

2020 Annual Report

Dear Members of the Madison International Trade Association (MITA):

2020, one of the more challenging years in the 41-year history of MITA, is finally coming to an end. And because of those challenges MITA and all of us have experienced and responded to, 2020 may be one of the organization's finest. We have had setbacks, limitations, and transitions but have turned them into motivations, innovations, and opportunities. For these reasons, I am especially glad and proud to report that the state of MITA is strong and its future as promising as ever.

Like most years, we started this year with a new slate of Board Members [please see Appendix I], two of our hallmark annual events—our January “Economic Forecast” and our February “Trade Compliance Day”—and a solid set of programs scheduled into early summer. The looming pandemic had just started to emerge at that time. As we all know, by mid-March, the pandemic had spread to the point of shutdowns, social-distancing, and even graver impacts. The in-person programs and networking that so many look to MITA for were suspended indefinitely. And MITA's President and long-time supporter, Katy Sinnott of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), had to step down to manage the financial assistance programs implemented by the state to lessen the pandemic's effects. We are forever grateful for Katy and all her service to MITA and Wisconsin.

Despite everything, MITA and its Board of Directors remained true to MITA's mission to be a resource, a guide, and a forum for the state's and region's international trade community. Taking the word that embodies our great state, we implemented “MITA Forward,” an organizational initiative to “stabilize, energize, and rise” in the face of the “new normal.” First, MITA leveraged its network to expand the calls for vital PPE for the state and several hospitals in the Chicago area. Next, MITA appointed a new President, re-organized its Board Committees, and oversaw a successful transition to virtual programming. Several of MITA's newest Board Members rose to this occasion and assumed Committee leadership roles. Once stabilized, MITA started to energize. It embarked on a re-design of its website and brand, commenced a series of Membership, Sponsorship, and Outreach drives, and lined-up a series of valuable—and free for MITA Member—virtual programs well into 2021.

In doing all of the aforementioned, MITA, its Board and Committees, its Communications and Events Coordinator (Ana Garic), its generous Sponsors, together with all of you, accomplished an incredible amount in 2020, the highlights of which is my great privilege to report to you here:

- After a decline following the pandemic in the first half of the year, MITA's **Membership** stabilized and then increased to a two-year high and several new Corporate Members thanks to the Membership Committee, led by Chair Paul

Jarzombek. We responded to Member needs in these uncertain times by making all virtual programs free for MITA Members. And MITA sought greater input from and engagement with its Members by inviting at-large Members to join Board Committees and conducting a very insightful Membership Survey.

- In the area of **Programs**, the Programming Committee led first by MITA Vice President, Harry Haney, and then by newly appointed Chair, Henrietta Bogyay, procured a WebEx Meeting solution as MITA's new event platform, organized monthly webinars on timely topics from Letters of Credit to Sourcing Beyond China, and yielded above-average program attendance with participants joining from Sun Prairie to Serbia. Harry finishes his term and time on the Board at the end of this year; we are grateful for Harry's commitment and service to MITA and believe he is confident he is leaving MITA in good hands.
- Continuing and new **Sponsors** contributed to the invaluable resources that helped fuel "MITA Forward" through these challenging times. Thanks to the efforts of the Sponsorship Committee and its Chair, Carrie Fix, MITA now has Trek Bicycle as its newest "Platinum Sponsor" (joining M.E. Dey and ABS Global) and the Wisconsin District Export Council (DEC) among its "Gold Sponsors" (joining Geo Group, LR International, WEDC, and Wisconsin Alumni Association). We encourage the MITA Membership to support all our Sponsors in the same way they have supported us.
- The fruits of MITA's membership, programming, and sponsorship efforts kept MITA's **Finances** on solid footing this year. Treasurer Dan Millmann's enhancements to MITA's financial tracking and planning have helped the Board of Directors ensure sustainability and growth as we advance. Please see Appendix II for the 2020 MITA Treasurer's Report.
- MITA reconstituted its **Outreach** Committee and strengthened its mutually beneficial relationships with many of the other international trade organizations in the state. Under the leadership of Aleda Bourassa, the Outreach Committee reaffirmed its longstanding partnerships with organizations like the MMAC's World Trade Association (WTA), the WEDC, and DATCP, and expanded its relationships with organizations such as the New North, the Ethnically Diverse Business Coalition, and the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC).
- And finally, MITA combined its tried and true approaches with some fresh ones in energizing its **Marketing and Communications**. Newly appointed Marketing Chair, Maureen Muldoon—with guidance and support from MITA Secretary (and past MITA President and Marketing and Communications Chair), Jen Pino-Gallagher—oversaw the design and launch of a new MITA website and branding, a Member Survey that pinpointed what MITA Members value most, and, a 55% increase in Followers of MITA on LinkedIn.

