MASONRY MATTERS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEBRASKA MASONRY ALLIANCE

At the Nebraska Masonry Alliance (NMA) our mission is simple yet powerful - BUILD BETTER with MORE MASONRY for the RIGHT REASONS. NMA works hand in hand with industry partners to promote masonry as the building material of choice, provide technical support to the design community, and develop a highly skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of tomorrow.

Together, we're building a stronger, more resilient future – one brick at a time.



Cover Photo: Featuring the architectural vision of RDG Planning & Design and the skilled masonry craftsmanship of Kehm Contractors, Inc. at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Elkhorn, Nebraska. Through thoughtful design and enduring masonry, the project beautifully blends tradition with renewal, honoring the parish's rich heritage while creating a lasting spiritual landmark for generations to come.





"The gradual imprint of time on Irish monastic buildings gave each site an organic, living character. This contemporary campus draws from that same tradition of living stone.

Distinct masonry selections help differentiate each space and evoke the passage of time, while establishing a shared material language which unites the campus. In a range of colors, forms and applications, masonry endures as a consistent presence throughout the campus, grounding each space in a lasting material."

– Joe Kotulak, AIA – RDG Planning & Design

SPOTLIGHT ON NMA MEMBER KEHM CONTRACTORS, INC.

Building on more than a century of craftsmanship, Omaha-based Kehm Contractors, Inc. has been a trusted name in masonry since 1910. Now in its fourth generation of family leadership, the company specializes in commercial masonry, restoration, and complex masonry projects throughout Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa. With a commitment to quality, safety, and skilled craftsmanship, Kehm continues its proud tradition of preserving the past while building for the future. Learn more at www.kehmcontractors.com.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

2026 marks an exciting milestone for the Nebraska Masonry Alliance - our 10th anniversary.

As I reflect on NMA's beginnings in 2016, I'm grateful to the founding board members and the collaboration between the Nebraska Concrete Masonry Association (NCMA) and the Nebraska Masonry Institute (NMI) that brought our organization together. Our original vision was to unite the masonry industry, promote masonry, educate designers and builders, develop a skilled workforce, and advocate for safe, resilient communities. Ten years later, that vision remains at the heart of our mission: Build Better with More Masonry for the Right Reasons.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished in 2026.
We began the year with mason contractors developing Best Practices for masonry construction, establishing expectations for workmanship and accountability while demonstrating the value of working with NMA mason members.

Our partnership with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln College of Architecture continued with classroom instruction, a Yankee Hill Brick plant tour, and hands-on brick and block experiences for students. That partnership has also led to the creation of the Studio Excellence Fund to expand masonry curriculum, while we continue building relationships with the Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction.

Workforce development also remains a priority. NMA once again sponsored Bella Garcia of Fremont High School as she advanced from Nebraska SkillsUSA competition to SkillsUSA Nationals in Atlanta. It was encouraging to see strong student participation in masonry and the next generation gaining exposure to our industry.

Throughout the year, we expanded our outreach to Nebraska's design and construction communities through our summer Lunch & Learns, AIA Nebraska conference, Nebraska CSI events, and promotion of Beauty of Block and the Block Design Collective. We will also continue our sponsorship of the Maple St Construct Design Lecture Series in December.

Our 10th year has certainly been a busy one, and none of it happens without people like you who give their time, expertise, and energy. Thank you to our board members, members, industry partners, volunteers, and everyone who has supported NMA throughout the year.

As we celebrate our first decade, I'm even more excited about what's ahead. Together, we will continue strengthening our industry, growing our masonry community, and building better with more masonry for the right reasons.



Here's to the next 10 years, together!

Mark Cleveringa, President, NMA

BUILDING TOGETHER: BUILDING WITH THE BEAUTY OF BLOCK

More resources. More Opportunities. More Masonry.

What if the right resources and expertise could turn more projects into masonry projects? That's the opportunity behind NMA's continued collaboration with The Beauty of Block and the Concrete Masonry Checkoff.

