



Belt Line

A publication of NIBA-The Belting Association

In Their Own Words

COVID-19 and the Belting Industry: The Outlook for 2021



Back in April, NIBA hosted a panel discussion about how belting companies were addressing the burgeoning pandemic.

As a new year begins, the world is still dealing with the impact of COVID-19. And the belting industry is no different.

So we brought business leaders back together to discuss how they adjusted to a changing landscape, and what they think 2021 has in store.

Here's just some of what they had to say.

On Federal or State Grants

Stephenie Davis, President and CEO at Davis Industrial: "We applied for it and received it mid-summer. And it was a good help, since we slowed down drastically for a few months there. Then things bounced back, and we've had one of our best years

ever. So it's been good. And now we're just kind of dealing with the forgiveness and all of the paperwork that is involved in that and the income ramifications. So mad dash to spend before the end of the year, but it was a great help. I agree with Tim, it was really boiled down to your relationship with your bank. I've got a lot of friends in different industries and bankers from all sorts of different areas. They all said the same thing: that, if they had a great relationship, it was a pretty easy, smooth process. But if they didn't, then it was it was a bumpy road along the way."

Bill Thaman, President at Thaman Rubber Company: "I would add one other thing. If someone has not started the application yet, don't assume that the rules are the same today as when you took the loan. The rules have changed often. And you're really not quite sure until you've actually pushed them that those are the rules you're playing by that day."

On COVID-19's Impact on Their Workforce

Brian Schachner, President at Vaughn Belting Company: "The number one thing we did a little different than we had in the past was preparing our workspaces: cleaning, wiping things down, spraying with Lysol daily or at least weekly. But we became a little more careful about how we interacted in our shop and in our offices. And that required us to do that. Because being small, we're in close contact. We made sure that we did that every Friday, for sure. So I think being careful when we were outside of work, as well as here, was a big deal. We put in some other things as, far as if you came in contact of staying out of work, if you didn't feel good, stay out of work. We paid everybody along the way. So anyone who missed work for any possible reason, it might be related to COVID, we didn't want to worry about getting paid. So we made sure everyone received a full paycheck, no matter what the

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reason was. And I think that helped us get through the whole thing.”

Tom Wujek, President and COO at Flexco: “I think one of the hardest things for our employees is that we’re on site, we’re just getting used to the social distancing practices, and our folks interact a lot, day in and day out. So that was a real challenge to change those habits. We’re currently experimenting with some proximity devices that each employee would wear when they come into the facility. And it gives them a gentle reminder, if they’re within six feet of another employee, so they wear them on the wrist or their wearable device, it gives them a little vibration, just like your phone would have if you get a text message. So we’re exploring technology to just help reinforce and remind our employees to be conscious of that, that aspect of trying to be safe.”

On the Upcoming Vaccine

Tim Shaw, President and CEO at Almex Group: “It could be for us in Canada up until September or later in the year before we see them. It’s certainly causing us a pause and concern. I think like for people like Tom and other people as well, that the challenge is we have no idea in Indonesia, or India or some of those other places where we’ll get them. And we’re all very networked on our facilities as far as we take things out of South Africa and ship them to Chile or from Chile, to Europe, and so forth. So it’s one thing we have noticed is just a tremendous difficulty in syncing everybody up. So we had one factory in China close in the first quarter, because it was near Wuhan, the second quarter, we had another factory closed in India for three months, and then it just kind of, it’s just disjointed.” ●

Planning Ahead for In-person and Virtual Connections



Greetings NIBA members,

I’ve been looking forward to writing this message as we begin 2021 to emphasize two important words that describe how I feel right now as NIBA President – **optimistic** and **grateful**.

The Board and leadership at NIBA are optimistic about our programs and services in 2021 after we learned some important lessons this year.

Even though it’s very difficult to forecast what will happen in 2021, NIBA is in a much better position today than ever before when it comes to digital opportunities. We are budgeting for a return of in-person events when appropriate (and, personally, I’m really looking forward to getting all of them back to normal), but will also increase our resources around virtual engagement - including events, technical content and more. We want to get more people within your member company involved in NIBA, whether it’s virtual or in-person.

