Hello Eastern Illinois Chapter. First of all – I hope you all have a wonderful and happy Thanksgiving. In this crazy year, I believe it’s more important than ever to identify what we’re thankful for. For me, I’m thankful for my family, health, business, employees, fellow industry professionals and this chapter, to name a few. What about you?

Now onto the business. This month’s “Eastwords” is going to focus on finding business success within our industry during COVID. Many sectors have been hit hard by this pandemic, including our own. As I’ve had conversations with firm owners and industry professionals about layoffs and slowdowns in new work, I’ve realized that it’s our responsibility as an industry organization to provide guidance and stability for our members.

Here are some suggestions for setting your firm and yourself up for a successful 2021.
1. Be agile and capable of adjusting your business plans on the fly.
3. Employ marketing campaigns to obtain 2021 projects now.
4. Identify emerging business concepts that require design services in order to open.
5. Submit pre-qualification materials to city and state agencies (government and public work is plentiful right now).
6. Network with purpose.
7. Update your resume.

While these are broad recommendations, I believe if you apply them to your specific business operations, you’ll see success in 2021.

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President’s Message
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goals and professional life, you will be setting your­self up for a successful 2021.

In 2020, I graduated from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program and the Small Business Administration Emerging Leaders Program. One of the most important points I took away from these classes was the emphasis on hav­ing a plan to follow. We’ve instituted this practice at JP Architects, Ltd. and have experienced tremen­dous success, even through a tumultuous 2020. If the architectural industry is going recover and thrive during these times, I believe it’s essential to share best practices and success stories so our fellow professionals can establish processes that will lead to success.

Wishing you and yours a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

Until next time,
Jose Pareja, AIA
EIC President

Chapter Corner
Design Awards

The AIA/EIC travelling awards display was at the Manteno Public Library during October.

This year’s Design Awards entries have been submitted and are in the judging process. Winners will be announced in December. Go to aiaiec.org/survey.php?id=4 for information that may impact the awards ceremony, then watch your email for details!

“Eastwords” is the monthly publication of the American Institute of Architects/ Eastern Illinois Chapter. Opinions expressed are those of the particular author and not necessarily those of AIA/EIC. Submit articles to the editor, Roxanne Paukner, Hon. AIA, rp.entasis@att.net. For advertising information, contact Edvin Mertdogan, AIA at emertdogan@yahoo.com.
I was curious how meeting remotely had affected attendance at chapter meetings. There’s no cost and no commute, so maybe it’s higher? Obviously no one knew this would be an extended absence, or how deadly this virus might be, so the first two meetings were suspended. Then when it became clear that, while it wasn’t so infectious or deadly that we all had to maintain total isolation, there remained enough caution not to congregate in crowded rooms. Thus, in-person chapter meetings are still out for the time being.

By now most of us are comfortable with virtual meeting technology, which is surprisingly intuitive and user-friendly. It works well enough to conduct conversations and business. What is missed is a certain connectedness, the optimal level of engagement that comes from being in the same room. There can be no handshakes, side conversations, or shared refreshments. Networking doesn’t happen well, as only one person can talk at a time, to everyone. This is no place for one-to-one fellowship. It’s not appropriate for any personal exchange (ie: how’s your son doing at college), so the camaraderie is flat. Don’t you miss live meetings?!

The best attended AIA/EIC events - the golf outing and summer outings - were cancelled altogether this year, and conferences went virtual. Somehow a weekend in front of the computer isn’t as inspiring as going out of town to join up with hundreds of our fellows who share the same interests.

Still, we are in a pinch, and this is better than what we had a decade ago. Without it we likely would have been forced to resume more normal operations. I wonder if that means the shutdown is lasting longer because of technology?

