News

CEO of Cemex Appointed President of GCCA

Gonzalez

Fernando Gonzalez, CEO of Cemex, was elected as President of the Global Cement and Concrete Association (GCCA). Member companies of GCCA account for 80% of the global cement industry volume outside of China. Through the launch of its Roadmap in 2021, cement and concrete became the first global essential industry to commit to delivering on net zero by 2050. Gonzalez is calling for the industry and governments around the world to establish a "robust regulatory framework" that can further accelerate the cement and concrete sector's decarbonization efforts.

Gonzalez has been GCCA Vice President since 2018 and succeeds the outgoing President, **Jan Jenisch**, whose term concluded after 2 years. Gonzalez is seeking to galvanize collective efforts to cut emissions, setting out the following priorities for industry and governments:

- Take decisive action to phase out fossil fuels and promote the use of alternative fuels by encouraging regulation to divert societal waste from landfill to cement kilns;
- Enact policies to accelerate the extensive adoption of low-carbon construction products;
- Establish market-driven carbon pricing mechanisms around the world to incentivize industry to decarbonize and further develop technology focused on reducing emissions; and
- Collaborate and provide funding to develop new technologies to decarbonize manufacturing processes and help speed up the rollout of carbon capture, utilization, and storage.

"It is a great honor to be President of the GCCA—cement and concrete are the world's essential building materials. As an industry, we've gone beyond the commitment phase to taking decisive action today to reduce our CO_2 emissions. While we are making important progress today on our 2030 goals, we currently have the opportunity to accelerate even more the pace of our industry's decarbonization if we can achieve the right regulatory policies and support from governments around the world. That's why my number one priority, as the new President of the GCCA, is to collaborate closely with governments and industry to facilitate our roadmap levers," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez has worked for Cemex since 1998 and brings a wealth of experience in the cement and concrete industry. On the operational side, he has led various regions of Cemex, including Europe, Asia, South Central America, and the Caribbean, as well as held corporate positions in strategy, planning, business development, and human resources. He was appointed Executive Vice President of Planning and Development in 2009, Chief Financial Officer in 2011, and has been the company's Chief Executive Officer since 2014.

ASTM International Unveils Roadmap on Advanced Technologies for Digitalization of the Construction Industry

ASTM International has developed a roadmap on digitalization of the construction industry, sponsored by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Advanced Manufacturing Technology Roadmap (MFGTech) Program. The roadmap identifies key technological/technical challenges that, if solved, would encourage industry collaboration and transformative technology development to advance digitalization of the construction industry.

Mohsen Seifi, ASTM International Vice President of Global Advanced Manufacturing Programs, notes that delving deep into the potential of eight groundbreaking technologies, the roadmap envisions a construction sector revolutionized by these game-changers. These technologies—additive manufacturing, robotics and automation, big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), simulation, augmented reality, and cybersecurity—hold promises of heightened productivity, unparalleled safety, and sustainable solutions for tomorrow's urban landscapes.

Specifically, the roadmap identifies priority challenges and sets out action plans in the areas of standards and codes; data and integration; technological advancement; economics and business models; and education, workforce development, and awareness. Suggested activities range from developing data standards to creating demonstration centers for new construction techniques, among more than 35 others.

The roadmap is based on input from the 3rd ASTM International Additive Manufacturing Center of Excellence (AM CoE) Specialty Workshop: Digitalization of the Construction Industry, held in January 2023, as well as a community survey and interviews with experts representing diverse perspectives across the construction community.

For more information on the roadmap, or work of the AM CoE, visit **www.amcoe.org**.

NPCA Names Nick Rhoad as President and CEO

The National Precast Concrete Association (NPCA) announced **Nick Rhoad** as President and CEO. Based in the Indianapolis, IN, USA area, Rhoad brings more than 20 years of experience in association management, government service, and private sector economic development to his new role.

NPCA is the national trade association for more than 900

companies that manufacture precast concrete or supply the industry throughout the United States, Canada, and around the world. Rhoad succeeds **Fred Grubbe**, who now serves as the ACI Executive Vice President.

Rhoad began his role at NPCA on December 1, 2023. He most recently served as CEO of the Association of Real Estate License Law Officials (ARELLO). Prior to that, he was Vice President of Economic Development for a private sector company supporting manufacturers with property tax reductions. Rhoad also served in state government under two Indiana governors.

Rhoad will lead NPCA's 26-person staff in serving the association's members from the Carmel, IN, office. He will collaborate with the Board of Directors to execute NPCA's strategic plan to the benefit of its members and the precast concrete industry.

He is a member of the Indiana Society of Association Executives, currently serving on its Government Affairs committee. He also volunteers with his local fire department.

Rhoad graduated from Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI, USA, and received his master's degree in public administration from Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN.

CFA Elects New Board Members

The Concrete Foundations Association (CFA), a North American association serving as the recognized authority for the residential concrete industry, announced the installation of three new members to the Board of Directors and a continuation term for a fourth board member.

Mike Bromley, ABI Corporation, Lee's Summit, MO, USA; **Nathanial Jordan**, Stephens & Smith Construction Company, Lincoln/Omaha, NE, USA; and **Johnny Zamora**, Form-A-Drain, Houston, TX, USA, were elected to serve 3-year terms. Re-elected during voting was **Amanda Kurt**, Kirk Concrete, Union Grove, WI, USA, for her second 3-year term.

