



# FASTEN YOUR FUTURE

## ISSUE NO.1 2026

We are excited to share YFP's very first newsletter, a publication that reflects on our journey, highlights our current achievements, and shares our vision for 2026 and beyond.

YFP has come a long way since its inception. What began as an idea of a few passionate people, an initial board of five members, has expanded into a thriving community of hundreds of young professionals – a number that continues to grow each day. Our mission is to cultivate confident, forward-thinking industry leaders who embrace the values of the fastener community while advancing innovation and progress. Through education, mentorship, collaboration, and networking, YFP is committed to empowering the rising generation of professionals to shape the future of our industry with purpose and impact.



### YFP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By: Zech Williams,  
Würth Industry USA*

Happy New Year, YFP community!

I am truly honored and grateful to serve as President of the YFP this year. The YFP offers so many outstanding programs for our industry, and I'm beyond excited to work alongside such an incredible team.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to Immediate Past President **Hristijan Georgievski** for his leadership in 2025. I'd also like to recognize our Vice-President **Nihar Sinha** and our Directors – **Craig Beaty, Mallory Nichols, and Jake Glaser** – for their continued dedication and contributions to the YFP.

Looking ahead, my goal is to further enhance YFP's offerings and ensure that we continue to fulfill our core purpose of **empowering young fastener professionals**. I'm especially looking forward to the continued success of our flagship programs – the **YFP Book Club** and the **Mentorship Program**.

I'm also thrilled to share some exciting news for 2026! We'll be launching a brand-new opportunity – the **YFP Trade Show Scholarship**, created in partnership with the **International Fastener Expo** and the **Fastener Training Institute**. Stay tuned for more details about this exciting new initiative in the months ahead.

On behalf of the entire YFP team, thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm. Here's to a fantastic year ahead – we can't wait to see where 2026 takes us!

## YFP OFFERINGS

**YFP Book Club:** Led by Mike White of Brighton Best International, we are proud to continue our book club. We host two book club meetings a year, highlighting books that fall under the umbrella of leadership and self-development. The first book club of the year is usually held in-person at the NFDA Annual Meeting & ESPS, and the second is held virtually in the Fall. The meetings include interactive conversations, where participants can share what they have taken away from the book and gain new insights from other readers in our industry!

**FTI Partnership:** The Fastener Training Institute has been instrumental in helping YFP achieve its goal of providing educational opportunities to new and existing members. As a YFP member, participants will receive access to a free FTI virtual training video of their choosing. Furthermore, YFP is also able to offer one scholarship per year to attend Fastener Training Week.

**Mentorship Program:** In this program, mentees submit their interests and areas that they would like to develop, and we pair them with a mentor who has expertise in those fields. While applications have closed for the 2026 program, mark your calendars to sign up new employees as mentees and well-experienced employees as mentors for next year's program. The application deadline for the 2027 program is November 1, 2026.

### BUILDING THE FUTURE OF THE FASTENER INDUSTRY: WHY MENTORING AND GIVING BACK MATTERS

*By: George Hunt III,  
Vice President/  
Industrial Sales,  
North America for  
Brighton-Best  
International, Inc.*

The fastener industry has always been built on precision, reliability, and relationships. While technology, automation, and global supply chains continue to reshape how we do business, one factor remains constant: people drive progress. Nowhere is this more evident than in the growing community of young fastener professionals. Mentoring, supporting professional associations, and intentionally giving back to this community are not optional extras; they are essential investments in the future of the fastener industry.

Mentoring is one of the most powerful tools for developing young professionals. For those entering the fastener industry, the learning curve can be steep. Beyond technical knowledge, success requires understanding customers, navigating supply chains, managing quality standards, and building trust. Experienced professionals can shorten this learning curve by sharing real-world insights that can't be found in manuals or training videos. A mentor provides guidance, perspective, and encouragement, helping young fastener professionals avoid common pitfalls while gaining confidence in their abilities. Just as importantly, mentoring fosters a culture of collaboration rather than competition, strengthening the fastener industry as a whole.

