

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE 2026 FISA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In 2026, as the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its founding, FISA members will gather in one of America's historic settings for an exceptional Annual Conference experience. Set in beautiful Leesburg, Virginia—just outside Washington, DC—the 2026 FISA Annual Conference will bring together industry leaders for four days of insight, connection, and inspiration.

FISA is honored to welcome Tim Tebow as the opening keynote speaker on Thursday evening, September 17. Tebow is a renowned speaker, entrepreneur, college football analyst for ESPN and SEC Network, and author of six New York Times best sellers. He is also the founder of the Tim Tebow Foundation, which is dedicated to bringing Faith, Hope, and Love to those facing difficult circumstances.

Before his career in broadcasting and business, Tebow achieved extraordinary success as a first round NFL draft pick, two-time national champion, Heisman Trophy winner, and College Football Hall of Fame inductee. Today, he shares powerful lessons on leadership, resilience, and purpose. Drawing from his experiences in elite athletics, business, and philanthropy, Tebow challenges audiences to redefine success, not simply by what they accomplish, but by the impact they make. His message will set the tone for the conference and inspire attendees to embrace the conference theme of Thrive Forward.

Thrive Forward

This theme reflects FISA's own history of growth and evolution. Many FISA member companies began more than 100 years ago serving dairy processors. Over time, members expanded into food and beverage, pharmaceutical and bio-pharmaceutical, and personal care industries. Today, FISA members are also serving emerging markets such as data centers with hygienic process-



Tim Tebow is speaking at dinner on Thursday, September 17.

ing solutions. While our industry continues to evolve, one constant remains: change is inevitable, and the pace of change is accelerating. The 2026 Annual Conference will provide valuable insights and connections to help members successfully navigate the future.

The conference will take place September 17–20, 2026, at the Lansdowne Resort. Activities will begin on Wednesday, September 16, with the popular NextGen gathering for members under 40, offering valuable opportunities for emerging leaders to connect and build relationships.

Thursday's events will include the FISA Golf Tournament, as well as a guided tour of Washington, DC, giving attendees the opportunity to experience the landmarks and history of our nation's capital. The First-Timers Meeting will be held later that afternoon, followed by a cocktail reception and opening dinner featuring keynote speaker Tim Tebow. Throughout the conference, attendees will benefit from informative speakers, meaningful discussions, and numerous networking opportunities. Additional keynote speakers and a detailed conference agenda will be announced in the coming months, with registration opening around May 1.

Building Relationships

Each year, the FISA Annual Conference brings together leaders from distribution and manufacturing companies to strengthen partnerships, exchange ideas, and build new business relationships. It is a unique opportunity to step away from daily operations, gain fresh perspective, and connect with peers who share a commitment to excellence and growth.

Make plans now to join your fellow FISA members for this historic and inspiring event. The 2026 FISA Annual Conference promises to be an unforgettable experience as we celebrate our industry, our partnerships, and our future together.



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.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



In January, your FISA Board and Committee leaders came together for our annual Planning Session to evaluate our current position, industry direction, and how FISA will lead in 2026. The conversation was candid, strategic, and

forward-looking. We assessed business conditions, member engagement, educational programming, and conference performance with one clear objective: delivering measurable value to our members. The direction for this year can be summarized in two words: **Thrive Forward.**

Optimism Grounded in Reality

The consensus was clear: Last year was a solid year for most member companies. Many firms added new supplier or distributor lines, and increasing clarity around tariffs will support stronger planning in 2026. At the same time, we addressed pressure points that remain:

- Labor shortages, particularly in field service and operational roles
- Extended lead times driven by strong demand for hygienic equipment
- Data center expansion tightening raw material supply
- Heightened complexity with commercial terms and conditions
- Expanding practical applications of AI inside member companies

FISA members serve diverse hygienic processing markets, and that diversity positions us well for sustained growth. It also ensures that FISA benefits from broad, informed perspectives that strengthen our collective direction.

Shaped By Member Feedback

The 2026 Annual Conference reflects thoughtful input from our members. After reviewing post-conference surveys and financial performance, we identified clear opportunities to elevate the overall conference experience. While sponsorships and attendance remain strong, our responsibility is continuous improvement.

