

the **Gasket Fabricator**

Volume 45 Number 1 Spring 2026

The latest on all things GFA

Viva La

GFA FALL 2026 MEETING



**Strong Attendance
and Engagement at
G/C Expo 2026**

**Expanding Converter
Capabilities with
International
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**PSA Tapes' Bright
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Capturing the Moments

By Erin Gurney, President of the GFA



At the GFA Gasketing/Converting Expo 2026, we took some time to look back at newsletters from years past. The President's Messages were front and center, and one in particular stood out, the post-9/11 message.

The December 2001 GFA Newsletter featured a message from Kaye Desch. It was the first issue after the September 11th attacks, during a time when the world felt uncertain, and even something as simple as opening the mail carried unease. Reading it again brought back how deeply that moment was felt, and how well his message captured it.

It made me think: what does our moment look like? What will define 2026 when we look back years from now?

So far, 2026 has given us plenty to reflect on. Alysia Liu captured Olympic gold in women's figure skating, the first in 24 years, and she is just 20 years old. The Seattle Seahawks claimed a Super Bowl victory. Globally, tensions rose with Operation Epic Fury and conflict involving Iran beginning February 28th. Closer to home, the U.S. celebrates its 250th anniversary, while Route 66 marks its centennial. Can't leave out tariffs, which, for now, seem to have stabilized, but I hope this does not jinx it.

And through it all, we made it through TSA lines and travel challenges to gather for the GFA Gasketing/Converting Expo in March 2026. This was one of the most engaging and impactful events I've experienced in our industry.

This year's G/C Expo brought together 456 attendees and 97 exhibitors. Over three days, the energy was undeniable - vibrant, focused, and full of purpose. Our speakers addressed the realities we're all navigating: geopolitics, economic trends and forecasts, and the growing role of AI in manufacturing. Since the event, three new membership applications have already been submitted.

But beyond the sessions, what stood out most were the smaller moments - the conversations in hallways, the exchanges outside meeting rooms, the buzz that begins the moment you walk

into a space filled with peers. If you pause and take it all in, it's remarkable. The interactions and collaborations are only possible in a space like this - with our competitors, our suppliers, our customers.

In a room of 456 people, there are 103,740 possible one-to-one connections. Let that sink in for a moment. How many introductions were made over those three days? How many relationships were strengthened? How many ideas sparked? And more importantly, how much of that momentum continues forward as we return to our businesses, our employees, our suppliers, and our customers? The impact of those moments doesn't end when the G/C Expo does.

I want to recognize the continued growth of the Women of the GFA. In just two years, participation has grown to 41 attendees at this year's meeting. We are capturing a meaningful moment in time - building stronger connections, supporting one another, and deepening our presence in the gasketing industry.

Speaking of time and connections, I'd like to thank Petra Schaefer and Brian Condon for completing two terms on the GFA Board of Directors. It was an honor to recognize their service at the General Session.

I'll close with a quick confession. If you ever find yourself thinking you don't belong, you've already made the decision for yourself. At the G/C Expo, I let that mindset get the better of me. I skipped the golf outing, assuming the list was full of "serious golfers." In reality, I missed an opportunity to spend more time connecting with all of you. Lesson learned.

Because in the end, that's what this is all about - showing up, being part of the moment, and making the most of the connections in front of us. Thanks, everyone, for attending! Can't wait to see everyone in Las Vegas for the Fall Meeting!

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

GFA Fall 2026 Meeting
September 15-17, 2026
JW Marriott Las Vegas Resort & Spa
Las Vegas, Nevada

GFA Spring 2027 Meeting
Featuring a Sales and Marketing Program
March 16-18, 2027
The Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

COMPANY PROFILES



Associate Member

Established in June 1997, Chengdu Junma Sealing Technology Co., Ltd. is recognized as a state-level high-tech enterprise. The company is dedicated to the research, development, production, and sales of static sealing materials of the highest quality. Over nearly three decades, Junma has consistently focused on technological advancement and the continual refinement of its manufacturing processes, ensuring that its sealing materials remain superior in performance.

Junma's commitment to independent research and development, coupled with the adoption and integration of advanced international technological expertise, has positioned the company as the leader within the Chinese sealing material industry. Its unique asbestos-free Beater-Addition materials are acclaimed for their exceptional sealing properties and wide applications. Junma's products not only compare favorably with, but often surpass, many imported sealing solutions available on the market.

Junma is a company fully committed to Sealing Technology. While manufacturers worldwide have slowed down on research and development of sealing materials, Junma still continues spending 8-10% of company's revenue in developing innovative manufacturing processes and high-performance sealing products. The results have helped Junma generating 30 proprietary patents and leading China in product quality and performance. Junma plays an active role in the sealing industry in China. The company not only serves as a board member of the China Sealing Materials Association; it also is a senior consultant of the Standardization Committee for Non-Metallic Mineral Products. In addition, Junma has also made significant contributions to the development of more than 20 national industry standards for sealing materials and non-metallic products in China.

Quality Management

Management System: Junma company complies with the IATF 16949:2016, ISO 9001:2015, and ISO 4001:2015 management systems.

Quality Certification: All of Junma's products are subject to annual testing to ensure compliance with toxic chemical content regulations. They consistently meet the requirements outlined in the ROHS and REACH EU Directives for hazardous materials.

Technological Capabilities and Product Features

Junma utilizes a range of innovative manufacturing processes in the production of its sealing products. Among these are in-situ nano-particle generating techniques, which enhance the internal structure of materials by creating nano-sized particles during fabrication. Additionally, the company employs raw material surface modification methods and co-precipitation techniques to further improve material properties. This combination of advanced technologies results in sealing materials with tightly bound structures, significantly boosting their mechanical strength and sealing effectiveness.

Performance Under Challenging Conditions

Junma's sealing products are specifically designed to operate reliably in demanding environments. These materials maintain their performance when exposed to high temperatures, substantial pressure differences, elevated humidity, intense friction, frequent vibrations, and aggressive chemical reactions. Their robust structure ensures integrity and strength, allowing them to resist both pressure and temperature extremes.

Junma is capable of designing products tailored to customer specifications, offering materials with variable compression and recovery characteristics, insulation properties, flame retardance, electromagnetic shielding, and thermal conductivity. The company's products are environmentally friendly and pollution-free, providing a reliable alternative to high-end imported friction and sealing materials.

Industry Applications

Junma's products are widely used in a range of industries, including automotive, motorcycle, small engines, shipbuilding, petrochemicals, refrigeration compressors, and nuclear power generation industry. The company's wet-processed friction materials have demonstrated outstanding properties, outperforming other domestic products and matching the quality of advanced imported materials. As a result, these products are well suited to replace high-end imported materials commonly required in the sealing industry.

For further information regarding Chengdu Junma Sealing Technology Company, please refer to the contact details provided below.

Li li—Export Dept
Chengdu Junma Sealing Technology Co., Ltd
Email: sealing_lili@jmseal.com
Phone: (86)355-104-7242
Web: www.jmseal.com



LAMATEK™

Regular Member

LAMATEK, Inc. is a die cutting and converting manufacturer focused on gasket, sealing, and mounting applications. Founded in 1983 in a small garage in Kresson, New Jersey, the company has grown into a 92,000 square foot, ISO 9001:2015 certified facility in West Deptford, New Jersey. Today, LAMATEK supports both OEMs and fabricators as a Tier 1 and Tier 2 supplier, delivering consistent, high-quality components across a wide range of industries.

LAMATEK specializes in tapes, gaskets, and seals, producing everything from tight-tolerance die-cut parts to multi-layer laminations and custom sealing solutions. The company works with a broad range of materials, including open- and closed-cell foams, rubber and sponge, nonwovens, films, and pressure-sensitive adhesives. With more than four decades of experience, LAMATEK combines strong material knowledge with reliable processes to get parts right and keep them consistent.

Their converting capabilities are built around a mix of rotary die cutting, flatbed die cutting, and CNC cutting. With equipment from Delta ModTech, Preco, Guidolin, and Atom, LAMATEK produces everything from simple parts to complex, multi-layer constructions with tight tolerances and clean registration. Additional capabilities like scoring, perforating, liner customization, and sheeting help support both prototyping and high-volume production, including parts designed for automated assembly.

Beyond die cutting, LAMATEK offers roll-to-roll converting, slitting, spooling, and rewinding, along with contract and toll converting services. By stocking a wide range of foam, rubber, and adhesive materials, the company gives customers flexibility without large minimums, helping reduce lead times and simplify sourcing.

LAMATEK's products include die-cut gaskets and seals, foam and specialty tapes, and custom converted components, and are used across industries such as industrial manufacturing, electronics, HVAC, solar, automotive, construction, medical, and thermal management.

As an active member of the Gasket Fabricators Association, the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program (NJMEP), and a founding supporter of the New Jersey chapter of Women in Manufacturing (WIM), LAMATEK stays closely connected to the industry. With a continued focus on process improvement, automation, and strong partnerships, the company remains committed to delivering practical solutions and dependable service.



Associate Member

Passaic Rubber Company is a fifth-generation, family-owned custom rubber manufacturer with more than a century of experience serving industrial markets. Founded in 1919 in Passaic, New Jersey, the company has built a reputation for quality, craftsmanship, and engineered rubber solutions.

