PERSEVERING TOGETHER

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

120 Years
AHFA
American Home Furnishings Alliance

TRUMP: 'BEEN LOOTED
President declares emergency
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
ONE OF AMERICA'S GREAT NEWSPAPERS
THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025
238 YEARS OF SERVICE
$4.00
TRUMP UNVEILS SWEEPING NEW
President says levies will promote U.S. manufacturing, restore fairness
By Josh Boak
Associated Press
TRUMP TRANSITION
INSIDE
SEE TARIFFS, PAGE A-5
SHUTDOWN
Illinois federal workers face confusion, anxiety as government
on all imports
PLUS EXTRA LEVIES ON SOME 60 NATIONS
Economic gamble risks a recession, experts say
WALL STREET JOURNAL.
Fed Cuts Rates, Powell Wary of More
Benchmark trimmed by a quarter point, but data blackout blurs path ahead
The New York Times
CANADA AND CHINA HIT BACK AT TRUMP WITH OWN TARIFFS
Pressure Drives Pride in 'Made in Mexico'
Economic Upheaval For U.S. Is Feared
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
Trump Slaps Broad Tariffs on Imports
President, heralding 'Liberation Day' hits all partners with 10% levy. Some with more
The Minnesota Star Tri
The Minnesota
Trump proclaims sweeping new tariffs
Pence says mo families $3
What's News
Tariff confusion?

PERSEVERING TOGETHER

Even before Donald Trump assumed office on January 20, it was clear tariffs and trade policy would be the seminal issues of 2025 for the home furnishings industry. The roller coaster left the station February 1 when Trump announced 25 percent tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico and launched 11 months of dizzying maneuvers that dominated business discussions for most of the year. His social media proclamations included tariff delays, tariff exemptions, new tariff threats, "discounted" tariffs, stacked tariffs, court-blocked tariffs, paused tariffs, reinstated tariffs and retaliatory tariffs.

By the April High Point Market, the business climate was characterized by tariff exhaustion.

In contrast to tariff activity, the housing market failed to deliver much measurable movement in 2025. The affordability crisis continued. Stubborn mortgage rates inched lower but not enough to engage sidelined prospective buyers. New construction lagged while remodeling activity remained steady. For the furniture industry, this all added up to pinched sales, with fewer new homeowners furnishing new spaces and more established homeowners staying put and investing in remodeling and renovation.

Inflation served up a cloudy backdrop to this landscape. It remained well above the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target, averaging around 2.7 percent despite three interest rate cuts. Coupled with a 43-day government shutdown beginning October 1, the economic uncertainty of 2025 created winners and losers, and each quarter saw a fresh wave of home furnishings closures and bankruptcies, along with contrasting furniture factory and retail store expansions.

Helping to navigate these choppy waters, AHFA provided member companies with a steady rudder throughout its 120th year of service to the industry. 2025 Chair Andy Bray advised fellow executives to stay closely connected through AHFA's educational conferences, where insight and counsel on the day's issues always flows freely. The silver lining in tumultuous years, it turns out, lies in members persevering together and becoming more engaged and committed to supporting AHFA's mission of mutual success.

AHFA CEO Andy Counts and Board Chair Andy Bray at the 2025 Washington, D.C., Board of Directors meeting.

Photo: Daniel Delgado

ADVOCATING TOGETHER

As the second Trump administration took office in January 2025, AHFA's regulatory compliance team quickly began adapting to a new game with new rules and a new referee. The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) pushed relentlessly for fewer regulations and began slashing the federal workforce in its effort to shrink the size and scope of federal agencies. Regulatory activity continued throughout the downsizing, and AHFA's vigilance ensured the industry's voice continued to be heard on the most pressing trade, environmental and product safety issues with bottom-line implications for our industry.

TARIFFS & TRADE

Uncertainties Temper Domestic Growth Expectations

The home furnishings industry was drawn directly into the tariff fray in March when the Department of Commerce announced a Section 232 national security investigation into imports of timber, lumber and their derivative products, including furniture. In response to the investigation, AHFA helped coordinate a coalition of American companies – including both domestic producers and importers. The coalition's 20 pages of comments in response to the investigation reflected real-world implications of the proposed tariffs on the home furnishings industry.

On April 2 – Trump's "Liberation Day"– the administration announced a universal 10 percent tariff on all imported goods to take effect April 5, followed by further tariffs on products from dozens of named countries beginning on April 9. These were imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), with the administration arguing that foreign trade and economic practices from the targeted countries created a national emergency. AHFA responded by helping members decipher the cumulative effect of the new tariffs and providing legal insights on the growing (and complex) list of exceptions. Solution Partners members CV International and Gulfstream Shippers Association assisted by offering a webinar for members at the end of April.

Gat Creek CEO Gat Caperton holds the December 1, 2025, edition of USA Today *that featured his factory along with several other U.S. manufacturers earning tariff-related press coverage.*

An August 22 Truth Social post from the President signaled the Section 232 investigation into wood products was nearing completion, and new tariffs would soon be announced. The goal, which Trump emphasized on social media and in public statements, was to "bring the Furniture Business back to North Carolina, South Carolina, Michigan and States all across the Union."