In direct response to member feedback, the 2026 Conference will include:

- Agenda time changes with later starts for breakfast and cocktail receptions.
- Increased investment in speaker quality and content impact
- Enhanced sponsor recognition opportunities
- Elevated networking opportunities

You challenged us to raise the caliber of our speakers. We responded accordingly. This year's program opens with a Thursday night dinner featuring nationally recognized keynote speaker Tim Tebow — a strong and energizing launch to the Conference.

Additional sessions will focus squarely on the issues shaping your businesses:

- Economic outlook
- Cybersecurity and emerging digital risks
- Pricing strategy
- Leadership under pressure

Excellence in Education

FISA continues to strengthen and grow our member companies through relationships, connectivity, and education. This month, six members will attend the University of Innovative Distribution (UID). Once again, congratulations to our UID scholarship recipients, Alex Stueve and Jared Hively. In addition, thirty members are participating in the FISA Business Academy, continuing the strong momentum from last year. These programs represent more than participation numbers. They reflect companies making intentional investments in leadership capability, financial acumen, operational excellence, and the long-term stewardship of our industry.

We also reviewed committee initiatives designed to deepen engagement and education across generations and roles:

- **WISDOM** remains focused on recruiting, retention, and cultural influence.
- **NextGen** continues to increase participation and elevate the quality of virtual programming.
- **Engagement & Technology** efforts continue to expand FISA's social media reach and strengthen digital connectivity.

Across all these efforts, one principle remains clear: education is central to FISA's mission. Excellence in education is not an initiative for a single year; it is a long-term commitment to developing stronger companies and stronger leaders. FISA remains focused on strengthening distributor–manufacturer relationships, investing in education, elevating thought leadership, and ensuring our members are positioned not just to respond to change—but to lead through it.

Thank you for your engagement, your feedback, and your continued commitment to FISA.

Together, we will Thrive Forward.



Joe Reynolds, Central States Industrial (CSI)

VIRTUAL FISA BUSINESS ACADEMY STARTS MARCH 11

March 11 is the kick-off of the 10-week FISA Business Academy, a fully digital program designed for current and aspiring leaders in the hygienic processing industry. Focused on the essentials of people management and business finance, it empowers managers at every stage of their careers to reskill and upskill effectively. FISA has partnered with the learning platform GoalMakers to deliver this learning experience.

Thirty students from nine different FISA companies are participating in the Academy this year. A highlight of the program is that every two weeks there will be online sessions with FISA experts sharing their hands-on experience. Bryan Downer, VP of Sales at Sani-Matic, will be leading the sessions on organizational leadership and people management while Michael Spohn,

Chief Financial Officer of M.G Newell Corporation, will lead sessions on mastering the financials.

Participants in the 2026 FISA Business Academy include: **Alfa Laval:** Jodi Denice, Ty Anderson, Jonathan Sitzman; **Anderson Process:** Kim Lueck, Matt Kacsur, Joe Miserendino; **Central States Industrial:** Josh Lancaster, Melissa Pitfield, Cole Hanson; **Endress-Hausser:** Scott Stewart, Gary Ratajczak, Sezer Ersoy Yilmaz, Claudia Foster, Riley Parshall; **M.G. Newell Corporation:** Ashley Smith, Nick Grindle, Raymond Bennett, Keith Curtis, Nate Wood, Kennon Hydock, Joseph Graf; **Oliver M. Dean:** Shivani Jain, Michael Kichura; **Sani-Matic:** Erin Breindel, Mesh Naidoo, Mike Borkowski; **SPX Flow:** Patrick Scheurell; **VNE Corporation:** Mike Flitcroft, Sam Hayes, and Tom Olsen.

UID IS MARCH 16-19 IN INDIANAPOLIS

This year, six FISA members are joining the more than 420 students enrolled in the University of Innovative Distribution taking place March 16-19, 2026 in Indianapolis, IN. This is a concentrated educational program focused on the unique need of wholesale distribution. Participants select their curriculum from one of five tracks being taught by world class instructors. The tracks offered are Distribution Strategy, Leadership, Management/HR, Operations, or Sales/Marketing.



FISA UID 2026 participants include: Brett Zelle, Anderson Process; Jared Hively and Alex Stueve, FCX Performance; and Adam Reno, Ashley Rentz and Michael Wilke from Nelson-Jameson, Inc.

2026 Planning Meeting Attendees



(L to R) Shawn Breeden, Pentair, Steve Carver, The Williams-Carver Company, Andy Soukup, Triplex Sales, Joe Reynolds, CSI, Emily Gentile, OCS Process Systems, Gray Sherrill, M.G. Newell Corporation, John Georgen, VNE, Jeff Heerema, Heerema Company, Devon Vogel, Nelson-Jameson Inc, Jason Ryan, FCX Performance and Dan Eldon, Oliver M. Dean Inc.

