

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**The Omni Amelia Island Resort & Spa • September 11- 14, 2025**

The location for the 2025 FISA Annual Conference is the Omni Amelia Island Resort & Spa, a premier AAA Four Diamond destination island resort, matched in perfect harmony with nature. Located on Amelia Island, Florida, just 29 miles north of Jacksonville International Airport (JAX), the 1,350-acre property overlooks the blue water of the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the green marshland and Intracoastal Waterway on the west.

All the 402 guest rooms and suites have ocean views and private balconies overlooking the 3.5 miles of beach. Multiple pools also overlook the beach providing a relaxing place for guests to meet. In addition, the Resort has 36 holes of championship golf on property, a full-service luxury spa, large tennis center and miles of nature and hiking trails. Guests may also enjoy the fully equipped fitness center and the indoor lap pool. Many of the networking activities that FISA plans as part of the conference agenda will be offered on property making access convenient. Take your pick from a planned networking activity, a one-on one meeting with a potential partner or simply relaxing on the beach. You will find Amelia Island is the place to be.

### About Amelia Island

Steeped in history and natural beauty, Amelia Island, Florida is the southernmost jewel of the Sea Island chain of barrier islands off the southeastern coast of the United States. Pristine, uncrowded beaches envelop the island's east side, while expansive salt-marsh estuaries lie along the west. It's no wonder locals and visitors on this 13 mile-long and two-mile-wide island feel as though they're a world away from everyone else. And although it may feel that way, Amelia Island is just a 30-minute drive from Jacksonville, Florida making access easy from throughout the country.

Amelia Island has three distinct areas — North, Central and South. At the northern end of the island and only about a twenty-minute drive from the Omni Amelia Island Resort is the town of Fernandina Beach. Historic downtown Fernandina Beach has a unique blend of history, culture, dining and shopping with 50 blocks of island charm. Begin at the harbor-front and make your way down and around historic Centre Street to see it all.

### 2024 FISA ECONOMIC SURVEY

	DISTRIB.	MANUFACT.
	32% Return	28% Return

#### Now that we are nearing the end of 2024, how does your business compare with 2023?

Profits are up	73.33%	17.65%
Profits are down	26.67%	29.41%
Profits are same	0.00%	52.94%

#### Including this year which of these three years has been your best year?

2024	60.00%	41.18%
2023	13.33%	29.41%
2022	26.67%	29.41%

#### For 2025, in which market segments do you anticipate the most growth?

Food	26.67%	23.53%
Dairy	13.33%	5.88%
Beverage	13.33%	11.76%
Pharmaceutical	20.00%	29.41%
Personal Care	6.67%	0.00%
Other	20.00%	29.41%

#### What is the biggest challenge you face going into 2025?

##### DISTRIBUTORS:

- Lack of qualified engineering and project management support
- Lack of skilled labor
- Cost pressures, interest, workforce
- How to meet the demands for our products and keep deliveries to a reasonable time frame
- Uncertainty around tariffs & changes in labor market
- Retaining quality personnel
- Training all the new people that we have onboarded. We have the bodies, all with good pedigrees. Need to now become industry savvy and educated.
- Growing new service offerings
- Finding employees and retaining them
- New import tariffs
- Consolidation of Mfg. by PE firms
- 2024 was a great year. Continuing to grow will be a challenge
- Pending tariffs impact on costs from manufacturer partners
- Tariff uncertainty

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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.

**2024 – 2025  
FISA Board of Directors**

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



FISA Members,

As we enter the holiday season, it's the perfect time to reflect on the year and express gratitude for the many blessings we've enjoyed, both personally and

professionally. In the fast pace of business and life, it's important to pause and appreciate the connections, successes, and shared moments that bring meaning to what we do.

Please know how much we appreciate the support of you, the members, and the great contributions of volunteers who serve on the Board and on the task forces. FISA would not be where it is today without all of you.

FISA recognizes the importance of continuing education, and we continue to support the University of Innovative Distribution (UID) for in-person learning.

Congratulations to our two scholarship winners, John DeBruin and John Gaul, who will be attending UID March 10-13, 2025 in Indianapolis. And if others of you are thinking of attending, I want to remind you to register before January 31st because the tuition goes up after that date. [https://www.univid.org/aws/AEA/pt/sp/UID\\_registration](https://www.univid.org/aws/AEA/pt/sp/UID_registration)

You will notice in our economic survey posted on the first page of this newsletter, that looking to 2025, labor issues continue to be a major concern for our members. Both finding and keeping skilled labor and training younger workers to move into positions vacated as

experienced people retire is an issue. To assist with developing talent within our member companies, we are pleased to once again offer the FISA Business Academy which was new last year and was well received. It is a ten-week digital learning program that begins March 25th. Registration fee is \$995 for a single learner and teams of 5+ are \$795 each. Watch for the registration information coming soon.

