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## A Warm Welcome for Everyone

**T**his particular September will be special for me as I take some vacation around the Labor Day weekend to celebrate my daughter getting married. As I think about the family and close friends who are traveling long distances to Atlanta to join us for this event, I am filled with excitement and joy about this opportunity to spend time with so many loved ones, including some I have not seen in quite a while.

I'll admit to being a little nervous. In my family—and probably in your family, too—there have been moments of tension or misunderstanding. I am sure we can all recall difficulties we have had with various family members over the years. But at the end of the day, we are family. Instead of letting those past difficulties divide us, we are all better off when we come together, work through our challenges, and celebrate (or at least tolerate) our differences. For that reason, I intend to be as welcoming as possible to all the guests at this special event.

By the time you read this column, my term as president will be about halfway done. (Time flies!) As I noted in my first message, one of my goals for my term in office is to do everything I can to ensure that IIBEC expands, supports, and diversifies our membership. This is why I am excited that IIBEC has developed a Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. Its mission is to help IIBEC exemplify the values of inclusion and innovation as a leader in the building enclosure industry.

Diversity and inclusion can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. In workplaces, diversity is often defined in terms of demographic and social distinctions, such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, educational background, and national origin, whereas inclusion ensures that such distinctions do not act as barriers to employment opportunities (hiring, raises, promotions, mentoring, and so on). Although the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force is an invaluable resource, it can't on its own overcome diversity and inclusion challenges in our industry. Each of us has a personal responsibility to extend a hand and make everyone feel welcome in the IIBEC community and our workplaces.

Another aspect of diversity and inclusion for IIBEC concerns representation of all parts of the building enclosure industry. For the health and growth of our organization, it is important that we provide educational opportunities relevant to all types of building enclosure consultants, offer a comprehensive range of credentials, and encourage a diverse array of manufacturers to exhibit at our annual convention and other events. Whether you are a consultant focused on roofing, exterior walls, waterproofing, or another building enclosure specialization, IIBEC wants you to feel welcome and supported.

An important initiative in this regard is our new website ([iibec.org/consultant](http://iibec.org/consultant)), which is one of IIBEC's latest marketing efforts to help our clients, contractors, vendors, and other end users learn about the value of the services that IIBEC members provide. If you haven't visited the site yet, I encourage you to do so.

Although this Labor Day weekend will be mostly a family time for me, I won't lose sight of the holiday's broader meaning as a day to honor workers. I've been thinking a lot about our labor market and what the future holds. If our marketing efforts have the positive impact that we anticipate, we are going to need more labor to accommodate the increased demand for our services. Recruiting is going to be a challenge, and I am acutely aware that our workload has already been incredibly heavy over the past several years despite all the roadblocks the economy has thrown at us. This is yet another reason why diversity and inclusion are so important. By welcoming more people from diverse backgrounds into the building enclosure industry, we improve our odds of finding the qualified workers we need to further expand our businesses and thrive.

What I said at the beginning of this column with regard to our families applies equally to our professional community. I hope you'll join me in extending a warm welcome to everyone who wants to be a part of our IIBEC family.