



## A Decade Later – GMIC at 10 Years

In September of 1998, members of the United States glass industry, with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy, embarked on an experiment to see if the traditionally secretive and closed-off companies who comprise its various sectors could work together to identify their common technology needs and then to fill those needs through precompetitive research cost-shared with the DOE. These efforts actually go back to 1995 when representatives of the four sectors – flat, container, fiber and specialty (which itself covers a wide range of different types of glasses) – were focusing on creating a “vision” for the industry, i.e., objectives that would be accomplished by 2020. Then they turned to creating a “roadmap” that identified the gaps in technology in various process areas that they agreed to work together.

That September, 10 years ago, seven glass company executives signed an agreement creating the Glass Manufacturing Industry Council as a trade association that would represent the interests of all the glass sectors and would coordinate the relationship between the DOE and industry.

Our mission, one that evolved over the decade to cover global rather than purely U.S. interests, is “To facilitate, organize and promote the interests and economic growth, and sustainability of the glass industry through education and cooperation in the areas of technology, productivity, innovation and the environment.”

Five of the original seven glass companies remain as “plank owners” who were there at the beginning: Owens Corning, CertainTeed, Corning Inc., PPG and Visteon (now Zeledyne).

Their long-term commitment was recognized at the 2008 Glass Problems Conference when representatives from each company received an award in honor of their companies’ service to our industry. Today, from seven members, we have grown to 21 glass company, 22 associate, 11 university and 14 individual (“affiliate”) members.

Cost-shared research was the impetus that started us on the path, and our group has undertaken more than 70 research projects of varying significance. A number of them have entered the marketplace and are contributing in one way or another to improved energy efficiency and reduced environmental emissions. For example, the submerged combustion melter, clearly the leading “game changer” for our industry, is in its first commercial application. Many others are in development.

Today, however, with a substantially larger membership and changing economic and environmental realities, the GMIC has broadened its activities to include a wide range of additional interests.

A major focus for discussion and inquiry among our members and elsewhere around the world is the possibility that glass could be substantially stronger than it is today – stronger across the board, in all sectors. Indeed, many companies are beginning to work on increasing glass strength, and on June 4, as part of this year’s PACRIM8/International Commission on Glass/Glass & Optical Materials Division conference in Vancouver, a one-day conference, “Improving Strength in Industrial Glass,” will bring together glass company professionals, university and national laboratory researchers, and glass users to generate a technology and market roadmap to guide research toward resolving the as yet unanswered questions that have prevented glass

from achieving its theoretical potential of a tensile strength of 2 million psi!

Increasingly, the issues of interest in one country similarly are being considered in others. Working with representatives of the global umbrella glass organization, the ICG, our industry continues to

- Work on technology development to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in our operations;
- Increase safety;
- Explore alternative energy sources for glassmelting, such as gases produced by coal gasification or landfills;
- Increase the importance and value of glass in alternative energy technologies, such as solar and wind generation systems; and,
- Move toward a strengthening of our long-term sustainability as an industry in an increasingly constrained operating environment.

Work is also moving forward on a project mentioned in my last column under the auspices of the ICG: the development of the image of glass as a material with broad applications that already is reducing society’s use of energy and emissions, and will continue to do so.

This year, with 10 years “under our belt,” we will be looking to the future through meetings and discussions among our members to formalize our path forward into the next 10 years and beyond. What do we want to be when we grow up? Stay tuned for developments!

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