

2023 FISA ANNUAL CONFERENCE HAS RECORD ATTENDANCE

The recent 2023 FISA Annual Conference in Colorado Springs, CO was attended by more than 300 people. The Conference provided networking and educational sessions and as usual, first-time attendees who numbered more than 40 people were especially welcomed.

Shailendra Seecharan who is Enerquip's South Division Global Sales Manager was a first-time attendee and he commented, "I thought that the conference was one of the best (if not the best) networking events that I've attended. The relationship building and activities presented an opportunity for everyone to work together in a more relaxing setting. The presentations on both mornings were filled with pertinent and high value information that directly tied into our industry and work force. I particularly enjoyed the presentation from Chris Kuehl as it really focused on macroeconomics while showcasing the strength of the US economy. I also thought that the event helped introduce me to key industry contacts. I was quite impressed by the event, and I'm certainly looking forward to next year's event in 2024!"

In the on-line post Conference survey, attendees were asked if they reviewed the company profiles in the App for each company attending prior to the Conference. 82% responded they did review the descriptions of the companies, and 76% indicated they scheduled meetings with attendees during the Conference. 99% of the survey respondents indicated they met

someone during the Conference to follow up with for future business.

Tommy Hagood, President of Sanitary Solutions Group, LLC. was a first time attendee who said, "I have been in the hygienic process industry for 13 years and joined FISA in 2020. This year's conference in Colorado Springs exceeded my already high expectations. Simply put, there is no other association or platform that brings together under one roof such a great mix of manufacturers, distributors, competitors, and associates. I have heard multiple times over the years that the gloves come off and that competitors talk, swap stories, shake hands, laugh, and have a good time with their



direct competitors. What a breath of fresh air to experience and watch what I had heard over the years play out just as it was told. Although I didn't get an opportunity to meet everyone, I left the conference having made 39 new contacts. I am still working through my follow ups. I have already had Team meetings and physical visits with a handful of these contacts."

Each year, the FISA Board of Directors carefully reviews all the comments about the Conference to learn how we can improve. Thank you to those members who attended and returned the survey and know your comments matter. We are already busy planning for 2024.

Special thanks to all the sponsors who made the 2023 FISA Annual Conference possible.

Speaker Sponsors:

- CSI
- Perrigo, Inc.

App Sponsor:

- CPE Systems



PINNACLE SOCIETY

Pinnacle Society:

- Alfa Laval Inc.
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- Haynes Manufacturing Company
- M.G. Newell Corporation
- Newman Sanitary Gasket Company
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- Quality Tank Solutions
- Rath Gibson
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- SPX FLOW
- Statco-DSI
- Steel & O'Brien Manufacturing
- Stuart W. Johnson & Co., Inc.
- Thermaline
- Triplex Sales
- Unibloc Hygienic Technologies
- Unisource Mfg.
- VNE Corporation
- Wayland Industries
- Wright Process Systems

And to the other 26 companies who generously sponsored events.



FISA is an association composed of distributors and manufacturer members who share a commitment to value-added distribution in serving hygienic processing industries. FISA's mission is to help its members improve performance and customer value.

**2023 – 2024
FISA Board of Directors**

FISA Officers:

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Dobbins Company

Vice President

Joe Reynolds

CSI

Past President

Eric Perkins

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Oliver M. Dean, Inc.

John Georgen

VNE

Ali Legatt

DCI

Chris LoPresti

Andron Stainless Corporation

Andy Soukup

Triplex Sales

Deb Tracy

Lighthouse Process Corporation

Ola Wesstrom

Endress+ Hauser

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Stella L. Jones

Executive Director

Email: stella@fisanet.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear FISA Members, I am honored to be serving as President of the FISA Board and want to encourage you to reach out and share your ideas as we work together to strengthen distribution in the hygienic processing industries. The recently

concluded 2023 Annual Conference had a record attendance in the picturesque setting of Colorado Springs. While we had some challenges with the Resort, the Conference would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of everyone involved.

