

Active Member Engagement Fuels PMI's Success

By Chip Way, PMI Board of Directors President, Lavelle Industries



Chip Way

What a ride—and an honor—it has been to serve as the Plumbing Manufacturers International Board of Directors president for the last 12 months. Leading an association as healthy, dynamic, and forward-looking as PMI is an amazing experience. And celebrating PMI's 70th anniversary this year reminded me of all the great collaborations and accomplishments powered by an engaged membership that got us to this point.

My passion for road cycling continued to be a fitting metaphor for leading the PMI board, as we used balance and flexibility to navigate our path forward. The support, guidance, and sound advice delivered by a great team of PMI volunteer committee, task group, and board leaders was invaluable—whether it was helping fuel the renewal of the Strategic Advisory Council, searching out industry partners to serve on our board and committees, leading the charge at our legislative forums and fly-ins, or wrangling the hundreds of small and large decisions essential to our association's success.

I'm incredibly grateful for the support and teamwork of the PMI staff: CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**, Director of Programs and Administration **Jodi Stuhrberg**, Technical Director **Kyle Thompson**, Programs and Events Coordinator **Merill Morse**, and Administrative Assistant **Ann Geier**. They've helped guide me through this role and kept me on track. Thanks also to my considerate team and colleagues at Lavelle Industries for their support while I engaged in PMI business.

Looking back, many highlights stand out from my year as president. With the PMI Washington Legislative Forum and Fly-In, we accomplished meaningful engagements during unforgettable Hill visits—so important to keeping our members' plumbing manufacturing expertise and challenges in front of policymakers.

We re-engaged the PMI Strategic Advisory Council at the summer strategy meeting in Chicago, where we had a productive session that aligned and energized everyone involved. The

council brings deep experience and insight to guide PMI's strategic work and success as we take on key issues that impact our industry. Tackling the influx of counterfeit and contra-band products has become one of those issues. In 2024, PMI stepped up its efforts to ensure plumbing fixtures and fittings entering the United States uphold the codes, standards, and safety measures that protect our products and industry.

A tremendous way to round out the year was by celebrating PMI's 70th anniversary at the PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference. We have made enormous strides as an industry. The growth of plumbing fixtures and fittings manufacturers over the past 70 years is a story of resilience, creativity, and a pioneering spirit. In 2010, when the PMI Board of Directors opted to shift from Plumbing Manufacturers Institute to Plumbing Manufacturers International—it was more than a name change. It was a real-world understanding that our business and indeed our industry faced challenges on a global scale.

In January, I look forward to handing over the reins to **Belinda Wise**, a member of the Neoperl USA Board of Directors, who will do an excellent job as your new PMI board president. I'll continue serving as immediate past president and can't wait to see the momentum of PMI's key initiatives, such as Rethink Water, and legislative and advocacy efforts as they gain new ground.

PMI remains committed to finding answers to our industry's challenges and will continue counting on members for expertise and guidance. As we head into 2025, let's keep inspiring each other to actively participate in PMI to ensure our collective success—with the goal of assuring reliable access to clean, safe water for future generations.

INSIDE

Members Become Force for Global Change . . . 2

Belinda Wise Elected PMI Board President . . . 4

Economist Sees Growth Ahead 10

Members Advised to Prepare for Action . . . 11

PMI Members Become a Force for Global Change

By Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE, PMI CEO/Executive Director



Kerry Stackpole

Celebrating Plumbing Manufacturers International's 70th anniversary this year brought into focus how PMI members have become a force for global change. They

not only produce beneficial products, but create solutions to the water crisis, to global health challenges, and to sustainability and climate change. PMI is committed to supporting our members' crucial work through advocacy efforts, such as proactive engagement with regulatory bodies and our Rethink Water initiative.

While the plumbing industry might not dominate headlines or capture the world's attention, it fundamentally shapes the future of our planet. Every faucet, fixture, and piece of plumbing infrastructure represents progress. PMI, our members, and industry are committed to building a future where clean water is abundant, sanitation is a universal right, and our use of natural resources is balanced with the needs of future generations.

Our industry tackles water efficiency head-on as more than a billion people globally face water scarcity. That number is expected to grow as climate change exacerbates droughts and depletes water sources. The answer to this crisis starts in homes and buildings—with the plumbing fixtures PMI members design and consumers choose.