Looking back over 2020, MITA and its Community certainly have a great deal to be proud of; but our initiative is “MITA Forward,” and now is the time for MITA to “rise.” We will begin with the Board of Director elections that we hope all our Members will actively participate in as a candidate or nominator, or in the least, as a voter. The newly installed Board and the MITA Community already will have an exceptional line-up of virtual programs through the first third of 2021, with timely iterations of our annual economic forecast and trade compliance events and new programs on trade policy and trade insurance. Those programs will be supplemented by MITA joining forces with MMAC-WTA to restart its trade compliance roundtable on a bi-monthly basis, and a potential return of MITA’s popular “Breakfast Briefs” series where we can offer more focused or industry-specific topics for those from agriculture to manufacturing to software. We will continue to grow Members’ stake and value in the organization by providing more opportunities for Member input into MITA’s direction, an enhanced suite of web-based resources (such as a more dynamic Member Directory and a peer-to-peer exchange forum), and connecting Members with the full extent of MITA’s global network. We will expand our outreach to trade organizations across the state and broader region and more industry-specific associations. We will introduce new ways to recognize our sponsors via the revitalized MITA website (such as an ongoing “Meet-A Sponsor” feature) and innovations to the traditional event sponsor intros. And we will continue to refine and promote the MITA brand with a best-in-class team of marketing professionals, thereby raising the profile and value of MITA and its entire Community.

In closing, I would like to say that as I look back on 2020 and see signs of stability, reassurance, and promise, MITA is standing among them (and I hope you see that as well). I must thank my fellow Board Members and our Board Advisors, our Communications and Events Coordinator, our Sponsors, our Partners, and most of all, you, our valued Members once again, for making that possible. And looking ahead, together we will ensure there is only one direction MITA can go; Forward.

Humbly submitted with Season’s Greetings and healthy wishes,



Jay P. Nash
MITA President

December 8, 2020

APPENDIX I: The 2020 MITA Team

MITA Board of Directors

Henrietta Bogyay, Hydro-Thermal Corporation [Program Chair and Outreach Committee]

Aleda Bourassa, International Customs Services, Inc. (ICS) [Outreach Chair]

Carrie Fix, M.E. Dey and Co. [Sponsorship Chair]

Harry Haney, Loyola University Chicago [Vice President and Programming Committee]

Olivier Hiers, ABS Global [Marketing and Communications Committee]

Erik Ibele, Neider & Boucher, S.C. [Programming Committee]

Paul Jarzombek, LR International [Membership Chair]

Carle Kutsche, The GEO Group [Membership Committee]

Glaselyn Miller, Sophke International Consulting [Membership Committee]

Dan Millmann, RSM U.S. LLP [MITA Treasurer]

Maureen Muldoon, Trek Bicycle Inc. [Marketing and Communications Chair]

Jay P. Nash, Nash Global Trade Services (NGTS) [President]

Jen Pino-Gallagher, M3 Insurance [Secretary and Programming Committee]

Katy Sinnott, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) [Immediate Past President]

MITA Board Advisors

Maria Cartier, Port of Milwaukee [Marketing and Communications Committee]

Mark Rhoda-Reis, Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) [Outreach Committee]

Staff

Ana Garic, Communications and Events Coordinator

APPENDIX II: MITA Treasurer's Report – December 2020 – by Dan Millmann

We are pleased to report that from a financial perspective, we continue to cover our costs and maintain a very modest reserve, which enables us to make periodic investments such as the recently completed www.mitatrade.org website upgrade. Let us know what you think of the upgrade.

As many of you are aware, MITA is nearly an entirely volunteer-run organization. Ana Garic, who does a wonderful job for us, is our sole paid staffer, and she is part-time. The Board is working toward being able to secure additional management expertise because we believe that will enable us to better meet your needs in an increasingly challenging and complex global trade environment. Due to the uncertainties caused by COVID, these plans have been put on the back burner until such a time there is financial flexibility to bring on additional resources.

We are deeply appreciative of the support provided by our members and sponsors who make this possible. If you have any questions, please let us know