As we face a new year, the effect of the tariffs creates an air of uncertainty for all of us — whether we are a manufacturer or a distributor. Our customers are looking to us for answers, and as I write this, no one has a definitive answer on the ripple effect of the tariffs. By being flexible and communicating with our partners, we can work together to best serve our customers. We've weathered these supply chain issues before and will get through it again.

In January, look for the annual member survey which will solicit your opinions and help us plan the content for the 2025 FISA Annual Conference. By pooling our resources, FISA can hire speakers and offer training that an individual company could not do. Building connections and growing together is key to the mission of FISA.

Linda joins me in wishing each of you a healthy, prosperous 2025.

Barry Dobbins

Barry Dobbins, Dobbins Company



*Gratitude is a powerful force that can transform our mindset and well-being. By focusing on the positive aspects of life, even amidst challenges, we shift our attention away from scarcity and frustration to abundance and contentment. When we express gratitude, we cultivate a sense of connection to others and a deeper appreciation for the present moment, fostering happiness and emotional balance. The power of gratitude lies not just in the words we say, but in the mindset we cultivate.*

**Wishing You Health & Happiness in 2025.**

## TWO UID SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS SELECTED

FISA is delighted to announce the selection of two scholarship winners to attend the University of Innovative Distribution (UID) in March of 2025. The two winners are **John Gaul** of Twinco, Inc. and **John DeBruin** of M.G. Newell Corporation.



**John DeBruin**, a FISA NextGen member, is Controls Engineering Manager with M.G. Newell Corporation. John has been

in the industry for eleven years and with Newell for the past seven years. Gray Sherrill, President of M. G. Newell nominated John for the UID scholarship and said, “The unique thing about John’s background is that while he is a control engineer by profession, he is a mechanical engineer from University of Wisconsin – Platteville in 2017. Additionally, he worked all four years of college at Galloway Company. While he is young, he still has over a decade of experience in our industry. He is very active at Newell and is a part of our leadership team, been on the safety committee and been part of our corporate strategic planning team.”

In John’s essay for how he would benefit from attending UID, he said, “The classes offered by UID in management and leadership will provide me with invaluable tools to excel in my role as a Controls Engineering Manager. Effective management and leadership are essential in guiding teams, projects, and fostering innovation. Acquiring advanced knowledge in these areas will enable me to lead my team more effectively, enhancing our project execution and ensuring a higher level of client satisfaction. The aspect of creating a good work culture is equally significant. A positive work environment fosters collaboration, motivation, and innovation. As someone

overseeing engineering projects, I recognize that a motivated and engaged team is more likely to deliver high-quality work. By learning how to create and maintain a positive work culture, I can contribute to the well-being of our employees at M.G. Newell, ensuring job satisfaction and productivity. This, in turn, translates to better service for our clients.”



**John Gaul** is a Controls Engineer with Twinco, Inc. and has been with the company for 19 years. In recommending John for the

scholarship, Jim Meholick, Sales Manager at Twinco, said, “John joined Twinco after graduating from college with an electrical engineering degree. Throughout his career, he has worked to form strong connections and working relationships with our customers. These relationships, coupled with experience, and commitment to customers, has been integral to Twinco’s growth.”

In completing his essay for why he would like to attend UID, John wrote, “When employees retire and vacate crucial roles within the company, a void is created that must be filled by a well-prepared successor. As the most senior engineer behind two mentors who are near retirement, I am faced with the prospect of filling that void and taking on new responsibilities. The seamless transfer of these responsibilities is paramount in maintaining the relationships that have been forged with our customers and vendors and I believe the University of Innovative Distribution program will equip me with the knowledge and skills necessary to assume these responsibilities effectively. The UID program provides a comprehensive curriculum for an employee taking on new roles in distribution. Courses in professional development,

management, marketing, operations and sales will supplement my experience as a process controls engineer which I can use to ensure the continuity of operations and the company’s long-term success.”



