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FEBRUARY 2026

TileLetter

**THE
TRAINING
ISSUE**

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WE ARE JM.'
INNOVATION FROM DAY ONE.**

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HELPER to CTI
ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY**

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to an old glossary
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ON ACCURACY AND KEY TERMS
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TileLetter

TileLetter is the official monthly publication of the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA), and the industry's leading tile installation magazine.

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Meet the 2026 NTCA Training Team



Matt Weiner
Training Department
Manager



Randy Fleming



Chad Jones



Kate Koerber



Bill O'Connor



Amber Fox
Director of Strategic
Initiatives



Anthony Oliver



Robb Roderick



Alex Smith

2026 NTCA Workshop Programs *

To confirm dates and for more information visit NTCATraining.com

MARCH

- 3 Floor & Decor – Beaverton, OR
- 3 Floor & Decor – Toms River, NJ
- 3 Floor & Decor – Springfield, NJ
- 4 Daltile – Mechanicsburg, PA
- 4 Floor & Decor – Seattle, WA
- 5 Daltile – Rochester, NY
- 10 Southeastern Tile Connection – Mills River, NC
- 10 Daltile – Ventura, CA
- 10 Daltile – Woburn, MA
- 11 Floor & Decor – Knoxville, TN
- 11 Floor & Decor – Bellingham, MA
- 12 Daltile – Hartford, CT

- 12 Floor & Decor – Atlanta, GA
- 17 Floor & Decor – Farmingdale, NY
- 24 Floor & Decor – Las Vegas, NV
- 25 The Tile Shop – Lombard, IL
- 26 Daltile – Kentwood, MI
- 31 Floor & Decor – Devon, PA

- 20 Daltile – La Vista, NE
- 21 D&B Tile – Hialeah, FL
- 21 Daltile – Maspeth, NY
- 21 Floor & Decor – Wichita, KS
- 22 D&B Tile – Sunrise, FL
- 23 Daltile – Arlington, TX
- 23 Floor & Decor – Naples, FL
- 28 Texas Tile Supply – Abilene, TX
- 28 Floor & Decor – Arlington Heights, IL
- 29 MSI – Indianapolis, IN
- 29 Floor & Decor – San Antonio, TX
- 30 Emser Tile – Nashville, TN
- 30 Floor & Decor – San Antonio, TX

APRIL

- 7 Floor & Decor – Cincinnati, OH
- 14 Floor & Decor – Draper, UT
- 14 Floor & Decor – Mooresville, NC
- 15 Daltile – Greensboro, NC
- 16 Daltile – Morrisville, NC

2026 NTCA Regional Programs *

Register online at NTCATraining.com

MARCH

- 5 Mosaic Tile – Alexandria, VA
- 5 ESG Gallery – Las Vegas, NV
- 12 Floor & Decor – Turnersville, NJ
- 12 Caesarstone – Sun Valley, CA
- 19 Floor & Decor – Roseville, CA
- 19 Floor & Decor – Avenel, NJ
- 26 Floor & Decor – Shrewsbury, MA
- 26 Daltile – Tualatin, OR

APRIL

- 2 Floor & Decor – Silver Spring, MD

- 2 Daltile – Seattle, WA
- 9 Floor & Decor – Lewis Center, OH
- 9 Floor & Decor – Riverdale, UT
- 16 United Tile – Orange, CA
- 16 Daltile – Bedford Heights, OH
- 23 Crossville Studios OKC – Oklahoma City, OK
- 23 Floor & Decor – Dorchester, MA
- 28 Floor & Decor – McKinney, TX
- 30 Wayne Tile Company – Wayne, NJ
- 30 Caesarstone – Pompano Beach, FL



NTCA maintains an ongoing list of training events through an interactive map on its website. Check it out by scanning.



**Dates are subject to change*

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EDUCATION and TRAINING: THE HEART OF NTCA

"The goal of education is understanding; the goal of training is performance."

– FRANK BELL



Lesley Goddin

Education and training are at the heart of the NTCA—and they hold the best hope for those in the industry looking to do exemplary work and elevate their skills as new tile formats and setting material technologies come into being. This issue is a tribute to the ongoing efforts and programs from NTCA and other companies to inspire you and inform you of a path you can take for your career.

In this issue, we share wisdom from our training team and check in with what's on tap for training and education this year, as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of training at NTCA. We also take a look at Fireclay Tile's new installation training program and the professionalism it brings to handmade tile installation. And be sure to check out the story on the incredible opportunities to boost what you learn and how you put that into practice by recouping your membership dues several times over through the Partnering for Success voucher program.

As a testament to how things change, flip over to the Technical story on the updating of the glossary that appears in the *NTCA Reference Manual*, and how a NTCA Technical Committee subcommittee is crafting it to be more installer-centric than ever before.

Nicole Hulme, who obtained her Certified Tile Installer credential last year at the All-Women's CTI test, shares her journey through the industry in our Member story, and Bart Bettiga talks with Calvin Stuart of Welch Tile in this issue's One to One story. Learn about his grit and optimism and what he brings to the Welch team.

We welcome Johns Manville (JM) as our cover feature sponsor in February. Learn about the evolution of the company, and how JM's visionary, Duane Paradis, saw new possibilities in an existing waterproof roofing product that gave rise to GoBoard®.

Learning is a lifelong process, and the training programs NTCA offers to support that process are immense. It doesn't happen without dedication, planning, expert instructors and organizers, sponsors and hosts—and, of course, without your attendance. Take every occasion to learn something new this year. With the dizzying pace of change in our industry and our world, you owe yourself the best chance to compete and thrive in your chosen career. NTCA Training Programs—and the access to discounted or free products afforded by the Partnering Success Program—are just two facets of the many benefits your membership provides. Scan below for the list of 11 partnerships NTCA has secured for members, beyond the training, networking, helpful publications, and opportunities to literally change the course of the industry by your involvement!

God bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley".

Lesley
lesley@tile-assn.com



WHAT THEY SAY...



I realize that other NTCA members probably feel the same love for the industry and artistry in tile - and we all share that feeling - NTCA is a home for that family. People communicate, help each other, support each other, and celebrate each other's accomplishments.

*Alex Tsituk, Owner, Trimworks, Inc.,
Shrewsbury, MA*

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Rod Owen

BUSINESS ACUMEN SERIES: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ACUMEN

As we move into February, the holidays feel far behind us, job sites are in full swing again, and we're settling into the rhythm of a new year.

January is always a month of planning and alignment for the NTCA, and this year was no different. Your Executive Committee met in early January to review our progress and fine-tune the strategic priorities that will guide the association over the next several years. The future is bright, and I'm proud of the direction in which we're heading.

This month in our Business Acumen Series, we turn our focus to People Management Acumen, a skill that sits at the very heart of every successful contractor's business. No matter how much equipment, technology, or experience we bring to a project, our people remain the difference-makers. They are the ones solving problems, serving clients, maintaining quality, and representing your name on every single job.

People Management Acumen is more than scheduling crews or assigning tasks. It's the ability to develop talent, communicate clearly, set expectations, and build a culture where people can do their best work. In today's environment where labor is tight, expectations are high, and projects move fast, strong people management is a priority.

Great people managers do three things well:

- **They listen.** They make it safe for their teams to speak up, ask questions, and point out issues before they become problems.
- **They invest.** Training, mentorship, and hands-on guidance don't just build skills, they build loyalty, confidence, and pride in the craft.
- **They set clarity.** Clear instructions, clear standards, and clear accountability help crews perform at a high level without confusion or guesswork.

All this ties directly into this month's *TileLetter* theme:

Training. Training is one of the most powerful tools we have for developing our people and strengthening our industry. NTCA is well aware of the value of training—2026 marks the 40th anniversary of NTCA's training programs.

Whether it's manufacturer training, NTCA Workshops or Regional Training Programs, online resources, or in-house coaching, every hour spent training your team pays dividends in quality, safety, and professionalism. No one in our trade succeeds alone, and no one learns alone. We learn best when we learn together.

And speaking of learning together, Coverings 2026 is right around the corner, March 30–April 2. If you haven't already, start planning your trip. Coverings brings the entire tile and stone community under one roof, and it's one of the most impactful events you can attend for education, networking, and exposure to innovation. Stop by the NTCA Booth #4070, introduce yourself, and get connected with all the resources we offer.

