

## Global Economies Brace for U.S. Tariffs

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump pledged to impose a 25% tariff on Mexico and Canada on his first day in office. In response, Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum warned that the penalties would cause inflation and unemployment in the U.S.

Mexico is the top U.S. trading partner, and Canada is close behind. More than US\$1.5 trillion worth of goods are exchanged annually among the three North American nations. Mexico's top exporters included U.S.-based automakers General Motors and Ford Motor Company, which have built sprawling modern production facilities around the country.

Trump's latest tariff pledge sent shivers through the U.S. auto industry, which depends heavily on both countries for parts and manufacturing. The prospect of tariffs "is a two-alarm fire for the auto industry," said Patrick Anderson, CEO of consulting firm Anderson Economic Group. "There is probably not a single assembly plant in Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Texas that would not immediately be affected by a 25 percent tariff."

The list of vehicles made in Mexico or Canada includes Ram pickups and Chrysler minivans. General Motors makes Chevrolet Silverado pickups and electric versions of Equinox and Blazer SUVs in Mexico, where Ford also makes its Maverick pickup. Separately, Trump outlined "an additional 10% tariff, above any additional tariffs" on imports from China. He has previously pledged to end China's most-favored-nation trading status and slap tariffs on Chinese imports in excess of 60% - much higher than those imposed during his first term. Trade between the U.S. and China amounts to US\$600 billion annually.

U.S. fasteners and automotive products suppliers have prepared for months for this outcome. Executives at auto parts retailer AutoZone told investors in October 2024 that they were prepared for products they import from India, China and Germany to become more expensive. "If we get tariffs, we will pass those tariff costs back to the consumer," Philip Daniele, CEO of AutoZone, said on a recent earnings call. "We'll generally raise prices ahead of — we know what the tariffs will be — we generally raise prices ahead of that." Likewise, Stanley Black & Decker CEO Donald Allan told investors his company would probably "have to do some surgical price actions" to offset any new tariffs.



## NFDA Panel: 'Sell Relationships' to Build Customer Trust

"Take care of the customer," panelist Kelly Lehman of Pacific Warehouse Sales told the National Fastener Distributors Association. Lehman credited her father, the late Bob Lehman, for establishing PWS relations with customers. Beyond being customers, he made them his friends, she added.

Kevin Chavis of Star Stainless Screw agreed. "You have to sell relationships" and build trust. Customers need to know "we want to do business with you." NFDA panelists on the topic "What Business Are You Really In?" emphasized serving the customer. Kelly Charles of manufacturer Sems and Specials noted each customer "has their own personality" and "hot buttons." Feedback from customers should be both "formal and passive," Charles said.

Distributor Mark Beaty of Beawest Fasteners emphasized "respect." "Ship accurately," Beaty said. After delivering the wrong parts, Beawest added a "double check on all shipments." NFDA president Scott McDaniel of Martin Fastening Solutions added that "you are only as good as your last delivery."

Not all potential customers are good customers for you. Lehman noted that "I will fire a customer" that PWS has too much trouble with. "We won't take that abuse," Lehman said. Part of success is "picking the right customers," McDaniel said.

AI is part of business now. "There is no denying AI," Chavis said. He finds AI provides great follow-up information. "AI will involve itself" in your business, but you are "still going to need people for building relationships and trust," Chavis said. Charles said Sems and Specials has gone to daily meetings as needed to handle problems. "Everyone is empowered to make own decisions," she said. "Allow people to make mistakes," Charles said. "They want to feel included." Chavis emphasized communication is vital and is both internal and external.

"Inventory is the one thing we can control," Beaty said. If a factory has to shut down because parts aren't available on time, there may be 400 people on the floor idled. McDaniel noted that



shutting down a factory can cost US\$25,000 a day. That highlights the importance of forecasting. Know what the signals are. “Know their business better than they do,” he said. If you don’t have inventory, a customer may turn to a competitor, Beaty pointed out.

Charles, noting Sems & Specials specializes in “made-to-order products” said she has “never had to turn down an order in 22 years” with the company. “Inventory is king,” Lehman agreed. “If you don’t have it on the shelf, they are going elsewhere. If you have it, you are going to sell it.”

Beaty noted “something is always going to come at you. Approach in a positive way. Don’t overreact.” “Your customers aren’t concerned about your problems,” Beaty finds. Customers “just want it fixed.” The bottom line is that “customers want to see the right thing at the right time,” Beaty said.



## Costly Boeing Machinist Strike Ends

The machinist strike at Boeing’s West Coast facilities has ended. Nearly 60% of International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers’ District 751 and W24 voted Monday to accept a new four-year contract with Boeing. Workers returned to work Nov. 6. The 53-day strike halted production at Boeing’s factories in Puget Sound, WA, and Portland, OR, for commercial airplanes and defense, space and security programs, including the 737 Max.