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Andy and Brooke Soukup, the dynamic duo who served as the 2023 Annual Conference Chairs. Their leadership and meticulous planning contributed significantly to the Conference's success, making it a memorable event for everyone involved.

The 2023 FISA Conference featured an array of outstanding speakers and panelists who expertly addressed the hottest topics in our industry. Their insights and expertise ignited discussions that were both enlightening and impactful. It's through the collaboration of such thought leaders that we continue to stay at the forefront of our field, ensuring that FISA remains a vibrant and relevant community. In addition to Andy and Brooke, we want to recognize the invaluable contributions of Jim Brink, Tony Roisen, Joe Gamradt, and Jason Ryan (our past president), who have shown

unwavering dedication during their time on the Board of Directors. As they rotate off the Board, we extend our deepest appreciation for their hard work and commitment to FISA. With every departure, there comes a warm welcome. We are excited to introduce the new members of our Board: Dan Eldon, Ali Legatt, and John Georgen, and you can meet them on page 5 of this newsletter. Their fresh perspectives and ideas will undoubtedly enrich our organization. We also welcome back Joe Reynolds, who has taken on the role of Vice President. We look forward to collaborating with them and achieving new heights together.

A special thank you goes to Eric Perkins, who moves into a two-year term on the Board as Past President. His unwavering dedication and service have been instrumental in shaping the future of our organization. The future of FISA shines brightly as we celebrate welcoming first-timers, encouraging our Next Gen members and continuing to grow and thrive by working together.

Watch for details coming soon about our exciting continuing education opportunity in the FISA Business Academy. We also look forward to meeting next year in beautiful Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. You will be hearing more details about when registration will open for the 2024 Conference after the first of the year.

Here's to a bright future filled with more accomplishments and memorable moments.

Barry Dobbins, *Dobbins Company*



HIGHLIGHTS OF FISA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Eric Perkins congratulates Brooke & Andy Soukup for their leadership in chairing the 2023 FISA Annual Conference.



Classmates USAF Academy, Sam Svitenko and Waldo Waldman



New President, Barry Dobbins, thanks Past President, Eric Perkins, for his leadership



Erick Perkins and Tony Roisen



First Timers Group



Next Gen Members gathered for a fun Networking event at TopGolf



Erick Perkins and Jason Ryan



Eric Perkins and Joe Gamradt



(L-R) Pete & Annie Herb and Lynn & Scott Kerns



Next Gen Panelists (L-R) Andy Soukup, Emily Gentile, Kevin Nieuwenhuis and Ryan Frimel

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP WITH DOBBINS COMPANY

When Barry Dobbins recently was elected President of the FISA Board of Directors, that meant the legacy of FISA leadership within the Dobbins family continues. Dobbins Company, a Distribution company based in Trussville, AL was originally formed in 1971 by Felix Dobbins, Barry's father. Felix was a past President of the FISA Board of Directors from 1989 to 1991, and Rodney Dobbins, Barry's older brother served as FISA President from 2007 to 2009.

From the beginning, Dobbins Company has been a family business and to this day that tradition continues. Through the years, many family members have worked with the company and now in addition to Rodney and Barry, Rodney's daughter, Alicia, is a Customer Service representative. "We've always been a hands-on business," commented Rodney. "That's how Barry and I both learned the products and the customers. When I started working with Dad in 1972, he started me in the shipping & receiving department and making deliveries. Barry worked there in the afternoons juggling his high school athletics with learning the business from the ground up." In talking to Barry about the company's history, he says he's been involved with the company since the beginning and in the early days was able to balance his music career with working at Dobbins Company.

"We've always been a hands-on business. That's how Barry and I both learned the products and the customers."

As early as age 17, Barry was performing as a drummer with a band based in Birmingham. As the band's reputation grew, they signed with a major record label and toured throughout the US. But one of his fondest memories was being able to play the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, TN with his Dad, Felix's, gospel group. For nearly 15 years, Barry juggled his music career and



The Dobbins Family: Barry, Linda, Theresa, Rodney and Alicia pictured at a recent 50th Wedding anniversary party for Theresa and Rodney.

travels with helping the family grow Dobbins Company.