Over five generations of continuous family ownership, Passaic Rubber has built upon its original foundations to become a trusted supplier of calendered rubber materials, rubber-covered rollers, endless belting, and custom engineered rubber solutions. Its products support a wide range of industries, including building materials, gasket fabrication, sealing, packaging, construction, and industrial processing.

Operating from its facility in Wayne, New Jersey, Passaic Rubber combines deep technical knowledge with modern manufacturing capabilities. The company places a strong emphasis on collaboration, working closely with customers to develop materials that meet demanding performance, quality, and delivery requirements.

Looking to the future, Passaic Rubber continues to invest in new equipment, technology, and talent to expand its capabilities and support evolving market needs. With a focus on innovation, operational excellence, and long-term partnerships, Passaic Rubber remains committed to building on its legacy while positioning itself for sustainable growth for generations to come.

COMPANY PROFILES



Regular Member

Who We Are

Founded in 1989, ATE is a family-owned company and a globally recognized leader in the custom transformation of flexible materials. With over 35 years of expertise, and 700+ raw materials across a 6,500 m² facility, we have built the scale and depth to handle virtually any converting challenge. ATE is also the only converter in the world to manufacture its own rotary cutting tools in-house, through its subsidiary Rototechnix.

Our founding philosophy has never changed: *"Bridge the gap in the world of converting by adapting the machine to the product — never the other way around."* — Daniel Burg, Founder

What We Do

ATE transforms flexible materials into precision-cut, printed, and laminated components — labels, gaskets, seals, insulators, and protective films — custom-made to the exact tolerances our clients require, at scale, with unmatched repeatability. Three things make us different: we adapt the process to your product, we combine cutting, printing and laminating under one roof.

Solutions we deliver: Inform & Trace · Protect & Mask · Insulate · Assemble · Identify

Quality & Certifications

IATF 16949 · ISO 14001/45001 · UL Certified · 3M Preferred Converter. Since 2018, ATE has been a Tier 1 supplier to the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance — one of the world's largest automotive groups.

A French Company, Global Reach

Headquartered in Alsace, France, we work internationally across 23 countries. We look forward to bringing our European precision converting expertise to the North American market and building lasting partnerships within the GFA community.

For more information, visit alsace-techniques-etiquetage.fr



Associate Member

MHXCo Foam Company is a leading manufacturer of high-performance closed-cell Polyethylene (PE) foam, proudly manufacturing in Amsterdam, New York. Family owned and with a dedicated team of 20 employees, MHXCo combines innovative material expertise with personalized service to deliver foam solutions that meet the rigorous demands of diverse industries around the world.

At the heart of MHXCo's business is its specialty foam portfolio, engineered to provide superior insulation, cushioning, and protective performance across applications that include automotive, medical, aerospace, industrial, and consumer products. The company's trademarked XOLEFIN foam family features advanced closed-cell Polyolefin materials that deliver excellent strength-to-weight ratios, chemical and water resistance, and enhanced durability compared with standard foam products.

MHXCo's product range includes formulated foam variants such as ZEVA and ZXET, available in jumbo rolls and custom forms to meet unique application needs. These materials can be tailored in density, thickness, color, and mechanical properties, giving designers and fabricators the flexibility to optimize performance for everything from protective packaging and thermal barriers to vibration control and sealing functions.

Core strengths of MHXCo lie in its commitment to service flexibility, customized solutions and technical support. The company partners and collaborates with customers from concept through production, offering engineered foam development, precise fabrication, and fast lead times to help project managers meet tight project schedules. With capabilities that support flexible manufacturing and quality performance, MHXCo is positioned to deliver reliable PE foam materials that integrate seamlessly into sophisticated product designs.

MHXCo also serves highly regulated markets such as medical devices, where material compliance, cleanliness, and consistency are critical. Its medical-grade PE foams meet stringent requirements like ISO 10993 biocompatibility standards and provide dependable performance in applications ranging from protective cushioning to sealing and spacing components in sensitive assemblies.



Beyond its core manufacturing expertise, MHXCo maintains a strong focus on customer service and community engagement. The company continually invests in expanding its capabilities and capacity, positioning itself to support both local manufacturing initiatives and global supply chains with quality foam products engineered for performance and reliability. Engrained in the customer-focused-culture is a passionate belief that service excellence is achieved through the problems you solve in addition to the products you offer. A second foaming oven which came online in 2026 ensures MHXCo has capacity to meet volume demands.

MHXCo Foam Company will continue to deepen its presence in key markets, expand its technical offerings, and uphold its commitment to excellence in materials science and customer collaboration. By combining industry-leading PE foam technologies with a highly skilled workforce, MHXCo strives to be a trusted partner for manufacturers seeking innovative, high-performance solutions across applications and industries.



Associate Member

Sinolight Fiber Composite Materials Co., Ltd. is a leading manufacturer of high-performance and cost-effective asbestos-free fiber gasket materials in China. Formerly the Gasket Materials Division of the China National Pulp & Paper Research Institute, our company is built on a strong foundation of scientific research and decades of technical expertise in gasket materials.

With an annual production capacity of 5,000 tons, we specialize in the research, development, and production of asbestos-free fiber composite materials for gaskets, wet friction products and thermal insulation components. Our materials are engineered to meet the demanding requirements of diesel engines, gasoline engines, compressors, transmissions, and both OEM and aftermarket applications.

Advanced material formulation and manufacturing technology are central to Sinolight's innovation. Our beater addition gasket materials deliver excellent sealing performance and long-term reliability under extreme operating conditions at optimized cost. These materials provide critical gasket solutions for powertrain applications, ensuring durability and safety across a wide range of applications. We supply to industry leaders including Cummins,

Federal-Mogul, and Yantai Ishikawa—a testament to our commitment to quality and consistency.

Sinolight's dedicated R&D team, led by technical experts with decades of experience in gasket materials, drives continuous innovation in fiber composite technology. Our commitment to sustainability includes environmentally responsible manufacturing practices and the development of materials that support cleaner, greener industrial applications.

We are honored to join the Gasket Fabricators Association (GFA)—a premier global organization advancing the gasket and sealing industry. Membership in the GFA provides valuable opportunities to collaborate with leading fabricators, suppliers, and innovators worldwide. Through this platform, we aim to share technical expertise, contribute to industry standards, and strengthen partnerships that bring advanced asbestos-free gasket solutions to the North American market and beyond.

Looking ahead, Sinolight Fiber Composite Materials Co., Ltd. will continue to expand its global presence and deepen its commitment to sustainable, reliable, high-performance and cost-effective materials for the next generation of industrial and automotive applications. By combining world-class manufacturing with a customer-focused approach, we strive to be a trusted partner in delivering innovative gasket, friction and thermal insulation solutions worldwide.

FOLLOW THE GFA ON LINKEDIN

Follow the GFA on social media, and stay on top of industry news, views, and trending topics directly in your feed!



The GFA is currently on LinkedIn (Gasket Fabricators Association).

PRESS RELEASES



ATE Expands Metrology Capabilities with Second Hexagon Optiv M Vision System

Alsace Techniques Étiquetage (ATE) has acquired a second Hexagon Optiv M Vision multi-sensor measuring system, further strengthening its tooling control infrastructure and its commitment to precision at every stage of the converting process.

The Optiv M Vision is a high-performance optical and tactile coordinate measuring machine combining multiple sensor technologies — vision, touch probe, and laser — within a single platform, delivering sub-micron measurement accuracy across a wide range of geometries and surface types.

For ATE, tooling quality is the direct foundation of cutting precision. The addition of a second system enables parallel inspection workflows, reduces bottlenecks in tool verification, and ensures full measurement traceability across a larger share of production.

This acquisition aligns with ATE's IATF 16949 certification and its practice of reinvesting 10% of annual revenue into technology each year. The system is now operational at ATE's 6,500 m² facility in Alsace, serving 306 active clients across 23 countries.

Texcel Enters New, Brighter Era with Brand Refresh

After 40+ years as a leader in industrial and hydraulic solutions, Texcel is entering a new era



with a brand refresh – featuring new colors, updated logos and an overall brighter, stronger look built for what's next. This evolution brings new energy to the brand customers already know and trust, while preserving the same high-quality expertise and service that defines Texcel.

This brand refresh will be reflected on Texcel's website, social media platforms, and overall communications. Despite the refreshed visual direction, the core of Texcel remains unchanged: the same trusted people, reliable products, and unwavering commitment to delivering dependable hose, fitting, and fluid-system solutions.

Importantly, despite this refresh, there will be no major changes to any products, points of contact, phone numbers, day-to-day ordering processes or the exceptional levels of service customers

have come to expect. Texcel will remain a trusted partner under pressure for industrial hose, flat goods, fluid sealing, and hydraulic products, helping fabricators, distributors, and OEMs maintain their reputations and keep supply chains moving. "Our customers will work with the same trusted representatives and receive the same exceptional service they've always known," said Jake Walker, CEO.

Texcel's brand refresh is more than new colors; it reflects our growth, our momentum, and our promise to stay a partner you can count on under pressure.

For any further questions on this new era, customers can reach out to their same representative or customer service contact at Texcel.

