

Using Creative Ideation to Develop a Sustainable Future

By Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE, PMI CEO/Executive Director



Kerry Stackpole

The spirited, innovative, and Grammy award-winning musician **Herbie Hancock** noted that “globalization means we have to re-examine some of our ideas, and look at ideas from other countries, from other cultures, and open ourselves to them and that’s not comfortable for the average person.” He’s not wrong.

In this era of supply chain disruption and the race to re-shore production capabilities, it remains a crucial imperative we not lose sight of ideas, cultures and experiences borne of other countries. It’s also wise to keep an eye on emerging competitors. The number of new, water-efficiency ideas navigating their way to market through start-up funding with Kickstarter or Go Fund Me campaigns remains surprising and revelatory.

Is a water re-circulating shower a good idea? In a desert or drought-stricken landscape, this kind of shower might be the difference between being able to wash yourself or not. In a world where potable water is potentially in short supply, a water re-circulating shower becomes a great idea. While water efficiency and flow rates are the heart of today’s policy discussion, consumer behavior is at the core of water savings and safety.

As an industry, we have now created and are delivering the ultimate in water-efficient products – smart faucets delivering the precise amount (and temperature) of water requested, touchless faucets that shut off the water promptly when not activated, and waterless urinals of all sorts.

All these creative, water-efficient solutions need only one thing – consumers and commercial property owners to adopt them. In new construction and some remodeling, current-

day plumbing codes and standards most likely require the installation of the latest water-efficient fittings and fixtures. Still, there are millions of homes and commercial buildings with legacy plumbing fixture and fittings that if replaced would create immediate and significant water and energy savings for homeowners, commercial property owners, and municipalities around the country.

If you’re wondering how much more, consider WaterSense, the partnership program sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency. This program works collaboratively with companies, utilities, organizations and communities to make it easy for consumers to find high-performing, water-efficient products. The latest WaterSense Accomplishment Report tells the story. Since 2006, WaterSense products saved Americans 6.4 trillion gallons of water, \$135 billion in water and energy expenses, 288 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and enough kilowatt hours to power 70 million homes for a year. It was **Walt Disney** who said “our heritage and ideas, our codes and standards – the things we live by and teach our children – are preserved or diminished by how freely we exchange ideas and feelings.” So, what more can we do?

To borrow a concept from PMI’s strategic plan, we need to continue our efforts to build a broad coalition aligning the interests of individuals, organizations and policymakers around a shared future state in which water is sustainably managed and always abundant. Let’s all get started.

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Attend PMI22 in Louisville, Hit a Home Run

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

The PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference will deliver an exciting line-up of plumbing and related industry major leaguers sure to help attendees hit a home run in learning and networking. Taking place from Oct. 24-27 in Louisville with a special event planned at the Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory, PMI22 will explore thought-provoking topics covering sustainable practices to conserve water and energy, manufacturing approaches and theories, homebuilding digital services, and more.

Up to bat as keynote speakers will be **Andrew Winston** and **Chad Pregracke**. Winston, a globally recognized expert on megatrends and how to build companies that thrive by serving the world, is the co-author of “Net Positive: How Courageous Companies Thrive by Giving More than They Take.” Pregracke, founder of the nonprofit river cleanup organization Living Lands & Waters, and his team have organized and led over 1,000 community cleanups on 23 rivers in 20 states, removing over 10 million pounds of garbage.

Trevor Boyer, a professor in the School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment at Arizona State University, will discuss urine diversion as a more sustainable alternative to conventional wastewater management. His presentation, “Building-Wide Urine Diversion: Radical Change in Incremental Steps,” will explain how urine diversion has the potential to conserve water and energy, recover nutrients for fertilizer, and protect ecological and human health from trace contaminants.

Boyer, who has a Ph.D. in environmental engineering, will delve into the current



Trevor Boyer

one-size-fits-all approach to wastewater management. He says this approach wastes valuable resources — such as potable water, fertilizer-quality nutrients and energy — while also polluting the biosphere with excess nutrients, contaminants of emerging concern, and greenhouse gases. The program chair for environmental engineering at ASU will highlight his team’s ongoing work to advance both the basic understanding and practical implementation of urine diversion. He’ll cover urine collection and storage, nutrient recovery technologies, implementation in buildings, life cycle environmental impacts, and stakeholder perceptions.