Next (and I think I can speak for the rest of my NIBA colleagues when I say this), I’m grateful for the support of the belting community through these tough times. NIBA has had to adapt and try new things in 2020 but the support from our members has been unwavering throughout. This constant feedback and participation drives all of us - volunteers and staff - to do more.

We’ll continue to work hard to deliver benefits in both environments (in-person and virtual) so that we can increase the value of your membership.

Lastly, I hope everyone has a safe and healthy holiday season. I can’t wait to see everyone again. On behalf of NIBA, wishing you and your families a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Morgan
NIBA President, 2021

NIBA Scholarship Applications Now Open

Students around the nation feel the weight of the pandemic. Campuses shut down. Classes went digital. And an uncertain time for millions of students became even more unpredictable.

NIBA is working to ease that burden. To inject some stability into unprecedented times.

We are now accepting applications for both the Memorial and Presidential scholarships.

The **Memorial Scholarship** (\$2,000) benefits those who impact their communities and schools through service. NIBA member company employees and their children are both eligible.

The **Presidential Scholarship** (\$4,000) is exclusively for the children of NIBA member company employees. Students must attend, or be set to attend, an accredited college, university, or technical school of two or more years.

NIBA scholarships are supported by generous donations from NIBA members and companies. Every dollar fuels the academic dreams of NIBA members and their children. ●

149 Scholarships Awarded

\$375K Awarded Since 2008

The NIBA Scholarship Fund relies on charitable gifts from our generous members.
(For employees and children of employees of NIBA member companies.)

Belt Tracking for PTFE Coated Process Belts

by Ed Kennedy, Technical Service Engineer, Advanced Flexible Composites Inc

Tracking, sometimes called belt guiding, is simply the method for keeping the belt centered on the rollers. This technical support article focuses on large PTFE coated fiberglass belts. When a belt is over 48 inches wide and over 20 ft long, it is approaching a size where an active tracking mechanism is economically sound. In this article, we will examine several different types of tracking mechanism.

But first, a brief explanation of the type of belts we are discussing. We call these belts “process belts.” This type of belt is not simply a transport from point A to point B. A process belt will cause a change in the product being conveyed as it moves from A to B. The process could be drying, cooking, vulcanizing, lamination, melting, curing, pressing, etc.

Most of the processes will apply heat to the product as it moves along. For this reason, a coating of PTFE is often specified. A PTFE coating will withstand temperatures over 500° F and the non-stick property of the PTFE will also allow for the product to be easily removed at the exit of the process.

In order to be truly a high temperature belt material, the base fabric must also be high temperature. Often, a woven fiberglass fabric is used. A PTFE coating is applied to produce the finished belting material. Note that PTFE is sometimes sold under the tradename Teflon. For this article we will only use the generic term of PTFE.

The use of woven fiberglass allows the belt to be used for high temperature applications and at an economical price. The fiberglass weave also imparts good dimensional stability into the belt. Almost too good.

A fiberglass belt will have very low stretch when tensioned, often less than 1% stretch. This low stretch makes it more difficult to track. Therefore, we must use extra caution when designing a process or a machine that will use a PTFE coated fiberglass belt.

Active tracking mechanisms are the best choice for larger PTFE/glass belts. This type of mechanism will have an edge sensor and at least one roller that moves in response to the sensor. Passive tracking mechanisms do not have moving machine rollers. A future *Beltline* article will discuss passive tracking designs.

Crowned rollers are perhaps the most common method of tracking belts. However PTFE/glass belts do not work well on crowned rollers due to their extremely low stretch property of the fiberglass. When a PTFE/glass belt is run on a crowned roller, the belt will not track well and will immediately develop loose, wavy edges.

If a crowned roller is the only possible option, the end user may consider a PTFE coated aramid belt. Kevlar and Nomex are two trade names for aramid belts.

The fibers of these belts will have more stretch as compared to a glass belt so they will perform better in a system with crowned rollers. PTFE coated aramid are much more expensive compared to fiberglass belts.