Barry said, "In the early 1970's there were seven dairy plants in Birmingham alone. Today, there's not a single dairy plant in the whole state." Dobbins Company expanded into citrus and poultry and continued to increase their capabilities by changing with the times. Today in addition to the home office in Trussville, AL, Dobbins Company has offices in Lake-

land, FL, Richardson, TX and Buford, GA. The company has many long-time employees including Glenda Taylor whose career spans 35 years starting in inside sales, and now she is Vice President.

For Barry and Rodney, the lessons their father taught them will always be with them as they manage the business. They



Barry Dobbins, Glenda Taylor, Rodney Dobbins

remember their Dad telling them.

- See everybody who comes to talk to you because you should always be looking for new opportunities.
- Never have ill will for your competition. You may be working with them one day.
- You learn more by having your mouth closed and listening than you do by talking. So listen.
- But when the time comes to lead, be ready to lead.

That advice was helpful when Dobbins Company started in the 1970's and now more than 50 years later, those are words to remember.

NEW FISA OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

The FISA Annual Meeting was held Saturday September 23 in Colorado Springs, Colorado prior to the final dinner of the 2023 Annual Conference. At that time, Bob Morava, Chairman of the FISA Nominating Committee presented the slate of officers and directors. Bob made a motion, which was seconded, and approved and the slate was elected.



Barry Dobbins

Barry Dobbins, a Principal and Co-Owner of the Dobbins Company, a distribution firm headquartered in Trussville, Alabama was elected President.

Barry has been serving on the FISA Board for the past two years as Vice President, Barry said, "I am grateful to be part of an organization such as FISA. FISA provides a platform for the Distributors and Manufacturers in our industry to meet each year to discuss our ever-changing world of business. Dobbins Company has a long history with FISA, and I am honored to follow in my father, Felix's, and brother, Rodney's, tradition as an officer of FISA." Barry has been married to Linda for 38 years, and Linda is an entrepreneur who is the founder and owner of many diverse businesses including Linda Dobbins Dance and The Academy at Linda Dobbins. Barry and Linda have two children. Their son, Michael, is married and earned a PhD in Research Science. He is with Bain Global and he and his wife live in Atlanta. Their daughter, Anna Marie, is an actor, designer and producer and lives in Hollywood, CA. Barry says, "I love music – performing, producing and listening to music but most of all, I love spending time with my family when they have time for us to get together."



Joe Reynolds

Newly elected FISA Vice President, **Joe Reynolds**, is President of Central States Industrial (CSI) in Springfield MO. CSI has a rich history with FISA and Joe commented

that "Distributors within the hygienic process industry are facing significant changes in the next several years. FISA strengthens relationships among peer companies and

provides exceptional educational conferences that challenge each of us to better serve our customers. It's an honor to continue CSI's influence in positioning FISA to lead members through the industry changes ahead." Joe and Shannon have been married for 31 years and have five kids, three grandkids and Joe has been involved in the hygienic industry for 25 years. He believes in giving back to the community and serves on the board of directors for several civic, nonprofit, and ministry organizations. Previously, Joe served on the FISA Board and looks forward to the next two years serving as Board Vice President. He enjoys the fast-paced large family life, traveling with Shannon, hiking, biking, and golf.



Don Eldon

Also, at the FISA Annual Meeting, three new Directors were elected to the Board to each serve a three-year term. **Dan Eldon** is President of Oliver M. Dean, Inc, a distribution company in Worcester, MA. Dan said, "I am thrilled and honored to join the FISA Board of Directors with the intent of collaborating deeper with my industry peers. FISA is an incredible organization that promotes fantastic networking opportunities between Manufacturers and Distributors, enabling innovation across numerous industries that contribute to the ongoing manufacturing needs of the world. I am proud to be a FISA Board Member and promote the recruitment and development of our next generation of leaders in the industry." Dan has been in the industry for eight years and served as the Golf Chair for the 2023 Annual Conference. Golf is his main hobby.