As you push through the busy weeks ahead, take time to invest in your people, sharpen your leadership, and build the kind of culture that elevates everyone around you.

Next month, we'll close out our Business Acumen Series with Ethical Acumen, understanding and upholding the principles and standards that define trustworthy, professional business practices.

Until then, stay focused, keep developing your teams, and as always,

Educate for Excellence.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod".

Rod Owen
NTCA President
rod.owen@ccowen.us

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'WE ARE TILE. WE ARE JM.'

INNOVATION FROM DAY ONE.



By Shawna Bouchard, Sr.
Marketing Specialist for
GoBoard®, Johns Manville
Building Insulation

Sal Azzolino of Argo Tile & Stone in San Francisco, squaring up his GoBoard walls.



Ken Ballin of Skyro Floors, a New Jersey-based tile contractor, installs GoBoard.

There are many questions a business asks itself when it dares to step foot into an industry and market that is outside of the typical wheelhouse. This is what Johns Manville (JM) mulled over with its tile backer board product line.

In 2014, JM took a product developed in partnership in 2006, a ½” thick polyiso foam board, and placed its second foot into the marketplace with a brand called GoBoard®. Win, lose, or draw, JM all went in. And now it’s sweeping across North America.

You can read about our extensive history on the JM website (jm.com), but this is a quick overview of the trajectory of the company.

Company history

Johns Manville got its start in 1858 by Henry Ward Johns, who created the company’s first roofing shingles in his New York basement. Johns’ business grew rapidly and earned its first asbestos patent in 1868. In 1886, Charles B. Manville and his sons established the Manville Covering Company, later becoming sales agents for Johns’ products. The two companies merged 15 years later to form Johns-Manville (JM), expanding into insulation, packaging, brake linings, and asbestos-based products. By 1927, JM’s sales reached \$45 million, and it went public on the New York Stock Exchange.

Over the following decades, JM thrived through major historical challenges and ultimately confronted the rise and fall of the “miracle mineral” asbestos, shaping a lasting commitment to health and safety. In 2001, JM became a Berkshire Hathaway subsidiary, strengthening its financial footing. By its 160th anniversary in 2018, JM remained focused on innovative solutions to improve energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and comfort.

Development for the future



Duane Paradis, JM
Research Manager and
inventor of GoBoard®.

At JM's state-of-the-art research and development facility in Littleton, Colo., our engineers and building scientists are continually building on our leadership position in the sustainable building products industry. We are confident in the future accomplishments our team will achieve.

Duane Paradis, Research Manager and Chemical Engineer, is the visionary backbone of GoBoard. He took an existing product from our roofing business and asked himself if he could feasibly remodel a bathroom in his home utilizing its inherent

waterproof characteristics. Like Henry Ward Johns in 1858, development started with the simple question, "How can we solve a problem with this idea?"

The "gateway board"

Cement board has long been the industry standard for tile applications. However, it is heavy, dusty, and not inherently waterproof. GoBoard is ultra-lightweight, with a 3' x5' ½" board weighing 0.50 lbs. per square foot. Something as simple as dropping the weight of the product and highlighting the resulting benefits can shift an entire industry to adopt more innovative building products—and fuel product growth in an industry that is reporting contractions in ceramic tile sales.

Some GoBoard team members report that GoBoard is being hailed as "the gateway board." Certainly, this



Brandt Garrison of Garrison Tile and Renovation (l.) and Duane Paradis, JM Research Manager and inventor of GoBoard.



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■ FEATURE

can be an allusion to Johns Manville’s ingenuity in positively impacting the market as a whole, simply by entering this space with a high-performing product at an appetizing price. What we believe is meant by the gateway statement is that our competitors are also enjoying the industry shift to foam boards, and they are riding GoBoard’s wake. Have we solved a problem for tile contractors? Yes, we have.

Crucial contractor relationships

At Johns Manville, we have a tagline: “We Are JM.” We have a developed culture that puts our customers first. Our customers aren’t only the distributors. We truly focus on the end user when we develop or improve a product. Price is how we help our distributors, but high performance and problem solving is how we serve the end users who are out there buying our products every day.

Developing relationships with contractors is a very important piece of what we call “The JM Experience.” Inspired by Portland tile contractor Jason McDaniel—an early adopter of GoBoard—we added “We Are Tile” as a variation of our tagline.

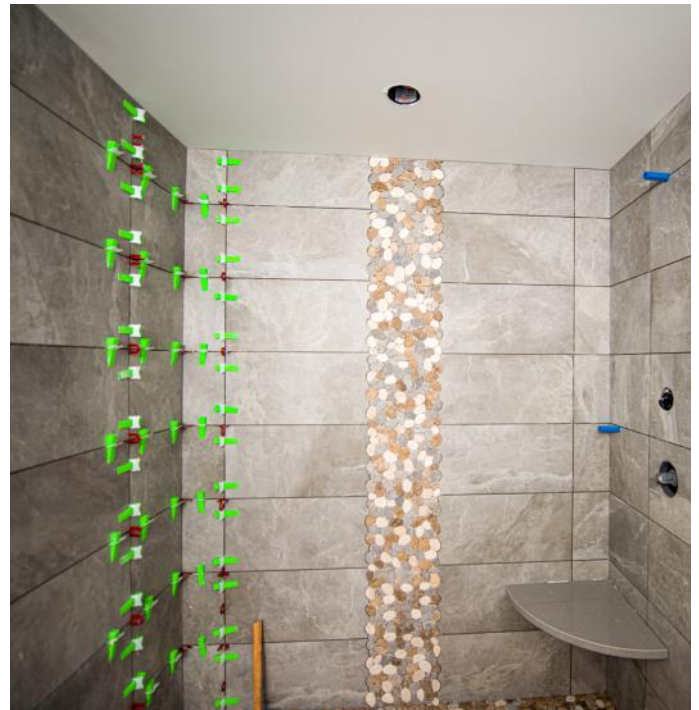
Our core values, ever-present in everything we do at Johns Manville, are People, Passion, Perform, and Protect. Contractor feedback is key to Paradis’ goal of developing the best, highest-performing tile backer board in the market. In addition to spending a lot of time in the laboratory and in the manufacturing plants, Paradis haunts customer events and training sessions, where he listens to



A GoBoard shower installation by Brandt Garrison in Burley, Idaho.



Sal Azzolino of Argo Tile & Stone in San Francisco, measuring and cutting GoBoard to fit.



Ken Ballin’s artistic scribework in a GoBoard shower install.

National Tile Contractors Association

ELEVATE YOUR CRAFT. SECURE YOUR FUTURE.



In an industry where precision is paramount, every mistake costs you. The NTCA equips you with the most comprehensive technical standards and installation training in the industry. As part of your membership, you receive the *NTCA Reference Manual* – a definitive guide to help you navigate complex installations, avoid costly errors, and ensure every job meets the highest industry standards.



- ✓ **Access Instant Answers:** On-demand technical support and documented best practices.
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Membership isn't a cost; it's an investment that pays for itself through unmatched installation training, technical expertise, and support that only the "Voice of the Tile Contractor" can provide.

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Sean Wahl, tile contractor in Omaha, Neb., installed these GoBoard Membrane products.



Matt Wentland, a Colorado general contractor, installs GoBoard PRO.

what everyday installers have to say about what works and what doesn't work. And then he goes to work, solving their problems.

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Collaborative connections: contractors and JM

Here are two such examples of contractors and how they've connected with JM, influencing product development and incorporating GoBoard into their day-to-day operations.

Brandt Garrison of Garrison Tile & Renovation in Burley, Idaho—another early adopter of GoBoard Tile Backer—was looking for a high-performing yet economical foam tile backer board solution. Having already made the switch from cement board, Garrison reached out to Johns Manville to better understand the product from a technical perspective. He also wanted to know about available solutions for dry packed mud pans. He was

missing a topical waterproofing membrane from the GoBoard product lineup to install a large walk-in shower for a pool house project in November/December of 2023.

With Garrison's willingness to try out solutions in the field, Paradis went to work again. JM provided the membrane materials for the project, and throughout the installation, we received early feedback indicating that more installers would also find the product offerings to meet or exceed expectations.