Smaller machines often will attempt to use manual screw type take up adjustments to track a PTFE /glass belt. This design is inexpensive, but it does not work well. Often it does not work at all. Manually adjusted screw take-ups will be able to track the belt for a few minutes but soon the belt

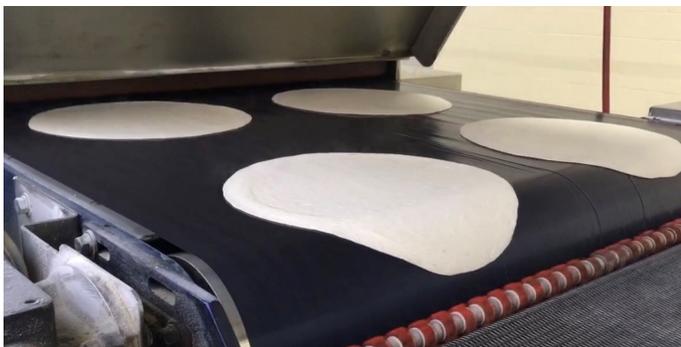
will slowly wander off one edge of the roller.

Active tracking systems are, by far, the best way to keep a belt centered on the machine. A typical system will have a sensor to detect the edge of the belt. Often the edge sensor is an on/off microswitch and a paddle to rub on the edge of the belt. The sensor will send a signal to a set of rollers that pivot on one end causing them to move away from the 90-degree position (measured from the belt edge called zero degrees). A simple system may use an air cylinder to move the rollers. A simple air cylinder will have two positions: all the way out and all the way in. This results in a belt that will constantly move from side to side within a narrow range, usually less than 1 inch of side-to-side motion. This system is sometimes called a non-proportional system.

If the side-to-side motion is not acceptable, a more advanced system is readily available. In this system, the edge sensor will produce an electrical signal that is proportional to the amount the belt has moved sideways. It is not a simple on/off signal. The signal then causes a servo motor to move the rollers. This type of system will make very small corrective movements. Often, the belt will appear to not move at all in the side-to-side direction. This type of system is sometimes called a proportional system.

Proportional control systems are more expensive and more complicated than simple non-proportional systems. This added expense has another performance edge. For many machines, there is simply not enough room for a simple non-proportional system. A good rule of thumb is to place this type guider at a distance of 1.5 times the belt width from the nearest roller. If it is closer than that, the guider may cause wrinkles to form in the belt. Therefore, when space is tight, a proportional system will avoid wrinkles by making very small corrective movements.

For PTFE/glass belts, a wrinkle is the first step toward belt failure. ●



The tortillas are formed and partially cooked on the black belt shown in the picture.



Servomotor actuator for a three roll tracker.

NIBA Learning Library

Training Articles Tech Notes Webinars Resources Certification



NIBA Training Available to Your Whole Team

Did you know your NIBA membership includes hundreds of digital resources to help develop your employees' knowledge of belting/business.

In efforts to create a valuable membership, NIBA has curated an online learning library packed with engaging content to educate belting professionals. A mix of free and paid content provides on-demand tools to ignite higher performance.

Here's what's included:

Webinars

In the wake of the pandemic, we launched a monthly webinar series covering a diverse range of topics. Now, you can enjoy them all on-demand. Explore topics like marketing, COVID-19's impact on the industry, stress management, building inclusion, and more.

You can also register for upcoming webinars right from the Learning Library.

Handbooks

Looking for something to use in your facility and with new employees? The Learning Library features lightweight and heavyweight handbooks to serve as reference throughout your company.

Certificate Courses

The culmination of years of work, NIBA's certificate courses feature intentionally-designed, introductory-level courses. Five courses covering both lightweight and heavyweight belting topics are the ideal way to level up your staff's skills.

Technical Trainings

This year's technical trainings went virtual. But if you missed them, you can still catch the content. The same expert instructors. Teaching the essentials of belting to build a foundation for your career. With the convenience of a virtual format.

The class archives are now available for purchase as on-demand content for all members.

Technical Notes and Articles

Dive into a variety of in-depth technical articles and notes written by expert NIBA members. Discover knowledge to make an impact on your business. ●

To access the Learning Library, go to NIBA.com and click on "Online Learning" under the "Training" drop down. Log in with the same username and password as your NIBA login and start learning.