Another new Director is **John Georgen** who is currently Vice President of Sales and Marketing for VNE Corporation. He says,

"Being involved with FISA brings the opportunity to do 'more.' Meet more people in our industry and establish more personal relationships with FISA members. Explore



John Georgen

more regions of the United States and experience more social activities. Influence others to be more successful in business. For those of us who have many years of experience or if you are just getting started in the sanitary industries, it is a privilege to share your experiences and knowledge to keep our industry moving forward. For these reasons and more, I am excited to be on the FISA board." John continued by saying, "I have held multiple positions during my 23 years in the industry, but all have been here at VNE. My hobbies revolve around outdoor activities: boating, fishing, backpacking, archery, and hunting."



Ali Legatt

Our third newly elected Board member is **Ali Legatt**, who has been in the industry for 18 years. She is currently Director of Sales - Food Dairy Beverage for the DCI Family of Companies. Ali said, "DCI has been deeply rooted in the FISA organization. I have personally found the FISA organization to be a great way to network and keep up with different changes within the industries that we serve. I am very excited and honored to be on the Board of Directors to collaborate with many key people within our trades, and I am proud to continue DCI's lineage within the FISA organization." When she is not working, Ali loves to travel and is particularly looking forward to returning to Croatia which was a favorite destination.

Member News & Views

The who, what, where, when and whys of the FISA membership.

How to Submit News

The Distributor News is published quarterly and the deadline for the next issue is February 20, 2023. Due to space limitations, we cannot print specific product information, but personnel changes, changes of address, expansions or other industry news is always of interest.

If you have a question, please call 336-274-6311 or email stella@fisnet.org

M.G. Newell Corporation



David McNamara

M.G. Newell is pleased to announce that **David McNamara** has joined the company as a Project Engineer in their Nashville, TN office. In this position, David will report to **Robbie Roof**, General Manager, Nashville Division. David brings over 30 years of engineering, product development and business management experience to M.G. Newell. David has a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from N.C. State University. While studying engineering, he worked as a co-op for Black & Decker as a resident designer for tools. Headquartered in Greensboro, NC with divisional offices in Greensboro, Louisville, KY, and Nashville, TN, M.G. Newell is a full-service distributor and systems integrator of sanitary processing equipment for the food, beverage, dairy, pharmaceutical, and personal care industries

Statco/DSI



John Piazza

John Piazza was promoted to General Manager of Statco-DSI effective August 3rd, 2023. John has been with the company since February, 2023 as Statco-DSI's VP of Operations. **Eric Perkins** selected John for this role and Eric will remain in ProMach in his new role as VP, Commercial in the ProMach Process Group, leading their integrated system sale opportunities across ProMach. In this strategic role, Eric will work with the business development teams across the organization to continue to position ProMach as a leader in engineered process systems, Eric has been with Statco-DSI and in leadership positions for over 25 years. He has helped grow Statco-DSI from a small private company to one of the largest and highly innovated companies in the industry. Eric is excited for the opportunity to use his experience to continue to grow the process divisions within ProMach.

Rodem

After five decades in Western Hills, Rodem Inc., opened its new headquarters located at 10001 Martins Way in Harrison, Ohio, bringing 50 jobs to the area. The 50,000-square-foot facility



is designed to accommodate Rodem's ongoing growth and distribution capabilities. Rodem's systems integration segment – SaniSmart Solutions – will also benefit from additional fabrication and shop capabilities needed for creating custom solutions and skidded systems for its customers in the consumable and consumer goods manufacturing industries. Rodem's new space features expanded community gathering areas, collaborative workspaces, and a training center for ongoing education and development programs. "We're thrilled to be in our new headquarters," said **Brock Beach**, vice president of sales and marketing. "Our expanded shop space provides more room for skidded system fabrication to better meet our customers' needs for flexible processing solutions."