Plumbing manufacturers have been at the forefront of developing water-efficient products—high-performance faucets, low-flow toilets, and water-saving showerheads—that significantly reduce water waste. For example, in the first phase of PMI's Rethink Water initiative, the association estimated that a robust

legacy plumbing product replacement initiative in California could save up to 65.3 billion gallons of water within a five-year period.

Saving water not only protects rivers, lakes and ecosystems, it reduces the energy required to process and deliver water, which directly reduces carbon emissions. This is sustainability in action, and our members and industry are leading the charge.

The plumbing industry's deep humanitarian impact reaches beyond water conservation. Access to clean water is a fundamental human right—essential for survival, health and dignity. Yet, in many parts of the world, millions of people still lack access to safe, reliable water sources.

Imagine the profound ripple effects when a village that once depended on contaminated water sources now has access to safe, hygienic and durable plumbing solutions. Families are healthier, children can go to school instead of walking miles to collect water, and women—who often bear the burden of fetching water—are empowered to engage in economic activities. By delivering affordable, high-performance plumbing systems, the industry helps bridge the gap between privilege and necessity.

Improving global health outcomes is one of the most important contributions our members and industry make. The connection between sanitation, clean water, and health is undeniable. Diseases like cholera, dysentery and typhoid—all linked to poor sanitation and contaminated water—claim thousands of lives every year, mostly in underdeveloped regions where plumbing infrastructure is inadequate or nonexistent.

Modern plumbing systems are crucial in fighting these diseases. By providing

safe and hygienic sanitation solutions, the plumbing industry is directly saving lives. Every new faucet installed in a school, every high-efficiency toilet placed in a community center, every water-saving showerhead fitted in a rural clinic is a step towards a healthier, more dignified world.

The plumbing industry plays a significant role in the broader movement toward sustainable living and green building. As societies grow more conscious of their environmental footprint, demand is rising for eco-friendly homes and buildings. This shift is powered, in part, by advancements in plumbing technology.

From rainwater harvesting systems to greywater recycling, the industry is pushing the boundaries of what's possible in water conservation and sustainable building practices. Plumbing products are increasingly being integrated into green building certifications, ensuring both people and planet are being considered as new cities and homes are developed.

Through innovation, research, and a relentless focus on sustainability, plumbing manufacturers and the plumbing industry are helping to create the sustainable cities of tomorrow. These cities will be built with water efficiency at their core, reducing waste and lowering energy consumption while creating healthier environments for their residents.

Plumbing solutions help with water scarcity, climate change, and public health crises and have the potential to transform societies and create a better future for everyone. In 2025 and beyond, let's continue to be inspired by—and proud of—the quiet yet powerful difference PMI members and the plumbing industry make.

Former MMA Fighter Brings Water to Pygmy Tribe

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Justin Wren washed down 80 OxyContin and a half dozen Xanax with a handle of tequila in an attempt to end his life. Miraculously, he woke up the next morning.

With his heart racing and head hurting, he stumbled toward a nearby beach and knelt into the surf. “I had my eyes closed and I’m welling up with tears and something outside of myself, this little whisper in my soul, was saying, ‘Be grateful for that beating heart in your chest. Be grateful for the breath in your lungs,’” recalled the founder of Fight for the Forgotten, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of the Pygmy Batwa tribe of the Congo rainforest.

The keynote speaker at the PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference recalled then opening his eyes. “And on the horizon, the sun poked up. And I watched the most beautiful, epic, majestic sunrise of my life. It was a masterpiece being painted right before my eyes. That’s when my gratitude penetrated my heart,” he stated.

Injuries inflicted upon him during his years as a wrestler and mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter led him to become addicted to OxyContin. This addiction, in turn, led him to the beach, to a resolution to seek help, and eventually to founding Fight for the Forgotten.



Wren with PMI Strategic Advisory Council member Shawn Oldenhoff of Kohler

The road to recovery

After his attempted suicide, Wren began his road to recovery by finding purpose through service, working as a volunteer at a children’s hospital, at a mission for the homeless, and with an at-risk youth group. But eventually, he had to decide whether or not to begin fighting again.