NIBA Member Spotlight

Fenner Dunlop Conveyor Belting



Buddy Wilson
Senior Director -
Services Operations

Tell us about your company

Fenner Dunlop Conveyor Belting is the leading domestic provider of premium conveyor belting products. Additionally, we operate five (5) direct belting and service locations across North America, providing world class splicing, installation and repair services.

Describe what you do on a day-to-day basis

In my current role, I am a part of our Services team. Our first daily priority is safety. Safety of our personnel and the safety of our customers and partners. However, our day to day tasks include everything from belting and component applications recommendations, service scheduling, and on-going personnel development.

What was your first industry job and how did it lead you to where you are today?

My first industry job was at Georgia Duck. I started out as an account manager / inside sale. Green as a gourd! I knew fairly soon that I wanted to be involved in the technical / applications aspect of our business. Knowing nothing helped me learn as much as I could absorb. I try to use the same philosophy today. Always something to learn!

What is the one piece of advice you wish someone had given you before you started in the belting industry?

Learn and get in the field. I cannot stress this enough. This business is not meant to be served from behind a desk! Learn your product(s). Learn your competitor's product. Not only know the right answer(s), but why those are the right answer(s).

How did you hear about NIBA?

I literally heard about NIBA within months of beginning my career at Georgia Duck. It seemed like all the people I wanted to be when I grew up were involved in NIBA.

How has NIBA impacted you, both personally and professionally?

I'd say the two are intertwined. Early on, I realized that I wanted my career to be in the conveyor belt industry. I also found my first NIBA Engineering Manual not long after starting at Georgia Duck. I realized that I needed to be involved on a broader scale when the time came, and NIBA was that conduit.

In your opinion, what sets NIBA apart from other associations?

I think that one of the biggest differences is the camaraderie among the membership. There is a great mix of experience with an obvious growth of younger belting professionals.

Tell us about your favorite moment from a past NIBA Annual Convention.

Believe it or not, 2019 was my first convention. So, the entire experience was in line with what I expected, but really eye-opening as well.

What is the belting industry's biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge is actually two-fold. The first is the growing knowledge gap between the most experienced professionals and the younger professionals. The second is the desire to learn, and gain experience from the younger professionals. There seems to be a lack of desire in this realm, which is highly detrimental to our industry. NIBA can drive this initiative by continuing to show value in development and updating technical content through the training initiatives. ●



Time to Renew Your NIBA Membership

A year of surprises brought new ways to work and live. And new things from NIBA as well.

We introduced virtual programs like NIBA Connect and virtual technical trainings to help you reconnect with colleagues and enhance your team. We also launched a new online certification program to elevate your staff's skills and knowledge.

All on top of the exciting standard benefits like:

- Access to key personnel from belting manufacturers, distributors, and component suppliers.
- A robust learning library with 100+ educational resources.
- Opportunities to enhance your staff's skills and knowledge with certification courses and technical trainings.
- Discounted trainings by the Association Education Alliance.
- Scholarships for staff and their children.
- Exclusive member rates to our annual convention.

We can't wait to be back together in person at the 2021 Annual Convention in Palm Springs, CA. And to see the new challenges we can overcome together next year.

Renew today!



MEMBER-TO-MEMBER NEWS

News submitted by and for NIBA members

NEW PRODUCTS

ASGCO® “Complete Conveyor Solutions” announces the latest addition to their line of Secondary Belt Cleaner products for bulk material handling applications. The U-Scrape™ Secondary Cleaner’s, unique “U” shape design conforms to the return side of the belt, which allows the blade to maintain the maximum pressure in the center of the belt where the majority of the carryback material builds up.

Nitta’s industry-leading tools for aramid cord belting just got even better. They have introduced new tooling combination that can lower your cook times to 17.5 minutes on belts used throughout the logistics and material handling industry.

Flexco has updated the look and performance of the CBS Continuous Blade Secondary Cleaner with a more robust pole and SST Extreme Duty tensioners for use in the most abusive environments. The one-piece blade features impact-resistance carbide tips across the entire length. The tips are held in place by a steel internal backbone that adds strength and rigidity to the overall assembly. The blade is also backed by Flexco’s proprietary polyurethane, which provides a squeeze effect and makes it a great performer in abrasive/wet environments.