"By investing in our future, we are able to provide the high level of service our customers expect while also following our founder's motto of 'onward and upward' as we continue to grow and expand our offerings" added **Susan Kerr**, owner and president. "We're always hiring as well so it's great to have the space we need to accommodate our growing team." Rodem's list of products and offerings range from raw material storage to processing and final packaging, including pumps, valves, instrumentation, heat transfer, cleaning and processing equipment, plant consumables, spare parts, process engineering and design, installation, fabrication, service, and more.

About Rodem:

Founded in 1971 by **Bob Diener**, Rodem distributes, installs, and engineers sanitary processing systems for the dairy, food, beverage, personal care, pharmaceutical and other high-purity industries. Still owned by the Diener family, Rodem is headquartered in Harrison, Ohio with additional locations across the Midwest and Southeast. To learn more, please visit www.rodem.com or call 800-543-7312.

Nelson-Jameson

Lights, Camera, Action! Nelson-Jameson's leadership team was thrilled to have the company and its employees featured in a digital documentary series called "We Supply America: Leading Change in Distribution's Future." The series is in its third season and showcases eight companies operating as a "force for good."



Amanda Nelson-Sasse

For Nelson-Jameson, acting as a force for good is nothing new. Father-son team **Earl** and **Ted Nelson**, two of the company's founders and eventual sole owners, set out to create a family-based company culture. **Amanda Nelson-Sasse**, a fourth-generation owner, says, "Dad (John Nelson) always said that employees were also family. He'd have lunch with them and want to know

what was happening in their lives. If they were dealing with any kind of hardship, he'd find a way to help." Over time, Nelson-Jameson defined its company values as a culture based on honesty, integrity, and kindness, and a commitment to operating in an ethical manner with respect for people, the community, and the environment. Nelson-Sasse continues this family-focused legacy with her work with the Nelson-Jameson Foundation (NJF). NJF anchors its contributions around three pillars: employees, the community, and the industry. More specifically, the foundation provides scholarships for employees' families as well as industry students and grants across a range of needs, including community groups and hardship grants for employees. "Our company has had the same ethos for more than 75 years, and the foundation plays a critical role in the way we express and deliver on the Golden Rule culture," says Nelson-Sasse. Nelson-Jameson's *We Supply America* episode premiered live on LinkedIn on October 5 at 3:00 pm CT. Immediately after the premiere, the film was available for on-demand viewing at <https://wesupplyamerica.net/featured-films/>.

APPLY NOW FOR A UID SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline for scholarship submissions is November 1st.

To download an application, go to www.fisanet.org and click on the Why FISA? tab. In the drop-down menu, click on Targeted Education.

The winners will be announced December 11th. If you have questions, call the FISA office at 336-274-6311.

The University of Innovative Distribution (UID) is an annual, intensive four-day educational program focused on the unique needs of the wholesale distribution industry. FISA is offering two scholarships to the program held March 11-14, 2024 in Indianapolis, IN. One of the scholarships will be designated for a NextGen member under the age of 40.

The scholarships cover the \$1295 tuition cost. Students select their own half or full day courses each day with classes focused on distribution management, territory

sales, marketing, negotiation skills, inventory management, sales management, human resources, leadership, information technologies and many more. Any FISA employee of a member company is eligible to apply for the scholarship as long as he/she has been employed in the industry for two years. Applicants provide a letter of recommendation from a company principal or manager and write a short essay about their reasons for wanting to attend.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

■ Control & Power Systems, Inc.

Contact: Chad Hawkins
17 Spielman Road
Fairfield, NJ 07004
(262) 909-2864
chad.hawkins@c-p-s.com
www.c-p-s.com

Part of the DCI family of companies, CPS is a full-service systems engineering, integration, and fabrication company with over four decades of experience. Since opening our doors in 1979, CPS has grown into one of the most reliable and talented firms dedicated to custom solutions. CPS offers in-house electrical, mechanical, process and automation engineering capabilities. Whether your needs are in the areas of automation engineering, data/information technology, process equipment design, skid design and fabrication, electrical/instrumentation design or qualification/validation, partnering with CPS means we will deliver a complete range of solutions.