However, when the tariffs were revealed a month later, they targeted upholstered wood furniture only, beginning at 25 percent on October 1 and rising to 30 percent January 1, 2026.

In the days following the administration's proclamation, AHFA received more than a dozen inquiries from around the globe from economic, trade and business reporters seeking industry comments on the impact of the new tariffs. AHFA drafted media statements that emphasized the diversity within the upholstered furniture industry and explained why the tariffs would not have a uniform positive or negative impact across that industry. AHFA reminded reporters that nearly half of all upholstery sold in the United States is still produced here – and that even domestic producers rely on a robust global supply chain.

AHFA responded to another round of media inquiries at the end of the year when Trump delayed the scheduled increase on the upholstery tariff until January 1, 2027.

CHEMICAL REGULATION

Formaldehyde Fiasco Continues

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began 2025 with a final risk evaluation for formaldehyde that was a "mixed bag" for the home furnishings industry. Released in December 2024, the final risk evaluation contained extremely low worker exposure limits and an unreasonable risk determination for consumer exposure to formaldehyde from foam seating and bedding.

The proposed worker exposure limit of 110 parts per billion in the final risk evaluation was substantially lower than the current OSHA occupational limits (750 ppb) and lower than recently updated European Union limits (300 ppb). AHFA concluded that implementation of these limits could negatively impact most domestic furniture production facilities. In response, AHFA developed a comprehensive worker exposure study and collected emissions data at four member company facilities. Results of this study would be used to support AHFA's position on occupational exposure limits. At the end of the year, EPA issued a memorandum on the final risk evaluation proposing to increase the formaldehyde worker exposure limit to 300 ppb.

The EPA's Nancy Beck addressed Regulatory Summit attendees in August.

The December 2024 final risk evaluation contained good news on the consumer exposure front. The agency determined that composite wood panels already regulated under Title VI of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) do not pose an unreasonable health risk to consumers. The unexpected bad news was that EPA included a new condition of use – foam used in seating and bedding – that it claimed could expose consumers to unhealthy levels of formaldehyde.

Remarkably, the agency used 25-year-old data for rigid fiberglass wall insulation and equated that with the polyurethane foam used for seating and bedding. Despite citing this error and providing current polyurethane foam seating data in detailed comments submitted in May 2025, AHFA received no explanation from the agency, even when the top official in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, Nancy Beck, addressed industry executives at AHFA's Regulatory Summit in August. AHFA expected to participate in a Small Business Roundtable sponsored by EPA early in 2026 to discuss both the worker exposure limits and the foam seating/bedding issue.

Issues That Stalled In 2025

EPA PFAS REPORTING

In November, the EPA proposed changes to its perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) reporting regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act. To make reporting more "practical and implementable," the agency proposed exempting importers from the reporting requirements. No changes were proposed for domestic manufacturers, who do not need to report if all components are sourced from within the United States. Domestic companies that import components, such as fabric that contains PFAS, must still report. The proposed change for importers remained up in the air at year's end, with a final rule not expected until around June 2026.

UTAH'S ONLINE LABELING

Two years after mandating online law labels for upholstered furniture sold on e-commerce sites, Utah officials withdrew the requirement in March. AHFA opposed the labeling rule, noting content labels do not exist for special order upholstery until the product is manufactured. AHFA proposed that companies make their menu of possible filling options available for on-line shoppers to review, but the state opted to drop the requirement instead.

EU DEFORESTATION RULE

The EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) was intended to fight climate change by curbing deforestation and biodiversity loss in global supply chains. In November, the European Parliament voted to postpone implementing the law for a second year in a row, extending the deadline to December 2026, with an additional grace period for small businesses through June 2027. The regulation prohibits wood (and many related products) from being imported into the EU if it originates from land that was deforested after 2020. Extensive due diligence is required to verify compliance.

STATE REGULATIONS

EPR Packaging Rules Gather Steam

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulations for packaging advanced over the last five years largely unnoticed by the furniture industry. That changed in 2025.

Since 2000, the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) has promoted EPR laws in the United States as a key component for developing a more "circular economy." Until 2020, those laws focused on involving manufacturers of specific products – like batteries, paint and carpet – in the collection, disposal and recycling of their products. In 2020, PSI broadened the focus and worked with the Flexible Packaging Association on key elements of an EPR regulation for packaging. Those efforts paved the way for the first statewide EPR for packaging laws in Oregon and Maine in 2021. Colorado and California followed in 2022.

Oregon's law called for all packaging "producers" to register with the state by March 31, 2025. Soon thereafter, AHFA received its first inquiry about the implications of this new law on the home furnishings industry.

At the Regulatory Summit in August, AHFA's Alex Williams looks on as Mike Lazorchick and Jonathan Stoll remove the carton to reveal substantial inner packaging for a four-drawer chest. The team also inspected inner packing for a dining table.