Flexco is proud to announce the introduction of the FGS Food Grade Secondary Cleaner to its offering of easy-to-use light-duty belt cleaners. A self-tensioning blade that provides constant blade-to-belt contact provides more efficient cleaning and less maintenance. It is FDA-approved, BISSC verified and Health Canada accepted, making it suitable for applications that operate under the oversight of various sanitary (or government) agencies.

The food industry is one of many to use metal detectors for sorting undesired metal debris out of the production during ongoing operation, thus ensuring consumer safety.

MÄRTENS Transportbänder GmbH rod network belts made of K2390 stainless wire, used in fryers and enrobing lines, increased magnetisability, making it easier to detect than their standard AISI 302 material. It is also much more resistant to detergents, fruit acids and brines. MÄRTENS now offers the rod network belt ECO with “ECO- Clips.” These hygienic connections can be used with almost every newly manufactured product.

Mulhern Belting has expanded their cut part, hole punch and gasket production departments. They now have three CNC cutting machines and two water-jets. They are able to fabricate on the thinnest material to over 2” thick. They can cut, slit, counter sink, groove, grind, bevel almost any material and are equipped to fabricate from sheet goods as well from full rolls.

PARTNERSHIPS

Vayeron Pty Ltd, has granted Precision Pulley & Idler (PPI) one of their limited premium partnership spots in their flagship customer program. Vayeron is rapidly growing the global distribution of its Smart-Idler® product line. Now users located in Canada, USA, and Latin American countries will have access to a reliable and well tested market ready solution for proven PPI conveyor components powered by Vayeron Smart-Idler technology.

ACQUISITIONS

Belt Power LLC (“Belt Power”) has completed the acquisition of the assets of Rubber Service Corp. (“Rubber Service”). Rubber Service operates out of the Denver metropolitan area providing lightweight belting solutions to customers in the Mountain West and Midwest United States. Rubber Service owner Lou Siemer will continue to lead the new branch for Belt Power.

Thermex-Thermatron Systems (“Thermex”) has acquired Jacksonville, Florida-based JTE Machines. Thermex-Thermatron is a proven industry force in manufacturing high-power industrial RF and MW Systems for heating dielectric materials. Notably, JTE Machines use of cutting-edge technology aligning with Thermex’s drive to improve production, creates a powerful alliance. Thermex is very excited to welcome Jens and Traci Evling and several members of the JTE team to build the next chapter together.

PERSONNEL

Jean Sebastien “JS” Lavigne joined **Ammega Canada Inc.** as Vice President/General Manager. He will have overall responsibility for the Ammega Canada Conveyor, Power Transmission and Fluid Power business. Most recently, Sebastien was the Vice President of Sales and Marketing at NTN Bearing Corporation.

Beltservice Corporation welcomes Steve Fesperman as their new Plastic Products Business Development Manager. He comes with a strong background in business development and a history of creating new product lines and markets for OEM customers across a wide range of industries.

Flexco recently hired Aaron Wilson for the position of Strategic Accounts Manager. Wilson will focus on strategic account customers in the aggregate, cement, and mining industries.

Flexco CEO Richard A. White recently appointed three new business leaders and introduced new reporting structures designed to promote better alignment of programs and activities. Thomas S. Wujek has been promoted to President/COO. Tammy Balogh, Vice President of Human Resources; Glen Paradise, Chief Financial Officer; Keith Staninger, Chief Digital Officer; Chip Winiarski, Chief Marketing Officer; Doug Saunders, Director of Manufacturing Operations – North America; and leadership of foreign subsidiaries will now be reporting directly to Wujek.

RECOGNITION

Motion Industries, Inc. is pleased to announce that President Randy Breaux is a 2020 award recipient of CEO of the Year, from the *Birmingham Business Journal*. The CEO Awards recognize excellence among top executives in the Birmingham metro area for businesses of all sizes. Breaux was named CEO of the Year in the category of Companies with more than 300 employees. ●



Membership at a Glance

The Numbers

Manufacturers	69
Distributor/Fabricators	135
Component Manufacturers	38
Affiliates	11
Total members	253

Our Newest Member

- Belt Concepts of America

WE WANT YOUR NEWS!