Tim Costello, chairman and CEO of Builder Homesite Inc., will share the latest on digital transformations in homebuilding. He oversees the homebuilding industry’s digital transformation by running the industry-owned entities of Builder Homesite Inc., BDX Inc., and New Home Technologies LLC. The organizations provide a wide array of digital services to the homebuilding supply chain, serving 250 manufacturing brands, as well as the more than 1,300 builder customers that construct over half the homes in the United States. Services encompass the entire spectrum of digital needs — virtual reality, interactive kiosks, websites and mobile solutions.



Tim Costello

Adam Gordon, founder and managing partner of the Bristol Group, will present on the status of Section 301 tariffs and whether they



Adam Gordon



will continue or end pending litigation at the U.S. Court of International Trade. He also will provide an overview of Buy American Act requirements that were updated in 2022.

Mahesh Gupta, a professor in the Department of Information Systems, Analytics and Operations at the University of Louisville, will examine the theory of constraints in manufacturing. This theory identifies the most important limiting factor — a constraint — that blocks a goal and then systematically improves the constraint until it’s no longer a limiting factor.



Mahesh Gupta

With a Ph.D. in industrial engineering, Gupta has earned several research and educational awards. His expertise includes evaluating and improving organizational performance by using management philosophies, such as just-in-time inventory management, activity-based management, quality management, market orientation, and theory of constraints.



Reinvented toilets have become an important topic, especially for developing countries without established sewer systems.

Brian Hawkins, associate research professor,

Duke University Center for Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Infectious Disease (WaSH-AID) will discuss WaSH-AID's Reclaimer toilet and the broader topic of reinvented toilets. The Reclaimer toilet is a compact, onsite wastewater treatment technology for buildings and homes that requires no water or sewer hookup and enables treated wastewater to be reused in flush toilets.



Brian Hawkins

At WaSH-Aid, Hawkins, who has a Ph.D. in neuroscience, leads the development and commercialization efforts on the Reclaimer, oversees several research and development programs, and coordinates technology partnerships with other academic institutions and companies. His research interests include processes

for household-scale water treatment and reuse, nutrient remediation, and energy recovery. Hawkins also leads the center's efforts on various small business innovation research programs for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Rob Keith, membership and policy director at AMERIPEN – the American Institute for Packaging and the Environment – will share a legislation update on packaging producer responsibility. With a passion for sustainability, Keith has over a decade of experience in membership and government relations working at conservation nonprofits and outdoor industry associations.



Rob Keith

Connor Lokar, speaker and senior forecaster with ITR Economics, returns to present the latest PMI Market Outlook. An engaging speaker who delivers his insights with humor and candor, Lokar

brings a new perspective to the world of economics. He specializes in construction and presents to businesses across all industries to help them navigate an ever-changing business cycle.



Connor Lokar

Producing drinking water from air-to-water technology is one of the most innovative water extraction solutions used to tackle the world's growing problem of depleting levels of drinking water, according to Watergen's website. Barack Ranon, president for Watergen Americas, and Nick Harris, vice president sales and marketing for Watergen Americas, will discuss how this technology delivers a new source of drinking water that removes dependence on municipal water, expensive infrastructure and pipes.

Watch for more speakers to be added to the program! Register for PMI22 at safelumbing.org/pmi22

Aspiring Leaders to Learn How to Sustain High-Performing Teams

Leading a high-performing team can be both rewarding and challenging. It takes the right skills, including conscious leadership, collaboration and celebration. Participants of Plumbing Manufacturers International's Aspiring Leaders Program, "Developing and Leading High-Performing Teams," will learn those skills on Oct. 24 during PMI22 by practicing leadership behaviors. Attendees also will develop an action plan and acquire helpful tools to apply immediately.