**MARCH 10-13, 2025**

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN**

**Register Now**  
**WWW.UNIVID.ORG**

### 2024 FISA ECONOMIC SURVEY

*Continued from page 1...*

#### MANUFACTURERS:

- Uncertainty
- Supply chain, tariffs
- Looking at our distributor network, we’re looking at consolidation options to best serve the marketplace
- The economy & tariff potential
- Corporate consolidation
- Tariff headwinds
- Distributors pushing back on price increases
- New projects in the Food & Beverage sector
- Simply uncertainty what to expect with the economy
- Shrinking revenue.
- Staffing vStaffing/personnel
- Our biggest challenge will be managing rising costs.
- Shortage of qualified labor, welders, metal finishers etc.
- Staffing
- Finding good, qualified candidates.
- As usual, dependable production people

# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS ABOUND FOR FISA MEMBERS

November and December are not only the last months of the calendar year but a time every year when our thoughts turn to celebrating with family, friends and our co-workers. We asked our members to share some of their family and corporate traditions and have highlighted a few for you to enjoy.

## Nelson-Jameson celebrates the holidays with an annual family tradition!



Over 30 years ago a cherished tradition was born at Nelson-Jameson and has continued to be upheld and beloved by all. Every holiday season, the Nelson family continues to support an annual Gift Box, composed of the many delicious products that our customers produce. This time-honored gesture, enjoyed by Nelson-Jameson employees and their families over the years, aims to express our appreciation for the dedication and effort employees invest daily. It also serves to shed light on the profound impact of Nelson-Jameson's involvement in the food industry, while fostering a deeper understanding and gratitude for our customers and the quality products they bring to market to feed the nation and world.

Within the Gift Box, our employees and families have enjoyed many delightful treats and new experiences that are not always easily found in their local market.



Gift Box received!

The opening and sharing of the Gift Box's content has become just as much of a tradition, as the box itself. This spans many generations with the tradition still being to "open" the box virtually with grown children and loved ones who cannot be there in person when the actual opening takes place. We are proud of this time-honored tradition and are anxiously awaiting the 2024 Gift Box to be distributed.



Enjoying the Gift Box

## Rodem, Inc.

LeighAnn Diener Gunter says, "This is the perfect theme for us! We are not just family owned; we consider family one of the core values of our organization. I was going to ask employees to share some of their favorite holiday family traditions and compile them for you. From a quick chat in the break room and pulled from an old internal holiday give away here're some of the Rodem families favorite holiday traditions that were shared with me!"

## Eric Wormus – Procurement Specialist

Some time in the late 70s / early 80s my father-in-law tried to get a Santa costume for Christmas. He was too late, and all the costume place had left was a big brown bear costume. So every year since, the "Christmas Bear" comes down from the

North Pole and brings gifts to the kids. Over the past eight years, I have assumed the role of "Christmas Bear."



Christmas Bear

## Jill Bryant – Human Resources Administrator

We have a pickle ornament hidden on our tree. We compete each year to see who the first to see it is!

## LeighAnn Gunter – Marketing Manager

On Christmas Eve with the Diener family, we all sing Happy Birthday to Jesus while the youngest member of the family puts baby Jesus in the nativity under the tree. It's super sweet and special for whoever's turn it is that year!

## Carrie Scotts – Customer Service

I started a "tradition" with the step-kids when they were young. Their stocking were always stuffed with candy, so I added toothbrushes & socks. I told them a few years ago that I wasn't going to do that anymore, and all three were NOT happy. So, all are now in their 20's, with their own little families, and they all get toothbrushes & socks in their stockings.



## Cathy Demerle – Human Resource Manager

Every year we celebrate my brother's birthday. He was born on December

# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS ABOUND FOR FISA MEMBERS

25th. My whole life Christmas has been associated with his birthday.

## Lindsay Peters – Accounts Payable

We have beef tenderloin for Christmas dinner every year! It used to be Grandpa Bob who made it but Uncle Kip has taken over now and both are made perfectly.

## Jacque Hawkins – Customer Service

I remember being a little girl & driving around with my family to see all of the Christmas lights in the neighborhood!

## Year-Round Traditions at Girton Manufacturing Company.

Girton Manufacturing Co., Inc. started in 1927 and is a manufacturer of stainless-steel washing equipment. Still headquartered in Millville, PA, this long-time FISA member observes many traditions. Bruce Michael, Girton's Director of Sales, says, "We have 11 paid holidays per year. The Thanksgiving Holiday is a little unique here that we obviously start the holiday on Thursday along with the Friday after and the following Monday for deer season. Every year on the second Saturday in August the company sponsors our Annual Picnic at the nationally recognized Knoebel's Amusement Park. In 2025, this will be our 79th Annual Picnic. The 4th of July week is a major event for those of us in the Millville area. One of the largest Firemen's Carnival in the state is held in the Community Park, where all the food stands and amusements are staffed by the local volunteer fire department and community organizations. Several thousands of people attend this yearly event in this small town. I have helped at this carnival for the past 56 years."