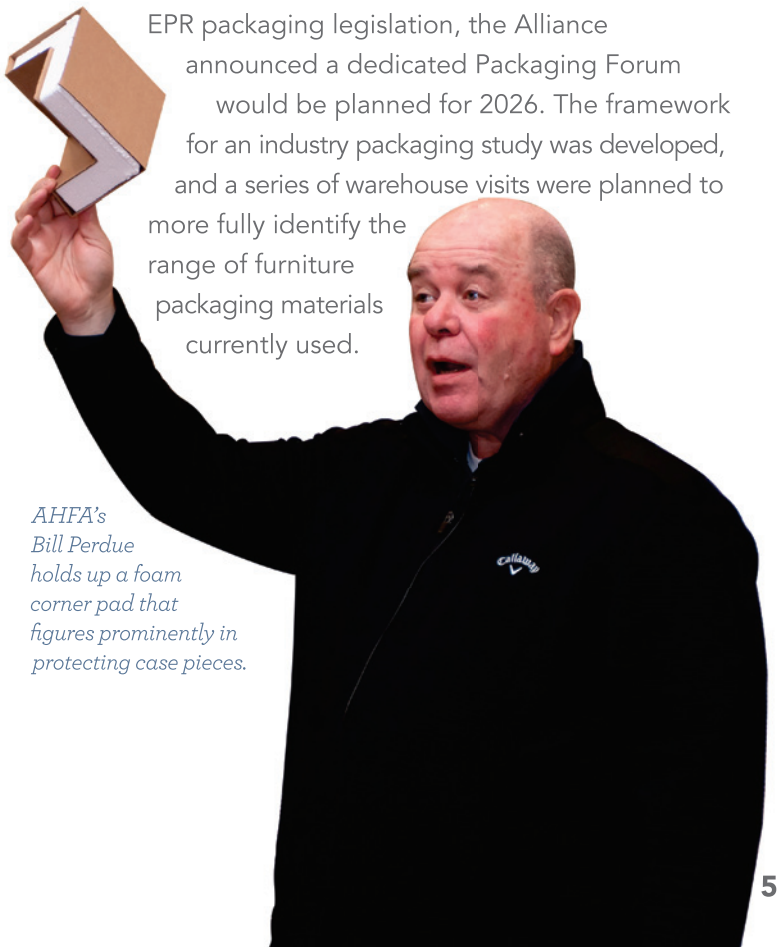
As the Alliance would soon discover, the implications were significant and far-reaching.

With Colorado's registration deadline fast approaching in July, AHFA set out to unravel the compliance timelines, understand the various definitions of "producers" and "covered materials" and to demystify the fee structures.

Registration requires manufacturers to calculate how much packaging they ship into the state annually. Quantities must be broken down by type of material, and, eventually, each state will assign fees based on quantity and recyclability of the packaging. Alex Williams, AHFA's manager of sustainability and regulatory compliance, covered these basics at the Regulatory Summit in August.

But the Summit's "What's in the box?" exercise illustrated an even greater challenge ahead: replacing non-recyclable packing materials with more sustainable options and balancing this objective with the imperative for maintaining damage-free product delivery rates.

At year's end, with nine more states having introduced EPR packaging legislation, the Alliance announced a dedicated Packaging Forum would be planned for 2026. The framework for an industry packaging study was developed, and a series of warehouse visits were planned to more fully identify the range of furniture packaging materials currently used.



AHFA's Bill Perdue holds up a foam corner pad that figures prominently in protecting case pieces.

Product Safety Work Advances Despite Agency Upheaval

Furniture safety issues remained a key focus of AHFA's regulatory compliance work in 2025, with changes at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) adding an additional layer of complexity.

As part of broad cuts in government spending, CPSC announced it would no longer produce its annual report on tip-over injuries and fatalities associated with televisions, furniture and appliances – produced every year since 2008 with data collected by the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). AHFA scrutinized this report each year over the last decade for clues to reducing tip-over incidents, and it was essential for guiding updates to the ASTM voluntary stability standard.

In May, all Democrat commissioners were fired by President Trump, leaving just Peter Feldman, who was named acting chair, and Doug Dziak, who addressed AHFA's Board of Directors during its May government affairs meeting in Washington, D.C. Dziak assured AHFA board members that enforcement of product safety standards remained the agency's top priority. He also emphasized the importance of the CPSC's new e-filing system for importers and said its implementation would help the agency detect non-compliant imports.

Doug Dziak, one of two remaining CPSC commissioners in 2025, addressed AHFA's Board of Directors in May. Dziak resigned his post in August, leaving Acting Chair Peter Feldman as the sole commissioner.

The CPSC's new e-filing requirement for imported consumer products will assist Customs & Border Protection officers in identifying and seizing non-compliant products. (Photo by Jerry Glasser, USCBP Office of Public Affairs)

Chief among those non-compliant imports in 2025 were "fabric dressers," which the agency began recalling in March. By year's end, 16 different models and over 200,000 units had been recalled, all produced in China and sold exclusively online. All sold for $120 or less, and all were introduced to the online marketplace in September 2023 or later. AHFA purchased one of the recalled units, assembled it and attempted to test it. However, the stability tests could not be completed due to the fabric "drawers" collapsing under the test weights.