He asked, “God, what do you want me to do with my life?” One day, Wren had a vision. “I wasn’t asleep, and it wasn’t necessarily a daydream, but I saw myself in the rainforest. I was walking down this footpath, and I was clearing vines and thickets out of the way. And as I was walking, I heard drumming. I heard singing. It was very distinct, tonal or indigenous singing. And as I came into a clearing, I saw dome huts with twigs and leaves, and I saw a man who was coughing, and I could count his ribs, meaning he was emaciated. And I knew he’s hungry, thirsty, poor, sick, oppressed, enslaved. He’s facing extreme poverty and oppression, and he feels forgotten. Forgotten. And I came out of that vision not knowing what to do, but

I wrote it down on a yellow legal pad—for-gotten, hungry, thirsty, poverty, oppressed, enslaved, call someone else master,” he remembers.

Sometime later, he was invited to hear a speaker who was doing impressive humanitarian work. “So I went, and there was a gentleman named Caleb



PMI24 keynote speaker Justin Wren

who had lived with the Maasai tribe in Tanzania and in Kenya,” Wren said. As Caleb told his story, Wren thought this may be a person with whom he could share his vision. Wren decided to give him his phone number. “Caleb said, ‘You’re just giving me your number? If you got something to say, tell me now. I’m right in front of you.’” Wren told Caleb about his vision. “And the first words out of Caleb’s mouth were, ‘I know who they are,’” Wren recalled. “‘They’re the Pygmy people, the Batwa, an indigenous forest-dwelling tribe of hunter-gatherers in the Congo Basin rainforest.’ I’m like, ‘Whoa. Who? Where and how do you know that?’” Caleb said, ‘because I’m going in three weeks and you’re coming with me.’”

Making a meaningful impact

Wren did travel with Caleb to Congo, where his vision became reality. “We were walking and we’re clearing vines and pickets out of the way, and we hear drumming, and then we hear singing,” Wren remembered. “Then we came into a clearing, and the first guy we meet that we acknowledge, he’s coughing, he’s got tuberculosis, and you can count each of his ribs. He’s emaciated. And it was so staggering that I was woozy, and I had to take a knee. I felt like I was rocked in a fight and Caleb’s leaning over my shoulder. He was telling me,

Continued on page 12

Belinda Wise of Neoperl Elected PMI Board President

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Plumbing Manufacturers International members elected **Belinda Wise** as president of the 2025 PMI Board of Directors during PMI's 70th Annual Meeting of the Membership. A member of the Neoperl USA Board of Directors, Wise succeeds **Chip Way**, director of OEM sales at Lavelle Industries. Way will remain on the board as immediate past president. The meeting was held during the PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference in Atlanta, where PMI celebrated its 70th anniversary.



Belinda Wise

In addition to Wise and Way, the members of the 2025 board will be board vice president **Bob Neff**, Delta Faucet Company; board secretary/treasurer **Lowell Lampen**, Kohler; and at-large directors **Troy Benavidez**, LIXIL; **Kate Olinger**, Uponor-GF Building Flow Solutions; **Michael Reffner**, Moen; and **Paige Riddle**, LSP Products.

In remarks after her election, Wise encouraged all members to leverage the power of their collective network. "The strength of our association lies in the knowledge and experience of each one of you. I look forward to fostering even greater collaboration among our members, facilitating the exchange of ideas, and creating platforms where we can work together to solve the challenges of today and tomorrow," she stated.

Wise recognized Way for his contributions as the 2024 PMI board president. Wise also announced that the 71st Annual Meeting of the Membership will be held as part of the PMI25 Manufacturing Success Conference from Nov. 3-6, 2025, at the Fairmont Hotel in Chicago.

In remarks summing up 2024, Way recognized new PMI manufacturing members Falcon Water Technologies, represented by president and CEO **John Confrey**, and LSP Products, represented by Riddle, senior director, product management.

Way also presented the PMI President's Award to **C.J. Lagan** of LIXIL and the Paul Patton PMI24 Manufacturing Success Award to **Jake MacDonald**, director, quality, BLANCO North America. PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole** named **Lars Christensen** of BLANCO as the recipient of the PMI Ambassador Award, given each year to an employee of a PMI member company.

During his state of the association report, Stackpole spoke of how the plumbing manufacturing industry is a force for global change, making leading contributions toward better water efficiency and hygiene, access to clean water and sanitation systems, and sustainable building and green living. These contributions ultimately save water, reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, prevent illness, and save lives.



C.J. Lagan (r) received the PMI President's Award from Chip Way

tion systems, and sustainable building and green living. These contributions ultimately save water, reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, prevent illness, and save lives.