BOARD BRIEFS

The FISA Board of Directors met in Naples, Florida on January 13, 2026. Stella Jones reported a current membership of 107 companies with 47 Distribution companies, 55 Manufacturing companies and five Associate members.

- A motion was made and passed that the 2027 budget be approved
- A motion was made and passed that FISA again sponsor two scholarships to UID in 2027 with deadline for applications being November 1, 2026
- Devon Vogel of Nelson-Jameson Inc. will chair the 2026 FISA Annual Conference in Leesburg, VA
- Dan Eldon of Oliver M. Dean Inc. and Gray Sherrill of M.G. Newell Corporation will chair the 2026 Sponsorship Committee for the Conference
- Jason Ryan, FCX Performance, will chair Conference registration through Cvent
- Emily Gentile, OCS Process Systems, is Chairman of the NextGen group
- Devon Vogel, Nelson-Jameson, and Ali Legatt, DCI Inc are WISDOM Coordinators
- Andy Soukup, Triplex Sales, is the Engagement Chair and will be responsible for the conference app, assisting with the FISA website and outreach to grow FISA membership through LinkedIn
- The Board discussed possible locations for the 2027 FISA Annual Conference and suggested Stella Jones investigate options in the Western part of the US.

YOU'RE PROBABLY USING THE WRONG AI TOOL FOR THE JOB: WEB SEARCH IN A GENERATIVE AI AGE



By Sam Richter,
www.samrichter.com

Sam Richter is a Hall of Fame keynote speaker and world-recognized expert in Generative AI and sales insight. He helps organizations confidently implement AI using practical tools and proven strategies that drive profitability through efficiency, creativity, and competitive differentiation.

Everyone seems to be using AI these days. ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Claude, Perplexity. The names come up constantly in meetings, on LinkedIn, at conferences. And yet most business professionals, salespeople, and executives are doing the same thing with all of them: typing a question and hoping for a good answer.

That approach works sometimes. But it also means you're leaving a lot on the table. Because these tools are not interchangeable. They were built differently, they think differently, and they're genuinely good at very different things. Knowing which one to reach for, and when, is quickly becoming one of the most practical business skills you can develop.

Let me break down what you need to know.

Traditional Search Engines: Still the Backbone of Precision Research

Even as AI tools have exploded in capability, traditional search engines remain indispensable for finding specific, targeted information. Here's why:

1. Boolean Searches: The Power of Precision

Think of Boolean as the difference between asking a librarian "find me something about widgets" versus "find me articles published this year, from trade publications, that mention widgets AND supply chain challenges, but NOT anything about retail pricing." The second request gets you exactly what you need. That's Boolean.

Search engines like Google allow you to use quotation marks to find exact phrases, minus signs to exclude unwanted terms, and specialized operators like site:, filetype:, and intitle: to laser-focus your results. I've built my entire career around teaching these techniques, and tools like YouGotIntel.com and IntelNgin.com exist precisely because most people don't have the time or inclination to master Boolean themselves. These tools automate the complex searching so you get precise results without the learning curve.

AI search tools, by contrast, are generally not designed for this kind of surgical precision. They interpret your intent, which is often helpful, but sometimes gets in the way when you need an exact, unambiguous result.

2. Real-Time, Indexed Web Results

Search engines crawl and index the live web constantly. When something is published today, a press release, a news article, a regulatory filing, it can show up in a Google search within hours. For researching prospects, competitors, or markets, that recency matters enormously.

Most AI tools have moved toward incorporating web search, but they still interpret and summarize results rather than simply surfacing them. That's a fundamental difference worth understanding.

3. Structured Information and Filters

Google's ability to filter results by date, file type, domain, location, and other factors remains unmatched for precision research. The ability to find all PDF documents published in the last six months from a specific company's website, for example, is where traditional search still rules. You can experience some of these advanced search capabilities for free at YouGotIntel.com.