These four members join 14 other thought leaders on a Board of Directors making a transition this year from a 3-year commitment to a strategic plan that has greatly amplified the member benefits and programs available to contractors. "The energy we have right now on the Board is indicative of the renewed confidence we have in the marketplace," said Board President, Jason Ells, Executive Vice President, Custom Concrete in Westfield, IN, USA.

During the CFA Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon held during CFACON23, James Baty, CFA Executive Director celebrated the contributions and expressed appreciation for members ending their terms on the Board, including **Andy Stachler**, Stachler Concrete, St. Henry, OH, USA; **Ryan Ekedal**, Ekedal Concrete, Irvine, CA, USA; **Aaron Witmer**, Gravel Conveyors, Zionsville, IN; and **Marty Paddock**, Purdy Materials, Lafayette, IN.

The Board is led by executive officers in their final year of 2-year seats including Chairman of the Board **Doug Herbert**, Herbert Construction Company, Marietta, GA, USA; President **Jason Ells**, Custom Concrete Company, Inc., Westfield, IN; Vice President **Sean Smith**, MPW Construction Services, Inc., Wellington, OH; Secretary **Ken Kurszewski**, Hottmann Construction Company, Inc., Dane, WI; and Treasurer **Scott Renfroe**, Foundation Builders, Inc. in Greeley, CO, USA.

Register for UT Austin's Forensics Engineering Conference

The 2024 Forensics Engineering Conference: Buildings & Infrastructure, organized by The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) Cockrell School of Engineering, will bring together academia and industry on February 8-9, 2024, for an exchange of expertise on forensics engineering. In its 18th year, the conference is offered in person at UT Austin's J.J. Pickle Research Campus, in Austin, TX, USA, and will provide a significant networking opportunity. A special breakout session is planned for UT Austin students to meet with the industry participants. There is also an online Zoom option for those unable to attend in person.

David W. Fowler, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Cockrell School of Engineering, is the Conference's Lead Faculty. Presentation topics will feature real-world case studies and lessons from significant structural forensic failures, presented by engineering experts. Some of the planned topics include:

- The Crucial Role of Forensic Engineering in Subrogation Litigation;
- Sampling Methodologies for Forensic Investigations;
- I-35W Bridge Collapse in Minneapolis; and
- "Duty to Warn" Panel Discussion.

For more information and to register, visit **https://executive.engr.utexas.edu/prof-dev/courses/forensics-engineering-conference**. Faculty, student, and group discounts are available. Email epd@engr.utexas.edu or call +1.512.475.8649 with questions.

Biden-Harris Administration Announces 100 Million USD in Grants to Support Manufacturers of Cleaner Construction Materials as Part of Investing in America Agenda

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the availability of 100 million USD in grants to support efforts to report and reduce climate pollution linked to the manufacturing of construction materials and products, which account for 11% of annual global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The funding through EPA's new Reducing Embodied Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Construction Materials program will help manufacturers disclose environmental impacts across the life of a product and inform institutional purchasers who are prioritizing lower embodied carbon construction materials. Due to President Biden's Investing in America agenda, a key pillar of Bidenomics, the new program—created by the Inflation Reduction Act—supports the resurgence of sustainable American manufacturing.

This new grant program—Reducing Embodied Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Construction Materials and Products—will help businesses develop robust Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) which disclose environmental impacts across the life of a product. Embodied GHG emissions—also called embodied carbon—refers to the amount of GHG emissions associated with the extraction, production, transport, and manufacturing stages of a product's life. EPDs facilitate the reliable tracking of emissions associated with construction materials and products to inform procurement decisions.

EPA will provide grants to businesses that manufacture, remanufacture, and refurbish construction materials and products for developing and verifying EPDs, and to states,

Tribes, and nonprofit organizations that will support such businesses. The EPDs generated through this grant program will make it easier for state and local governments—and other institutional buyers—to ensure the construction projects they fund are using low carbon construction materials.

EPA is working with other federal agencies as part of a broader initiative funded by the Inflation Reduction Act to address the embodied carbon of construction materials with the goal of substantially lowering the levels of embodied carbon and other GHG emissions. The Inflation Reduction Act also appropriated more than 2 billion USD to the General Services Administration to use low embodied carbon materials in the construction and renovation of federal buildings and 2 billion USD to the Federal Highway Administration to incentivize or reimburse the use of low embodied carbon construction materials in certain transportation projects.

Billions of tons of concrete, asphalt, steel, glass, and other construction materials and products are required to build, maintain, and operate our country's buildings and infrastructure. These new grants will support the historic investments made through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act to strengthen America's infrastructure while advancing America's industrial capacity to supply the goods and materials of the future and growing good jobs for American workers.

Funding amounts for individual grant and cooperative agreements are anticipated to be in the range of 250,000 to 10 million USD. In addition, EPA will consider subranges of grants in the amounts of 250,000 to 749,999 USD; 750,000 to 4.99 million USD; and 5 to 10 million USD.

EPA has published the Notice of Funding Opportunity for this grant competition on **grants.gov**. Earlier this month, EPA published an assistance listing detailing key parameter of the program, which can be viewed at **Sam.gov**.