Ttarp Company Acquires Assets of SDM Die Cutting Equipment

SDM Die Cutting Equipment has been designing, manufacturing and rebuilding high speed, precision, flatbed presses for over 30 years. Its highly experienced, technical team is joining Ttarp's responsive technical team with its recent acquisition by Ttarp. SDM's technical team has 85+ years of mechanical and electrical experience with automated, high speed, flat bed presses.

SDM designs are fast, precise, and affordable for non-metallic materials and used with male/female die sets and wood board – steel rule dies. The industrial, plc touchscreen based, operator system is easy to operate. The standard automated press size offering includes: 1224 – 40 ton, 2024 – 40 ton, 2430 – 60 ton, and 3038 - 100 ton models. These are complemented with productivity enhancing knock out stations, unwind & rewind stands, etc.

SDM and Ttarp offer complete refabrication services for their respective automated press designs. If the capital budget has competing priorities and an older press is nearing its lifecycle, a complete refabrication may provide a very solid R.O.I. option.

Ttarp Company has been designing and manufacturing converting equipment since 1981. Ttarp has a very complementary automated belt fed press and wide web line of PSA heated platen, heated blade, and hot air lamination systems. Ttarp plans to maintain both locations in Buffalo, NY (recently expanded by 16,000 sq. ft.) and Merriam, KS.

Please contact us to discuss your application: 716-894-5613, ask for Joe or reach out to us via email at: www.SDMPress.com or www.Ttarp.com on the contact page.



Griswold Products Champions American Manufacturing with Berry Amendment Compliant Solutions

The Buy American principle is more than a slogan—it is a long-standing policy embedded in U.S. law. One key example is the Berry Amendment, which requires the U.S. Department of Defense to give preference to domestically produced materials and products when sourcing across several industries, including footwear. This legislation strengthens American manufacturing, ensures supply chain security, and promotes high-quality standards for military and related applications.

For decades, Griswold Products has proudly supported the footwear industry with American-made materials tailored to meet demanding performance requirements. The company manufactures open-cell sponge rubber products that can be customized for specific gauge and hardness needs for insole cushioning applications. These materials are engineered to deliver superior comfort and durability—two critical attributes in both military and commercial footwear.

Griswold's sponge rubber solutions offer a low compression set, helping insoles maintain their shape and cushioning properties over time. In addition, the materials are naturally antimicrobial, contributing to improved hygiene and extended product life. To further enhance performance and versatility, fabrics can be applied for use as sock liners and shoe boards, providing manufacturers with integrated solutions designed for comfort and structural support.

Griswold Products is part of the growing Mechanical Rubber companies, whose molding division can supply out-soleing solutions to the footwear trade. This allows customers to maintain compliance with the Berry Amendment while streamlining their supply chains. By reducing the number of vendors required, manufacturers can achieve greater efficiency without sacrificing quality or regulatory adherence.

With decades of expertise and a commitment to American manufacturing, Griswold Products continues to provide dependable, high-performance materials to the footwear industry. Samples are readily available to meet development and production needs, ensuring customers can evaluate quality firsthand.

Exciting News from CGR Products and Technicon Acoustics

Life often comes full circle, and at CGR Products and Technicon Acoustics, we're experiencing just that.

CGR Products was founded in 1961 by Charles (Charlie) Keeley. In 1980, Charlie expanded the company's manufacturing capabilities with the purchase of what is now Technicon Acoustics. Over the past several decades, CGR Products and Technicon Acoustics have successfully operated as independent businesses under the leadership of Charlie's sons, Chuck Keeley and Tyler Keeley. They have each built strong teams, loyal customer relationships, and respected positions in their respective markets.

As Chuck and Tyler look toward the future and their succession plans, CGR Products has made the decision to bring Technicon Acoustics back into the CGR Products family. This transition strengthens CGR's long-term position and supports the next generation of leadership, as Chuck's sons, Charlie and Jake, prepare to take on expanded leadership roles. In today's landscape, where an increasing number of companies are owned by investment groups, the stability and continuity that come with family ownership are important to all parties.

For CGR customers, this addition brings direct access to Technicon's industry-leading acoustics capabilities. By integrating Technicon's deep expertise in acoustic materials, design, and manufacturing, CGR is expanding the range of solutions we can offer and enhancing our ability to solve complex noise, vibration, and sound-management challenges for our customers.

For Technicon customers and partners, CGR's priority is continuity and enhanced support. Technicon Acoustics will continue to operate as it has for the past forty-six years, with the same experienced team, customer-first focus, commitment to quality, and industry-leading lead times customers rely on today. At the same time, becoming part of CGR Products provides additional resources, manufacturing capabilities, and operational support that will enable us to serve Technicon customers even more effectively over the long term.

The decision to bring Technicon Acoustics into CGR Products was made with our customers at the forefront. This step allows us to build on complementary strengths to offer broader capabilities, deeper technical expertise, and long-term support, while continuing to deliver the service, quality, and responsiveness our customers expect. Our goal is simple: to be an even better partner to the customers who rely on us.

PRESS RELEASES



Accelerate Data-Driven Quality

Worldwide Foam announced the launch of its in-house foam testing lab, designed to deliver fast, accurate data that gasket fabricators can trust and to strengthen the consistency and quality of the company's extrusion line in Elkhart, IN. By centralizing testing and data collection on-site, the lab shortens feedback loops between testing and production, reducing lead times while providing reliable, application-ready performance insights.

Built around ASTM D3575 test methods, the lab is equipped to measure density, tensile strength, tear strength, elongation, compression set, and compression deflection. These core material properties inform gasket design, sealing reliability, and long-term performance, giving fabricators a clear, comparable view of how materials will behave in the field without waiting on third-party testing or shipments to a parent facility.

By moving testing in-house and collecting real-time data, Worldwide Foam closes the loop between testing and production. Operators gain immediate feedback to fine-tune process variables, tighten process control, and drive more consistent extrusion runs. Eliminating external handoffs minimizes delays and variability, while standardized methods aligned to ASTM D3575 ensure that results are both repeatable and relevant to customers' engineering requirements.

For gasket fabricators, the advantages are tangible. Faster timelines mean less waiting for data-driven decisions and quicker progress from concept to production. Improved consistency and quality translate into parts that perform as expected across runs, reducing scrap, rework, and field issues. And because the lab simplifies side-by-side comparisons across materials, it streamlines product selection, helping teams choose the right foam for specific compressive, mechanical, and environmental demands.

A key objective of the initiative is greater transparency. Worldwide Foam is building accurate typical property sheets for every extrusion material it produces, making it easier for customers to evaluate options and specify products with confidence. This commitment supports continuous improvement and gives fabricators an up-to-date, standardized reference for design, testing, and procurement.

Powering the Next Generation of Adhesive Coating: Adhesive Applications' UV Hot Melt Coater

Adhesive Applications continues to invest in advanced coating technology to deliver higher performance, greater efficiency, and more sustainable solutions for our customers. The newest addition to our manufacturing capabilities is our UV Hot Melt Coater, representing a major step forward in precision coating, product versatility, and environmental responsibility. With this new 63-inch (1600 mm) heated slot die coating line, Adhesive Applications strengthens its position as a flexible, innovation-driven adhesive coating partner.

Expanding Our Coating Platform

Adhesive Applications now operates three coating lines designed to support diverse chemistries, substrates, and end-use markets. The addition of Coater #4 – UV Hot Melt enhances our capabilities beyond traditional solvent-borne and water-borne systems:

- 100% solids hot melt system
- Heated slot die coating line
- Designed for acrylic and rubber PSA chemistries
- Equipped with UV curing capability

This investment allows us to deliver thicker coatings, improved performance properties, and more environmentally responsible manufacturing.

	Coater #1	Coater #2	Coater #4
Coating Method	Reverse roll	Reverse roll	Heated slot die
Width	Maximum 63"	Maximum 63"	Maximum 63"
Adhesive Type	Solvent-borne Water-borne	Solvent-borne	Hot Melt
Adhesives	Acrylic, Rubber	Silicone, Acrylic, Rubber	Acrylic, Rubber
Coating Thickness	1.0 – 6.0 mil (25 – 150µm)	0.5 – 6.0 mil (12 – 150µm)	0.5- 10 mil (12.7 - 250 µm)
Curing	3 zone oven	3 zone oven (high heat capability)	Ultraviolet (UV)
Quality Assurance	Beta gauge thickness monitoring	Infrared (IR) thickness monitoring	Infrared (IR) thickness monitoring
Other features	Zone coating capability inline corona treatment Substrate lamination Large diameter turret rewind	Inline corona treatment Mayer rod / gravure coating Inline slitting/edge trimming Turret rewind	Dry end corona treatment Turret rewind Zone coating capability Substrate lamination
Substrates	Polyethylene (PE) foam Polyester (PET) film Tissue Scrim Fabric	Silicone Polyester (PET) film Polyimide film Metal foil Fabric	Polyethylene (PE) foam Polyester (PET) film Tissue Scrim

Table 1: Coating Capabilities - Adhesive Applications

Precision Through Heated Slot Die Technology

At the core of our UV Hot Melt is a heated slot die coating system, engineered for superior uniformity and process control.



Coating Capabilities:

- Thickness range: 0.5 mil to 10 mil (12.7 μm to 250 μm)
- Width: 63 inches (1600 mm)

The system incorporates a closed-loop thickness control system using a traversing infrared gauge and precision pump regulation, ensuring tight cross-web coat weight tolerances. Additionally, a custom-machined shim system enables machine-direction zone coating with dry lanes—opening new product design possibilities for customers requiring patterned adhesive applications.