Another example of this collaborative approach to product research and development is when JM visited the job site of Ken Ballin in late 2023. Ballin is a tile contractor in New Jersey, specializing in custom scribework for his customers in the beach cities where he operates.

Ballin found that 3' x 5' tile backer board panels weren't the ideal size for him to work with. He was making more cuts than ideal, experiencing some waste following his projects. He also felt that 4' x 8' panels were too large. He was hoping for something in between. He asked us how feasible it would be for Johns Manville to produce a 4' x 5' panel for distribution. This feedback was crucial for developing the GoBoard 4'x64" panel, which is now available in the marketplace. **TL**

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2025 TCNA Handbook and ANSI Standards

ANSI A137.2



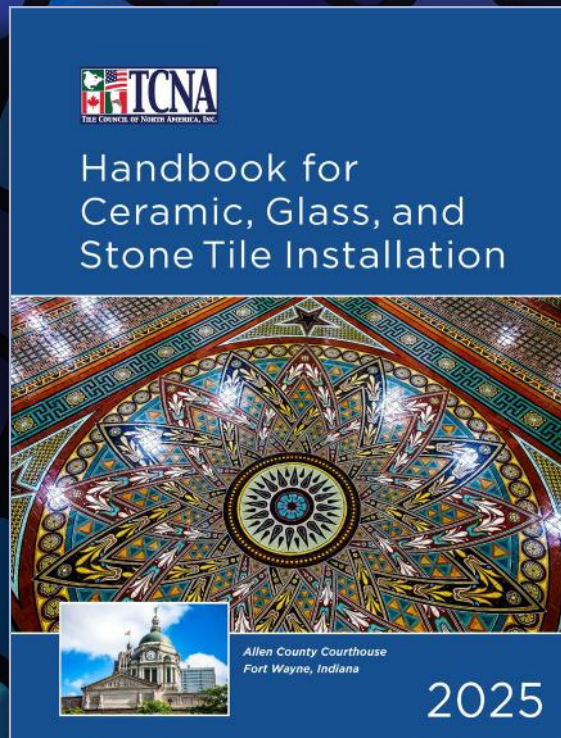
ANSI A137.1



ANSI A108, A118, and A136



ANSI A137.3, A108.19 and A108.20



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Fireclay Tile builds THE FUTURE

WITH A GROUNDBREAKING INSTALLATION TRAINING PROGRAM

By Elena Grant, TileLetter Publisher

Walking into Fireclay Tile's Aromas, Calif., manufacturing facility for the first time was an unforgettable experience and a personal milestone, as it marked my very first visit to a tile manufacturing plant. There was a calm energy to the place with the hum of production, the craftsmanship on display, and the pride woven into every stage of the process. Being escorted behind the scenes to see raw materials transformed into beautiful handmade tile was truly inspiring. Watching the artisans—120+ in its California factory—shape, glaze, fire, and finish each piece gave me a new appreciation for the skill, precision, and artistry that define this industry, and set the tone for a truly eye-opening day immersed in the world of tile.

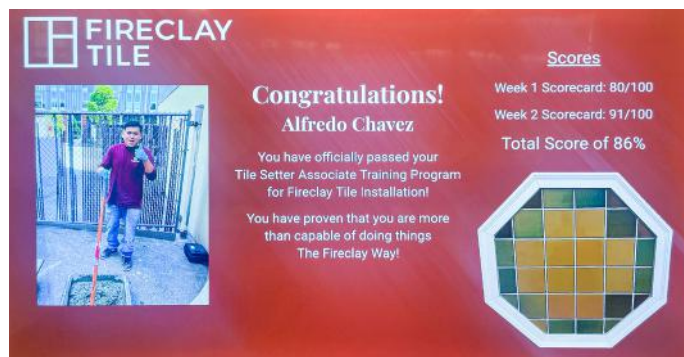


Developing installers from the ground up

The reason for visiting Fireclay was to see firsthand its unique approach to training in its San Francisco installation offices. In an industry facing a continued shortage of skilled installers, Fireclay Tile has taken an innovative step forward by creating an in-house training

program designed to develop tile installers from the ground up. Launched last summer, the Fireclay Training Program zeroes in on real-world readiness, combining technical standards with hands-on craftsmanship to prepare complete beginners for successful careers working with handmade tile.

The program is led by Lucas Hendershot, Training Associate and Quality Manager, who developed the curriculum based on more than 16 years of professional field experience, in conjunction with Martin Brookes, Fireclay's Director of Installation, and Nirmal Kumar Ravichandran, Fireclay's Director of Manufacturing. After taking over his father's tile business and stepping away from installation briefly, Hendershot was drawn back into the trade when Fireclay became the first US tile manufacturer to form its own in-house installation service team, a progressive move that bridged product creation and execution in the field.



Alfredo Chavez, first graduate of Fireclay's Associate Training Program.

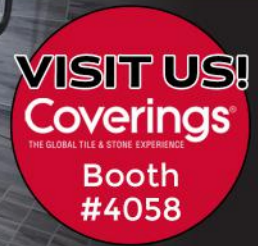


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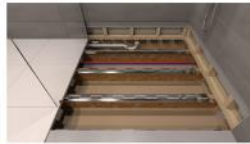


The first step to a curbless shower is recessing the subfloor.



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Expose the joists.



Attach

Attach the bracket system.



Recess

Recess the subfloor.



Finish

Finish with shower pan and tile.

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Hands-on phase of the program where trainees practice cutting tile to installation-ready standards and other tasks.

A collaborative approach

“Lucas understands both the beauty and complexity of handmade tile installation,” said Brookes. “What makes this program special is that it blends strict adherence to ANSI and TCNA Handbook standards—and NTCA best practices from the NTCA Reference Manual—with the distinctive expertise required to work with handmade tile. We are training installers not just to meet industry benchmarks, but to truly master the nuances of our product.”

Part of the program’s foundation rests on industry standards developed through collaboration. Hendershot worked closely with Brookes and consulted seasoned NTCA Five-Star Accredited Contractors and industry partners. Every training module is reviewed for compliance with ANSI and TCNA standards, while also addressing the unique variables of handcrafted tile: size variation, thickness inconsistencies, surface textures, and layout challenges that aren’t present with mass-produced tile.

Four weeks of total immersion

Unlike traditional onboarding approaches, where new hires learn piecemeal on live job sites, Fireclay’s model

NTCA Total Health & Wellness Benefits Program

The National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) provides exclusive, cost-saving programs designed to support the success and growth of tile professionals nationwide. Among the many valuable benefits available to NTCA members is the NTCA Total Health & Wellness Benefits Program. This comprehensive program is dedicated to promoting the well-being of our members and their teams. Discover how NTCA can enhance your business and help you thrive!



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Meridio



The Fireclay Tile classroom.

starts with complete immersion. The four-week training program accepts participants with zero construction background and guides them through both instructional and experiential learning modules. In addition, the company has a six-week training program for tenured Associates who are ready to progress to Junior Tile Installers. At this point the goal is for them to successfully pass the CTI exam.

The theoretical portion focuses on understanding tile fundamentals, including the “why” behind installation processes, cutting techniques, layout principles, safety protocols, staging practices, and job site organization. Students learn not only how to work with materials, but how to operate efficiently and professionally within a crew.

Graduates: ready to contribute from day one

From the classroom component, trainees move to hands-on production work. They practice cutting tile to installation-ready standards, staging materials, organizing work trucks, protecting job site surfaces, and assisting lead installers with intermediate tasks. By graduation, trainees are prepared to contribute meaningfully from day one.

“Our goal is for graduates to hit the ground running,” said Brookes. “They’re not just helpers, they are trained job site assets.”

After completing the initial four weeks, graduates enter a clearly defined pathway to progress to Junior Installer status within approximately 6–12 months. This structured growth track reduces turnover, increases confidence, and fills the industry’s pressing need for skilled labor specialists.

Recognition motivates and inspires

A particularly innovative aspect of Fireclay’s program is its built-in recognition system, designed to motivate participants while also reinforcing accountability and pride of workmanship.

Each training cohort concludes with a graded hands-on exam. Graduates are photographed alongside their completed exam results, a moment that serves as both documentation and celebration. These photo achievements are shared company-wide, making successful training visible across departments.