Inspiring leaders use imagination to turn problems into opportunities

The Nov. 4-7 PMI24 meeting earlier featured the PMI Inspiring Leaders Program held at the Carter Center, and the PMI Women's Breakfast, a celebration of the contributions of women to the plumbing manufacturing industry.

Facilitated by **Scott Hutcheson**, Ph.D., of Purdue University, the PMI Inspiring Leaders Program focused on reframing



The 2025 PMI Board of Directors with PMI CEO/Executive Director Kerry Stackpole at far left. l-r: Michael Reffner, Kate Olinger, Troy Benavidez, Belinda Wise, Chip Way, Paige Riddle, Lowell Lampen, and Bob Neff

problems into opportunities that can be gained through strategic thinking. To accomplish this reframing, Dr. Hutcheson encouraged participants to develop imagine questions. For example, imagine water conservation was a universal household value. What would that look like?



Representing new PMI members were John Confrey, Falcon Water Technologies, and Paige Riddle, LSP Products



Lars Christensen (r) received the PMI Ambassador Award from Kerry Stackpole



Jake MacDonald received the Paul Patton PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference Award

Other examples relating to PFAS: imagine the same level of product quality and performance without PFAS, what would that look like? Imagine the same level of product quality and performance without forever chemicals. Imagine a PFAS regulatory framework that represented the realities and needs of plumbing manufacturers. Imagine PFAS wasn't a liability. Imagine easily being able to identify and remove/displace PFAS from all your products and processes.

Women's breakfast speaker encourages connection, confidence building

Featuring guest speaker **DeRetta Cole Rhodes**, Ph.D., executive vice president and chief culture officer of the Atlanta Braves, the breakfast gave PMI's women the opportunity to connect and support each other. For more, see the story on page 9.



2024 PMI Women's Breakfast attendees with guest speaker Dr. DeRetta Cole Rhodes



2024 PMI Inspiring Leaders Program attendees at the Carter Center, with program facilitator Dr. Scott Hutcheson (r)

PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference



PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference

More PMI24 photos can be viewed here tinyurl.com/463ach2x





**ICC
EVALUATION
SERVICE®**

LOOKING FOR A CERTIFICATION PROVIDER THAT UNDERSTANDS?

Look no further than ICC-ES PMG – the leading provider of product evaluations in plumbing, mechanical and fuel gas.

Excellent customer service plus the highest acceptability by code officials – at the cost you are comfortable with.

WE TEST AND CERTIFY:

- Plumbing Fittings and Fixtures
- Plumbing Waste Fittings – Drains
- Pool Products – Shells, Suction Fittings
- HVAC Products
- NSF 61 / AB100
- WaterSense Products
- Plastic Pipe & Fittings – Potable, Drainage, Hydronic
- Kitchen Cabinets



Experts In Plumbing, Mechanical and Fuel Gas
Product Evaluations

www.icc-es.org/pmg



Contact Us

VISIT US

NAHB

IBS

#C3032

KBIS

#N2571

February 25–27, 2025

Las Vegas Convention Center



A Mark of Confidence™

24-24228

Thank you PMI24 Sponsors!

Gold Sponsors

INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL™



ICC EVALUATION SERVICE™



Silver Sponsors

CONTRACTOR.



Creating Confidence By Building a Strong Community

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Find the support of great mentors and a strong community to build confidence, so you can more easily manage career challenges, suggested **DeRetta Cole Rhodes**, Ph.D., executive vice president and chief culture officer of the Atlanta Braves, at the 2024 Plumbing Manufacturers International Women's Breakfast.

The breakfast allowed PMI's women members to connect and support each other during the PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference in Atlanta. Speaking to a group of 25 women, Dr. Rhodes discussed how she climbed to success with the support of her mentors and community.

She invited the attendees to use the breakfast to build a community and coalition. "I ask that you reach out to one person, maybe two, that you can connect with and that is your person that you are able to call, talk to, email, whatever the case may be, given whatever's going on. I do ask you to do that because I think that's so important for us to have those allegiances, to have those alliances, to be able to move forward," she said.

Overcome imposter syndrome

Dr. Rhodes spoke of the importance of having confidence. She said imposter syndrome, which is defined as self-doubt or the fear of being exposed as a fraud, sometimes gets in the way of career advancement. "I tell people I suffer from imposter syndrome probably four days a week," she related. "I'm serious. We do a lot of second-guessing around things that we're doing that we know we're capable of."