The Generative AI Tools: Not All Created Equal

The AI tools have proliferated rapidly, and they are not all the same. Each has a distinct personality, strength, and ideal use case. Here's how I'd characterize each one for business and sales research purposes:

ChatGPT (OpenAI)

ChatGPT remains the most widely recognized AI tool, and for good reason. It's enormously versatile. The platform's most recent major model brought substantial improvements in reasoning accuracy and instruction-following. For salespeople and business professionals, ChatGPT shines at synthesizing general information, drafting outreach and research summaries, and conducting multi-step, in-depth research through its "Deep Research" feature, which is available to paid subscribers and delivers a comprehensive, sourced report on virtually any topic.

One important caveat: ChatGPT can sound very confident even when information is outdated or uncertain. Always verify critical facts and treat its output as a strong starting point rather than a final answer.

Google Gemini

Gemini's biggest advantage is where it lives.

If your team runs on Google Workspace, including Gmail, Docs, Sheets, and Drive, Gemini is deeply embedded in those tools. That integration means you can analyze documents, summarize email threads, and research topics without constantly switching between applications. Gemini also handles multimodal inputs well, meaning it can process images, documents, and text together.

For business research, Gemini is particularly valuable when you're already working within the Google ecosystem and want AI assistance that connects directly to your files and workflows.

Microsoft Copilot

Copilot is Microsoft's AI layer, built on top of Bing and integrated throughout Microsoft 365. If your organization runs on Teams, Outlook, Word, and Excel, Copilot can be a genuine productivity multiplier. Like Gemini for Google users, Copilot's core strength is contextual access to your actual work environment. It can draft emails, summarize meetings, and pull together information from across your Microsoft tools.

As a standalone research tool for finding external business intelligence, Copilot is useful but still trails the dedicated research-focused platforms below.

Claude (Anthropic)

Claude is the tool I'd reach for when I need to analyze a long, complex document and trust that the analysis is accurate and thorough. Claude has developed a reputation for precision, careful reasoning, and following complex instructions without wandering off-topic. It handles extended, nuanced conversations particularly well, the kind where you're working through a complicated research question across multiple exchanges.

For research involving lengthy reports, financial filings, or multi-page documents, Claude's ability to maintain context and deliver careful, structured analysis is hard to beat. It's less flashy than some of the other tools, but that's somewhat the point.

Perplexity

Of all the AI tools, Perplexity operates most like a next-generation search engine. Rather than simply generating an answer from its training data, Perplexity actively searches the web in real time and provides cited, sourced responses. You can see exactly where the information came from and follow the original links.

For sales and business research, this matters a great deal. When I need current information about a prospect's company, recent industry trends, or competitive landscape data and I want to be able to verify the sources, Perplexity is often the right starting point. It doesn't replace Boolean-powered precision searches, but it's excellent for getting a fast, sourced overview of a topic.

The "Hallucination" Problem: Why This Matters for Your Business

Here's something you must understand about all of these AI tools: they can, and do, make things up. The technical term is "hallucination," and it's not really a bug so much as an inherent characteristic of how these systems work. They generate plausible-sounding text based on patterns in their training data. When they don't know something, they can still produce a confident-sounding answer that is simply wrong.

This is why Perplexity's citation model is valuable. It gives you sources to verify. It's why I always recommend treating AI research output as a first draft, not a final answer. And it's why, for critical business decisions, you still need to confirm AI-generated information through primary sources.

The old search mantra I've always preached, "garbage in, garbage out; good stuff in, good stuff out," now has a companion rule: verify, verify, verify.

So When Do You Use Which Tool for Search and Research?

Here's my practical guide for business professionals and salespeople:

Use Google (with Boolean or tools like You-GotIntel.com and IntelNgin.com) when:

- You need to find something very specific and precise, like a filing, a document, or content buried on a particular website
- You need the most current information available, indexed within the last hours or days
- You want to filter results by date, file type, location, or domain
- You can't afford to miss something because an AI paraphrased or skipped over it

Use Perplexity when:

- You want a fast overview of a company, competitor, or industry topic with sources you can actually verify
- You need to confirm a current fact and want to see exactly where the information comes from

- You're starting research on an unfamiliar topic and need a credible, cited foundation to build on

Use ChatGPT when:

- You want to dig deep on a topic and have it pull from multiple sources into one comprehensive research summary, using its paid "Deep Research" feature
- You need to ask follow-up questions and refine your research through a back-and-forth conversation

Use Gemini when:

- You want to research a topic while simultaneously referencing documents, emails, or files already in your Google Drive
- You need AI-assisted research that connects to information you already have, not just the open web

Use Copilot when:

- You want to research a topic in the context of information stored across your Microsoft 365 environment, including emails, documents, and meeting notes

Use Claude when:

- You have a lengthy document, report, or set of files you need thoroughly analyzed and summarized
- You need to ask complex, multi-layered research questions and want careful, precise answers that stay on topic

The Bottom Line

The question is no longer "will AI replace Google?" The real question is whether you know how to use each of these tools for what they're actually good at.