Advanced Adhesive Chemistry Capabilities

The UV Hot Melt Coater is designed to process:

- Acrylic PSA (100% solids)
- Rubber PSA (100% solids)
- Heat-activated adhesives

To prevent cross-contamination between chemistries, the system includes dual dispensing equipment, allowing seamless changeover between rubber and acrylic adhesives. For acrylic systems, UV crosslinking replaces traditional thermal curing. This offers significant advantages:

- Enables thicker coatings
- Allows coating of temperature-sensitive substrates
- Provides controlled crosslink density
- Improves chemical and shear resistance
- Eliminates long thermal oven dwell times

Sustainability Without Compromise

One of the most significant advantages of the UV Hot Melt Coater is its environmental profile.

Hot melt coating:

- Uses 100% solids formulations
- Eliminates organic solvents
- Reduces emissions and regulatory burden

This investment reflects Adhesive Applications' commitment to environmentally responsible manufacturing while improving production efficiency.

Broad Substrate & Product Versatility

The new coater supports a wide range of substrates and constructions:

Substrates

- Polyethylene (PE) Foam (1/32" to 1/8")
- Polyester Film (PET)
- Tissue and Crepe Paper
- Polyolefin Films, Scrim, and others

What This Means for Our Customers

The UV Hot Melt Coater allows Adhesive Applications to deliver:

Faster Development Cycles

- Slot die precision and UV curing shorten development timelines and enable rapid scaling.

Higher Performance Products

- UV crosslinked acrylics and controlled hot melt processing improve shear strength, temperature resistance, and durability.

Greater Design Flexibility

- Zone coating, thicker adhesive builds, and compatibility with foam and film substrates unlock new engineered tape constructions.

Sustainable Manufacturing

- Solvent-free processing reduces environmental impact while improving operational efficiency.

Investing in the Future

Adhesive Applications built its reputation on highly adaptable equipment, agile and responsive process development, and carefully balanced production systems—allowing us to pivot quickly, customize solutions efficiently, and scale with speed to meet evolving customer demands.

The addition of the UV Hot Melt Coater strengthens that foundation and positions us to meet the evolving needs of OEM, industrial, automotive, electronics, and specialty tape markets. The UV Hot Melt Coater is more than a new coating line—it is a strategic investment in innovation, sustainability, and customer partnership.

Adhesive Applications is ready to help you engineer the next generation of adhesive tape solutions. Customer Applications Drive Us.

**DO YOU WANT AN ARTICLE
FEATURED IN A FUTURE ISSUE OF
THE GASKET FABRICATOR?**

Contact the GFA office for details!
info@gasketfab.com

PRESS RELEASES



American Biltrite Announces Additions To Their Sales Force!

At American Biltrite, we're making big changes to our sales team to serve you better!

We're determined to make 2026 the year our sales team reaches new levels of efficiency and expertise. For over a year we've been heavily recruiting, scouring the country for sales leaders to add to our team. We interviewed dozens of candidates, but two stood out and distinguished themselves clearly from the crowd. We're thrilled to announce that Rob Hernandez has accepted the role of US Northeast Regional Sales Manager, while Ross Hannam has joined the crew as our US Midwest Regional Sales Manager.

Rob comes to us with over twenty years of experience in business development and key account management. Positioning himself as a leader in territory growth and exceeding sales goals, Rob brings new strategic vision to the region along with good old fashioned work ethic and values. Digging deep to achieve and exceed goals is where Rob displays his tenacity and to do that, he works hard on customer solutions and service. When he isn't busy selling, Rob enjoys his time with his lovely wife and family of four active boys.



Rob Hernandez

Ross brings more than fifteen years of sales management experience to the table, along with an extremely strong business education and background. Ross has a unique perspective on customer buying habits and finding the gap in what they're buying versus what we can offer. As a former Division 1 college athlete, Ross knows the value of teamwork. He will help us forge new partnerships and move us into this next era of American Biltrite growth. When he isn't busy selling, Ross values time with his beautiful wife enjoying the outdoors with his greyhound.



Ross Hannam

A reminder that Dan Kreuter covers the US Southeast as Regional Sales Manager, rounding out the US team. In Canada, we have Nick Sabatini leading the charge as Regional Sales Manager for all provinces except Quebec. All regional sales managers report to Craig Piotrowski, VP Sales Industrial Division. Leading inside sales support, Quebec sales, product management, and marketing is our Sales Operations & Marketing Director, Tracey Lancaster.

Our team is fired up to take on new challenges and find customer solutions in new and existing applications. Please contact rubber@american-biltrite.com with any questions, or reach out to your Regional Sales Manager.

Motion Opens Two New Branches in Mexico

Motion Industries, Inc., a leading distributor of maintenance, repair and operation replacement parts, and a premier provider of industrial technology solutions, is pleased to announce the opening of two new sales branches in Mexico.

Both locations, which officially opened in late 2025, offer quality industrial products and fast product fulfillment, plus field services and specialist support. The branches will also hold training opportunities for employees and customers.

Cuatlaningo, Puebla

Located in southeast Mexico, the Cuatlaningo branch's street address is Calle Rio Papaloapan 19. It is now Motion's southernmost Mexican location, providing service to customers more quickly in this region. The convenient facility is connected by several highways and strategically located in a growing industrial park.

Piedras Negras, Coahuila

This branch is located in northeast Mexico at Carretera 57 #1125 entre Federico Mendez y Aurelio Carrillo, Col Compositores Mexicanos. Motion's Piedras Negras team will also serve the surrounding area including Acuña, Sabinas, and Monclova, all in the north of Coahuila—providing faster service to customers in these areas.

Leadership Quotes on the New Facilities

"We're excited to fill an important gap in these areas with outstanding service to local customers," said Eric Gonzalez, Motion's Senior Vice President of Mexico and Business Development. "I believe we have the right talent in place, combined with Motion's products, services, proven processes and proximity to customers as the right recipe for success—not only in Mexico but across all our markets."

James Howe, President of Motion, added: "Expanding our footprint in Mexico reinforces our commitment to this vital market and enhances our ability to drive value for these customers. We remain dedicated to deepening our investment to fuel these regions' economic growth, while delivering the excellent service our customers expect."

A Positive Economic Impact for Northeast and Central Mexico

The Piedras Negras branch held an open house on November 28, 2025, while the Cuatlaningo branch hosted a customer appreciation event on January 23, 2026. In addition to providing industry-leading services, the branches will create employment opportunities as teams expand with the business. The two new facilities join a network of 14 established Motion branches across Mexico, further expanding the company's service footprint in North America.



Survey Shows Americans Embrace “Peel and Stick” DIY Solutions

When it comes to tackling home improvement, a vast majority of Americans welcome “peel and stick” bonding solutions for do-it-yourself (DIY) projects. The finding comes from a survey of 1,000 Americans ages 18 or older conducted by Wakefield Research in August 2025. The survey was sponsored by Avery Dennison Performance Tapes.

It found 84% of Americans, and 92% of Millennials and Gen Z, would use a peel-and-stick product for home improvement projects such as decorative and accessory items, interior wall surfaces and trim, flooring, and tile.

The survey also found Millennials are the most confident DIY generation, with 81% of Millennials and 73% of Gen Z respondents rating their home-improvement DIY skills as “good” or “excellent” compared to only 65% of Generation X and just 44% of Baby Boomers.

“We’re seeing a generational shift as younger people tackle DIY projects and become contractors, and they’re looking for ease-of-use as well as reliability,” said Luke Johnson, business development manager, Avery Dennison Performance Tapes. “The home improvement segment has a tremendous opportunity to design products tailored to these younger generations as they grow in buying power and influence.”

DIY Frustrations Strong Across Generations

The survey found 90% of respondents across all generations find some aspect of DIY challenging, with working in tight spaces (57%) and the need for specialized tools or equipment (51%) the most common frustrations.

Additional aspects of DIY Americans found frustrating included:

- Mounting items properly – 28%
- Surface preparation – 26%
- Getting items to stay on/put together – 24%
- Adjusting or repositioning materials – 24%
- Bonding or fastening materials – 23%

Regarding specific bonding solutions, 33% named the nail and plastic fastener as the most challenging bonding or fastening material.

Pressure Sensitive Adhesives (PSAs) Solve DIY Frustrations

PSAs often require no tools and can make it easier for DIYers to work in spaces that might be challenging to navigate with tools and fasteners, addressing the most common frustrations identified in the survey.

In addition, high-performance PSA technology has advanced in recent years to offer advantages that traditional bonding methods like nails, screws and glues don’t. These include:

- Easy repositionability
- Low VOC emissions, important in indoor environments
- Durability in challenging environments, including extreme cold and humidity

The wide range of applications for PSAs in home improvement is growing and includes wall mounting, lighting, blinds, floor tiles, functional and decorative mounting, edge bands and cabinets, and backsplashes and tiles.

“Pressure-sensitive adhesives can match or exceed the reliability of traditional bonding solutions,” said Johnson. “They are a simple alternative.”

About the Survey

The Avery Dennison survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 1,000 nationally representative Americans ages 18 or older, between August 6 – 14, 2025, using an email invitation and an online survey. The data has been weighted.