As part of its Furniture Safety Week public information campaign in October, AHFA advised consumers about the dangers associated with "fabric dressers," especially when used in a child's room or used as a media stand – as shown by the manufacturers in promotional photos appearing on e-commerce websites. At year's end, AHFA's representatives on the ASTM furniture safety subcommittee were wrestling with the definition of a "fabric bin" versus a "drawer" and whether modifications in the language of STURDY might be required – an issue to be debated more fully in 2026.

AHFA helped draft the proposed scope of a new safety specification for recliners with attached foot support mechanisms in 2025, paving the way for details of the standard to be developed in 2026.

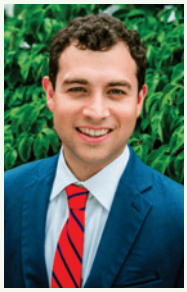
Finally, AHFA helped importers prepare for the July 2026 implementation of CPSC's electronic filing system for compliance data. The e-filing requirement is designed to improve CPSC's ability to target higher risk products for screening and inspection. The rule did not create additional safety testing or certification requirements for importers. Rather, by requiring electronic filing prior to import, the CPSC aims to make it more difficult for non-compliant foreign manufacturers to evade detection.

AHFA provided e-filing compliance guidance for importers throughout 2025, including a dedicated session at the August Regulatory Summit emphasizing the importance of accurate data entry, since even minor discrepancies can trigger noncompliance and supply chain disruptions.

A YEAR BUILT TOGETHER

For 120 years, AHFA has remained an organization that fosters a sense of community among its member companies, encouraging collaboration and camaraderie over competition. The month-by-month recap on the following pages highlights the advocacy, networking and knowledge-sharing that helped member companies build that community together in 2025.

JANUARY



ALEX WILLIAMS

ALEX WILLIAMS joins the AHFA staff as manager of sustainability and regulatory compliance, a new position. Alex's responsibilities include supporting existing programs and deepening AHFA's involvement in state-level regulatory matters like extended producer responsibility legislation for packaging.

On January 2, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announces its final risk evaluation for formaldehyde conducted under the Toxic Substances Control Act. The long-awaited report raises concerns for AHFA due to new workplace exposure limits and a new consumer exposure claim related to foam seating and bedding.

Donald Trump is sworn in as the 47th president of the United States. Immediately upon returning to the White House, he issues a presidential memorandum promoting an "America First Trade policy" through which he intends to use aggressive tariffs to "revitalize U.S. manufacturing."

Andy Bray, CEO/president of Vanguard Furniture, begins his tenure as chair of AHFA's Board of Directors. He urges members to take stock of their involvement in AHFA and make sure they are taking full advantage of their investment.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) publishes its final e-filing rule for importers. It requires them to file compliance certificates electronically beginning in July 2026. AHFA promises detailed sessions on the topic at the 2025 Regulatory Summit.

ICFA unveils a travel incentive program for retail buyers attending the Summer and Fall Casual Market Atlanta. ICFA retail members in good standing qualify to have up to three nights for two people covered at either market.

CASUAL MARKET ATLANTA

Henry Vanderminden IV, president of Telescope Casual Furniture, steps into the top leadership position on ICFA's Board of Directors. Eddie Massood of Massood Logistics heads the Solution Partners Board for 2025, and Dan Hunt of Murrow's Transfer heads the Specialized Furniture Carriers Board.

FEBRUARY

AHFA'S 2025 MARKETING/PR CONFERENCE is postponed due to a late season snowstorm impacting much of North Carolina. The conference is rescheduled for August.

More than 150 casual industry executives attend the two-and-a-half day "Elevate" Education Conference in Tampa, Florida (above). Keynotes include Dan Gingiss, author of "A Remarkable Customer Experience Is Your Best Competitive Advantage," and Tom Edwards, generative AI leader at Ernst & Young.

The Chinese manufacturer of a 12-drawer fabric storage unit marketed as a "dresser" refuses to recall the product when notified by the CPSC that it fails to meet stability requirements dictated by the STURDY Act. CPSC issues a warning advising consumers with children to stop using it. This begins a year-long CPSC campaign focused on recalling non-compliant fabric "dressers."

ICFA introduces "ICFA News," a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep members of the outdoor division up to date on programs, services and events.

ICFA NEWS

MARCH

FOLLOWING last month's warning, the CPSC recalls a 10-drawer fabric "dresser" for failing to meet federal stability requirements. The 28,590 units in this recall barely scratch the surface, and sales of the low-cost units continue to soar.

AHFA urges members who ship products into the State of Oregon to register with the state to comply with its extended producer responsibility (EPR) law for packaging. The law's goal is to increase recycling rates and reduce landfill waste. AHFA begins tracking measures introduced in other states and adds EPR regulations to its 2025 Regulatory Summit agenda.

The Trump administration initiates a Section 232 investigation into potential national security threats posed by the import of timber, lumber and their derivative products, including wood furniture.

ICFA publishes its 2025 Outdoor Living Trend Report, revealing that 77 percent of American homeowners do not spend as much time outside at home as they would like. Sixty percent say they plan an outdoor living purchase in 2025, and comfy seating tops most shoppers' wish list.