The professionals who will win in this environment are not the ones who pick a single AI tool and use it for everything. They're the ones who understand the strengths and limitations of each resource and match the right tool to the right task.

Traditional Boolean-powered search, or tools that automate it for you, remains irreplaceable when precision matters. AI tools have become genuinely powerful partners for synthesis, analysis, and preparation, but only when you know what to ask, how to verify what comes back, and which platform to open in the first place.

The opportunity has never been greater. The advantage goes to whoever learns to use these tools smarter than everyone else.

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 June 1, 2026. 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@fisanet.org

Anderson-Negele



Anant Aggarwal

Anderson-Negele announces the appointment of **Anant Aggarwal** as Global Head of Product Management & Marketing. Aggarwal brings more than 16 years of global product and engineering leadership experience, including senior roles at OSRAM GmbH and Sensata Technologies. He will lead global product strategy with a focus on accelerating innovation-led roadmap, advancing new product launches, and translating customer insight into scalable solutions – supporting Anderson-Negele’s next phase of growth in hygienic and Industrial measurement technologies.

Steel & O’Brien Manufacturing

Steel & O’Brien Manufacturing is pleased to announce the appointment of **Mike Lewis** as Vice President of Sanitary & Bioprocessing. In this role, he leads strategy, commercial growth, and operational alignment across the company’s sanitary and high-purity product portfolio. With more than 20 years of experience in complex, value-based sales environments, Mike brings a disciplined, systems-driven approach to scaling revenue and building high-performing teams. Prior to joining Steel & O’Brien, he held senior leadership roles at Danaher Corporation and its operating companies, including Hach, where he led global software and engineered solutions initiatives and consistently exceeded growth targets. Mike’s roles have focused on solutions and services that deliver value to customers through efficiencies, surety, and risk mitigation. Mike is formally trained in the Danaher Business System and holds a degree in Chemistry from DePauw University. He resides in Indianapolis.

About Steel & O’Brien Manufacturing

Headquartered in Arcade, NY, Steel & O’Brien manufactures stainless steel process equipment—including sanitary and BPE fittings, tubing, and valves—for industries requiring strict hygienic and high-purity standards. For more information, visit steelobrien.com.

Fristam Pumps USA



Jack Mitchell

Fristam Pumps USA is pleased to announce the appointment of **Jack Mitchell** as OEM Manager, succeeding longtime OEM Manager **Tom Garrity**, who will soon retire. We extend our sincere gratitude to Tom for his many years of dedicated service, leadership, and commitment to sup-

porting our OEM partners. In his new role, Jack will oversee OEM account management, technical support, and strategic partnership development. With a strong background in chemical engineering, hygienic process system design, and project execution, Jack brings a well-rounded blend of technical expertise and customer-focused experience that will help strengthen Fristam’s OEM relationships and support long-term growth. Jack holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering



Roman Andrew

from Michigan Technological University. Fristam Pumps USA also is pleased to announce the addition of **Roman Andrew** to its team as an Applications Engineer. In this role, Roman will provide both in-house and in-field technical support, assisting customers with pump selection, application guidance, and system troubleshooting, as well as delivering customer service. Roman holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin–Platteville. He first joined Fristam as a Design Engineer Intern during his undergraduate studies, working during summer and winter breaks over a two-year period to gain valuable hands-on experience. Roman’s familiarity with Fristam’s products, processes, and the industries it serves makes him a strong asset to the team.



Erich Inglin

Fristam Pumps USA is also pleased to announce the addition of **Erich Inglin** as Application Engineer, further strengthening the company’s technical support team and commitment to delivering expert hygienic process solutions to customers across North America. In his new role, Erich will support customers, channel partners, and internal sales teams by providing application guidance, product selection, troubleshooting support, and on-site assistance. With more than 10 years of experience in application engineering and industrial automation, Erich holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

About Fristam Pumps USA

Fristam Pumps USA, based in Middleton, WI, is a leading global manufacturer of sanitary centrifugal and positive displacement pumps, blenders, and mixers. The company provides high-performance solutions to the beverage, dairy, food, and pharmaceutical/biotech industries worldwide.