CHECK OUT THE MEMBER POSTING BOARD!

The GFA Member Posting Board is your space to share new products, company news, used equipment for sale, and other important updates with fellow members. It’s a great way to stay connected and informed within the GFA community.

Log in and see what’s new—or post your own update today!

Viva La

GFA FALL 2026 MEETING

Where Fabricators & Suppliers Connect

September 15-17, 2026 | JW Marriott Las Vegas Resort & Spa

THE INDUSTRY'S MUST-ATTEND EVENT

Our semi-annual meetings are designed to provide maximum benefit to fabricators, suppliers, and the innovators of our industry. Twice each year, GFA members get the chance to spend three days on a deep dive into the gasket industry as they meet, network, and learn with professionals that share similar concerns, interests, and backgrounds. With highlights that include a supplier expo, technical and business presentations, discussion forums, and plenty of opportunities to network and exchange ideas, you will come away with new insights, technical understanding, and connections that will help you grow your business.

For all of the latest information on upcoming events, please visit us online at <https://gasketfab.com/gfa-events/>.



"Being part of the GFA has opened the door to incredible networking opportunities, insightful speakers, and new supplier connections that help us better serve our customers in so many different ways. It's been a valuable resource for both our company's growth and our team's professional development."



CELESE PAULEY
DURLON BY GASKET RESOURCES

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH

Noon - 5:00pm Long Range Planning Committee Meeting



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH

11:00am - 2:00pm Board of Directors Meeting
 2:30pm - 4:00pm Committee Meetings
 + Communications
 + Membership
 + Program and Content
 + Technical Content Development
 4:00pm - 5:30pm Women of the GFA Meeting
 6:00pm - 7:00pm Cocktail Reception



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH

7:00am - 7:30am Casual Morning Walk
 7:30am - 8:30am Breakfast and New Member/
 First-Time Attendee Orientation
 8:45am - 9:45am Member Presentations
 10:00am - Noon Supplier Expo
 Noon - 1:30pm Group Luncheon / CEO Luncheon
 1:45pm - 3:00pm Fabricator Forum
 1:45pm - 3:00pm Associate Member Meeting
 3:15pm - 4:45pm "We're All in This Together" by Mike Robbins
 6:00pm - 9:00pm Dinner Reception



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH

7:30am - 8:30am Breakfast
 8:45am - 9:15am GFA Business Meeting
 9:30am - 11:00am "Thrive: Turn Uncertainty to Your
 Competitive Advantage"
 by Meridith Elliott Powell
 11:00am - 11:30am New Board of Directors Meeting
 1:00pm - 5:00pm Golf Tournament
 1:00pm - 5:00pm Hoover Dam Power Plant Tour
 6:00pm - 7:00pm Cocktail Reception

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Gain insight. Get inspired. Leave ready to lead.

SPEAKER: MIKE ROBBINS

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER: CREATE A TEAM CULTURE OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE, TRUST, AND COLLABORATION

Wednesday, September 16th



High-performing teams need more than talent and strategy to thrive—they need trust, authenticity, and genuine connection.

Drawing on 25 years partnering with a diverse group of companies across the country, as well as lessons from his pro baseball career, Mike Robbins reveals how to build a team culture where people can speak up, engage fully, and perform at their best.

Through inspiring stories, practical tools, and real-world examples, this program helps leaders break down silos, strengthen relationships, and unlock the collective potential that drives sustained success.

This Program Teaches:

- Practical tools to strengthen trust and connection.
- Proven strategies to foster collaboration and high performance.
- Inspiration and confidence to communicate openly and embrace feedback.
- A renewed sense of purpose, unity, and commitment to winning—together.

SPEAKER: MERIDITH ELLIOTT POWELL

THRIVE: TURN UNCERTAINTY TO YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Thursday, September 17th



These are unprecedented times! A marketplace where disruption is happening on steroids. One where there is more change building outside of your organization than in it. And a relentless pace of uncertainty that can radically impact your ability to grow your organization and keep your team motivated.

The only guarantee you have is this: more change is coming. And if you're not prepared — if you don't have a plan — then research proves this level of uncertainty will negatively impact your ability to drive innovation, attract top talent and achieve bottom-line results.

While uncertainty can seem daunting, the truth is uncertainty has an upside — it always has an upside. In fact, it can be your greatest asset to thrive, grow and turn disruption into opportunity. But you need a plan, a strategy, and the research that shows the precise path you must follow to turn disruption into opportunity.

Join business growth strategist and award-winning author, Meredith Elliott Powell in this high powered keynote where she reveals the research, the stories and the methodology.

This keynote has it all — energy, engagement, and a personal plan of action for every attendee.



TOUR ACTIVITY

Hoover Dam Power Plant Tour

Thursday, September 17th

Discover the Hoover Dam, a lasting symbol of American ingenuity and engineering. The Hoover Dam Guided Tour features breathtaking views of Hoover Dam, Lake Mead, and historic Boulder City. You will visit the Boulder Dam Museum, walk the Mike O'Callaghan–Pat Tillman Bridge, view the massive spillway, and experience the dam up close.

BEYOND THE SESSIONS



Supplier Expo

Connect with material, equipment and service providers



Networking Receptions

Build relationships that drive business forward



Optional Activities

Enjoy Las Vegas and connect in a relaxed setting

JOIN THE INDUSTRY'S MOST VALUABLE MEETING

Meet. Network. Learn



Strong Attendance and Engagement at G/C Expo 2026

By James Wolfington, Gasket Fabricators Association

The Gasketing/Converting Expo 2026, presented by the Gasket Fabricators Association (GFA) and held at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Florida, welcomed over 450 attendees and 97 exhibitors, marking another highly successful gathering for the converting and fabricating industry. As the premier event for the industry, the G/C Expo delivered a dynamic platform for fabricators and suppliers to connect, explore innovations, and gain valuable business insights.

The program featured a full-day exhibit hall showcasing the latest materials, equipment, and services driving the industry forward. The tabletop format once again proved highly effective, allowing exhibitors direct access to key decision-makers in an environment designed to foster meaningful conversations and business development.

Attendees also benefited from a strong lineup of educational sessions led by industry experts. Highlights included "Economic Outlook and Analysis" by Taylor St. Germain of ITR Economics, offering forward-looking insights into market trends and strategic planning, and "The Impact of Geopolitics on Your Business" presented by Alex and Eugene Chausovsky, which explored how global events are shaping supply chains and business decisions.

The program concluded with "Artificial Intelligence – Opportunities & Challenges" by Professor W. Keith Robinson, providing a timely look at the legal and operational implications of AI in the converting and fabricating industry.

Another highlight of the event was the continued growth of the Women of the GFA Meeting, which provides a dedicated space for connection, collaboration, and meaningful discussion

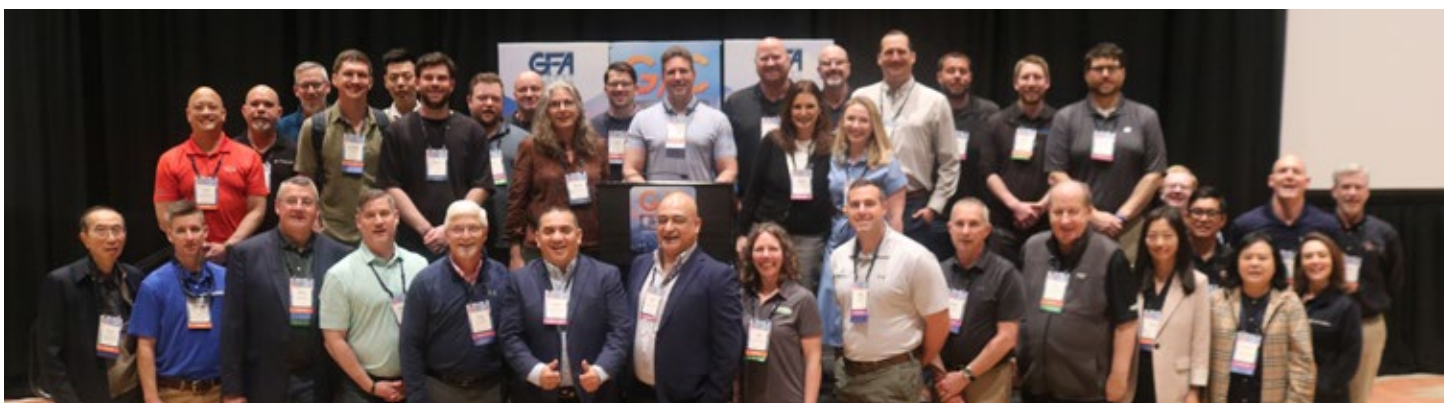
among women in the industry. Additional programming included committee meetings, a new member orientation, and the GFA Business Meeting, all designed to strengthen engagement and advance the association's initiatives.

Beyond the educational programming, the G/C Expo 2026 created a highly engaging environment for meaningful networking across the exhibit hall, receptions, and recreational activities, including the golf tournament and Kennedy Space Center tour. Notably, there was a strong presence of new attendees and first-time exhibitors, which added fresh energy to the event. Longtime attendees connected with new faces, learned from first-time exhibitors, and bonded over a shared sense of community, strengthening relationships and expanding networks across the industry.