APRIL

ON APRIL 2 – a day President Trump proclaims as "Liberation Day" – the administration announces the most sweeping tariff hikes since the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930. The two-tiered tariff system includes a 10 percent universal baseline tariff on most imports and a higher, "reciprocal tariff" (ranging from 11 to over 50 percent) on goods from countries with large trade deficits. AHFA works to unravel the rates for member companies.

The Solution Partners division announces recipients of $35,000 in education scholarships – all awarded to the children of employees working for AHFA member companies.

Funding for an annual report on tip-over fatalities and injuries associated with televisions, furniture and appliances – published every year since 2008 – is eliminated by the CPSC due to "other priorities."

Two years after mandating online law labels for upholstered furniture, Utah officials withdraw the new requirement. AHFA had been working with the state since it revised the labeling law in April 2023, because the original rule failed to account for items like upholstery for which no content label is available at the time of an online purchase.

A coalition of companies collectively calling themselves "Furniture for America" submits comments to the U.S. Department of Commerce in response to the Section 232 investigation announced in March. The group, spearheaded by AHFA, concludes that tariffs on timber, lumber and derivative products (including furniture) would harm the domestic furniture industry and the American public.

JEREMY HOFF & REPRESENTATIVE PAT HARRIGAN

MAY

AHFA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS meets with regulators and legislators during its annual government affairs meeting in Washington, D.C. Senators Rick Scott (R-FL) and Thom Tillis (R-NC), along with Representative Pat Harrigan (R-NC), are among lawmakers who address industry executives. Questions from board members center largely on tariffs and trade.

ICFA kicks off two programs to promote leadership and small business growth. The first is a series of three webinars featuring D4Concepts, a consultancy focusing on people development, strategic planning and innovative processes for small businesses. The second program includes 12 monthly webinars to help business owners live out their corporate vision.

Following a year serving as ICFA's director of programs and member engagement, Siri Scott steps into the role of ICFA executive director.

SIRI SCOTT

JUNE

MORE THAN 120 industry executives gather at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Asheville, North Carolina, for the annual Logistics Conference. Keynote presenter is Tony Williamson of Samaritan's Purse, who details the complex logistics of mobilizing 13,000 volunteers to serve over 700 families in North Carolina and Tennessee following the devasting Hurricane Helene flooding in September of 2024. The agenda also includes panels featuring retailers, shippers and third party logistics providers.

Harold Hudson of Summer Classics Private Label and a longtime ICFA board member receives City of Hope's International Home Furnishings Industry Group Lifetime Achievement Award during the West Coast Golf, Tennis & Pickleball Tournament in Coto de Caza, California.

Freddie Davis (above center), founder of Gulfstream Shippers Association, receives the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award from AHFA's Specialized Furniture Carriers.

AHFA's Furniture Foundation awards $67,000 in educational grants for 2025. The funds target continued support for programs that are successfully equipping students for careers in the home furnishings industry, including three North Carolina community college programs providing a pipeline of trained workers for upholstery factories in the region. Grants also support the furniture design curriculum at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and WithIt's annual educational conference.

JULY

THE ASTM Furniture Safety Subcommittee votes on a proposed scope for a new recliner safety specification. The standard is intended to minimize injuries and deaths to children resulting from entrapment in the gap created by the operation of a recliner's foot support lift mechanism.

ICFA announces retailer Douglas Sanicola, owner of Outdoor Elegance Patio Design Center, and Harold Hudson, vice president and former president of Summer Classics Private Label will receive the 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award.

DOUGLAS SANICOLA & HAROLD HUDSON

ICFA celebrates its 67th year with a Birthday Bash during Casual Market Atlanta. Other summer market events include "Pink Out Atlanta," raising funds for City of Hope, and a Summer Soccer Social at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

On September 29, President Trump announces on Truth Social that he will make North Carolina great again by imposing substantial tariffs on all furniture imports.

AUGUST

A STRING OF TRUTH SOCIAL POSTS from President Trump promise tariffs on imported furniture and a return of furniture production to North Carolina. In the weeks following the posts, AHFA fields a flurry of questions from national media outlets looking for "official" comments and industry data. AHFA declines to speculate on impacts, but the association's communications office spends hours providing background data for reporters.

JAYE ANNA MIZE

The Marketing/PR Conference enjoys a 40 percent increase in attendance over 2024 and spotlights a global trend report from Jaye Anna Mize of Future Snoops, insights for influencer marketing, ecommerce marketing strategies and AI tools industry marketing executives can use to streamline everyday tasks.

Nancy Beck, the top official in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, keynotes the Regulatory Summit. The program covers key product safety and environmental requirements promising future impacts on the industry, leading to the "Eyes on the Horizon" theme.

SEPTEMBER

THE 2025 Solution Partners Education Golf Tournament is held in Mount Airy, North Carolina, with more than 100 golfers and 21 sponsors. A pre-tournament putting contest sponsored by Surry Chemicals helps boost scholarship fund proceeds to over $20,000. The first place team (right) is sponsored by ANDMORE.

AHFA purchases a recalled "fabric dresser" and tests it according to the stability requirements outlined in ASTM F2057-23. Noting that the tests could not be completed because the unit's drawers collapsed under the test weight, the Alliance issues a press release advising consumers not to use fabric dressers in homes with small children.