The first graduate of the Associate Training Program, Alfredo Chavez, set the tone for this initiative. His



ONLINE LEARNING

NTCA University is a comprehensive online platform offering tile installation courses designed for individuals new to the industry or those seeking to refresh their skills. These courses are an excellent resource for training or apprenticeship programs, ensuring that learners are equipped with industry-standard methods and practices before applying their knowledge through hands-on or on-the-job learning. Additionally, these courses are beneficial for sales associates and professionals in other roles within the tile industry, providing valuable insights into the principles and processes of tile installation. NTCA University also features business courses tailored to small business owners. Accessible 24/7 via computer, tablet, or smartphone, NTCA University allows learners the flexibility to study at their convenience.

[**LEARN MORE**](#)

■ BUSINESS

exam photo now stands among the growing gallery of achievements that new trainees see when beginning the program, creating instant inspiration and healthy competition. Grades are displayed publicly, encouraging participants not only to pass, but to strive for excellence.

“The recognition aspect really fuels engagement,” said Brookes. “Trainees see what success looks like. They know the standard is high and achievable.”

The program is through its second cohort and into its third, signaling immediate momentum and organizational commitment. Fireclay views installation training as more than an internal staffing solution; it’s an investment in the trade itself. By developing installers internally with standardized teaching, mentorship from seasoned professionals, and manufacturer-specific expertise, Fireclay is demonstrating how companies can strengthen

the workforce while ensuring consistently high-quality craftsmanship on installations nationwide.

As the tile industry looks for solutions to the labor shortage and rising consumer demand for artisan products, Fireclay’s training initiative offers a strong blueprint to teach from the ground up, honor industry standards, reward excellence, and pair education with real-world experience.

“In the end,” Brookes concluded, “we’re not just training installers, we’re building confident professionals and preserving the craft for the next generation.” **TL**



Training modules onsite at Fireclay.

Assurance.

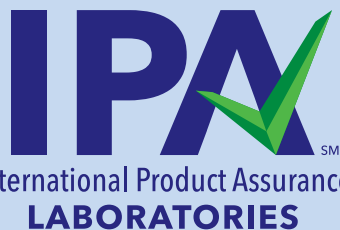


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PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS:

Take your training to the next level with an investment in your business



By Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer

Paul Luccia at Built With Foam has made redeeming his company's Partnering for Success vouchers easy for contractors. They need only to hold their voucher in front of their face or their work and tag Built With Foam in the social media post. Here's Stephen Steele with Timber & Steel Customs in St. Cloud, Fla., redeeming the Built With Foam shim kit voucher by posting on social media.

There are lots of good reasons to join NTCA—the education, the training, the camaraderie and community of fellow installers, contractors and artisans, recognition for outstanding projects, the opportunity to serve something bigger than yourself and support the next generation in the trade, the mentorship and wisdom. I could go on.

Another great reason to join NTCA is the Partnering for Success program. You know—the voucher program, where manufacturers reward NTCA members with discounts or free materials. This longstanding program by NTCA can be a support for your training, boosting your ability to stock up on materials you use every day for free or at a discount, while also providing the chance to try something new that you may have learned about during a training program.

Supported by manufacturers

Why do manufacturers do this? Why do they believe so much in NTCA?

Paul Luccia of Built With Foam said, “Having been a contractor member of the NTCA for many, many years, the primary reason for membership was tapping into the vast knowledge bank that is the NTCA. Redeeming the vouchers was a nice plus, but always a bit of a chore to figure out which ones to select and how to redeem them.

“Now that I am a manufacturer, I get to see the other side of the program and get to use my contractor experience to

greatly ease the redemption process to benefit the installers,” he added. “It’s an honor and a privilege to participate in the voucher program as a way to give back to the community of installers that helped me in my journey.” Luccia offers a simple redemption method: post a photo of the voucher with your face or a project on social media and tag “Built With Foam” to receive a free shim kit!



For 2026, the Partnering for Success program offers more than a whopping \$8,000 in vouchers for existing members who renew before March 31, 2026. That’s a great return—almost 11.5 times your annual membership dues.

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To enroll, go to PartnerShip.com/NTCA-FedEx



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The *NTCA Reference Manual* is released annually and a **printed copy is mailed to all active members**. PDF and print are available by visiting the [NTCA Online Store](#).


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Ashley Singer of Tile Jawn, with part of her recent stash of goods and materials from the NTCA Partnering for Success vouchers. She exclaimed, “I’m happy with the member benefits the NTCA is able to offer to us!”

Scott Maslowski, Executive Vice President of SSC Sales and Operations for Dal-Tile, noted, “The labor shortage remains the single greatest headwind facing our trade. Dal-Tile is committed to being a leader in attracting, developing, and retaining skilled installers, which is essential for the long-term health of our industry—and NTCA plays a crucial role in addressing that challenge. Supporting the Partnering for Success program is rooted in a simple belief: when we invest in the trade, we strengthen the entire industry.”

QEP’s Leslie Del Pozo values the enthusiasm and contributions of NTCA members. “The passion and pride that NTCA members bring to the flooring industry is invaluable,” she said. “Being part of the NTCA Partnering for Success program is QEP’s way of saying, ‘We see you and appreciate you.’ NTCA is a true partner with its partners, and they work hard to make training and education easily accessible to members. I don’t think you could ask anything more from an association!”

Voucher benefit for existing members: 11.5 times your annual dues

Over the years, the annual dollar savings amount for vouchers per member has grown from the low hundreds to \$7,500+ in 2025. For 2026, the Partnering for Success program is offering more than a whopping \$8,000 in vouchers for ALL members. That’s a great return—almost 11.5 times your annual membership dues. (This is an update from the print issue, which was published before the decision was made to extend full voucher redemption to ALL members.)

This is even more significant in 2026, amidst a tight economy. Every opportunity to be smart with your financial resources is a good move.

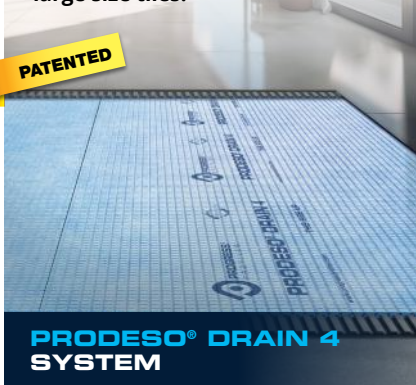


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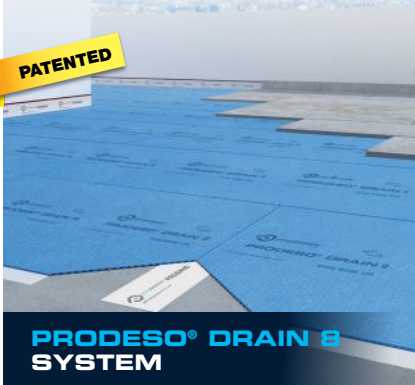
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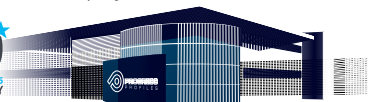


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“Not only does using the vouchers cover your membership fee, but discounts and free materials mean you can make more money on the job and increase the bottom line of your business,” said NTCA Assistant Executive Director Jim Olson..

Redeeming your vouchers

Lucas Hendrickson of Northwest Artisan Tile Company in Auburn, Wash., is a longtime NTCA member who redeems vouchers each year, starting with mortar, membrane and mail-in vouchers. He also immediately redeems vouchers for materials he stocks.

“I have found cool products and used new products that I enjoyed that I wouldn’t have normally tried, so that’s good as well,” he said.