Feedback from both attendees and exhibitors has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants consistently noted that the size, format, and focused nature of the event created an ideal environment for productive conversations, new partnerships, and valuable knowledge sharing.

Special thanks go out to our co-sponsors: the International Association of Diecutting and Diemaking (IADD), the International Sealing Distribution Association (ISD), and the Fluid Sealing Association (FSA), whose continued partnership helps make this event a cornerstone gathering for the industry.

Stay up to date on all the latest GFA events at www.gasketfab.com/gfa-events/. If you would like to be added to the distribution list to receive information on future events, please send your contact information to info@gasketfab.com.



New Members and First-time Attendees at the Orientation



GFA President, Erin Gurney (center), with outgoing Board Members Brian Condon (left) and Petra Schaefer (right)



Attendees networking during the Supplier Expo



Speaker Taylor St. Germain presenting "Economic Outlook and Analysis"



Speakers Alex Chausovsky (left) and Eugene Chausovsky (right) presenting "The Impact of Geopolitics on Your Business"



Speaker Professor W. Keith Robinson presenting "Artificial Intelligence – Opportunities & Challenges"



Attendees listening to a presentation



Attendees enjoying the Golf Outing



From left to right: James Wolfington, Erin Gurney, Pete Lance, and Dan Paschke





WOMEN OF THE GFA

Highlights of the Women of the GFA Meeting

By Erin Gurney, Accurate Felt & Gasket Mfg. Co., Inc.



The W-GFA meeting at the Gasketing/Converting Expo 2026 on March 25th was AMAZING. You can see it in the smiles on our faces in our group picture of 41 women!! The theme was Confidence, Communication, and Letting Go. The meeting started with 30-second fast introductions with a twist of personality. We discussed workplace confidence builders, before moving on to my favorite, the "Not Sorry" role playing. We posted on LinkedIn the role-playing exercise by request from multiple women - it was tough and introspective. We wrapped up our hour and half meeting discussing the "Let Them Theory" by Mel Robbins. More will be coming on that topic on our W-GFA LinkedIn page soon too. Thanks for everyone who joined us!

WOMEN OF THE GFA SUMMER GATHERING

Join us for a wonderful evening of connecting, networking and community. Unwind with food, drinks, great company and bowling or bocce.

Date: Thursday, July 16, 2026

Time: 5:30pm - 9:00pm

Pinstripes Oak Brook

7 Oakbrook Center
Oak Brook, IL 60523

JOIN THE WOMEN OF THE GFA LINKEDIN GROUP

Scan the QR Code to join the Women of the GFA LinkedIn Group.

The Women of the GFA (W-GFA) is a thriving community of women united in a commitment to positivity, support, and education.



INTRODUCTION TO NEW DIRECTORS

The GFA is happy to announce that the following new directors were elected at the GFA's Spring 2026 Meeting.



Stacy DeVoll

DeVoll Rubber
Manufacturing Group

Stacy DeVoll is the President of DeVoll Rubber Manufacturing Group, a third generation family-owned business specializing in commercial and industrial rubber products. She is passionate about advancing the manufacturing industry as a whole, serving on the County of San Bernardino Workforce Development Board, the Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce Board, and the Manufacturer's Council of the Inland Empire, where she helps support workforce growth and strengthen the regional business community.

In addition to leading her company, Stacy is actively involved in community service with Kiwanis Club of Victorville, where she helps lead events that support local youth and families and can often be found running a beer garden or holding a microphone at community events.

When she is not working or volunteering, Stacy has fun with her two pups who keep life entertaining and just the right amount of chaotic.



Austin Mathew

AM Rubber & Foam Gaskets

Austin Mathew oversees Production and Sourcing at AM Rubber & Foam Gaskets Inc., located in Mississauga, Canada. AM Rubber has been a member of the GFA since 2010. Austin is the current Chair of the Technical Content Development Committee, a position he has held since 2023. A graduate of McMaster University, he holds a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Materials Science & Engineering.

Having been involved with the business full time since graduating university, Austin has contributed to many departments within the company, including customer service, accounting, manufacturing, logistics, engineering, procurement, sales, and operations.

NEW GFA MEMBERS

REGULAR MEMBERS

All Balls Racing
East Greenville, PA
allballs racing.com

Auster Rubber Co Inc
Brooklyn, NY
austerrubber.com

Impresos RTM SA DE CV
Tamaulipas, Mexico
gruportm.com.mx

Industrial Custom Products
Minneapolis, MN
industrialcustom.com

LAMATEK Inc
West Deptford, NJ
lamatek.com

Miami Valley Gasket
Dayton, OH
miamivalleygasket.com

National Rubber Corp.
Cannonsburg, PA
nationalrubber.com

Pacmet Aerospace
Corona, CA
pacmetaerospace.com

Thrust Industries
Evansville, IN
thrustin.com

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Elastech Solutions
Burnsville, MN
elastechsolutions.com

Griswold Products
Moosup, CT
griswoldproducts.com

Nolato Jabar
Andover, NJ
nolato.com

Sinolight Fiber Composite Materials Co.
Wangjing, China
sinogasket.com

Tesa North America
Grand Rapids, MI
tesa.us

Sheet Rubber Failures: Causes, Mechanisms, and Prevention

By Mariah Bennett and Amanda Barnes, Texcel

Sheet rubber products are engineered for flexibility, durability, and chemical resistance. Whether it is nitrile, EPDM, neoprene, or other elastomers, sheet rubber is used to produce gaskets, seals, pads and other protective barriers and built to withstand various applications. Despite this precision, failures can still occur when limits are exceeded, whether it be environmental, mechanical or manufacturing ceilings.

That is why it is key to understand common causes of failure. It helps when it comes to selecting materials, troubleshooting, and overall product performance. There are three major common causes of failure: Chemical or temperature incompatibility, mechanical overstress or environmental exposure, and manufacturing or material consistency issues.

Manufacturing or Material Consistency Issues

Causes of failure may start as early as production. Factors that can create weak spots include improper compounding, inadequate bonding during manufacturing, inconsistent thickness during calendaring, and incorrect curing levels. To prevent this, organizations should strive to meet industry standards, like ASTM International, to ensure proper testing methods are being used to provide consistent products that soar in product expectations.

Mechanical Overstress or Environmental Exposure

Even with proper production protocols and quality materials, outside variables during application can impact products causing wear-related failure. Applications involving movement or contact surfaces can cause friction, particulate contact, and repeated mechanical stress on products causing erosion, pitting, or tearing. For prevention, one must carefully select their products beforehand to minimize this.

Environmental exposure is another outdoor variable that can cause failure during application. Elements like ozone, sunlight, oxygen, and weather cycles in outdoor applications can impact and attack susceptible elastomers. This impact can cause surface cracking, chalking, and stiffness symptoms. Prevention can include

proper protections from prolonged exposure, and correct material selection, specifically choosing materials formulated for superior weather resistance.

Chemical or Temperature Incompatibility

Chemical incompatibility is one of the most repeated causes of sheet rubber failure. This can include exposures to oils, fuels, solvents, or aggressive chemicals that can cause swelling, softening, or loss of strength. Prolonged chemical exposure can even be a cause accelerated fatigue failure, reducing sheet rubber's elasticity and tear strength.

Chemical incompatibility effects occur when fluids penetrate the polymer matrix, weakening internal bonds, and altering dimensions. This can be prevented by the correct selection of materials. Specific chemical environments require specific materials; it is essential to prevent premature degradation.

Temperature incompatibility is another recurring cause of failure. When an elastomer is not made for a specific temperature set, an elevated temperature can accelerate material oxidation and structural changes in rubber. This overexposure to heat can lead to embrittlement, cracking, or loss of elasticity over time. Prevention for this cause of failure starts in production through the proper formulation and curing to improve heat resistance. While choosing materials for applications, it is crucial to examine their temperature ratings. Continuous exposure beyond the material design limits eventually reduces performance.

Selection is Key to Prevention

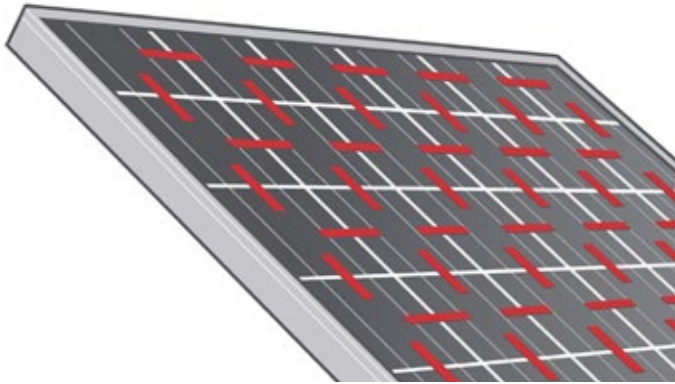
As seen from the most frequent failure causes, precise material selection is key to prevention of failure. While sheet rubber is engineered to be flexible, durable and chemical resistant, reviewing their specifications and standards they uphold is crucial to preventing failure and successful applications. Most importantly, selecting quality manufacturing and suppliers ensures quality materials and correct applications when carefully selecting materials to extend service life of products and maximize application performance.

WANT YOUR COMPANY PROFILE FEATURED?

To be featured in an upcoming newsletter, send your logo and a brief write-up about your company to info@gasketfab.com.