Send to staff@niba.org or complete the form at niba.org/members/submit-news

NIBA Scholarship Contributors

President's Club

(cumulative contributions \$1,500 and over)

AccuPad Inc
Accurate Industrial Inc.
Advanced Flexible Composites Inc (AFC)
AFM Industries
AirBoss Rubber Solutions
All-State Belting LLC
American Biltrite
Ammeraal - an Ammega Company
ASGCO - Complete Conveyor Solutions
Behabelt USA
Belt Power LLC
Belting Corporation
Beltservice Corporation
Blair Rubber Company
Bullitt County Belting & Supply
Canadian Bearings Ltd
Chemprene Inc
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Continental
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Conviber Co Inc
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Flexco
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JA Emilius Sons Inc
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Midwest Rubber Service & Supply Co
Motion Industries Inc
Mulhern Belting Inc
Nashville Rubber & Gasket Co. Inc
Nitta Corporation of America
Norwesco Industries (1983) Ltd
Novex Inc
PANG Industrial
Passaic Rubber Company
Power & Rubber Supply
Quality Belt Maintenance (QBM), Inc.
R/W Connection Inc
Ram Belting Company Inc
RAM Enterprise Inc
Reichel-Korfmann Co Inc.
REMA TIP TOP - NA
RGA - Rubber & Gasket Co of America
Rubber & Accessories Inc
Sampla Belting
San Antonio Belting & Pulley Co Inc
Shanghai YongLi Belting Co Ltd
Shaw Almex Industries
Southwest Rubber and Supply Co Inc
Sparks Belting Company
Thaman Rubber Company
Transtex Belting
Uniband USA
Universal Belting Resource
Vaughn Belting Company Inc
VIS USA LLC
Voss Belting & Specialty Company
William Goodyear Company

Gem Levels

(cumulative contributions)

Diamond

(Contributions of \$7,500 or more)

AccuPad Inc
Advanced Flexible Composites Inc (AFC)
AFM Industries
Belt Power LLC
Beltservice Corporation
Chiorino America, Inc.
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Derco BV
ERIKS North America, Inc.
Flexco
Green Rubber - Kennedy Ag
Habasit America
Industrial Supply Solutions Inc
Nashville Rubber & Gasket Co. Inc
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Passaic Rubber Company
Reichel-Korfmann Co Inc.
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Sparks Belting Company

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Behabelt USA
Blair Rubber Company
Conveyor Accessories Inc
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Forbo Siegling LLC
Friesens Inc-Conveying Solutions
Quality Belt Maintenance (QBM), Inc.
REMA TIP TOP - NA
Shanghai YongLi Belting Co Ltd
Universal Belting Resource

Ruby

(Contributions of \$2,500 - \$4,999)

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AirBoss Rubber Solutions
ASGCO - Complete Conveyor Solutions
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Bullitt County Belting & Supply
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Conveyor Belt Service Inc.
Dunham Rubber &
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Forbo Movement Systems
Great Lakes Belting & Supply Corp
Knoxville Rubber & Gasket Co
Midwest Rubber Service & Supply Co
Power & Rubber Supply
RGA - Rubber & Gasket Co of America
Rubber & Accessories Inc
Sampla Belting
Transtex Belting
Uniband USA
Vaughn Belting Company Inc
VIS USA LLC
Voss Belting & Specialty Company
William Goodyear Company

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Contribute to the NIBA Scholarship Fund at
niba.org/scholarships/contributions/

Annual Go for the Gold!

The following companies have made contributions to the NIBA Scholarship Fund in 2021

Gold Sponsors

(Contributions of \$800 or more in 2021)

AccuPad Inc
Conveyor Accessories Inc
Industrial Supply Solutions Inc
Minet Lacing Technology, Inc.
Passaic Rubber Company
Reichel-Korfmann Co Inc.
REMA TIP TOP - NA
Sparks Belting Company
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Silver Sponsors

(Contributions of \$400-\$799 in 2021)

All-State Belting LLC
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Belterra Corporation

Bronze Sponsors

(Contributions of up to \$399 in 2021)

Dunham Rubber & Belting Corporation



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Save the Date!

**NIBA 2021
ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**SEPTEMBER 21-24
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA**