

Fitzsimmons Lauds IACMI for Setting Strong Foundation, Looks to Bright Future

Alex Fitzsimmons, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency at the U.S. Department of Energy, told IACMI members Oct. 7 that the institute is going to play a critical role in the future of U.S. manufacturing and in manufacturing competitiveness in the next five to 10 years.

“I strongly believe that the future of IACMI is as bright as its past and I applaud IACMI and all the partners who have contributed to its success,” Fitzsimmons said. IACMI was launched in 2015 by the U.S. Department of Energy’s Advanced Manufacturing Office.

His remarks came during the opening session of the IACMI Fall 2020 Virtual Members Meeting. More than 350 members and core partners registered for the virtual event and Working Groups held Oct. 7-8. This was the first time for IACMI to conduct a “virtual” Members Meeting for its 140+ member and partner organizations due to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fitzsimmons said manufacturing “forms the backbone of this country” and that energy competitiveness is a key to manufacturing success. Manufacturing employs more than 11 million people in the U.S and consumes about 25 percent of U.S. energy.

“When you talk about the future of manufacturing, energy competitiveness is manufacturing competitiveness,” he said. “Manufacturing is very energy intensive and you know the United States is never going to have the cheapest labor because we have highly skilled workers and a highly skilled workforce that IACMI has contributed to in significant ways.”

Fitzsimmons added that the U.S. has high environmental standards and high manufacturing standards. “We don’t cut corners – so we have to find other ways to be competitive,” he said. “Manufacturing is energy intensive – that’s an input we can control. Energy competitiveness is increasingly tied to manufacturing competitiveness. Composites play a key role in that. Composites are all about making things lighter, faster, stronger and cheaper and IACMI has led the way in this area on behalf of DOE in the last five years.”

Fitzsimmons applauded IACMI and its partners for being on the front lines of research and development of materials to assist communities in dealing with the Covid-19 challenge. “We’ve all been learning about what it means to be more adaptable, flexible and more resilient and that’s exactly what IACMI and it’s partners have proven to me,” he said. “But also, we never rest on our laurels. You don’t have the benefit of doing that as manufacturers – and particularly in this type of climate, in the middle of a pandemic. I know you all are focused on what the future holds and we are looking forward at DOE to continuing to be strong partners with IACMI and all of its member companies and its other partners because we really do see IACMI as a foundation, as a hub, of regional economic development and technology innovation going forward.”

