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Submitted by

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It's been 50 years!

In 1958, Miss Pearl Sheffield worked at the Builder's Exchange of Texas. Every day, she talked to women at contractors' and architects' offices. But, they were only voices. Tired of not knowing each other, 10 or 15 women gathered for their first business dinner meeting.

About the same time, some women from Fort Worth were traveling around the south starting women's organizations called "Women in Construction." So, Miss Sheffield and her friends called their group "Women in Construction of San Antonio" and affiliated themselves with the group from Fort Worth.

On Aug. 9, 1958, the "club" that Miss Sheffield and her friends started became the 11th chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction. The "club" rapidly ceased being a "club" and became a professional women's organization and a recognized force in the San Antonio construction industry.

NAWIC's membership is made up of women from all areas of construction – we're owners, architects, engineers, office administrators, tradeswomen, accountants, insurance agents, suppliers, bankers, general contractors, subcontractors, etc. Our membership is very diverse.

We have partnered with various associations in the industry, such as ABC, AGC, CFMA, and NCCER. We are members of CURT and ACE and participate at their annual meetings.

The main objectives of NAWIC remain the same in 2008 as they were in 1958: to help women establish and advance their career in the construction industry.

The best tool in our tool box to improve our careers is through education. NAWIC offers multiple educational opportunities, both formal and informal. We usually have construction-related speakers at our monthly chapter meetings. Regional and national meetings also have top-notch speakers and presenters. We always learn something new.

We also learn from each other. If one of us has a problem in the workplace, you can bet another one has a solution, and she is more than willing to share her experience.

NAWIC has a national office, located in Fort Worth (the city of our birth) and a national board consisting of six officers and 14 directors from across the country. I am honored to be serving as National Secretary. But, the benefits to NAWIC membership start with the chapter. We cannot be successful without strong chapter leadership and the valuable support of our employers and associates.

Thanks to all those who have continued to support us over the past 50 years, including the Builders' Exchange of Texas, who remains involved in NAWIC yet today. We urge employers to continue investing in the professional development of their female staff. -rd