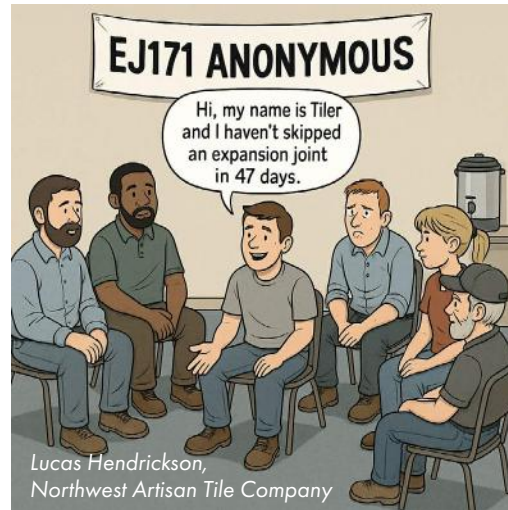
NTCA strives to make the vouchers as simple as possible to collect, but sometimes a contractor may run into a glitch. (Contact NTCA at 601-939-2071 immediately if that happens! We’ve got you!) But Hendrickson points out that even if there’s unexpected red tape, a miscommunication with a vendor, or a local supplier that may not stock a particular product, it is still worth his while. “I definitely get my money’s worth and then some, so it’s a no-brainer just for the vouchers,” he said.

Ashley Singer of Tile Jawn in Phoenixville, Pa., became an NTCA member in March 2025. “I don’t have the space or capacity for bulk inventory year-round, so the vouchers help the small guys like me offset my costs a bit,” she said. “My go-to vouchers are for the setting materials and tools, because those are predictable supplies and materials that I know I’ll need throughout the year. But I also love trying new tools and equipment that help make our jobs just a little less strenuous.”


Singer mails in a lot of her vouchers. “Just a week or two later the products are at my doorstep!” she said. “That’s really convenient! Vouchers that can’t be emailed in are redeemed at my local distributors. It’s relatively painless—just requires some planning ahead!” A recent run resulted in this stash:

- 20 bags of thinset from various brands, including favorite brands (ARDEX X5 and CUSTOM ProLite) and new TotalFlex thinset from TEC
- 4.5” DNA angle grinder blade from Montolit, available from Gundlach
- Schluter DITRA
- Blanke Permat
- Built With Foam shims
- Python Gloves from RTC
- Tile from Daltile and American Olean
- A gift card for TileTools.com

If you are an NTCA member, don’t leave money on the table by neglecting to redeem your vouchers. NTCA—and its supporting manufacturers—believe in you and are pulling for your business to succeed. Take them up on their voucher offers and stockpile materials you use every day or take this opportunity to try something new for 2026! **TL**



WHAT THEY SAY...



I realize that other NTCA members probably feel the same love for the industry and artistry in tile - and we all share that feeling - NTCA is a home for that family. People communicate, help each other, support each other, and celebrate each other's accomplishments.

Alex Tsituk, Owner, Trimworks, Inc., Shrewsbury, MA

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ONE to ONE



CALVIN STUART

NTCA Member Barry Kemna (l.) of Kemna Tile, Inc. with Calvin Stuart.

Overcoming adversity WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT



In the One-to-One column, NTCA Executive Director Bart Bettiga interviews industry leaders about pertinent topics.



(l. to r.) Welch Operations Manager Steve Coates with Barry Kemna, Calvin Stuart and Welch President Dan Welch.

I met Calvin Stuart about 20 years ago when he was setting tile at Coverings with the Welch Tile and Marble crew. After leaving Welch Tile for a few years to try his hand at running his own business, Stuart returned to Welch Tile and resumed his role as a team leader. Unfortunately, he suffered a fall from a tree stand while deer hunting in 2020 and ended up a C4 quadriplegic in a wheelchair. Many people would struggle to recover from this type of accident. But Stuart is an optimist by nature, and his journey back to a leadership position these past five years is an inspiration to all who are fortunate to know him.

Before we jump into your innate ability to overcome life's obstacles, tell us how you got into the tile business and what role Welch Tile and Marble played in your career.

My father-in-law was an auto mechanic for Dick Welch and I grew up baling hay across the road from his house. I went to school with some of the Welch kids and knew the family. Dick was at the shop one day getting his truck fixed, and he mentioned to my father-in-law that he needed to find some good employees—and mentioned me. Two days later, we talked. Two weeks after that, I started. That was on September 2, 1996. I was the 14th person Dick Welch hired, and that number grew to almost 30 over the next five years.



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At the Welch Tile Solutions facility, (l. to r.) Dan Welch, NTCA's Bart Bettiga, Calvin Stuart, Barry Kemna, Steve Coates and Megan Garvey, NTCA Regional Director and Welch Tile Director of Human Resources and Marketing.

What was it like at Welch Tile at the beginning of your career?

After about five years learning the trade, I started leading some projects and riding along with Dick to jobs. We were a labor contractor back then, so I would sometimes assist our larger GCs in the area and help them price jobs. I got the feel for estimating and moved into project management, estimating and managing our own projects. When Welch Tile started to take on more contracting projects all over the country, I couldn't make that commitment, and I left the company for several years. I came back after my kids were a little older, late in 2017, and Dan Welch (President) asked me to oversee the apprenticeship program.

How has the apprenticeship program helped the company meet its strategic objectives?

It gets our workers up to speed a lot faster and gives them the ability to know why we're doing things. You can teach somebody a task on the job and they can complete it, but the apprenticeship program goes into "why" you're doing things a certain way. Why do we put expansion joints in, and why do we use these particular products? It sets us apart from other companies because we have a standard we hold to, and that standard is taught from apprenticeship all the way through.

It also helps in recruiting new talent. Megan Garvey (NTCA Regional Director and Welch Tile Director of Human Resources and Marketing) talks to students at job and career fairs. We don't push the tile trade. We push trades

that have apprenticeships and trades where you can learn and develop. Our younger prospect applicants are sold on the fact that we have an apprenticeship—you're paid for it; you learn on the job. We use NTCA University for content, and our office works closely with Becky Serbin of NTCA to register everyone. It's a great program.

Welch Tile takes a lot of pride in the quality of its workforce and having Certified Tile Installers. How do you prepare your apprentices for this process?

We have a mockup test built so they can practice installing for the eight-hour CTI test. We quiz them through the book on potential questions for the written test. We don't schedule the test until they get the stamp of approval that they're going to pass. It's an investment for the company because we pay for it the first time around, and we want to set them up for success.

You had a serious life-changing accident in 2020. What happened, and what has your journey been like since that day?

In October 2020, I fell from my tree stand and ended up a C4 quadriplegic in a chair. It's been five years now and I've eased back into work. I was working a little bit here and there when I was feeling good, but I turned a corner physically with my progress and some medical help recently. Dan and the Welch Tile team asked me to help run their new manufacturing facility, and I am thankful I have been able to make a difference.

Build your skilled tile team from the ground up!

The NTCA's Apprenticeship Guidelines, registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, give you the blueprint to create your own "learn-while-you-earn" programs for tile finishers and setters. Combine hands-on training with NTCA University online learning, develop clear career paths, and boost your recruitment. NTCA provides the guidelines, resources, and even recruitment materials to get you started. Ready to invest in your future?

Visit www.tile-assn.com/page/NTCA_apprenticeship_guidelines for more info.





(l. to r.) NTCA's Jeremy Sax, Welch Administrative Project Coordinator Jenna Wilson, and Calvin Stuart.

I receive a lot of support at home and on the job. One of our general contractors, EV Construction, helped build ramps to remodel my house. Welch Tile, of course, helped remodel and fix things in the house so I could get in and out. Some state-funded things with Michigan Rehab Services have helped me get my car and ability to drive so I could go to work, and they help pay for anything that I need for getting to and from work. And Welch Tile adapted doors and garage door openers for easy access. The manufacturing facility has been so convenient for me to get back to and be able to use my mind to help direct things again.

Tell us about the role you are playing at the new manufacturing facility.

We're fabricating tile panels and shower bases in an assembly line-type facility. I'm able to oversee it because it's in one space and I don't have to go to the job sites. We have a couple of large projects going for hotels and college dorms, as examples. We can make tile panels for just about any situation that could be hung and installed. *(See the December 2025 TileLetter for a story on Welch Tile Solutions' prefabricated shower systems.)*

We're changing with the times. It's still a traditional install. It's still a thinset install. It's still a sloped shower base and curbs and everything that you would get out on the job site, but it's way more consistent. We can make everything repeatable. My role is to get the production up to what I think is acceptable in the production flow from storage to the job site.

Why do you think the time is right for Welch Tile to invest in this technology?