Supporting industry associations is another critical way to uplift young fastener professionals. Associations create structured opportunities for education, networking, and leadership development. Through conferences, workshops, plant tours, and committee involvement, young professionals gain exposure to different segments of the fastener world and build relationships that may shape their entire careers. When established leaders actively support these associations by either sponsoring events, volunteering time, or encouraging participation,

they help ensure that these platforms remain accessible and impactful. Associations also serve as a bridge between generations, allowing knowledge to flow both ways and ensuring continuity in best practices and values.

Giving back to our young fastener professionals goes beyond formal mentoring programs or financial support. It includes showing up, listening, and creating space for young voices to be heard. Inviting young fastener professionals into strategic conversations, encouraging them to lead projects, and recognizing their contributions sends a powerful message: they belong here, and their ideas matter. This sense of inclusion is critical for retaining talent in an industry that competes with many others for skilled, motivated professionals.

The benefits of supporting young fastener professionals are not one-sided. Seasoned professionals often find that mentoring reinvigorates their own passion for the industry. Fresh perspectives, new technologies, and evolving market expectations challenge long-held assumptions and inspire innovation. By engaging with younger fastener professionals, leaders stay connected to emerging trends and ensure their organizations remain adaptable and relevant.

Ultimately, the strength of the fastener industry tomorrow depends on the actions taken today. By mentoring with intention, supporting associations wholeheartedly, and giving back generously, industry leaders help cultivate a capable, confident, and committed next generation. Investing in young fastener professionals is not just about helping individuals succeed; it is about securing the long-term health, resilience, and growth of the entire fastener community.



### SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

In recognition of his unwavering commitment to the fastener industry, inspiring career path, and visionary leadership among his peers, IFE honored Tim Vath with the 2025 Young Fastener Professional of the Year Award.

Tim's journey from working in a warehouse at a small family-owned business to leading one of the largest master distributors in the United States is a testament to his determination and leadership. Throughout his career, he has remained actively engaged in supporting industry associations, initiatives, and programs, demonstrating a deep commitment to the growth and advancement of the fastener community.

"It's easy to see why the IFE Awards Committee had a unanimous decision in voting Tim as the 2025 YFP Award winner," says Mike Robinson, a member of the committee. "This is a great way to recognize his tireless work ethic, dedication to the fastener industry, and his exceptional character. Tim continues to show his genuine kindness and inspires everyone around him. Congratulations, Tim!"

## FASTENER TRAINING WEEK SCHOLARSHIP

In 2025, we had an overwhelming number of applications submitted for the YFP Fastener Training Week Scholarship. The winner was Ethan Loomis, Supplier Quality Engineer with Shamrock International. This program has been a very meaningful experience for past scholarship winners. One of our winners, Thomas Cochran of Threaded Fasteners Inc., shared, “Before the Fastener Training, my view of the fastener world was largely transactions & products. Through the Fastener Training program, I gained a much deeper understanding of the industry itself. The relationships, the shared standards, and the responsibility we carry in supporting the projects and people that rely on us. That perspective shift gave me a clearer sense of purpose and reinforced why it matters to lead with curiosity, accountability, and service in everything we do. Always stay Humble, Hungry, & Aware.”

## VISIT YFP AT THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

Members of the YFP Board enjoy and see value in attending in-person events.

Please keep an eye out for us at:

- Fastener Fair - May 5-6, 2026 (Charlotte, NC)
- NFDA Annual Meeting & ESPS - June 17-19, 2026 (Indianapolis, IN)
  - o YFP Happy Hour
  - o YFP Book Club
- IFE - October 7-9, 2026 (Phoenix, AZ)

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*Young Fastener Professionals (YFP) is committed to providing educational and networking opportunities for ambitious young professionals desiring professional growth within the fastener industry. We empower, advocate for, and provide opportunities for education and networking for young fastener professionals. If you are interested in volunteering, mentoring, or being added to the YFP email list, please email Amy Nijjar at **[amy@nfda-fastener.org](mailto:amy@nfda-fastener.org)**.*