The State of Oregon begins sending its first non-compliance notices to companies that have failed to register with the Circular Action Alliance under the state's new extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulation for packaging. Seven other states have passed EPR laws that require companies to report the amount of packaging used to ship products into their states.

The Solution Partners division kicks off a member "spotlight" webinar series designed to showcase the diverse expertise and innovation within the supplier membership. The September "spotlight" features All3D and is followed by webinars hosted by Comply Pro+, Eurofins and Identic AI.

SOLUTION PARTNERS SPOTLIGHT

OCTOBER

AFTER CONGRESS FAILS to pass an appropriations bill for the new fiscal year (FY2026), a federal government shut-down begins at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time on October 1. It will last a record 43 days.

Two weeks later, on October 14, the President's new 25 percent tariffs on imported upholstered furniture take effect, with him promising to boost them to 30 percent on January 1, 2026. The focus on upholstery catches the industry – and a host of economic, trade and business reporters – by surprise. AHFA focuses first on providing clarity for its member companies on how the new tariffs will "stack" with existing tariffs. Answering media inquiries from around the globe quickly becomes a second priority. Requests for comment from various news outlets continue unabated for the remainder of the year, and AHFA works to provide reporters with essential background and context.

The second annual Furniture Safety Week is held the first week of the month with widespread support from AHFA member companies, child safety advocacy groups, retailers and industry associations. The campaign includes a video news release produced by lead sponsor, CertiPUR-US, which generates cumulative airings reaching a consumer audience of over 25 million. CertiPUR further boosts the week's safety messages with a print news release that generates over 1,000 news articles covering all 50 states. AHFA announces the 2026 Furniture Safety Week dates are October 5-10, adding a Saturday to the week-long campaign to encourage in-store events.

NOVEMBER

AHFA HOLDS ITS ANNUAL MEETING and CEO Conference at Hotel Bardo in the heart of Savannah's historic downtown. The program features lessons in leadership from Paula Wallace, founder of Savannah College of Art & Design, and consumer insights from Charles Kennedy, a media research and consumer behavior expert.

Longtime industry analyst Ken Smith, in the center of the photo above, receives AHFA's 2025 Distinguished Service Award. In presenting the award, Ethan Allen's Farooq Kathwari, at left above, and AHFA's Andy Counts recognize Smith for more than 37 years of providing business guidance and conducting surveys of operating results among home furnishings companies.

Caroline Hipple, CEO of HB2 Resources, is elected to chair AHFA's Board of Directors. She is the first woman to serve as board chair in the association's 120-year history.

CAROLINE HIPPLE

DECEMBER

THE SOLUTION PARTNERS division announces it has restructured its Board of Directors for 2026 to incorporate representatives of the Specialized Furniture Carriers. Executive Director Gene Clark says the move streamlines governance and aligns additional resources behind the annual global logistics conference. Serving as chair of the newly combined board is Jeremy Copeland, regional sales manager at Carpenter Company (above).

A study led by the California Department of Public Health finds that when families replace older, flame-retardant-treated sofas and chairs with new furniture made without flame retardants, their blood levels of these harmful chemicals drop by about half in 1.4 years. Thanks to the federal flammability standard drafted by AHFA and adopted in 2013, furniture manufactured after a 2014 no longer requires these chemicals.

CPSC closes the year by announcing four more "fabric dressers" have been recalled for failing to meet stability requirements established by the STURDY Act. This brings the number of units recalled in 2025 to over 206,000. ASTM International's Furniture Safety Subcommittee forms a task group to explore how the units are tested.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Since its founding in 1964, the broad array of companies within AHFA's supplier division has proven to be its greatest strength. The varied expertise and support they bring to the table is so essential to AHFA's success that in 2014 these members were deemed "partners" to the AHFA membership rather than simply suppliers. The Solution Partners division launched several new initiatives in 2025, emphasizing the group's ability to foster connection and collaboration.

The International Casual Furnishings Association, on the other hand, focuses on the commonality of its membership. While the roll includes manufacturers, importers, retailers, suppliers, representatives and designers, they are all inextricably linked with one another by their concentration on the outdoor and casual segment of the market. In 2025, this division focused on providing members with new tools to ensure their future success, including programs to provide the maximum benefit from attending markets and webinars to refresh key business skills.

Surrounded by family and Telescope Casual Furniture colleagues, Stephanie Loomis was overwhelmed as she was named recipient of ICFA's Mia Nault Unsung Hero Award.

SOLUTION PARTNERS

Suppliers Develop Growing Strength In Diversity

AHFA's Solution Partners division logged significant growth in 2025, driven in part by introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) in many aspects of the home furnishings industry. From companies offering smart design and production optimization to product visualization and logistics workflow, many new Solution Partners members in 2025 were at the forefront of the AI revolution.

To help showcase the high-tech expertise and wide range of new services represented within the Solution Partners membership, the division launched a series of monthly "Spotlight" webinars in 2025. Each 30-minute webinar offers the host supplier an opportunity to introduce themselves and their products or services to the broader AHFA membership. The series proved so successful that more than half of the 2026 series was booked before 2025 came to a close.