Together, we're connecting Nebraska's architects, engineers, contractors, and masonry professionals with the tools, technical expertise, and support needed to make masonry a competitive, high-performing building solution.

Through the Block Design Collective (BDC), industry professionals can access free project assistance, technical guidance, design tools, and expert support. The Block Learning Hub offers educational courses and continuing education opportunities, helping designers better understand masonry's versatility, durability, sustainability, resilience, and long-term value.

One of the most powerful opportunities is delegated design, which brings specialized masonry engineering expertise into projects earlier - helping optimize costs, improve constructability, and open the door to more masonry solutions.

But the real impact happens when these resources are put to work. NMA encourages members to engage architects and engineers early, share available tools, and connect project teams with the BDC before critical design decisions are made. Whether overcoming design challenges, exploring alternative building systems, or identifying cost-effective solutions, early collaboration can turn potential opportunities into successful masonry projects.

The goal is simple: Turn more conversations into opportunities—and more opportunities into masonry projects. Explore the possibilities at www.BeautyofBlock.com.

CONCRETE MASONRY CHECKOFF

THE BEAUTY OF BLOCK

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF MASONRY: ACADEMIC ALLIANCES

UNL College of Architecture



NMA continues to strengthen its partnership with the UNL College of Architecture, creating opportunities to introduce future architects to the benefits and possibilities of masonry. In April, second-year architecture students participated in a classroom lecture and visited Yankee Hill Brick for a plant tour and hands-on masonry experience. With guidance from skilled masons representing Midwest Masonry and Stonebrook Exterior, students gained firsthand experience working with brick and block, bringing classroom learning to life.

NMA is also investing in the future of masonry education through its newly created Studio Excellence Fund, supporting the development of a dedicated masonry design studio. Additionally, updates to NMA's scholarship program will place greater emphasis on graduate students pursuing architectural education.

From hands-on experiences to classroom innovation, NMA is helping inspire the next generation of architects to design and build with masonry.



Bella showing her skills at the 2026 SkillsUSA Nebraska Competition.

SkillsUSA Competition: Bella Garcia: Back-to-Back Champion

For the second year in a row, Bella Garcia of Fremont High School earned the title of Nebraska SkillsUSA State Champion in Masonry, showcasing the skill, determination, and craftsmanship that are shaping the future of the trade.

NMA was proud to award Bella a $3,000 travel sponsorship to help cover expenses as she represented Nebraska at the 2026 SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, competing alongside talented students from across the country. Congratulations, Bella, on another outstanding year! NMA is proud to support your journey and looks forward to seeing where your talent and hard work take you.

BRICK BY BRICK - BUILDING CONNECTIONS

NMA Annual All-Member Meeting

NMA's March All-Member Meeting brought members and design professionals together for a conversation about the future of masonry with Tino Kalayil, PE, Technical Director with the Concrete Masonry Checkoff. Tino highlighted resources available through the Concrete Masonry Checkoff and Block Design Collective (BDC) and shared how early collaboration among architects, engineers, contractors, and producers can lead to smarter designs, lower costs, and more opportunities for masonry.

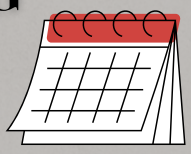


Pictured: *NMA members and design professionals connecting at the 2026 All-Member Meeting.*

A key focus was delegated design, which brings specialized masonry expertise into projects earlier - helping solve design challenges, streamline construction, and improve project outcomes. The message was clear: early involvement, stronger collaboration, and the right resources can help put more masonry into more projects.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



December 3, 2026
NMA Board of Directors Meeting
11:30am – 1:00pm
@ TCC Materials
3208 Keystone Dr.
Omaha, NE 68134

January 7, 2027
NMA Board of Directors Meeting
11:30am – 1:00pm
@ TCC Materials
3208 Keystone Dr.
Omaha, NE 68134

