

Mike Duffin Looks Back at 11 Years as PMPA Executive Director

After 11 years as PMPA executive director, Michael Duffin formally retires on December 31, 2013. He has been working on a transition with new executive director, Michael Kobylka, since August first.

Prior to becoming the PMPA executive director in September of 2002, Mr. Duffin and his brother owned Duffin Manufacturing Co. Duffin Manufacturing, founded in 1956 by W.T. Duffin, was a PMPA member as well as a member of the National Screw Machine Products Association, the predecessor of PMPA.

“As a former owner of a family-operated machining business, Mike was ‘one of us,’ he knows what it is like to sit in the chair as a president of a company and the challenges we all face,” Darlene Miller, PMPA president and president and CEO of Permac Industries, says. “When he was named executive director of PMPA, Mike brought to the job a unique perspective having been an association member in his former life.”

Mr. Duffin’s belief in serving PMPA members as customers in his tenure as executive director added value to the services that PMPA’s administrative team offers as well as value to the organization’s members.

“I’ve always had the view that while the association is owned by its members and the executive director is hired by the board of directors who are elected by the members,

even though I worked for the members when I’m with them, they are my customers,” Mr. Duffin says. “That view has served us well over the last 11 years.”

Fond Memories

“In these 11 years, a lot of my time was spent traveling with PMPA officers to meet the members and keep in contact with them. I was able to visit anywhere from 75 to 100 companies each year,” Mr. Duffin recalls. “Each one of those visits was pretty special. I learned something at every stop and certainly the officer who was traveling with me learned a lot about the industry as well.”

Mr. Duffin explains, “I’ve developed some great personal friendships with the officers I’ve traveled with and had some good times.”

Developing relationships and traveling to different areas are the two fond personal memories that

Mr. Duffin shared. He also looked at the association’s achievements during his time as executive director.

“As an association, we should be the most proud of the Precision Machining Technology Show. PMTS was started by a group of members and the executive director prior to me, Jack McNaughton, who passed away right before the first show in 2001,” Mr. Duffin says. “The most recent show we completed featured record attendance, exhibitors and exhibit space. Jack would be proud of what the show became.”

Challenges

Technology and business have changed greatly in the past 11 years. When Mr. Duffin looks back at the challenges he and the administrative team of PMPA faced, many are related to the changing practices in the industry.

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“Some of the biggest challenges I remember are the ones that our members usually didn’t see, including changing and modernizing the accounting system, transferring from the old printed materials to digital formats and upgrading the website three times in 11 years,” Mr. Duffin explains. “The biggest challenges are the ones that aren’t often the most evident to the members, but the end product that they see is better now than what we used to have.”

PMPA’s Growth

“I appreciated the opportunity to work with the staff here. I was responsible for hiring 6 of the 11 who are here now,” Mr. Duffin says. “The organization is doing as much, if not more, today as it was years ago, but is running leaner. We’ve broken down the silos internally and the team’s responsibilities crossover with more collaboration.”

Other areas where PMPA has grown include government affairs with the partnership of an advocacy group that Mr. Duffin says sharpens the precision machining industry’s presence in Washington. The organization also streamlined its code of regulations and district and chapter alignment, both of which Mr. Duffin explains improved the PMPA governance model.

“I loved going to new places to visit members, and that travel really is part of the organization’s culture,” Mr. Duffin continues. “We actually investigated the value of visiting members and found it to be worth the time and cost to build the relationships and keep our members, our customers, updated.”

“Mike was an effective leader of PMPA through some challenging economic times which he faced during his tenure as executive director,” Ms. Miller says. “As Mike enters retirement, he leaves the association in solid financial condition, with a stable and growing membership.”

Retirement Plans

“Now that I’m retiring, I’m planning on getting my golf handicap back to where it should be!” Mr. Duffin jokes. “But also, I enjoyed spending so much time traveling and meeting members. I’d like to repeat a lot of those trips and take my wife so I can show her the nice places and people I visited.”

Beyond spending time on the golf course and traveling with his wife, Mr. Duffin also plans to spend more time with his family.



“We’ve been blessed with 3 children and 6 grandchildren and we’re going to spend more time with all of them,” Mr. Duffin says.

Parting Thoughts

“Associations are voluntary organizations. Members belong because they get something out of being part of the group,” Mr. Duffin summarizes. “The customer mentality wants to make sure that each member understands how they get a return on investment in association dues. We want them to get value out of their membership and participation.”

“One thing every association has is a culture and ours is unique,” Mr. Duffin continues. “PMPA has 80 years of history. The culture, the history, the traditions, the practices and the friendships have been developed over 80 years and they aren’t going to be changed. They shouldn’t be changed. It’s important to grow and keep the association relevant, but it’s also important to remember where you’ve been.”