PSA Tapes' Bright Future in the Solar Panel Industry

By Jenna Miles, Avery Dennison Performance Tapes



Once upon a time, solar power was of interest primarily to scientists, tinkerers and homesteaders. But that time has long passed, as today's solar industry sees growing demand, even amidst policy headwinds. As solar panel manufacturers look to find efficiencies and streamline production, they should consider the many advantages of using pressure-sensitive adhesive (PSA) tapes for bonding applications to help transform solar panel design and assembly.

Solar continues to grow in the U.S.

According to a December 2025 report by the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), the U.S. currently has 262 GW of solar capacity - enough to power 45 million homes. The report also notes that solar accounted for 85% of all new electricity-generating capacity added to the US grid in 2025. The fastest growth is in large solar projects, including those at the commercial, community, and utility scales. The average cost of solar is now lower, globally, than other forms of energy, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Improved storage is making the technology even more feasible for more people.

The solar industry was boosted in recent years by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Enacted by Congress in 2022, the IRA provided tax credits to manufacturers of renewable energy technology. The solar industry added 42 manufacturing facilities with 119 more under development since the IRA was signed into law, according to an August 2024 report by American Clean Power. Many of these facilities are located in the West and Southeast. But every region of the country can boast of at least some solar panel manufacturing capacity.

Even with the Trump administration's sharp divergence on many areas of energy policy, there's reason for continued optimism

when it comes to this industry. As we embrace new, power-hungry technologies such as AI and EVs, there's a growing understanding that our future energy demands will require a broad and diverse selection of domestic sources, including solar.

Benefits of PSA tapes for solar panel manufacturing

PSA tapes present several attractive benefits to solar panel manufacturing as a high-performance, scalable, reliable and versatile bonding solution.

Peel-and-stick ease

Peel off the liner and stick the tape in place. That's all there is to it. And many tapes can be made with repositionable adhesives that allow assemblers to "tweak" placement (or fix mistakes). Tapes create less mess and may be safer to use than some liquid adhesives. They also lend themselves well to automated applications for manufacturers focused on maximum efficiency.

Lightweight

Tapes weigh less than many mechanical fastening systems, contributing to lighter-weight panels. One of the "holy grails" of modern design and engineering, lightweighting brings a range of benefits to solar, such as lower shipping costs and easier handling by installers.

Durability, even in extreme environments

Modern PSA formulas can be fine-tuned to resist extreme temperature swings and exposure to UV, moisture, dust and other contaminants. Many PSAs offer excellent bonding to challenging low-surface-energy substrates such as PE and PP plastic, EVA and Teflon®.

Design flexibility

Finding a spot to punch a hole in a delicate panel to accommodate a nut and bolt can be a challenge. And those holes practically invite water and contaminant intrusion. PSA tapes don't require any of this, giving manufacturers added flexibility while helping prolong a panel's life.

Proven performance

PSA tapes are used for bonding in many industries, including automotive, aerospace, batteries, building and construction, electronics, and others. Many PSA tapes engineered for those industries are already well-suited to the demands of solar panel design and manufacturing.



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1



2

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Our experts will review and discuss your submission.

3



4

The experts will reach out with solutions or further ideas.

Apply the solutions with the knowledge at your hands.

5



GFA Members can access TechTeam from the Member Dashboard after logging in to the GFA's website (www.gasketfab.com). TechTeam will quickly and confidentially provide unbiased, expert support to save you time, money, and materials.

TechTeam™ is provided in partnership with the International Association of Diecutting and Diemaking.

Key solar panel bonding applications for PSA tapes

PSA tapes' track record with similar uses in other industries means manufacturers can be confident in their choice of PSA as a material solution across numerous applications.

Component mounting

PSA tapes can be used to securely mount components on the inside and outside of a panel. The ideal tape for this application is double-coated (adhesive on both sides of a carrier), while a foam carrier can add gap-filling properties. Component mounting with gap filling is a common application for PSAs across a wide range of industries, including automotive, aerospace, electronics, general industrial and more.

Dielectric protection

Single-coated tapes with electrically insulating films can provide dielectric protection that is crucial in panel design. Such tapes are already in use in industries such as EV batteries.

Cable fixation

Durable and easy-to-use tapes can be used to help organize and secure wiring within a panel. Tapes are used for this application in numerous industries, including automotive, aerospace, marine, and building and construction.

Edge protection

Tapes can be applied to panel edges and corners to prevent cracking and chipping, protecting the panel during assembly, shipping, installation, and beyond. A stretchable dielectric tape could be ideal for this application.

Summary: Collaboration is Key

As is the case in many industries, solar bonding applications may require highly customized PSA tape solutions. PSA manufacturers can apply their R&D expertise to tweak adhesive chemistries for specific needs, source unique facestock materials, or even produce liners that meet certain requirements.

Tapes are further customized by converters. These experts can die-cut or stamp materials to specific shapes, widths or formats. Converters typically work directly with solar manufacturers to understand their requirements; then with tape manufacturers, if needed, for additional R&D.

About the Author: Jenna Miles is a product development engineer with Avery Dennison Performance Tapes. With over 10 years of industrial experience, she's responsible for developing products for a variety of applications, including the Solar Panel segment. Reach her via email at jenna.miles@averydennison.com or on LinkedIn.

Expanding Converter Capabilities with International Laminators

By Manufacturers Supplies Company

More Than Cutting, Controlling the Foundation of the Product Most converting equipment shapes the final part. A laminator defines the structure of the material before it ever reaches the cutting table.

For gasket fabricators, lamination is not simply an added process, it is the stage where material performance is created. Bond strength, layer alignment, adhesive consistency, and dimensional stability are all established before cutting begins. Unlike downstream equipment that processes finished material, a laminator directly influences how that material will perform in the field.

International Laminators from Manufacturers Supplies Company (MSC), shown in Figure 1, are engineered to give fabricators greater control over this foundational stage of production.

Engineered for Structural Performance, Not Just Throughput International Laminators are modular industrial systems designed to process foams, rubber, pressure-sensitive adhesives, films, and multi-layer composites. With working widths ranging from 1300 mm to 2300 mm—and now up to 3000 mm—and the capability to laminate materials up to 100 mm thick, these systems are engineered for demanding production environments.

What distinguishes these systems is their ability to combine lamination, rewinding, and cutting within a single configurable platform. Integrated longitudinal and transverse cutting units reduce secondary handling, while precise tension control ensures uniform adhesive application and repeatable bond integrity.

This level of control directly impacts material stability, flatness, and overall assembly performance, particularly in multi-layer

gasket constructions where tolerance stack-up can affect final part quality.

Strategic Value for Ownership and Operations

For ownership and operations leaders, the laminator plays a different role than cutting or slitting equipment. It is not simply increasing speed, it is increasing control.

Key operational advantages include:

- Control over adhesive bonding and multi-layer construction quality
- Reduced dependence on pre-laminated materials
- Improved yield and lower material waste
- Greater flexibility in responding to specification-driven applications
- Stronger margin protection through value-added, in-house processing

While cutting systems define geometry, the laminator defines performance. Together they create a complete converting capability, but it is the laminator that enables fabricators to engineer the material itself.

By integrating International Laminators into their production strategy, converters can strengthen operational control, expand technical capability, and position their organizations for long-term growth.

MSC partners with fabricators from consultation through installation and ongoing support, delivering lamination and cutting solutions designed to improve efficiency and material control.

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If you would like to advertise in the next issue, please contact the GFA office at info@gasketfab.com or 610-971-4850.

Advancing Gasket Manufacturing Through Digital Cutting Technology

By Keith Soya, Zund America Inc.

Gasket manufacturers face increasing demands for precision, efficient material utilization, and fast response to changing customer needs. As materials diversify and application requirements become more specialized, production teams must manage the cutting process carefully, including dimensional accuracy, to ensure reliable output quality and, ultimately, product performance. Digital cutting technology has emerged as a valuable solution, offering consistent accuracy, flexible production capabilities, and streamlined job preparation.

Zünd's digital cutting systems support these needs through dependable mechanical performance combined with ongoing advancements in process control and workflow automation. Together, these capabilities help manufacturers achieve repeatable, high-quality results across a wide range of products and production volumes.

Reliable cutting performance

Advancements in Zünd's software ecosystem continue to expand what manufacturers can accomplish when processing both traditional and next-generation gasketing materials. Updated cutting algorithms, refined tool-parameter controls, and automated calibration and setup routines contribute to reliable, repeatable results—even with layered, compressible, or fiber-reinforced substrates.

These improvements support the precise execution of intricate geometries, maintain consistent cutting depths across areas of variable material density, and ensure stable edge quality throughout extended runs. By reducing material-driven variability and improving process control, digital workflows help fabricators maintain tight dimensional tolerances while minimizing rework and waste.

Benefits of digital cutting in gasket manufacturing

Digital cutting offers gasket manufacturers a flexible and efficient alternative to traditional flatbed or rotary die-cutting processes. Because digital systems do not rely on physical dies, production can begin immediately once a design is finalized, eliminating lead times associated with die fabrication, maintenance, storage, and replacement. This makes it easier to accommodate on-the-fly design updates, material changes, and mixed-order production.

Digital cutting also enables the creation of complex shapes with fine details that may be difficult or costly to achieve with conventional tooling. Consistent accuracy across varied material types and thicknesses helps maximize material yield and minimize scrap, while fast, tool-less changeovers support short runs, prototypes, customized parts, and high-mix production.