## Season of Giving: A DCI Holiday Tradition



At DCI, our commitment to the community is a part of who we are. Every year during the holiday season, we embrace the spirit of giving through our Season of

Giving Program. This year, we're proud to sponsor a family through our local Boys & Girls Club. Together as a team, we'll raise funds, shop for gifts tailored to their needs and wishes, and spend a morning wrapping these special items. It's a tradition that brings us joy and a chance to make a meaningful impact in our community.



Wrapping presents



DCI employees working together

## Celebrating A Unique Christmas Eve Tradition

Many families have traditional ways of celebrating Christmas Eve but the Barry Dobbins's family has a unique way to celebrate and delight their 30 plus family members who come each Christmas Eve. Every year, Barry's wife, Linda, surprises the group with a culinary journey to a different country. When the extended family members arrive in the late afternoon, they'll see the menu printed in the language of the country and try to guess which country is the featured one. Nearby, they'll see the menu printed in English describing the dishes that are displayed.

For Linda, Christmas Eve is the perfect



Linda Dobbins doing her menu research

time to combine her passion for travel and her love of cooking. She guesses this family tradition started about 30 years ago, and she makes it a point not to repeat a country. Her online recipe research starts weeks before Christmas. She then

chooses the country, orders authentic ingredients, and looks forward to creating the dishes for Christmas Eve. Her daughter, Anna Marie, who lives in California gets advance notice of the featured country so she can start researching appropriate games to play that night as well as learning how to say, "Merry

Christmas!" in a new language

And as you can imagine, Barry says he has nothing to do with the preparations but it's always an adventure the family anticipates.

"It's all Linda and her creativity. We've done countries like Russia, Denmark, Switzerland, etc. but this year, Morocco?"



# 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 March 1, 2025. 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@fisaset.org](mailto:stella@fisaset.org)

## Wayland Industries



Paul Ivey

Wayland Industries is pleased to announce the addition of **Paul Ivey** as Business Development Manager for the West Coast Region. Paul has 26 years of experience working with stainless steel & exotic alloys in the Industrial PVF, Sanitary & Long Product markets. Paul lives in Riverside California and will be based out of the Southern California



Alex Moreno

office. Wayland Industries is also pleased to welcome **Alex Moreno** as the new Engineering and Quality Control Manager, based out of the company's Los Angeles location. Alex brings extensive experience in industrial engineering and process optimization. Throughout his career, he has been instrumental in streamlining manufacturing processes, coordinating product launches, and ensuring compliance with industry standards across various sectors, including intermodal, aerospace, and industrial valves and automation. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from California State University, Fullerton.

## DCI, Inc.

DCI, Inc. is excited to announce a leadership transition. Effective December 2, 2024, **Jeff Keller** will continue as Chief Executive Officer



Dan Larsen

while mentoring our new President, **Dan Larsen**. Jeff has been with DCI since 1994 and served as CEO & President since 2006. During his tenure, Jeff's vision and guidance has strengthened and grown DCI's business. Dan Larsen brings over 22 years of leadership experience, including roles at Donaldson Company, Inc., and as President of Hengst Filtration, North America. We thank Jeff for his incredible leadership and welcome Dan to the DCI family as we embark on this exciting new chapter.

## M.G. Newell Corporation

M.G. Newell is pleased to announce that **Emily Harrison** has joined the company as a Project Engineer for their Louisville Division. In this position, Emily will report to Aaron



Emily Harrison

Sprowl, Louisville Engineering Manager. Emily brings over eight years of process and engineering experience in the bourbon industry to M.G. Newell. Previously, Emily worked for Jim Beam for 2½ years. In this role, she was Senior Project Engineer at Jim Beam's Booker Noe facility. Emily has a B.S. and MEng



Raymond Bennett

in Chemical Engineering from the University of Louisville. **Raymond Bennett** has joined the company as a Control Systems Engineer for their Greensboro Division. In this position, Raymond will report to John DeBruin, Greensboro Controls Engineering Manager. Raymond brings experience in controls and automation with a focus on machine vision and robotics. Previously, Raymond



Kennon Hydock

worked for Tellus Products for two years. Raymond has a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Florida State University. **Kennon Hydock** has joined the company as a Senior Control Systems Engineer for their Greensboro Division. In this position, Kennon will report to John DeBruin, Greensboro Controls Engineering Manager. Kennon brings over 10 years of controls and automation engineering experience in the pharmaceutical industry to M.G. Newell. Previously, Kennon worked for CSL Seqirus for three years. Kennon has a B.S. in Microbiology from the University of South Florida.