Ampco Pumps Company

Ampco Pumps Company, a manufacturer of pumps and mixing & blending equipment for sanitary and industrial markets, is pleased to announce **Lee Holliday** as the new Southeast



Lee Holiday

Regional Sales Manager (Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi). Lee joins Ampco Pumps following a distinguished tenure in process technology for the food and beverage, pharmaceutical, and chemical industries. His extensive background in process engineering and high-shear mixing equipment gives him a unique vantage point on the complex fluid-handling challenges faced by processing facilities. Lee's responsibilities also include managing sales activities, supporting the company's valued distributors, and expanding Ampco's presence across the Southeast



Joe Denney

territory. Ampco Pumps Company also is pleased to announce the appointment of **Joe Denney** as the new Regional Sales Manager for the Mid-East territory (Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia and Virginia). His proven expertise in optimizing fluid handling systems and understanding complex process requirements will be invaluable to Ampco's customers and distributor network.

About Ampco Pumps Company

Ampco Pumps Company, is a global manufacturer of centrifugal and positive displacement pumps, including the Ampco Applied Products division of mixing & blending and product unloading equipment. Headquartered in Glendale, Wisconsin and internationally positioned from the Ampco Pumps Company GmbH facility, located in Herxheim Germany, the Ampco Pumps Company serves the sanitary, marine and industrial markets.

Rodem Inc.

Bryan Rumrill has been appointed as the new lead over Sales and Marketing as the Director of Sales and Marketing. This achievement is a testament to Bryan's hard work, dedication, and exceptional skills. Rodem also is excited to welcome **Todd Driscoll**



Bryan Rumrill



Todd Driscoll

to the team as our new Northern Regional Sales Manager, working out of our HQ in Harrison, Ohio. Todd will be leading the Account Manager team across Ohio, Indiana,

Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Todd brings decades of experience in industrial sales and project management, with a background that spans both the distributor and manufacturer sides of the industry. We're thrilled to have Todd on board and look forward to the leadership, energy, and expertise he'll bring to the Sales Team and the entire company.

M.G. Newell Corporation

M.G. Newell is pleased to announce that



Andrew Daigle

Andrew Daigle has joined the company as an Outside Sales Representative for Newell Automation. In this role, Andrew will report to **Tim Ruff**, General Manager of the Greensboro Division. Andrew brings more than eight years of engineering and system controls experience to M.G. Newell. Previously, Andrew worked for Carolina Foods in Charlotte for three years as their plant manager. Andrew has a B.S. in Industrial Engineering from North Carolina State University.



Charlie Feagin

Charlie Feagin has joined the company as a Control Systems Engineer. In this role, Charlie will report to **Will Castrey**, Director of Engineering for Newell Automation. Charlie brings over 20 years of engineering and system controls experience to M.G. Newell. Previously, Charlie worked for Proctor & Gamble Corporation in Greensboro for three years as their Sr. Power Controls & Information System Engineer. Charlie has a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Buffalo.

Burkert Fluid Control Systems

Michael Juarez is the newest Area Sales Manager at Burkert Fluid Control Systems, and lives in San Antonio, Texas. He is covering the South-Central territory, including Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. With a Mechanical Engineering



Michael Juarez

background and experience in automation, capital equipment, and extensive exposure to the food industry, Michael is poised to contribute to the expertise and legacy of the Burkert name. He comes to Burkert most recently from Ensign Solutions, where he managed and developed a similar territory, successfully supplying capital

equipment within the Food and Beverage sectors.

Crane Engineering

Crane Engineering, one of Wisconsin's providers of fluid technology solutions, is excited to announce the completed 43,462 sq. ft. expansion of its Service Center in Kimberly, WI. This expansion enhances the company's capacity to serve customers across the Midwest with faster turnaround times and broader repair capabilities.

The upgraded facility has many additional features including space to triple inventory capacity and enabling plans to double the service technician team. The Service Center has been serving municipal, industrial, and food processing customers since 1991. With the latest updates, the facility will continue providing factory-authorized repairs, rebuilds, and field services.

LJ Star



Sam Weeman

We are pleased to highlight **Sam Weeman** as a new integral part of the LJ Star team as a Lead Engineer. Joining our team in May 2025, he is a 2016/2022 University of Akron Alum-

ni with a BSE and MSE in Mechanical Engineering and was previously employed with Test-Fuchs Corporation for eight years. Sam leverages his background in aerospace mechanical design to enhance our engineering capabilities. He collaborates extensively with our internal teams to refine and grow our product offerings and streamline supply chain and process efficiencies. His experience in technical quoting, sourcing, and system design is an essential asset to our daily operations.