Workflow Efficiency and Automation

As in any manufacturing environment, workflow efficiency is increasingly important in gasket production. Zünd's software tools support streamlined job preparation, efficient nesting for optimized material usage, and automated tool-parameter management tailored to specific materials. These capabilities reduce manual steps in production, minimize operator intervention, and improve throughput across the entire workflow.

Automated job sequencing, digital job tracking, and standardized cut settings help ensure consistency from shift to shift, supporting dependable productivity in fast-paced manufacturing environments. When combined with improved material utilization, these workflow enhancements help reduce production costs while maintaining high levels of output quality and reliability.

Supporting industry standards and material requirements

Many gasketing materials must meet performance specifications defined by ASTM, SAE, ISO, or other standards. Digital cutting provides the accuracy and repeatability needed to preserve the dimensional and functional integrity of designs required by these industry standards. Clean edges, consistent dimensions, and stable processing quality help ensure finished gaskets align with prescribed performance characteristics.

Why gasket manufacturers choose Zünd

Digital cutting has become an essential tool for gasket manufacturers seeking consistent quality, flexible production capabilities, and efficient, repeatable workflows. By combining precise cutting performance with advanced software and automated job preparation, Zünd systems support reliable results across a wide range of materials and production requirements. To see how these advantages translate into real-world production, watch this testimonial to hear directly from a Zünd gasket-manufacturing customer: <https://youtu.be/v6epF6pL4js>

HNBR vs. FKM/Viton™

By Cody David, West American Rubber Company



Fluoropolymers like FKM rubber or Viton™ are highly desired for a wide range of applications, especially those that require excellent high-temperature and chemical resistance. However, the implications of potential PFAS regulations and the investment associated with FKM have caused many companies to begin evaluating alternatives to protect and diversify their product lines.

While not an exact equivalent, HNBR (hydrogenated nitrile butadiene rubber) may serve as a potential alternative to FKM in certain applications due to its similar performance characteristics.

FKM & HNBR Similarities

- Strong chemical & oil resistance
- Generally resists higher temperatures than other organic rubber materials
- Excellent weathering and ozone resistance
- Characterized as a premier performance material
- Longer shelf life compared to other organic polymers

FKM Advantages compared to HNBR

- FKM resists a wider range of chemicals
- FKM provides superior resistance to corrosive chemicals, such as solvents and acids
- FKM has stronger electrical properties and flame resistance
- FKM generally has a longer service life in extreme high temperature applications

HNBR Advantages compared to FKM

- Although formulation compositions may vary between manufacturers, HNBR compounds are generally PFAS-free which can help avoid additional regulatory considerations.
- HNBR performs better in lower-temperature settings
- HNBR tends to produce fewer byproducts under extreme heat
- HNBR exhibits less volume loss in abrasive applications
- Robust mechanical performance in dynamic applications
- HNBR is typically more cost effective

Material Applications

FKM (Viton™) and HNBR rubber gaskets, o-rings and seals are regularly deployed in aerospace, military and defense, automotive, chemical processing, and oil & gas applications. Considering industry trends, FKM (Viton™) is more commonly used in aerospace applications, whereas HNBR is more frequently found in oil & gas applications, especially where low-temperature resistance is essential.

WARCO FKM (Fluorozone®, Viton™) and HNBR

Although HNBR and FKM share many similarities, selecting the right material ultimately comes down to the demands of your specific application. During your evaluation, it is best to consult with the end user to assess specific requirements and utilize a compounding expert to determine whether HNBR or FKM / Viton™ will meet those requirements.

WARCO regularly manufactures HNBR and FKM / Viton™ materials as sheet rubber, rubber extrusions, rubber seals, rubber gaskets, and custom-molded rubber parts. We invite you to leverage our team's experience and exemplary elastomeric expertise.

BENCHMARKING REPORT

BENCHMARKING REPORT: FABRICATORS

Below are the results from the Benchmarking Survey, which was completed to give GFA members a thumbnail sketch of how other members are fairing at this time. The following results were recorded from April 1-14, 2026.

We had 30 out of 120 Fabricators respond.

1. Were sales for the fourth quarter of 2025 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the third quarter of 2025?

Up
43% (13) **Down**
33% (10) **Same**
24% (07)

2. Were sales for the fourth quarter of 2025 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the fourth quarter of 2024?

Up
63% (19) **Down**
24% (07) **Same**
13% (04)

3. Is your projection for the first quarter of 2026 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the fourth quarter of 2025?

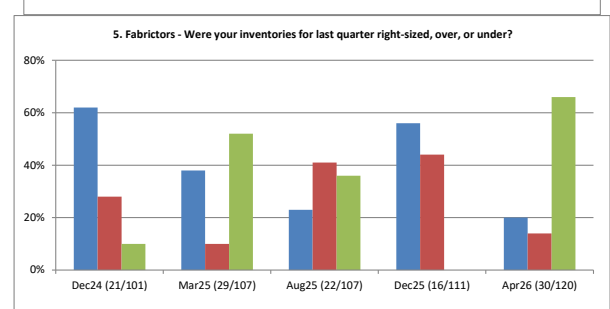
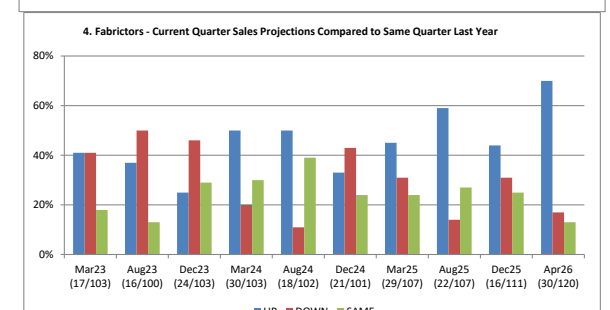
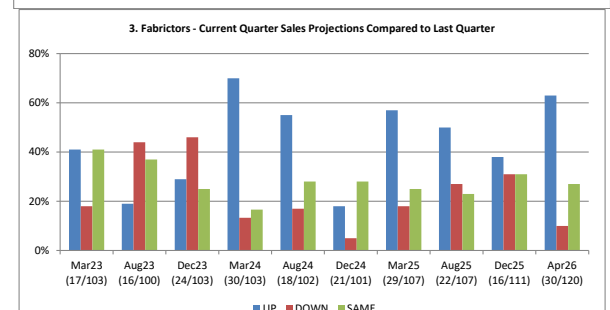
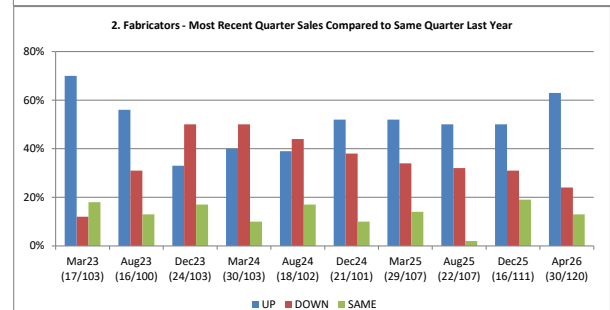
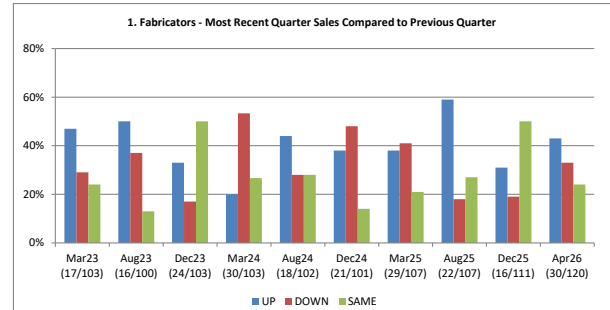
Up
63% (19) **Down**
10% (03) **Same**
27% (08)

4. Is your projection for the first quarter of 2026 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the first quarter of 2025?

Up
70% (21) **Down**
17% (05) **Same**
13% (04)

5. Were your inventories for the fourth quarter of 2025 right-sized, over, or under?

Right-Sized **Over** **Under**
20% (06) 13% (04) 67% (20)



BENCHMARKING REPORT: SUPPLIERS

Below are the results from the Benchmarking Survey, which was completed to give GFA members a thumbnail sketch of how other members are fairing at this time. The following results were recorded from April 1-14, 2026.

We had 26 out of 107 Suppliers respond.

1. Were sales for the fourth quarter of 2025 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the third quarter of 2025?

Up
38% (10) **Down**
38% (10) **Same**
24% (06)

2. Were sales for the fourth quarter of 2025 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the fourth quarter of 2024?

Up
50% (13) **Down**
38% (10) **Same**
12% (03)

3. Is your projection for the first quarter of 2026 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the fourth quarter of 2025?

Up
65% (17) **Down**
23% (06) **Same**
12% (03)

4. Is your projection for the first quarter of 2026 UP, DOWN, or the SAME compared to the first quarter of 2025?

Up
58% (15) **Down**
23% (06) **Same**
19% (05)

5. Were your inventories for the fourth quarter of 2027 right-sized, over, or under?

Right-Sized
12% (03) **Over**
23% (06) **Under**
65% (17)



THE GASKET FABRICATOR

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