## YFP Panel Offers Career Advice: First, Work Hard

“Perform to a level that can’t be ignored,” Jake Glaser of Sherex Fastening Systems advised Young Fastener Professionals. “Show my company that you have value.” Second, don’t overdo it. “It shows if you try to be something you are not,” said Tim Vath of Solution Industries. “It has to be about authenticity.” And third, stay curious.

“Ask questions” to get involved in projects, Mike Robinson of Star Stainless Screw suggested. The three “Leadership Development for the Young Fastener Professional” panelists offered experience and advice to members during the National Fastener Distributors Association 2024 executive summit.

Vath suggested “look at the high-performers” and decide, “I want to be there.” Understand your own style and where your strengths are day-to-day and beyond, Glaser said. Glaser, who started with Sherex in inside sales, said he was encouraged to participate in entrepreneurial events and continuing education via local college programs.

“Mentors gave me space,” said Vath, who started in the warehouse. Mentors need to give the mentee “autonomy to grow,” Glaser said. Ultimately the mentee must have the “interest, desire and drive” to advance, Glaser said. Build relationships early and maintain them, Vath advised. There must be mutual respect. “Understand people at their level” and the way they receive information, Vath said. “Go with your gut,” Vath said. “Accept risk of failure.”

Robinson advised “focusing on relationships” and networking. Robinson mentioned “EQ” as necessary. Emotional quotient is understanding and managing your emotions and others. Advancing may require difficult conversations, Robinson noted. Your path varies if the employer is a family business or large publicly-traded company, Robinson said. There are also times to let go where it is “just not the right fit,” Glaser pointed out.

Vath added that “you are not going to have a great relationship with everybody.”

## Fastenal Names new EVP of Strategy & Communications



At Fastenal Co., Winona, MN, USA, Donnalee K. Papenfuss is now Executive Vice President (EVP) of Strategy and Communications. In this new role, Papenfuss will lead marketing and drive strategic initiatives in the areas of technology, sales and environmental, social and governance. She will also enhance communication efforts to support these initiatives and ensure alignment with overall business objectives. Papenfuss served as Fastenal’s Vice President of Contract Development and Support from February 2014 to October 2024. In this role, she led teams responsible for various sales enablement, sales development and sales support functions—from providing tools and resources to help sellers in the field succeed in their roles to developing proposals and facilitating workflows for contract negotiations.



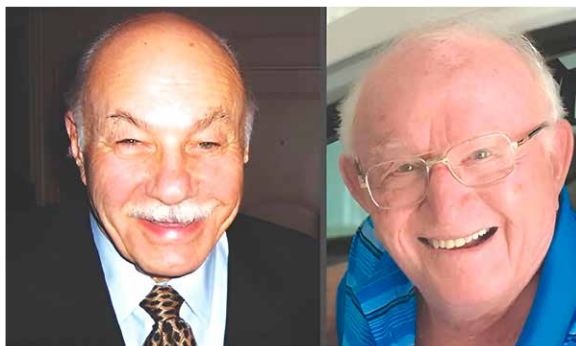


**Thomas Cochran  
Awarded YFP  
Scholarship for  
Training**

The National Fastener Distributors Association (NFDA), headquartered in Seal Beach, CA, USA, has announced that the Young Fastener Professionals (YFP) in partnership with the Fastener Training Institute (FTI) recently

awarded a scholarship for Fastener Training Week. Thomas Cochran, who is the Business Development Manager for Threaded Fasteners Inc., located in Pensacola, FL, USA, has been awarded the scholarship for the advanced fastener technical training program produced by the Fastener Training Institute. Young Fastener Professionals is proud to offer one scholarship for Fastener Training Week each year. Each YFP scholarship is valued at US\$2800. YFP scholarships can be used for any Fastener Training Week program in 2025 or 2026. The scholarship is for tuition only and does not include expenses for travel, lodging or meals.

**Century Fasteners Corp. Co-Founders  
Added to Smithsonian Wall of Honor**



Jack Schlegel

George Stieglitz

Century Fasteners Corp. Co-Founders, George Stieglitz and Jack Schlegel, have been added to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's – "Wall of Honor." From the early days in the Brooklyn Navy Shipyard to today, with over 500 parts on the world's most advanced fighter jet and the countless other DoD, NASA and military programs supported, their vision and leadership ultimately led to Century contributing to the advancement and innovation in aerospace and space technology. George Stieglitz and Jack Schlegel have their names, pictures and profiles listed on the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum "Wall of Honor" website and will have their names permanently engraved on Foil #49.