We have experienced tile setters all the way up to guys who are thinking about retirement but want to work a couple



Calvin Stuart (c.) with Megan Garvey (l.) and Welch Project Manager Marnie Piar at the EV Construction Safety Symposium.

more years, but their back or their knees aren't up for the job sites anymore. The ergonomics of working back here on the assembly tables extends the life of a tile setter well beyond what they would normally be able to do in the field.

And this type of offsite construction is growing beyond just tile. We're seeing hotels in Grand Rapids, Mich., come in on a semi and get set with a crane on the walls. If you can build a building and ship it on a truck and stack it up and bolt it together, we ought to be able to put a tile panel up and glue it to a wall and have it hold up.

Another huge advantage is job schedules. A hotel owner is so eager to turn rooms over and start making money, that if tile extends their job two or more months, they look at other projects or other products. With our manufactured panels ready to install, we can be ready. Some of the stuff we're building right now, I'm not installing until February. We can be so far ahead of the job, we can go in and keep to their schedule and change the direction of what they're putting on the walls because of convenience.

Your story is inspirational. You have my utmost respect. How were you able to stay positive through all of this? Can you share any words of wisdom?

I've always had a pretty good attitude towards everything, even before the accident. So that played a big role in my recovery and being able to handle living with the situation. My family and friends and co-workers play a huge role in keeping me positive as well. There were dark days, but they didn't last very long for me.

I talk to some other guys in chairs. They have way more dark days than good days. I'm just glad that I have more good than bad. **TL**

A network diagram with various icons connected by lines, including a speech bubble, gears, a smartphone, a laptop, a '4' in a circle, a 'www' icon, and a '@' symbol. The diagram is set against a white background with a teal diagonal overlay.

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From TEENAGE HELPER to CTI

ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY



By Nicole Hulme,
The Tile Chick, LLC



Hulme and her team created this steam shower using DUROCK, Schluter-KERDI waterproofing fabric and Schluter setting materials and profiles. The project combined porcelain and marble, flowing from the wall, to the bench and onto the floor.

My company is The Tile Chick LLC, and I am based in Mesa, Ariz. My story began when I was a teenager growing up in Michigan. I spent weekends with my father, and he started bringing me to work. He taught me simple tasks such as filling the five-gallon buckets of water, sweeping floors, and cleaning tools.

From there, I learned how to grout and wash the completed tile. At first, I remember trying to be quick at washing. But my father would catch it and make me redo it. He always said, "If you don't have time to do it right the first go-around, then you have time to do it again for free," and that stuck with me. I learned in those moments the importance of doing it right the first time.

I learned to set tile with my father. He taught me the building blocks of the tile world that I was able to build on, and I worked with him and my cousin for some time.

Stepping out on her own

I wanted to do more in tile, so I applied to work in the commercial industry. I spent five years learning a different part of the tile world I had never seen or had the opportunity to be a part of. This position taught me how to read blueprints and run a job with a crew of multiple tile setters and helpers. I was able to be part of countless big projects, such as the Detroit Pistons complex and the Shinola Hotel in downtown Detroit, Mich.



Hulme (far right) earned her CTI #1982 at the All-Women CTI exam on International Women's Day 2025, alongside fellow women in the tile industry.

I decided that it was time to establish a name for myself. I had been working on the side, setting tile in residential homes off and on throughout my career. This is where my independence and The Tile Chick were created. It was not easy, but slowly the business grew and my clients referred me to other clients.

Before leaving Michigan and moving my business to Arizona, I worked with an interior designer on a big barndominium project. This was one of the largest projects I had completed as an independent tile setter. So once I landed in Arizona, I hit the ground running.



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■ NTCA MEMBERS

But I didn't know anyone. I put an ad out on TaskRabbit, and completed my first small tile project. Even though it was small, with the power of word-of-mouth advertising, it led me to where I am today three years later.

I believe my attention to detail and compassion for my customers' needs set me apart from big install companies. I can take the time to focus more on custom tile installs rather than quantity of jobs.

Women supporting women

I had always wanted to complete the Certified Tile Installer (CTI) test. Initially, I felt I was not experienced enough and had not gained enough confidence to attempt it. When I received the invitation from the NTCA Women in Tile group, I knew I needed to take my shot. I was nervous, but had also gained enough confidence in myself and my work that I felt I could be successful.

The CTI test was even harder than I anticipated. It will test you in ways you may not expect: emotionally, physically, and your skill set. The biggest challenge is to stay on task and remain focused while maintaining your pace to complete within the allotted time frame. I learned you can't let negativity get inside your head, and most importantly, you can't get inside your own head. The CTI test put my tile-setting knowledge and skills to the ultimate test, with only seconds to spare for completion.

This experience demonstrated women supporting women through sharing ideas, skills, and emotional support. The camaraderie and relationships built during this experience are lifelong.



This is one of Hulme's favorite backsplashes, installed with MAPEI setting products and grout.

CTEF announced Hulme as CTI#1982 -- and celebrated her accomplishment.



Hulme installed this simple and elegant kitchen featuring gleaming white tile.



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www.tilecareer.com



Hulme used LATICRETE MULTIMAX™ thinset and SPECTRALOCK® grout in a school to install this boy's bathroom.

One of my greatest accomplishments was becoming one of the women to complete the CTI for the first time on International Women's Day 2025, alongside fellow women in the tile industry. I can confidently say I earned the CTI #1982.

Attracting women to the industry

I feel that [The CTI All-Women's Exam] can help support women who are already in the industry, and those who have always wanted to learn, but needed a reason to pursue their goals. In addition, when I attended the Coverings show last year, the NTCA Women in Tile group created an opportunity for high school students to come and see what the tile world has to offer. It allowed young women to meet, learn, and see what women in tile have accomplished and can accomplish, as well as the importance of diversity in a skilled trade.

I feel more of these events would help introduce women to tile and allow them to see firsthand if this is an interest for them. They can then provide the support and resources moving forward.

It was fun to go hands-on with The Women in Tile group to make mosaic coasters at the Artisan Showcase booth. We were able to teach them how to set the pieces and grout. Once they were done walking the floor, they could pick them up to take them home.

(Ed. note: The Artisan Showcase will be repeating this activity at Coverings 2026. Come on by booth 4671 and make a mosaic of your own!)



This 36" x 36" flooring was installed over a hydronic heating system, using Schluter-DITRA® and thinset and MAPEI grout.



Hulme called this shower, designed by her customer, as one of the most unique she's ever installed. The Tile Chick LLC used USG's DUROCK® backerboard and Schluter-KERDI® fabric waterproofing membrane as well as 2" KERDI board, with Schluter thinset and MAPEI grout. "It turned out perfect!" she said.

The power of NTCA and CTEF

I joined the NTCA in January 2025. I decided to join because I know the importance of having access to the resources that it offers. My networking has expanded more than double since attending just a couple of events.

Plus, the CTI credential from CTEF has started to make an impact on my business. Having this certification solidifies that I understand how to install tile according to industry standards. I have started to receive calls from customers who obtained my number from the CTI website. This was very exciting.

Setting tile for me is an art of its own. Working with the customers on their ideas, bringing their ideas to life, and seeing their enjoyment with the final product is what I enjoy the most. I am looking forward to creating a path in the tile industry that will showcase my skills and talents for future female tile setters.

Find out more about The Tile Chick at:



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Bringing new life to an old glossary

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON ACCURACY AND TERMS IMPORTANT TO INSTALLERS

By Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer



Everything old is new again. And that goes for the glossary that's been part of the *NTCA Reference Manual* for the last 20 years.

A Technical Committee subcommittee led by Chris Woelfel—with key input from NTCA's Becky Serbin, CTEF's Scott Carothers, and IMI's Scott Conwell—is updating and streamlining the glossary and making it even more pertinent to today's installers and contractors.

"It's said that you don't really understand something until you can define it," Woelfel said. "That was the goal when the *NTCA Reference Manual* first added a glossary some 20 years ago—and the goal remains the same today."

Back in the old days when the *NTCA Reference Manual* was a thick, heavy binder, NTCA members and staff put their heads together to gather information from the industry that would help to educate installers. Some of these terms were general descriptions, some came from manufacturers, and some were more contractor-specific.

The glossary has been a source of knowledge and information over the decades, but with the changes in tile size, setting materials technology, and other factors, the Technical Committee decided it was time to bring the glossary into the 21st century, streamline it, and make it even more useful and accessible.