Dixon Sanitary



Mike Zande

Dixon® Sanitary is pleased to announce the addition of **Mike Zande** to our Sales Engineering team. Mike brings a strong foundation in mechanical engineering, including leading design initiatives and developing custom solutions that enhance manufacturability, efficiency, and product performance. His background strengthens Dixon's ability to deliver application-driven solutions to sanitary processing customers. In his role, Mike will support distributors and end users with technical guidance, project execution, and tailored solutions to meet specific system requirements.

BRUCE MICHAEL ANNOUNCES HIS RETIREMENT

Bruce Michael, known within FISA as “the father of sporting clays” has announced his retirement from Girton effective April 30, 2026. Bruce joined the Girton team in April of 1971 and worked in steel inventory and as a welder for 1½ years. After working with the customer service team for five years, he joined the Laboratory Equipment Sales Division followed by the Food and Thermal Equipment Sales Division. Bruce was then promoted to the position of Director of Sales in 2016 where he currently oversees the Laboratory, Pharmaceutical, Thermal and Food Sales Divisions.



provided the foundation for sporting clays to thrive.

When asked to think back over FISA’s different conference locations and name a favorite shooting venue, Bruce does not hesitate. He says, “By far, the best venue has been Addieville East Farms in Mapleville, RI. We first went there when we met in Cape

Cod in 2006, and then we returned in 2014 when we were meeting in Newport, RI. Each time, it was a long drive, but well worth the trip.”

Outside of working at Girton and participating in FISA, Bruce’s hobbies are watching baseball, mostly Little League, high school, and college and announcing several Little League and High school games each season. He and his wife, Michelle, enjoy attending carnivals and festivals, listening to Country Western and Fifties and Sixties music. He enjoys all aspects of shooting whether it be handgun, rifle or shotgun and has been President of his local gun club for the past 34 years. He also has been serving as President of his Boro Council for the past 26 years and maintains a fleet of vehicles in his garage for himself and family members. He and Michelle have two children and three grandchildren.

FISA thanks Bruce Michael for many years of contributing to the success of the FISA Annual Conferences and leaving a legacy of dedicated service.

Bruce served on the FISA Board of Directors from 2006–2009, and he has been representing Girton at FISA annual conferences for 31 years. It was in 2003, when FISA was meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, that Bruce suggested FISA offer sporting clays as one of the events for attendees. He organized the Williamsburg event and served as chairman of sporting clays that first year when a small group of enthusiasts signed up to participate.

Since then, sporting clays has become one of the most popular events FISA offers and has gained a regular following typically attracting about 30 participants. Each year, Bruce has been the organizer handling all the details of the shooting venue and dividing the participants into squads. His meticulous attention to details have

JOIN WISDOM NOW

WISDOM (Women in Sanitary Distribution or Manufacturing) wants you to join the database so you can be part of future virtual events.

A spring event is in the works, and our goal is simple: grow the network, strengthen the connections, and amplify the impact of women across FISA.

Joining is simple:

1. Send an email to FISA Executive Director, Stella Jones, at stella@fisamet.org

2. Put WISDOM in the subject line
3. Include your name and email address in the body

That’s it!

If you know women in your company who didn’t receive an invitation last fall, please encourage them to join the database now. The more voices we bring together, the stronger our community becomes. Let’s build more connections for women in FISA.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Crane Engineering

Contact: Carlos Garcia
707 Ford Street
Kimberly, WI 54136
(313) 595-0249

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Crane Group is a nationally recognized flow control technology & service platform. We are committed to innovation, customer service, and applying deep product and system expertise to solve real-world challenges across industrial, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, and municipal water/wastewater markets throughout North America. We provide a one-stop shop for pumps, valves & instrumentation, mixers, filtration, mechanical seals, blowers, vacuum pumps, controls & integration, compressed air, and water/wastewater treatment equipment. Our regionally based, OEM-authorized service centers deliver expert technical support, troubleshooting, and root cause failure analysis. More than a supplier, we are a reliability partner helping customers optimize facilities with greater uptime, efficiency, safety, and confidence. Crane Group also designs and manufactures custom-engineered skid systems that enhance safety and reduce operating costs.

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