In April, the division once again awarded $35,000 in education scholarships to the children of AHFA member company employees. In addition to 12 $2,500 scholarships, the program included a $5,000 award from the Bill Hauck Memorial Fund and Deliveright Logistics. The 2025 scholarships supported technical education as well as four-year degrees for students representing nine different AHFA member companies. The Solution Partners Education Fund is supported by an annual golf tournament each September, played in 2025 at the Cross Creek Country Club in Mount Airy, North Carolina.

Technology's impact on the transportation and logistics industry was on the agenda at the June Logistics Conference in Asheville, North Carolina, where more than 100 home furnishings executives met to discuss the industry's most pressing challenges. The keynote address highlighted the extraordinary disaster relief logistics organized by Asheville-based Samaritan's Purse in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene in 2024. The program also included a retailer panel, an update from major ports and panels addressing key challenges for shippers and third-party logistics providers.

Attendees enjoyed an evening of networking and dinner at the Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The event was sponsored by North Carolina Ports Authority and featured a presentation and book-signing with special guest Valerie Bauerlein Jackson, author of "The Devil at His Elbow: Alex Murdaugh and the Fall of a Southern Dynasty."

The June conference also turned the spotlight on Freddie Davis, founder of Gulfstream Shippers Association, who received the 2025 Alvin W. Daughtridge Lifetime Achievement Award from the Specialized Furniture Carriers division.

Solution Partner sponsors were instrumental in the success of all AHFA educational programs in 2025, including the Logistics Conference, Regulatory Summit, Marketing/PR Conference and Education Golf Tournament. As 2025 came to a close, the division announced it was restructuring its Board of Directors to incorporate the Specialized Furniture Carriers board. United now as a single entity, the combined leadership and resources will bolster the division's impact in 2026.

From left, Guillermo Davila of Eurofins, a 2025 Regulatory Summit sponsor, with Cristina Roma of La-Z-Boy, during a break in the exhibit hall. Ricky Vescovacci, Lectra Sales Director, serving up cocktails at the Solution Partners Education Golf Tournament. Hans Bean, chief commercial officer for North Carolina Ports – the platinum Logistics Conference sponsor – provides a port update.

SPONSOR APPRECIATION

Top left: Freddie Davis, Gulfstream Shippers Association, participated in the Putting Shootout contest sponsored by Surry Chemicals prior to the Solution Partners Education Golf Tournament. Gulfstream was a gold tournament sponsor. Also supporting the event were Julie Messner, ANDMORE, and Eddie Massood, Massood Logistics, both gold tournament sponsors. At left, Wes Leonard, Bennett International, Lauren O'Hearn, Georgia Ports Authority, and Brin Perryman, J.B. Hunt, enjoyed the Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., at the Logistics Conference. The evening was sponsored by the North Carolina Ports Authority. Below, Andy Bernstein, Cara Borchardt and James Garside of FurnitureDealer.Net with Tom Hebel of Bucks Country Gardens at the ICFA Education Conference. FurnitureDealer.Net was a sponsor at both the ICFA Conference and the AHFA Marketing/PR Conference in 2025.

In February, more than 160 outdoor industry executives attended ICFA's Elevate Educational Conference in Tampa, Florida, where keynote presenter Dan Gingiss got attendees on their feet!

INTERNATIONAL CASUAL FURNISHINGS ASSOCIATION

Ambitious Strategy Builds Membership, Boosts Engagement

"Bigger, Better, Stronger" was ICFA's mantra for success in 2025. It began the year with plans to grow membership, increase market attendance, improve member communications and maximize partnerships, especially with ICFA supplier members.

A robust new travel incentive program announced in January offered free hotel accommodations for ICFA retailers attending the July or September Casual Market Atlanta shows.

To enhance member communications, an ICFA e-newsletter called *ICFA News* was launched in February and provided timely updates on events, association news and programs throughout the year. Also in February, more than 160 industry executives attended the Elevate Educational Conference in Tampa, Florida, where keynote presenter Dan Gingiss helped attendees envision customer service that becomes a company's ultimate competitive advantage, and futurist Tom Edwards introduced attendees to AI strategies to transform business.

ICFA's 2025 Outdoor Living Trend Report was released in March, with 77 percent of respondents saying they do not spend as much time outside at home as they would like and 60 percent saying they plan to purchase new items for their outdoor spaces in 2025. In press coverage of the report, consumers were urged to find a favorite spot to read, eat, work or just relax, and make it an outdoor oasis.

Following a year serving as director of programs and member engagement, Siri Scott was promoted in April to executive director of the division. Jackie Hirschhaut, who led the association from September 2014 through March 2025, transitioned to senior advisor. Under Hirschhaut's leadership, ICFA thrived and expanded, with the all-inclusive educational conference she launched in 2017 quickly becoming the outdoor industry's keystone event.

In May, ICFA introduced a "Leader Success Program" designed to provide members with new tools for success, along with an "Optimized Business Systems" webinar training program to help business owners reconnect with and reinvigorate their company vision.