She said sharing those thoughts with a community of individuals important to you helps to overcome them. "If we learn how to create a coalition, work with one another, build one another up, it makes such a difference in terms of the impact that we can do and how we can do it," she stated.

Dr. Rhodes shared an earlier career experience that taught her this valuable lesson. She worked for a manager who told her she didn't have the capability of being a leader, which undermined her confidence, she said. After a particularly bad day, Dr. Rhodes turned to an "amazing mentor who became a very good friend of mine," she added. Her advice was to retreat and come back to fight another day. Those are the individuals who help build your resilience so you can get to the good days and pay it forward by supporting others, Dr. Rhodes said.

Keep a list of accomplishments

"Typically, the things that we play in our head are never positive," Dr. Rhodes stated. "It always goes back to 'what did I do wrong?'" Instead, she advised attendees to keep a running list of their accomplishments as a reminder of what they are doing right. On bad days, review the list and check in with your network to reinforce your good qualities, she added.

Several attendees said they have a solid community of support. "Throughout my career, I have always been drawn to coworkers who provide positive, constructive advice and have relied on a 'mentor'-type supervisor. I like to always be learning and I am a huge believer in communication with the door 'always open' mentality in the workplace," said **Dawn LaFleur-Qualley**, vice president ES-PMG with PMI member ICC Evaluation Service, who attended the breakfast.



PMI24 Women's Breakfast speaker Dr. DeRetta Cole Rhodes with Belinda Wise, Neoperl, the incoming 2025 PMI board president

"I have an internal and external mentor for my job and professional development. I also rely on my spouse who is a communication major and social worker. She can review my writings and provide social perspectives," said breakfast attendee **Denise Dougherty**, global regulatory manager with PMI member Sloan Valve Company.

Dougherty's ready to fortify her network. "I spoke with several of the women from the breakfast on how to stay in touch and support each other. I am looking forward to the opportunities that will come from these new relationships," she stated.

Attendees also found Dr. Rhodes' advice inspiring. "I truly enjoyed her warmth and advice she gave on uplifting and supporting women in the workplace. Working in a predominately male industry, it empowers us as women to find strength amongst each other to keep building our confidence so we can prosper in our careers," LaFleur-Qualley added.

Economist Sees Growth Ahead Amidst Some Uncertainty

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Projecting macroeconomic growth for 2025 and 2026, ITR Economics' **Lauren Saidel-Baker** encouraged Plumbing Manufacturers International members to block out the political noise and maximize competitive advantages during her post-election PMI Market Outlook LIVE presentation on Nov. 6 at the PMI24 Manufacturing Success Conference in Atlanta.

"We have signs of uplift for 2025 and beyond," Saidel-Baker stated. "Leading indicators are turning up. We're currently in a slowing-growth environment globally. As I look at signs of life, these green shoots that are pointing up, I want to pinpoint where do we see them first, but also, where are there uncertainties?"

She said ITR Economics will not be changing its forecast according to the election result. However, there are uncertainties relating to geopolitical tensions and their potential impact on inflation and interest rates. "We do expect inflation to pick back up by the second half of 2025," Saidel-Baker advised, driven mainly by increases in wages and salaries, electric power, government spending, and other factors.

What direction the Federal Reserve takes with interest rates is a wild card at the moment, she stated, as it works to find a balance between low inflation on one hand and low unemployment on the other. She recommended staying current by watching ITR Economics' Fed Watch YouTube broadcasts (itreconomics.com/fed-watch).

Finding workers remains a challenge

While economists have often talked about workers who can't find jobs, "what we need to worry about today is jobs that can't find workers," Saidel-Baker stated. "For every job opening posted today, there's about 92% of a worker." Finding workers will continue to be a challenge, especially with a high

prime-age labor force participation rate and Baby Boomers retiring. "We're going to have to become more efficient. Maybe there's an AI solution, maybe automation, co-worker robots, something like that," she speculated. Otherwise, the way to find more workers is through competition with dollars and other benefits. "What that's doing is driving wage inflation higher," she explained.

She recommended strategizing on how your company will contend with future inflation and higher interest rates, which she predicted will rebound from the current disinflation, which is a slowing rate of inflation.

The good news behind inflation is real personal income. "Despite the impact of inflation taking a bite out of increasing wages, real income is still rising. Real means inflation-adjusted. So, we are actually better off today than we ever have been in history," Saidel-Baker said. Real income provides purchasing power, which bodes well for sales, she explained.