Lisa Zangari of the Leadership Louisville Center will facilitate the program at the Muhammad Ali Center, dedicated to the life and legacy of "The Greatest." Participants will learn why Ali, a three-time heavyweight boxing champion and cultural icon, made and left such a significant impact on our world.

The program will guide PMI member participants through an interactive session to learn about conscious lead-



ership – which focuses on emotional intelligence, the power of delegation as a development tool, and leadership style preferences. A segment on collaboration will delve into role modeling and how to equip a team with problem-solving language and tools. Tips on the importance of celebration will cover how to consistently recognize and show gratitude

for teams and individuals and take time to celebrate key milestones.

The program is open to any employee of a PMI member company seeking to develop their leadership skills. To register and take advantage of the discounted PMI22 registration bundle, visit PMI's website at safeplumbing.org/events/aspiring-leaders-program.

Be a Big Hitter, Sponsor PMI22

Want to improve your slugging percentage? Showcase your company's products and services to influential plumbing manufacturing all-stars through a PMI22 Platinum, Gold, Silver or Event Sponsorship!

This year, the main sponsorship event will be the Louisville Slugger Museum Reception and Dinner, where a custom, Louisville Slugger PMI22 souvenir bat displaying the sponsor's logo will be given to all PMI22 attendees. The sponsor's logo also will be displayed throughout the event on all signage.

Platinum, Gold and Silver Sponsorships all highlight your company's name and logo to both live and post-conference on-demand participants. Your company will get noticed through table exhibits, podium recognition, email blasts, social media posts, and Ripple Effect ads.

Each sponsorship level comes with one or more complimentary conference registrations — giving your company a box seat to learn about the latest industry trends and insights.

Event Sponsorships are available for keynote speakers, conference lunches, cocktail receptions, registration, and AM/PM coffee breaks. These activities will allow attendees to interact with each other and build relationships, thanks to the sponsors' generous support of the plumbing manufacturing industry. Each event is limited to one sponsor only — so step up to the plate now!

All sponsorship levels place your company at the top of the standings — and send a strong signal to the rest of the industry that your team is an important part of our mutual success.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Reasons to Sponsor

Benefit from a wider reach

Gain access to an influential group of industry leaders from the top plumbing manufacturers.

Enhance your corporate image

Show your support and commitment to the plumbing manufacturing industry.

Gain insight into industry issues

Your sponsorship entitles you to registration at this exciting conference.

Achieve continual visibility

Sponsors will continue to be promoted on recorded sessions available to all attendees post-conference.

ALL PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference sponsorship levels receive these benefits:

- Your company's name and logo highlighted to both live and post-conference on-demand participants
- Recognition by PMI leadership at opening keynote session and general membership meeting
- Your company's profile, logo and website link on safeplumbing.org as a PMI22 sponsor
- Social media visibility through #PMI22 promotional efforts



PMI Team Connects with Policymakers at NCSL Summit

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Plumbing Manufacturers International staff headed to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit in August to build vital relationships with state policymakers while sharing expertise on water-efficient measures and plumbing products.

“This is one of many opportunities where PMI proactively engaged with policymakers and legislators to show how we’re part of the water-efficiency solution. We want them to know how innovative and forward-thinking our industry and members are – and how we can help them understand reasonable and responsible ways to save water while making things better for their citizens,” said PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**.

Taking a proactive approach on legislation affecting plumbing products and water efficiency has been a key part of PMI’s strategy. The PMI team met with legislators and their staffs to discuss how states can best address water efficiency and find ways to help citizens make good choices when replacing legacy plumbing fixtures with WaterSense products, Stackpole added.

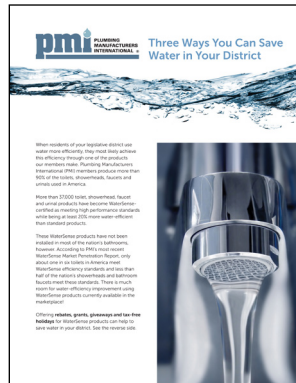
Described as the nation’s largest bipartisan gathering of state legislators and staff, the NCSL summit allows for policy experts, business leaders, and various industry leaders to engage in conversations covering policy priorities and the legislative landscape. “One of our goals is to educate legislators and policymakers about how PMI and its members can be trusted advisers on the complex issues associated with plumbing systems and water,” Stackpole said.