■ Wila A/S

Contact: Felicity Plansky
908 1st Street
Hudson, WI 54016
(715) 307-5154
www.wila.dk

Wila A/S offers stainless steel 3A and ASME membrane housings and tubular heat exchangers for process equipment within sanitary industries such as the food, beverage, and pharma industries.

At Wila, we are experts in membrane housings and tubular heat exchangers. By supplying these products to major parts of the food and beverage industry, we develop solutions for some of the most advanced lines of business.

■ Graco, Inc.

Contact: Kevin Jagielski
12655 West French Lake Rd.
Dayton, MN 55327
(612) 804-5882

Graco, Inc. is a hygienic pump manufacturer specializing in FDA certified pneumatic and electric double diaphragm pumps, high viscosity unloading systems and ingredient metering pumps serving the food, beverage, personal care and pharma markets.

INTRODUCING FISA'S NEWEST PROGRAM: THE FISA BUSINESS ACADEMY!

This program will begin on March 20, 2024 — registration information will be coming in November. Plan to sign up early while the early-bird pricing is still available, to save \$200 on your registration.

The FISA Business Academy is a fully virtual education program. Based on the fundamentals of an executive-MBA curriculum, but streamlined into a practical and engaging 10-week learning experience. The program will help you and your team learn, understand, and immediately apply pragmatic management skills and financial knowledge.

During this program, you will have 10 weeks of self-paced learning paired with six live facilitated learning discussions, all along with a cohort of your FISA peers & our guest experts for additional networking and social learning.

- 10 e-Learning modules, based on an executive-MBA curriculum.
- Network with your FISA peers & experts during live conversations.
- All in a streamlined program built for the working professional.

If you have any questions about this program please call FISA at 336-274-6311. We are excited to invite you to join this fantastic new educational resource from FISA!

**Based on an MBA curriculum,
Built for the hygienic processing
industry.**

FISA brings you our newest resource, a 10-week, fully-virtual training with content based on an MBA curriculum, in the FISA Business Academy.

- Refine your leadership skills
- Master people management
- Demystify the finances
- Grow your bottom line!

The Transformation

FISA Business Academy is a 10-week digital-first program for both the current & future leaders of the Hygienic Processing Industry to master the skills of organizational leadership, people management, & business finance.

WEEK 1 & 2



Vision, Goals, & Planning Process

WEEK 3 & 4



Coaching Teams & Serving Customers

WEEK 5 & 6



Empowering People & Systems of Management

WEEK 7 & 8



Demystify the Finances: A 2-Part Case Study

WEEK 9 & 10



Apply the Finances: Grow the Bottom Line

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

GOLF

Winning Foursome

Per Enochsson, Tetra Pak, Scott Kloetzer, LJ Star Incorporated, Jim Miller, Ferguson Industrial, Mark Wassink, Galloup

Longest Putt Ladies

Jen Harper, Tetra Pak

Longest Putt Men

Mark Stumpf, NOSHOK

Longest Drive Ladies

Abby Webb, Tru-Flo

Closest Pin Men

Dave Pollock, Feldmeier Equipment, Inc.

SPORTING CLAYS

Top Shot

Tanya Wilson, Wayland Industries (33 out of 50)

Hot Shot

Eric Gore, CSI

PICKLEBALL

Champions

Gary Jeral, Nuvonic UV- Aquionics UV, Greg Domino, Anderson Process

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

UID Scholarship Applications Due

DECEMBER 11, 2023

UID Winners Announced

MARCH 11- 14, 2024

UID – Indianapolis, IN

MARCH 20, 2024

FISA Business Academy Virtual 10-week Program

JULY 1, 2024

Renew FISA Membership

SEPTEMBER 12- 15, 2024

2024 FISA Annual Conference

NOTE: If you have a Marketing Manager, email his/her contact information to stella@fisaset.org so that person can be added to database