Residential construction on a cyclical upswing

Prices in the residential housing market for new homes are ticking downward and existing home prices are still on the rise. Mortgage rates are still making home ownership unaffordable for many Americans, Saidel-Baker said. Still, she sees residential construction, both single-unit and multi-unit, on the cyclical upswing. "Housing starts are a fantastic leading indicator for non-residential construction. We get people in the houses, then we need to build the schools, the hospitals, the offices, the warehouses, everything else around it. So, non-res construction, still going pretty healthy, 8.7% growth. That is something to write home about," she stated.

By 2026, Saidel-Baker expects huge growth in the non-residential sector. "Whatever it is that you need to do today and tomorrow and next year

to be ready for that 2026 boom, please, if it's people, if it's capacity, whatever it is, be ready. Don't be behind the eight ball when this growth comes in 2026," she advised.



Lauren Saidel-Baker

Plan for a serious downturn around 2030

While expecting growth over the next several years, Saidel-Baker predicted a serious depression to begin around 2030 and to last several years. This downturn will be caused primarily by the very large Baby Boomer generation drawing upon Medicare and Social Security and the national debt increasing as a result. She advised PMI24 attendees to work with their financial advisors to plan for this scenario.

In summary, Saidel-Baker said:

- Expect interest rates to lower through at least early 2025.
- Jump on the lower rates if you intend to leverage the future.
- Build out an inflation strategy. Margin pressures mean having effective cost management, and inflation-savvy plans are imperative.
- Be USA-centric in your thinking regarding the future.
- Digitize and use AI.
- Think about expanding the asset classes you are invested in and plan to pivot hard in 2028-2032.

PMI members can log in to view the presentation slides at tinyurl.com/3z2ypnjr.

PMI Members Advised to Prepare for Government Action

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

On the morning after the Nov. 5 presidential election, PMI advocacy and government affairs consultants **Stephanie Salmon** and **Jerry Desmond** advised Plumbing Manufacturers International members to prepare themselves to protect their interests under the new Trump administration and 119th Congress, as well as in California, where regulators are expected to issue recommendations for lower toilet flush rates.

Salmon said the House of Representatives will have more than 50 new members and the Senate nearly 15. “It’s important for our industry to know these new members,” she emphasized. “We do such great things, and we have such a great story to tell about our people and what we produce.”

Heating up quickly during the transition period will be the debate over tariffs, which would likely increase inflation. Despite voters raising strong concerns about higher prices, “Trump wants to put 60% tariffs on Chinese goods, up from the 25% that we already have. And China losing favored-nation trading status. He’s talked about putting 10 to 20% tariffs across the board, on all foreign goods that are imported. So

that means on Europe, our friends, with whom we work closely. He also said he wants to put a 25% tariff on all imports from Mexico, unless they curb the number of immigrants coming across the border,” Salmon explained.

“You need to be talking to your member of Congress about what this means for your company, if you’re doing business in Mexico,” she reemphasized. “(The Trump administration) will be looking at what’s coming on trucks across the border from Mexico. That’s not going to go away. But if you’re conducting yourself within the USMCA rules, then you need to tell your member of Congress.”

Salmon said she expects Trump to reopen USMCA. “My guess is that the USTR and the Department of Commerce will start to take comments sometime in 2025 about what changes stakeholders would like to see” relating to labor, the environment and other issues, she explained.

During President **Joe Biden’s** lame duck period, Salmon said bipartisan movement on a national defense authorization bill and FEMA funding is likely but expects negotiations on the fiscal

year 2025 budget to extend into the new administration.

Awaiting CEC recommendation on toilet flush rates

Meanwhile, PMI expects a California Energy Commission (CEC) report soon that will likely contain a recommendation to reduce the maximum flow rate for toilets. “That would trigger the formal rulemaking with public comments, with a potential effective date sometime next year,” Desmond said. PMI is developing a strategy to counter the proposed flush rate reduction with a robust legacy product replacement initiative, given that less than 25% of California toilets currently meet the state’s Title 20 specification of 1.28 gallons per flush.