"Over the years, terminologies—just like standards—change," said Woelfel. "Technologies morph and modern references to terminologies change."

Serbin added, "There are currently a lot of manufacturing and raw materials terms [in the glossary]. And there were many terms that the *NTCA Reference Manual* has that aren't 100% the same as the definitions in ANSI A108.T." ANSI A108.T, the American National Standard Terminology of Tile Assemblies, is a reference of industry terminology. Learn more here:



With all this percolating—and the fact that the 370-page *NTCA Reference Manual* and its 23-page Tile Glossary have gotten "fat" over the years (haven't we all?)—NTCA Executive Director Bart Bettiga requested that the Technical Committee include a review and update of the glossary as an agenda item at the meeting last fall. "Based on the feedback from the committee, the glossary is being reviewed and will consist of terms that tile contractors need to know," said Serbin.

Focus on the installer

Scott Conwell heads up the A108.T committee. He teamed up with Serbin and Carothers to do the heavy lifting. They reviewed all 23 pages of terms and definitions, cleaned them up and worked with ANSI A108.T Committee members who were also NTCA Technical Committee members to standardize terms and definitions related to ANSI A108T.

"The focus is on how [terms] may conflict, how [they] may align, and what we need to just get rid of because it is not pertinent anymore," Woelfel said. "The NTCA Technical Committee focuses on the *installer*. What does the *installer* need to know? There might be terms we may not need to include because they are already in the ANSI glossary, or they might be manufacturer-specific."

In addition to whittling down the number of extraneous terms in the glossary, the subcommittee is also reviewing terms that have different meanings for manufacturers and installers. For instance, "'Coverage and Transfer' means something different to an installer and to a manufacturer," Woelfel said. "To an installer, it means the percentage of mortar on the back of the tile and the substrate; to the manufacturer, coverage means how much area the bag will cover in square feet." The subcommittee is looking to clarify these meanings for specific terminology, and list these

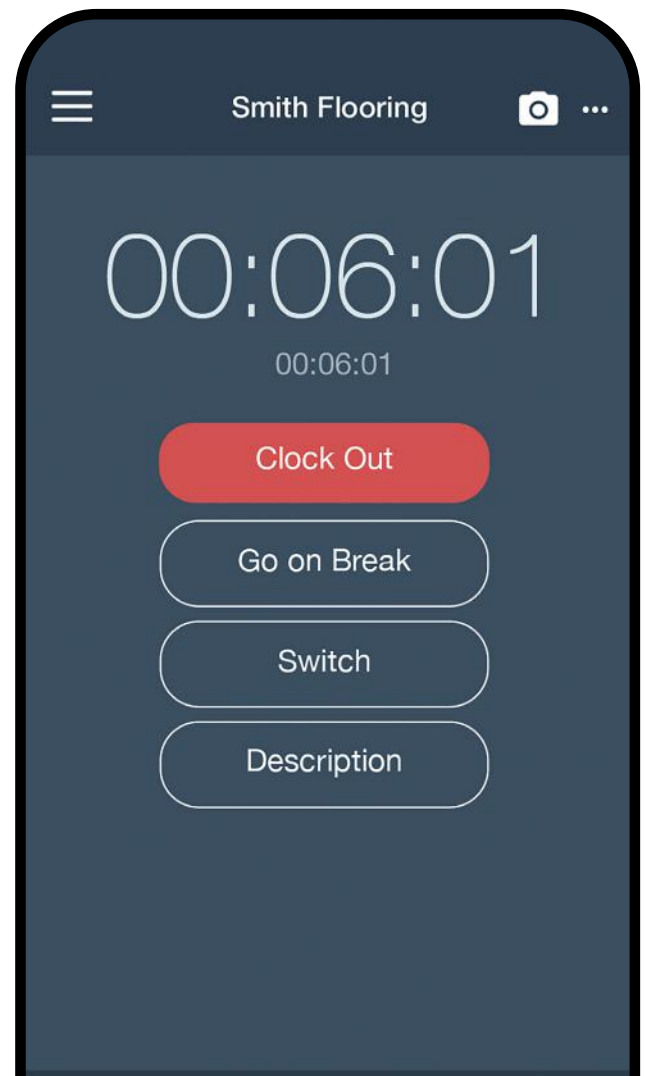
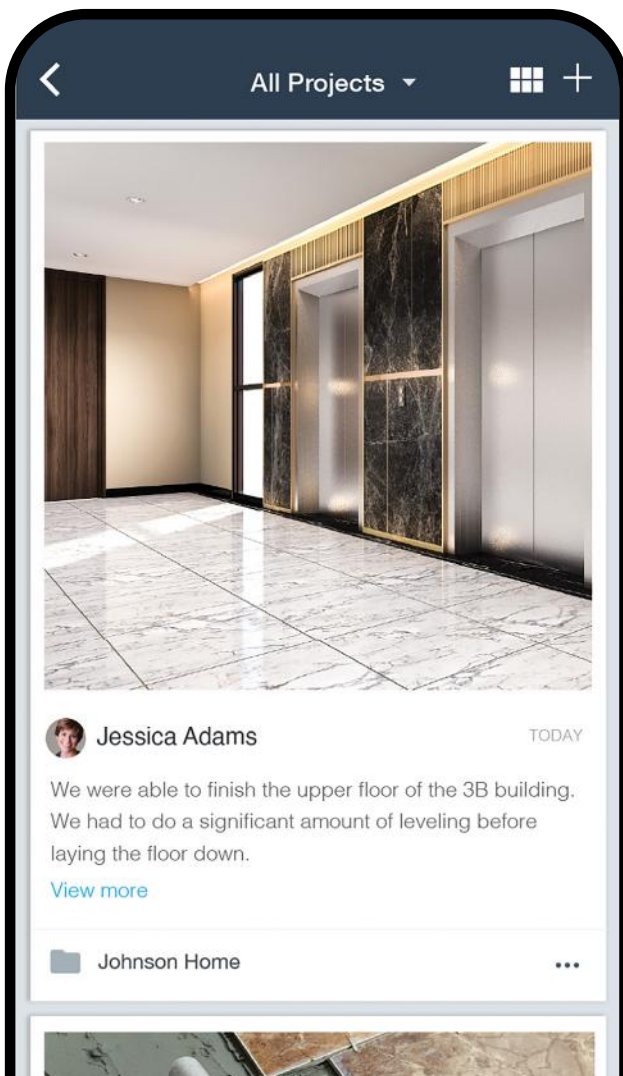
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Becky Serbin is a member of the subcommittee that is updating the glossary in the NTCA Reference Manual. She also oversees NTCA University, where the glossary is uploaded for easy access by members with NTCA University subscriptions.

multiple definitions “just like in a dictionary,” she said.

In addition, the two Scotts bring different perspectives to the definitions, Woelfel said. Scott Carothers brings his experience from CTEF, and Scott Conwell brings an architectural perspective about what needs to be considered when writing plans and specifications. Woelfel added that, “I bring an additional installer perspective from my time at Artcraft,” explaining that these different levels of understanding enrich and clarify the definitions for terms. This is useful, as the subcommittee seeks a common understanding, Woelfel noted.

Also being eliminated are terms that are not specific to the industry or can be looked up in the dictionary, such as “dolomite.” “These are aged or very general terms that are not really something that the tile installer would deal



All recommendations and changes to the NTCA Reference Manual glossary will be vetted by Technical Committee Chairman James Woelfel (l.) and Vice Chairman Nyle Wadford (r.) before open discussion in the committee.



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CTEF's Scott Carothers is a key member of the team that is updating the glossary.

with on a regular basis,” Woelfel explained. But there are also new terms like “pedestals” that are in vogue now, but not currently in the glossary.

Part of the discussion centers around terms a single installer working with handmade tile would need to know, for example, and those installing for mid-sized companies or large companies, as well as installers who work only in residential or commercial.

“There are many considerations we are mindful of,” Woelfel said. “We are not adding any terms unless they are put before the full committee. They have to be relevant to today’s tile industry.”

The subcommittee is currently embroiled in the laborious process of scrutinizing every term, ensuring alignment with ANSI, entertaining discussion and debate, and running them past Technical Committee Chairman James Woelfel and Vice Chairman Nyle Wadford before they are brought into open discussion in the Technical Committee as a whole.