## QualiTru Sampling Systems



Laura Rock

QualiTru Sampling Systems is excited to welcome **Laura Rock** as their new Vice President of Sales! She is a graduate of St. Cloud State University with a B.S. in Business Management and extensive experience in sales leadership, team development, and performance training,

## Harrington Process Solutions

Harrington Process Solutions, a leading provider of industrial flow control solutions

in the United States, recently announced the acquisition of Fluid Gauge Company (FGC) to expand its metal flow control solution portfolio. Led by President **Caroline Bozin**, FGC is a fourth-generation family business that was founded in 1932. Over the years FGC has grown to become a multifaceted wholesale distributor of flow control solutions to customers in the Northwest and Southwest regions of the U.S.

“FGC has established a strong reputation as a specialty distributor and earned the trust of its customers, some of which have relied on FGC for more than 20 years,” said **Bob Graham**, Chief Executive Officer of Harrington. “We look forward to partnering with Caroline and the rest of the FGC team as we expand our metal products offering, strengthen our geographic footprint on the West coast, and further develop our fabrication expertise. Their knowledge of key complementary markets, such as the food and beverage industry, will be crucial as we continue to grow within sectors that

require specialized flow control products and services.”

### About Harrington

Founded in 1959 and headquartered in Chino, California, Harrington is a leading distributor of fluid process products and solutions for industrial applications. With over 70 locations across the United States, Harrington serves customers in a wide array of critical industries, including water and wastewater management, chemicals, manufacturing, semiconductors, life sciences, and food and beverage processing. For additional information, please visit [www.hipco.com](http://www.hipco.com).

### Enerquip Thermal Solutions



Glenn Borthwick

Enerquip Thermal Solutions is thrilled to announce the appointment of **Glenn Borthwick** as its new Business Development Manager. With 27 years of sales management experience and a strong background in technical heat transfer, Borthwick is a key resource for customers seeking innovative

heating and cooling solutions for both sanitary and industrial applications. As Business Development Manager at Enerquip, Glenn brings a wealth of experience from previous strategic roles with industry leaders such as Paul Mueller and Timken. Borthwick holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and operations behaviors from Western Illinois University and is a Six Sigma Black Belt.

### Wangen America



Paul Snyder

**Paul Snyder** has joined the Wangen America team. He will be covering channel partners and hygienic projects throughout the Midwest. He will report into the Elk Grove Village office and report to **Andrew Wood**. Paul has over 20 years of sales experience and was most recently a regional sales manager at ProXES Inc.-FrymaKoruma in Illinois. He's held a number of previous roles selling industrial equipment in the food and beverage sector. Paul holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Wheaton College.

## NAW Publishes New Edition of Facing the Forces of Change

FISA is an Association member of NAW. Our membership entitles FISA members to utilize the services of NAW which include specific business discounts, educational conferences, benchmarking publications, strategic management information and lobbying on behalf of distribution.

NAW is the “national voice of wholesale distribution,” an association comprised of employers of all sizes and national, regional, state, and local line of trade associations spanning the 7.4 trillion wholesale distribution industry, that employs more than 5 million workers in the United States. There are approximately 35,000 enterprises with almost 150,000 places of business in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, that are affiliated with NAW. NAW's mission is to advocate its members' interests on national public policy issues that affect the entire wholesale distribution industry.



*Innovate to Dominate: The 12th Edition in the Facing the Forces of Change® Series* is a roadmap for distributor innovation. Every chapter addresses a piece of the puzzle to “connect the dots” between trends and progress. More than that, we intend *Innovate to Dominate* to help start conversations about the future of business and a journey for distributors to follow. Mark Dancer, a Fellow for the NAW Institute for Distribution Excellence, said, “I am committed to helping distributors set the standard for B2B innovation. I seek to support every distributor's efforts to survive and thrive. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time at [mark.dancer@n4bi.com](mailto:mark.dancer@n4bi.com). If you haven't already, I hope you will order your copies of *Innovate to*

*Dominate* and use it with your team as an essential tool and roadmap for your company innovations. It will help you plan and track your journey and progress.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**MARCH 11- 13, 2025**

UID – Indianapolis, IN

**MARCH 25 - JUNE 3, 2025**

FISA Business Academy

**JULY 1, 2025**

Renew FISA Membership

**SEPTEMBER 11- 14, 2025**

2025 FISA Annual Conference

**NOTE:** If you have a Marketing Manager, email his/her contact information to [stella@fisanet.org](mailto:stella@fisanet.org) so that person can be added to database