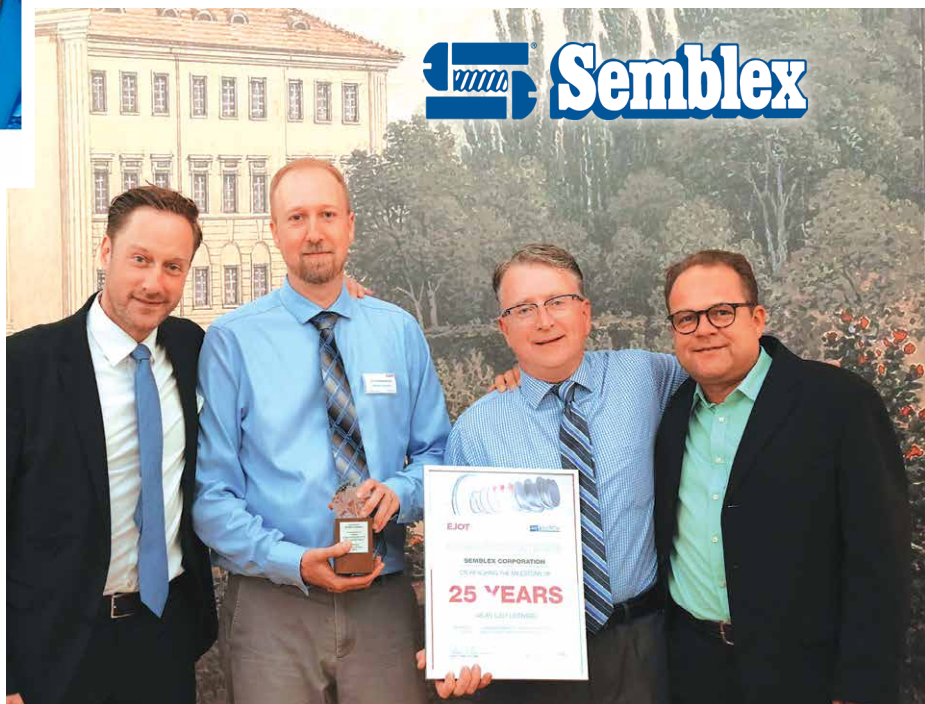
**John Varley  
to VP Sales &  
Marketing at  
Auto Bolt**



Auto Bolt, Cleveland, OH, USA, welcomes John Varley as VP of Sales & Marketing. With over 20 years of industry experience and a strong record of driving growth and customer satisfaction, Varley will lead the company's sales strategy and help expand its market reach. Varley's industry knowledge and commitment to customer focus align with Auto Bolt's vision of delivering excellence in the fastener industry.

**Semblem<sup>®</sup> Celebrates 25-Years as  
Licensed EJOT<sup>®</sup> Manufacturer**

Semblem<sup>®</sup> Corp. achieved a major milestone, marking 25 years as a licensed manufacturer for EJOT<sup>®</sup>. Semblem President, Gene Simpson, and Eric Breidenbaugh, VP of Quality/Engineering, were presented with the award in Germany at the Global Licensing Meeting by EJOT VP Dr. Markus Duchardt and Frank Schlosser, EJOT Licensing Manager. This achievement recognizes Semblem's dedication to high-quality products, its long partnership with EJOT, its commitment and to high-value market solutions.





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## Fastener Training Week Closes Another Great Year of Training

2024 was another busy year for the Fastener Training Institute (FTI). The last in-person class of 2024 was conducted in Cleveland, OH, USA, at the Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI). Dan Walker, IFI Managing Director, hosted, and Salim Brahimi, IFI Director of Engineering & Technology and Laurence Claus, IFI Director of Education & Training, presented the course. The class was sponsored by Birmingham Fasteners and produced by Jo Morris, FTI Director of Marketing. Students from 25 firms from across the USA and Canada attended the class, which included plant tours at Charter Steel and The Auto Bolt Company. Although the live class schedule is ended for 2024, FTI's On-Line Learning Library provides users with 24/7 availability.

## First Aviation Services Acquires Saint Technologies

First Aviation Services Inc., Westport, CT, USA, a leading provider of aircraft parts manufacturing, aircraft component maintenance and related engineering has acquired Saint Technologies Inc. of Shannon, IL, USA. Saint Technologies, founded in 1999, makes specialized lock washers for securing critical hardware assemblies in high-vibration and shock environments under the brand name REALLOCK®. REALLOCK saves weight, reduces assembly time and ensures critical safety for numerous applications covering land, sky and space. For over 10 years, REALLOCK self-locking washers have proven themselves to meet the most demanding requirements in aerospace design such as the F-22, F-35, Patriot Missile and satellites. The lack of chemical coatings makes REALLOCK suitable for extreme environments of outer space. High and low temperatures, pressures and loads are all defeated by Saint Technologies' unique locking device. ■



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