In addition to making the case for saving water through the installation of more water-efficient toilets, the strategy will recommend engaging governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to take a closer look at studies and data measuring the upstream and downstream impacts of lower flow rates on fixture performance, drain carry of solid waste, backflow, water age, and pathogen development. Desmond added that he is looking for opportunities to gain funding for legacy product replacement through a provision in the Water Infrastructure Climate Drought Bond, which will provide up to \$75 million for water conservation projects.

Also, in California, attorneys are readying themselves to challenge Trump executive orders and new partisan legislation, Desmond said. During the previous Trump administration, California Attorney General **Rob Bonta** filed more than 100 lawsuits of this nature on behalf of the state of California. “That can be expected to continue,” he stated. These lawsuits will be designed to protect state rules from federal intervention on issues relating to auto emissions, immigration, gun control, voter identification, and more, he explained.

Continued on page 12



Moderator Troy Benavidez, LIXIL, with Stephanie Salmon and Jerry Desmond, PMI’s advocacy/government affairs consultants

MMA Fighter Brings Water to Tribe (Contd.)

Continued from page 3

‘This is your vision. This is your vision.’ It was the most surreal deja vu times 100 moment of my life.”

Over the next few days, Wren witnessed the suffering and death caused by the lack of clean water and sanitation. His first stay there lasted six weeks, and he set four goals: live with, listen to, learn from, love them. They began to dig for water wells and, one by one, began to experience success.

Today, with the help of Wren and Fight for the Forgotten, the Pygmy community has dug 85 wells providing clean water to more than 56,000 people, purchased and provided more than 3,000 acres of land that legally belongs to them, and built many homes. This initiative has helped tribe members to become beekeepers, farmers, welders, tailors, and

more. They opened a barbershop and a hair salon, replanted tens of thousands of trees, and started four sustainable farms. In progress are a health center, vocational training school, and water reservoir, Wren said. “But what I’m most proud of is that we’ve seen more than 1,800 people transition out of a life of actual, modern-day slavery and into a life of freedom,” he stated.

Wren thanked the PMI24 attendees for the work they do to assure access to clean, safe water and sanitation systems. Donations to Fight for the Forgotten, with two-to-one matching happening now, can be made at tinyurl.com/3bbkr9fd. Wren said the donations will provide land, water, farming opportunities, better housing, health care, education, and sustainable livelihoods for the Pygmy community.

Members Advised to Prepare for Action (Contd.)

Continued from page 11

Getting ready to advocate for favorable programs and business sense

Negotiations over the federal budget will come with the Republicans holding the upper hand with control over the House and Senate, as well as the presidency. With Republicans eager to cut federal agency budgets, PMI and its members must be ready to advocate for the continual funding of programs within the Environmental Protection Agency that are favorable to plumbing manufacturers, such as Water-Sense, state revolving funds, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), and lead pipe removal, Salmon said. She added that she expects

a slowdown in PFAS registration but said the recent updates to the Lead and Copper Rule will stand because they are court mandated.

With California turning slightly to the right on Nov. 5, Desmond said Democrats may have to temper their enthusiasm for aggressive greenhouse gas reductions out of concern for creating business disadvantages. “Is the tech sector now going to have leverage and say, ‘We’re going to do what Elon did and take our personal tax revenues to Texas, or another state?’” Desmond asked. “A number of the statewide officeholders may try to articulate a more business-friendly attitude.”

2024 PMI LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chip Way, Lavelle Industries
President

Belinda Wise, Neoperl
Vice President

Bob Neff, Delta Faucet Company
Secretary-Treasurer

Sal Gattone, LIXIL
Immediate Past President

Lowell Lampen, Kohler

Kate Olinger, Uponor

Michael Reffner, Moen

Paige Riddle, LSP Products

LEGAL COUNSEL

Pam Taylor, Esquire
Jones Day
ptaylor@jonesday.com

PMI STAFF

Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE
CEO/Executive Director
kstackpole@safeplumbing.org

Jodi Stuhrberg
Director of Programs and Administration
jstuhrberg@safeplumbing.org

Kyle Thompson
Technical Director
kthompson@safeplumbing.org

Merill Morse
Programs and Events Coordinator
mmorse@safeplumbing.org

Ann Geier
Administrative Assistant
aageier@safeplumbing.org

PMI CONSULTANTS

Ray Valek
Public Relations
ray@valekco.com

Maureen Baird
Graphic Design



1750 Tysons Blvd., Ste. 1500
McLean, VA 22102
Phone: 847 481-5500
Fax: 847 481-5501
SafePlumbing.org