Establishing PMI as water-efficiency expert, first stop on legislative trail

This is the first year PMI hosted a booth on the NCSL exhibit floor. PMI exhibited with about 200 other associations,

businesses and organizations, including PMI member IAPMO, the Water Quality Association, the Design-Build Institute of America, Amazon and Google.

Stackpole, PMI Director of Programs and Administration **Jodi Stuhberg** and PMI California Government Affairs Consultant **Jerry Desmond** shared practical ways to save water and handed out five-minute shower timers and PMI handouts titled “Three Ways You Can Save Water in Your District” and “WaterSense is Common Sense.” Water saving ideas in these handouts include offering rebates, grants, giveaways and tax-free holidays for WaterSense products.



“We illustrated some of the simple, practical ways to save water that don’t require redesigning plumbing fixtures,” Stackpole said. The five-minute shower timer provides a simple, strong example of how people can save about 12 gallons of water per shower while also saving energy to heat the water.

Stackpole noted that the team discussed more sophisticated water-efficiency methods, such as mandating WaterSense fixtures for new construction; offering citizens rebates for WaterSense toilets, faucets and showerheads; and granting tax breaks for purchasing water-efficient



products. They also shared information on the many future-focused innovations PMI members offer, such as smart faucets that allow users to ask for a set amount of water heated to a particular temperature, advanced leak detectors, and other products.

PMI Technical Director **Kyle Thompson** said he attended educational sessions that helped him learn more about the legislative process. Other sessions provided him with useful information about infrastructure funding and the United States economic outlook.

“It was exciting to meet with legislators, policymakers and their teams to start forming long-lasting relationships,” Thompson said. “It’s challenging to be involved with all 50 states as they create water-efficiency bills. We want them to recognize that PMI is the organization they should call first to provide water-efficiency expertise on plumbing products and flow rates. We want to be included at the start of the legislative process – not after the fact.”

Thompson and Stackpole said they were pleased to meet representatives from states with water challenges, such as those in the Southwest, and states that have tried to pass legislation to reduce flow rates below WaterSense levels.

For more information about the NCSL Legislative Summit, visit the NCSL website at tinyurl.com/2p826ah4.

Providing Feedback on Packaging Legislation is Critical

As plastic packaging responsibility laws heat up, an expert suggested Plumbing Manufacturers International and its members should consider providing more feedback to lawmakers where possible – particularly in California, Colorado and Oregon.

“This is a critical time for industry to pay attention to these laws because we’re at a precipice right now with so much coming at us,” said **Dan Felton**, executive director of AMERIPEN – the American Institute for Packaging and the Environment – of which PMI is a member. “I would encourage you to understand the opportunities because I believe our fate is not fully sealed in these states yet.”

He shared an update on plastic packaging legislation and policy, including

extended producer responsibility (EPR), recycled content mandates and labeling, during the PMI Washington Legislative Forum in July. EPR shifts responsibility for funding package recycling from local governments and consumers to manufacturers.

Four EPR laws, with varying compliance dates, now exist in California, Colorado, Maine and Oregon. Two federal bills are being considered. Signed into law on June 30, California SB54 is the most recent and most ambitious state plastic packaging bill, Felton noted.

The four state laws are vastly different and complex. PMI members affected by these laws will need to carefully track requirements, Felton stated. There will be opportunities for PMI and its members to weigh in on rulemaking, he added.

Felton advised that the plumbing manufacturing industry share information about special packaging considerations for evaluation by state EPR advisory boards and other regulatory bodies.

Felton noted that plumbing manufacturers may be affected by New Jersey’s new post-consumer recycled content law (S2515) covering rigid plastic containers. That law takes effect in 2024.

AMERIPEN is working on a federal solution that would deliver consistency to EPR and other recycling standards to help plumbing manufacturers who sell products across state lines, Felton said.