But I digress... I asked Edvin Mertdogan, AIA, who has been my go-to this year, a one man band, the swiss army knife of the EIC, how going virtual had impacted attendance at AIA/EIC meetings. He was kind enough to send me charts and graphs showing that it is down. The typical 2019 meeting had 20-30 in attendance. This pandemic has halved that. And the events with 50, 70, 200 in attendance in 2019 did not take place in 2020, thus those numbers dropped to zero. Those are the hard facts. We are surviving but not thriving in this environment.

I encourage you to keep connected to your chapter. This stay-in-place way of living will not last forever, and we will need to keep the fires of EIC burning in order to have something to return to when things “return to” normal. To that end, please give your two cents worth regarding how to wrap up this year. Our festive annual dinner party must take a different form. Elections, changing of the guard, design awards might still happen, but not with a string quartet and other luxuries we appreciate (more than ever). What will it look like? That all depends on your feedback! So please participate by taking a very brief survey at https://aiaeic.org/survey.php?id=4

Then do your damnedest to get over the inertia accumulated from not having to get dressed up and drive anywhere for months, and see if you can contribute to making this festivity happen. 2020 might be a year to forget, but if enough participate, you can blow the doors out as it makes it’s exit. Send it out in a memorable way! What does that mean? Everyone drinking together in their slippers? Some showcasing hidden talents? Team trivia on architecture? Design awards winners presenting their entries? Roasting the chapter president? Pet tricks? House tours? I don’t know – it’s all up to you. So get over to that site, give your input, take advantage of the opportunity to get creative if you want. Or not. It’s your chapter.

I wish you all a happy Thanksgiving, and if I don’t see you online, a very Merry Christmas too. Cheers!

Roxanne Paukner, Hon. AIA
“Eastwords” Editor
Reducing Ready-Mix Carbon Emissions

Presenter: Ben Franklin, VP of Technical Services
Sponsor: Ozinga

Thanks to October’s virtual meeting presenter Ben Franklin, VP of Technical Services at OZINGA, and his team, for discussing Reducing Ready-Mix Carbon Emissions. You can find out more by visiting https://concrete.ozinga.com/product/carboncure/.

Students and emerging professionals can purchase study materials from PPI/Kaplan with a 15% discount.

Go to http://aiaeic.org/PPI_Test or contact our membership coordinator John Benware for more information.

To view the available catalog products through PPI/Kaplan, go to: https://ppi2pass.com/customer/account/login/?partnerid=AIAEI&redir=%2F&utm_source=AIAEIaffiliate.
Presenter: Mike Lowery  
Mike Lowery is a partner at A&D Products, LLC an independent roofing and waterproofing manufacturer representative. He has been representing Division 7 building products for over 15 years. Areas of concentration include roof maintenance and restoration, low slope roofing accessories, thermal insulation and commercial waterproofing systems.

Program: Conducting Visual Roof Inspections with a Purpose

Learning Objectives:
By the end of this lesson you should be able to...
· Describe the damage roof leaks can cause
· Conduct visual inspections on roofs
· Describe steps to locate leaks and defects in the roofing system
· Explain proactive roof maintenance techniques to address defects before they become larger issues and to prolong the roof’s service life

Location: On your device screen, wherever you are comfortable.

The ZOOM Link, Meeting ID & Password will be emailed to registrants.

Time: 5:00 pm Board Meeting  
7:00 pm Presentation

Cost: Free

Reservations by Monday, Oct. 26th
Click here to register online, or go to: https://aiaeic.org/meetinginfo.php?id=49
ZOOM Link, Meeting ID & Password will be emailed to registrants.

If you are unable to register online, contact Jonathan Murawski, AIA/EIC Program Coordinator at 815-806-0146 or j.murawski@rjaarchitects.com.
The December

AIA/EIC Annual Party

Due to current health precautions, our chapter unfortunately will not be meeting in person for our annual event. However we have every reason to gather together and celebrate - our design awards, the holiday season, colleagues and friends, the end of 2020 and looking forward to a new year! Please take a moment NOW to provide your input, as our plans must take shape quickly in order to put it together. Go to https://aiaeic.org/survey.php?id=4 for a very brief survey. Thanks!