Got feedback? This subcommittee wants it!

The subcommittee is inviting feedback from the tile community as a whole as to what terms need to be added or deleted.

“If someone has been working on a subcommittee and

they have terminology that is not in the glossary that they would like to have considered for inclusion, email me at chris@jgwoelfel.com,” Woelfel said.

Requests will be hashed out in the subcommittee. Any new terms the subcommittee agrees to consider for inclusion will be brought to the entire NTCA Technical Committee for discussion.

NTCA University

As the glossary is getting updated, it is also being made more accessible. Currently, the 2025–2026 version of the glossary is available as a PDF on NTCA University to support education taking place there.

“Members can find the resource if they search in the course catalogue for ‘glossary,’” Serbin said.

“Each year we will update the glossary in NTCA University with the newest published version available, and members with subscriptions to NTCA University can download it.”

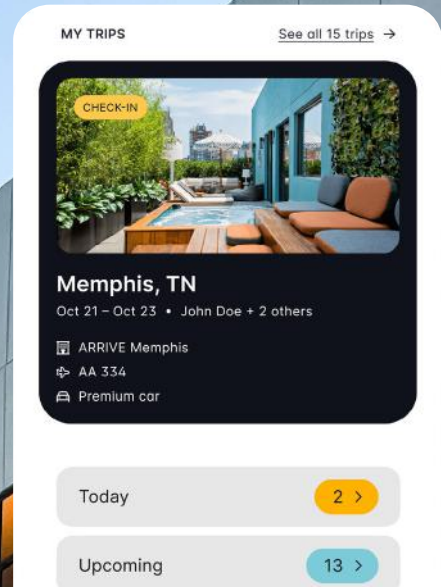
Look for the latest glossary version in the *2026–2027 NTCA Reference Manual* in August and in NTCA University in late summer next year. The *NTCA Reference Manual* is a member benefit that entitles each member contractor company to receive the latest edition annually. Scan here to learn more about the publication: **TL**



NTCA Reference Manual

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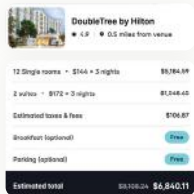
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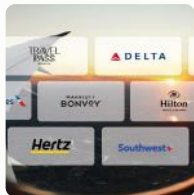
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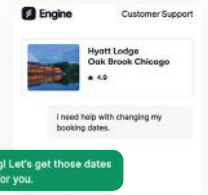
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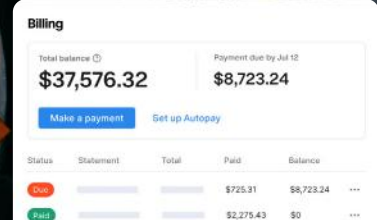
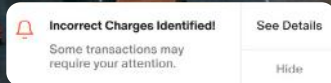
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ASK THE EXPERTS



Ask the Experts Q&As are culled from member inquiries to NTCA's Technical Team. To become a member and make use of personal, targeted answers from NTCA's Technical Team to your installation questions, contact Jim Olson at jim@tile-assn.com.



Confirm requirements before embarking on a GPTP installation

NTCA provides in-depth training covering Standards-Based Installation of Gauged Porcelain Tile and Gauged Porcelain Tile Panels/Slabs and Substrate Preparation for GPTP.

QUESTION

I am a tile contractor in Georgia with four employees. We just landed our first gauged porcelain tile panel (GPTP) project. We are purchasing the tools we don't already own and have attended several trainings and demonstrations. One thing I still can't get a clear answer on: do we have to be "certified" to install this product?

ANSWER

Thank you for the question—and congratulations on taking on your first GPTP project. Gauged porcelain tile panels require a higher level of training, planning, and tooling than traditional tile work, so it's smart to confirm the requirements before proceeding.

ANSI A108.19 does not use the word "certification," but it does require qualified installers.

There is no legal requirement that an installer be "certified" to install GPTP. However, ANSI A108.19 does require that installers have documented training and qualification specific to GPTP.

ANSI A108.19.10.1 states:

"Due to the unique material characteristics and unconventional installation techniques required for gauged porcelain tiles and gauged porcelain panels/slabs, this work requires installers who are equipped with the proper tools and have acquired sufficient product knowledge and installation experience through the completion of an installer qualification program as listed in 10.2."

ANSI A108.19.10.2 then identifies what qualifies an installer:

- **10.2.1:** Installer certified through the ACT (Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers) program for GPTP. (Note: This module is planned but not currently active.)



Manufacturer training and NTCA GTP Regional Trainings both meet the ANSI A108.19.10.2 requirement for documented GTP-specific training, and provide the product knowledge and practical skills essential for a successful installation.

- **10.2.2:** Completion of a comprehensive installation program provided by the manufacturer of the GTP panels or the setting materials being used on the project.
- **10.2.3:** Completion of a comprehensive installation program provided by the International Masonry Institute (IMI) or the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA).

Although there is no national license or mandatory certification, ANSI requires installers to have completed one of the recognized qualification programs listed above. In the field, this typically means:

- Documentation of manufacturer GTP training for the specific panels or systems being installed
- Participation in NTCA GTP Regional Training Programs, which align directly with ANSI A108.19
- For union contractors, training through IMI tile layer programs


Many specifications now reference “Qualified Labor” language from the *TCNA Handbook*. When GTP is specified, owners and GCs often require proof that installers have completed one of the ANSI-recognized training programs. Additionally, failing to follow the manufacturer’s required training may void product and system warranties.

You do not need a standalone “certification,” but you do need documented GTP-specific training from a source recognized in ANSI A108.19.10.2. Manufacturer training and NTCA GTP Regional Trainings both meet this requirement

and provide the product knowledge and practical skills essential for a successful installation.

If you need help locating a qualifying GTP training program in your region or verifying what the panel manufacturer requires, please let us know. We’re here to help. Scan for NTCA Training programs. **TL**






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mindset matters:


The brain is not fixed—it adapts through neuroplasticity. Repeated patterns of attention and self-talk influence how you respond to stress, uncertainty, and change. By choosing encouraging internal dialogue, you can improve emotional regulation, resilience, and decision-making. This isn’t positive thinking; it’s cognitive training.

Try pausing each morning to set focus and intention with a simple phrase like, “I’ll put my energy into what I can control today,” or, “I focus on what brings me joy,” to shape perception and behavior throughout the day.

Over time, these small, consistent habits compound, reinforcing steadier responses under pressure and clearer thinking at work.



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Jamen Carrizzosa, Five-Star Accredited Contractor with Icon Tile & Design in Bend, Ore.



Any set of Bluetooth speakers or headphones is a fave tool for Carrizzosa. He said,

“Music helps to put my mind in an easy focus mode and shuts out distractions. It lets me be in my space—and how you feel is directly related to how you perform.”



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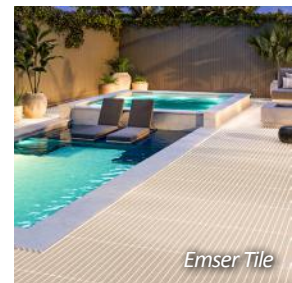
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The **Tile Heritage Foundation** appoints four new board members and new Executive Director of Development Karim Motawi as it prepares for its next chapter...**ARTO** and **Allison Eden Studios** collaborate on Palm Royale line...**Houzz** survey shows majority of homeowners continuing with 2026 renovation plans despite economic uncertainty...**Emser Tile** wins 2026 Good Housekeeping Home Reno Award for its Radiant illuminated glazed porcelain tile collection marketed under the E by Emser Tile™ brand...**MILEStone's** Earthen collection was named a 2025 *Architectural Record* Product of the Year...**Pantone** announced PANTONE 11-4201 Cloud Dancer, a billowy, balanced white, as its Pantone Color of the Year...The Starlight collection of porcelain floor and wall tile from **Merola Tile** shines bright...**Tile of Spain USA** previews 2026 trends in ceramic surfaces...**Blanke** offers full line of trims and finishes, including luxurious New York Line finishes available in select trims...**Louisville Tile's** second annual Tile on the Turf event draws record-breaking crowd.

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Johns Manville	jm.com/en/goboard	outside front and back cover
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