**NMA members and guests are always welcome to attend board meetings.*

BRICK BY BRICK - BUILDING CONNECTIONS (Continued)

Lunch, Learn & Build Better

In June, NMA partnered with Watkins to bring masonry education directly to the design community with Lunch & Learn programs in Omaha and Lincoln. Adam Hutchinson, P.E., of the Northwest Masonry Institute presented Better Masonry Walls: Crack Control, Water Resistance, and Energy Performance. The program offered practical guidance on designing high-performing masonry walls, including strategies for controlling cracking, resisting water penetration, improving energy efficiency, and increasing long-term durability. Attendees earned learning credit while gaining valuable tools and insights they can apply to future projects. Programs like this support NMA's ongoing efforts to educate the design community and encourage greater use of masonry.



Pictured: *Adam Hutchinson, Lisa Lackovic, Aubrey Cotton, and Mark Cleveringa*

AIA Annual Conference

Putting masonry in front of the design community continues to be an important part of NMA's mission. On September 17, NMA joined architects and industry professionals from across the state at the 2026 AIA Nebraska Annual Conference at Nebraska Innovation Campus in Lincoln. Throughout the day, NMA's booth created opportunities for conversations about masonry's place in today's projects—from its design flexibility and lasting performance to the resources available to help architects successfully incorporate masonry into their designs. More importantly, the conference gave NMA another opportunity to strengthen relationships with Nebraska's architectural community. By showing up, sharing knowledge, and being a resource, NMA continues working to ensure masonry is part of the conversation from the earliest stages of design.



Pictured: *NMA President Mark Cleveringa representing NMA at the 2026 AIA Nebraska Annual Conference.*

CSI Nebraska Kickoff

NMA kicked off the new CSI Nebraska year by sponsoring a September networking event at Jukes Ale Works in Elkhorn. The evening brought together architects, specifiers, contractors, manufacturers' representatives, and other industry professionals for conversation and connection. NMA shared a brief masonry industry update before attendees mixed and mingled. Events like this put masonry in front of the people who design, specify, and build Nebraska projects—while creating valuable relationships and keeping masonry part of the conversation



Pictured: *Attendees connecting, collaborating, and building industry relationships.*

MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Cleveringa, President – Watkins Concrete Block Company
Fernando Gutierrez, Vice President – K&K Masonry, Inc.
Dustin Windhorst, Secretary – Midwest Masonry, Inc.
Jon Nasr, Treasurer – TCC Materials
Shawn Kolterman, Immediate Past President – Kehm Contractors, Inc.
Matthew Anderson – Chester Anderson & Sons
Katie Bugbee – Watkins Concrete Block Company
Jeff MacTaggart – Jeff MacTaggart Masonry
Linda Potter – Hohmann & Barnard, Inc.

PROUD MEMBERS

The Nebraska Masonry Alliance draws its strength from the dedicated professionals who stand behind it. Together, we elevate our industry, foster innovation, and shape the future of masonry in Nebraska and beyond.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our valued members for your steadfast commitment—to NMA, to the craft of masonry, and to the spirit of collaboration. Through your leadership and partnership, we continue to build a stronger, more resilient, and forward-looking industry.

Artisan Stone Company, Inc.
Ash Grove Cement
Ash Grove Packaging Corporation
Brickworks Supply Center
Brand Safway
Chester Anderson & Sons
Elite Distribution
Endicott Clay Products Company
Hohmann & Barnard, Inc.
Irwin Equipment
Jeff MacTaggart Masonry
K&K Masonry
Kehm Contractors, Inc.
Masonry Precast Specialty Services
Midwest Masonry, Inc.
Nauslar Construction, Inc.
Prosoco
Seedorff Masonry, Inc.
Steinwart Sales Corporation
Stonebrook Exterior
T. Hansen Construction
TCC Materials
Thiele Geotech, Inc.
Thompson Masonry
Thunn Construction Inc.
U-Mix Products
Watkins Concrete Block Company
Yankee Hill Brick & Tile