PMI members can view a recording of the forum on PMI’s website ([tinyurl.com/26xsxsty](https://www.tinyurl.com/26xsxsty)).

Political Analyst Handicaps 2022 Midterm Elections

An analysis of the generic ballot and other political pulse points shows a likely win for Republicans in the House of Representatives and toss-up finishes in the Senate and for governors’ seats. However, other factors and political nuances could change voter opinion.

“A lot of things are going to happen between now and then to determine the outcome of elections,” said **Jim Ellis**, president of Ellis Insights, to attendees of the Plumbing Manufacturers International Washington Legislative Forum in July.

Fivethirtyeight.com showed a 0.2% aggregate generic ballot polling lead for Republicans on July 29. A recent New York Times/Siena survey of voters showed inflation and the economy motivating voters to vote for Republicans while issues such as gun violence, abortion rights and threats to democracy are spurring voters to punch the Democratic ticket. “Inflation is likely to

be a factor,” Ellis said, especially if it remains above 7%, the point at which he said economic studies show that the rate begins to adversely affect incumbents and the party in power. “On the other hand, if what the Fed is doing works and the inflation rate begins to come down, maybe that changes (the election outcomes).”

During his presentation on the “2022 Midterm Elections Outlook,” Ellis broke down the congressional and gubernatorial races. With the House likely to go to Republicans, Senate races considered toss-ups will likely determine congressional control, Ellis said. According to fivethirtyeight.com, the tightest Senate races will occur in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania, followed by New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Gubernatorial races will have an impact on state laws and redistricting, Ellis said. Right now, Republicans have 28

gubernatorial seats to the Democrats’ 22. He expects governors in Maryland and Massachusetts to turn blue, with 34 other races determining whether the balance tips to one party or the other. Because governors elected in 2022 may have veto power over redistricting maps, depending on court rulings, “the governors’ races are going to play an important role from a national context,” Ellis said.

Ellis considers primary turnouts as another key predictor of which party will win. “I’m a big believer in primary turnouts as a precursor as to what we may see in the general election, because the turnout rate generally measures enthusiasm,” he said. Republican primary turnout has generally been stronger than Democratic so far in 2022, he stated.

PMI members can view a recording of the forum on PMI’s website ([tinyurl.com/26xsxsty](https://www.tinyurl.com/26xsxsty)).

Section 301 Tariff Relief on Hold

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Americans for Free Trade, a coalition that Plumbing Manufacturers International joined, continues to push for fully repealing Section 301 China tariffs – as economists, businesses and government try to hash out a solution.

The coalition's "misery index" recently reported that the tariffs have cost manufacturers, businesses and consumers an estimated \$129 billion since the levies were established in 2018, reported **Jonathan Gold**, vice president of supply chain and customs policy for the National Retail Federation, during his presentation at the virtual PMI Washington Legislative Forum in July. The NRF also is a member of the coalition.

Economists and others are calling for tariff relief to help address inflation. Repealing the tariffs or, at the very least, re-instating tariff exclusions that expired at the end of 2021 could help. "Tariff relief certainly is not a cure-all for inflation but will send a positive signal to industry and consumers that the administration is trying to take action," he said.

USTR, ITC review tariffs' effectiveness, impact

Potential tariff relief could come on about \$10 billion worth of consumer products, such as bicycles and apparel, and a new product exclusion process, but that won't fix some of the larger economic impact and exclusion issues, Gold said.

A provision requiring a new fair and transparent exclusion process for the 301 tariffs by the United States Trade Representative is included in the Senate's U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, which NRF supports.

The USTR initiated a four-year review of the Section 301 tariffs to determine their effectiveness and impact on the

U.S. economy. On May 5, the USTR announced a two-phase comment period for businesses and industries interested in remarking on whether the tariffs should be continued.

Gold expressed concern for the lack of transparency and visibility into the organizations and individuals filing comments and what they are saying. He urged PMI and plumbing manufacturers to engage and share any stories publicly about the harm tariffs have caused – such as preventing investments in their companies and employees, charging higher prices, and forcing a shift from China to other markets to source materials.

