

Know your industry

A monthly look at the associations that shape your business world.

SSPMA: Sump and Sewage Pump Manufacturers Association

Founded: 1956

Headquarters: Indianapolis, Ind.

Website: www.sspma.org

Annual membership fee: Sales up to \$999,999: \$1,300 (1st tier); Associate Membership: \$975

Jeff Hawks, president at Champion Pump of Ashland, Ohio, and president of SSPMA, offers a helpful perspective on how valuable educational materials can be when coming from a credible organization, especially with so much free information available on the Internet in today's world.

"Any plumber who puts a pump in thinks he knows everything in the world about pumps, because he's been doing them for 20 years," Hawks told *EA*. "We have a technical committee on our website. We show different papers we have: we take the individual pumps: like sump pumps, sewage pumps, grinder pumps, and we write typical installations for the homeowner, and the public in general, on what they should be looking for, because there's so much out there. So we try to put guidelines out there, from our industry of professionals, on 'here's the way things should be done,' so all that is free online, even sizing guidelines, proper way to size pumps."

These educational materials are only a fraction of the useful benefits provided by the organization. SSPMA is the trade association for the sump, effluent, and sewage pump industry. Its mission is to serve the industry via standards, education, and analysis in the proper application, use, installation, and maintenance of the products and services offered by its members.

This encompasses a few notable areas. Collections of statistics are provided to describe up-to-date market size and activity. The development and promulgation of industry standards outline design and performance

criteria for residential sump and effluent pumps and sewage ejectors, while certification and labeling programs for products conforming to these standards help pump manufacturers work from a common baseline and ensure authenticity, especially in regulating overseas materials. "Instead of somebody just getting a pump overseas, bringing it in and saying 'it'll do all this,' we actually can certify it—we have a program to certify our pumps. It says there are certain guidelines and test requirements," says Hawks.

Hawks notes the importance of this in regards to specifications. "If, for instance, we say the pump will test certain size solids, there's a certain test, and certain requirements for us to be able to say that, and we publish curves. It has to be on a certain range of curves when it's tested . . . certified by industry standards, instead of just creating a pump and saying it does it, because we do run into that," Hawks concludes. Almost every member, he says, as well as the general industry community, buys products from overseas, so the purpose of the program is to protect the public.

Equally useful is the organization's "numbers" database. SSPMA reports to an accounting agency, which enables it to break down sales into groups by time and location. Sales are analyzed by "how much we sell per quarter, then people match that up with other numbers, and twice a year we report by state, so marketing departments within our companies can find out where all the pumps are sold."

Promotion of improved provisions in building and onsite wastewater treatment codes on pumps is also an important SSPMA priority. Regular members—which in addition to Champion include Barnes Pumps/Crane Pumps & Systems, Eco-Flo Products, Inc., Franklin Electric/Little Giant, Goulds Water Technology (a Xylem brand), Liberty Pumps, Zoeller, and Pentair—are instrumental in assembling these guidelines. Member variety also comes in the form of position. "I'm president of Champion, and I'm also responsible for sales . . . you kind of have a mix of who represents the companies in the organization, some guys are engineers, some are marketing, some are owners," says Hawks.

SSPMA's next meeting will be held at WEFTEC in New Orleans (Sept. 24-28). A free, special social networking event will be offered to those interested.—*Charlie Barks*