.

After talking to others in the industry that year, it became clear the organization needed a national presence. "We decided to host a networking event at the 2015 International Roofing Expo in New Orleans. We built a leadership team out of that event and devised a plan of what we wanted to do: educate, mentor, network, and recruit. These became our four pillars. We are still focused on these four main areas today, which is a difficult thing for many

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organizations to do without modifying their approach or goals in order to grow and sustain members. Everything we were initially built on is part of our strong foundational base," stated Carlozzi.

The four pillars connect and empower women to use training and leadership skills to help drive the overall betterment and professionalism of the roofing industry.

Having opportunities to meet the right people is imperative to career advancement. NWIR focuses on networking at both the national and local levels. NWIR hosts education sessions and receptions at most of the major industry shows, and Councils are forming across the United States to foster local relationships and learning opportunities.

Finding mentors and creating mentoring opportunities is also crucial to career growth. NWIR is launching a mentoring guide later this year, under the leadership of Mallory Payne and Melissa Walker, who head up the mentoring committee. "Mentoring has always been a big part of what we do," Carlozzi says. "Men have more mentors than women do, and we want to change that."

Roofing can also be very technical, and providing ongoing learning opportunities in the industry is top priority for NWIR. The education committee, led by Shelly Duhaime and Jennifer Keegan, is working on a full slate of educational sessions at industry events, as well as a series of webinars on topics such as networking, safety, and business management.

The recruitment pillar is playing a huge role in helping solve one of the largest problems in the roofing industry: the labor shortage. Recruiting a new generation of workers into the roofing industry is crucial for the future. The recruitment committee, led by Michelle Boykin and Chelsea Welsh, is active at employment fairs and career days, and NWIR is reaching out to other trade groups across the country to increase the visibility of the industry. NWIR believes that women can play a key role in filling the vacant jobs available now and in the future.

NWIR provides a unique and exciting opportunity for women in the roofing industry, and membership is open to women (and the men who support them) in the building envelope consulting arena as well. With 29 Councils formed across the United States and more Councils forming each month, there are opportunities on both the local and national level to be involved as a member, volunteer, and sponsor. For more information on joining, education, events, and sponsorships with NWIR, visit www.nationalwomeninroofing.com.

Oregon Approves Tall Timber Buildings

Oregon has become the first U.S. state to provide code approval for construction of tall-timber buildings (over six stories) via a hybrid approach. Cross-laminated timber and other mass timber products are allowed if the vertical elements of the seismic force-resisting system are concrete, steel, or masonry. It provided new classifications of "Type IV" or "heavy timber" buildings.

The new classifications are:

- **Type IV A –** Buildings with automatic sprinkler systems that require three-hour fire-resistance-rated primary structural frame elements and bearing walls, with two-hour fire-resistance-rated floors. Exposed timber surfaces must be entirely encapsulated. Can achieve 18 stories and 270 ft. high for certain occupancies.
- **Type IV B –** Buildings with automatic sprinkler systems that require two-hour fire resistance-rated primary structural frame elements and bearing walls, with two-hour fire-resistance-rated floors. A calculated percentage of the exposed timber surfaces may remain exposed. May achieve 12 stories and 180 ft. high for certain occupancies.
- **Type IV C –** Buildings with automatic sprinkler systems that require two-hour fire-resistance-rated primary structural frame elements and bearing walls, with two-hour fire-resistance-rated floors. Exposed timber surfaces are permitted to remain entirely exposed. May achieve nine stories and 85 ft. high for certain occupancies.

The University of British Columbia's Brock Commons Tallwood House 18-story student residence under construction. Photo by K.K. Law for Naturallywood.com.

In June 2017, officials in Portland, OR, approved plans for a 90,000-sq.-ft., 12-story mixed-use project that would have been ranked as one of the tallest timber high-rises in North America. That project is currently on hold.