An official cost-benefit analysis of the tariffs' impact on trade production and pricing was never completed – something the NRF has been asking for all along, Gold said. He shared positive news that the U.S. International Trade Commission, a non-partisan federal agency, is investigating the economic impact of Section 301 and Section 232 tariffs; this investigation may result in changes to current tariff rates and product lists. The NRF testified during hearings in July, and the AFT coalition submitted a letter signed by PMI and another 173 trade associations and organizations before the hearings. The USITC must submit its findings in a report to Congress by March 15, 2023.

PMI members can view Gold's presentation, "Trade: Update on Tariffs and Potential for Sunset and New Exclusions & China Competition Bills," on PMI's website (tinyurl.com/26sxsdtv).

Labor Strikes Could Cause More Supply Chain Woes

Three potential labor strikes could hit West Coast ports and the national railways, causing more supply chain headaches for plumbing manufacturers and other businesses. Gold discussed the longshore labor contract, rail labor negotiations, and issues with independent trucking owner-operators in California.

In July, the union representing West Coast dock workers continued negotiations for a new labor contract past the July 1 expiration of their current contract, according to a recent Bloomberg article. Gold said NRF sent a letter to the Biden administration urging a contract extension to avoid disruptions.

On July 15, President **Joe Biden** wrote an executive order that prevents any rail labor work stoppage for 60 days, Politico reported. A panel appointed by the president will investigate any disputes and submit a report.

On July 18, truck drivers blocked traffic at the Oakland, California, seaport to protest California AB5, a law that sets tougher standards for independent trucking contractors to transport goods, Reuters reported. The law could limit labor and further aggravate the nation's supply chain issues. Gold noted that NRF, PMI and other businesses and associations have been engaged in addressing the California trucking issues.



Plumber Shortage Costing Economy Billions of Dollars

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

A new economic impact study, sponsored by LIXIL, suggests that the current shortage of plumbers will cost the United



States economy about \$33 billion in 2022. The study, conducted by John Dunham & Associates, estimates a shortage of 557,000 by 2027 will escalate the economic impact.

Troy Benavidez, leader of government relations and policy at LIXIL and co-chair of Plumbing Manufacturers International's Advocacy/Government Affairs Committee, shared the study data with attendees of the virtual PMI Washington Legislative Forum in July.

"The plumber labor shortage is not just our industry's issue. Its impact on the overall economy is staggering. Consumers, industries and governments will continue to lose billions of dollars due to this labor gap," Benavidez said. "Unfortunately, we've been talking about this issue for several years in our industry but not making any progress in resolving it. This will need collective intervention along with efforts by the government and private sector at large to move the needle."

The economic impact study suggests that if only 4% of the needed 425,000 plumbing jobs are created in 2022 – about 17,000 positions – the U.S. economy could save a significant \$1.27 billion. The economic ripples could potentially produce about 38,000 additional jobs across many industries – not just the plumbing industry – and create \$1 billion in wages, \$3 billion in new economic activity, and \$242 million in federal revenues.

The study, to be published later this year, breaks down economic opportunity by industry, with \$55 million potentially going to manufacturing, \$41 million to business and personal services, and \$17 million to transportation and communication.

Contractors' perspective on workforce challenges

Sharing insights on how to fill plumbing jobs, **Cindy Sheridan**, chief operating officer at the PHCC Educational Foundation, suggested that the industry make a better connection about the importance of clean water toward saving the environment.

"Young people want to work in industries that are making the planet better," she said.

Exposing more junior high and high school students and at-risk youth to the plumbing profession can help boost recruiting efforts. Sheridan said her foundation's contractor members are working with school districts and technical and apprenticeship programs to find strong candidates. "We encourage contractors to get involved with local school advisory and workforce boards, which have funding to help pay for technical training," she added.

Excellent training programs with learning options – such as online and virtual reality courses – are important to successful recruiting. "We also believe that plumbers need to learn the math and science of plumbing so they can be problem solvers," Sheridan said.

Bringing in more diverse workers, including women and mid-career adults, could be helpful but has progressed slowly.

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