Former ICFA chair Harold Hudson of Summer Classics received the City of Hope's International Home Furnishings Industry Lifetime Achievement Award during the West Coast Golf, Tennis & Pickleball Tournament in June. The recognition spotlighted Hudson's efforts to step up ICFA's financial support for the renowned research hospital.

A host of ICFA member networking events filled the July Casual Market Atlanta, including retailer roundtables, a Women's Leadership Network breakfast event, the annual "Pink Out Atlanta" day, an ICFA Birthday Bash and a sunny evening at Mercedes-Benz Stadium for an ICFA Summer Soccer Social.

Two months later at the Fall Casual Market Atlanta, the membership gathered again at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, this time for the annual awards gala celebrating lifetime achievements, design excellence, superior service and noteworthy leadership.

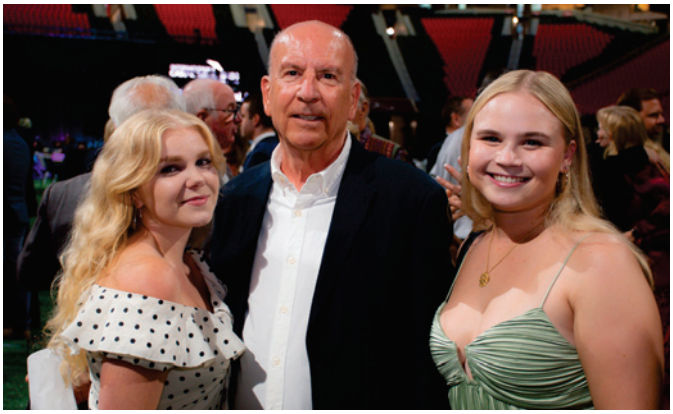
The Summer Classics Bari Swivel Lounge Chair (below) received the prestigious Lillian B. Winchester Best of Show design award. Apollo Awards for retail excellence went to Fowler Brothers Home & Patio of Chattanooga, Tennessee, in the single-store category and to Gasper Exterior Furnishings Studio of Furlong, Pennsylvania, in the multi-store category. Lifetime Achievement Award honorees Douglas Sanicola, owner of Outdoor Elegance in La Verne, California, and Harold Hudson, vice president and former president of Summer Classics Private Label, were recognized in spotlight videos that showcased their illustrious careers in the outdoor furniture industry, including their dedicated service to the ICFA.

Berlin Gardens was voted Manufacturer of the Year; John Pinion IV of Cedar Park, Texas, received Sales Representative of the Year; Megan Pierson, executive vice president of business development for POLYWOOD, received the Dudley K. Flanders, Sr. Leadership Award; and Stephanie Loomis of Telescope Casual Furniture received the Mia Nault Unsung Hero Award.

Also in September, ICFA presented the Richard Frinier Design Scholarship to Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD) senior Eve Friday for her textile designs and SCAD 2025 graduate Hannah Klein for her "Modara" modular seating group.

Joint strategic planning with executives from ANDMORE began in the fall with the goal of enhancing the Casual Market Atlanta show experience for all participants, and ICFA closed the year with eager anticipation of ELEVATE 2026 in New Orleans, with an educational program designed to help attendees "get inspired, get connected and get ahead."

Anji Beatty, Kiki Knudson, Kay Hilliard and Jessica Salisbury, all of POLYWOOD, supporting "Pink Out" for City of Hope at the July Casual Market Atlanta.



Richard Frinier with design scholarship winners, Eve Friday (left) and Hannah Klein, both Savannah College of Art & Design students, at the ICFA Awards Gala.

Harold Hudson (left), of Summer Classics hoists his Lifetime Achievement Award overhead. Sales representative Kathleen Ferry, and Lisa Dominy (right), POLYWOOD, joined the ICFA outing to an Atlanta United soccer game in July.

Robert Gasper and Ely Hymer of Gasper Exterior Furnishings Studio of Furlong, Pennsylvania, accept the single-store Apollo Award at the 2025 Gala in Atlanta.

LOOKING AHEAD... TOGETHER

In 2025, AHFA focused on building the relevance and impact of its advocacy, educational programs and compliance tools to strengthen member companies, because stronger individual companies are essential to the industry's growth and long-term success, as well as to AHFA's long term viability.

In 2026, members can expect AHFA to prioritize these mission-central objectives:

- Keep members and the industry informed on tariff developments;
- Protect members and the industry from unworkable burdens resulting from formaldehyde risk management;
- Work with Solution Partner members to develop eco-friendly packaging solutions that help mitigate the impact of Extended Producer Responsibility packaging regulations on our industry;
- Educate state authorities on the unique packaging challenges facing home furnishings;
- Help importers navigate e-filing and highlight any industry-specific obstacles encountered to the Consumer Product Safety Commission to make sure they are remedied;
- Engage with member company executives to help develop a workable and effective voluntary standard to minimize the injuries and deaths to children resulting from entrapment in the foot support mechanism of reclining residential seating;
- Bring an informed and reasoned voice to ASTM discussions regarding the safety of bookcases, wall beds and other home furnishings; and
- Monitor state legislative activity and advocate for the home furnishings industry.

For the International Casual Furnishings Association, key goals for 2026 include:

- Boosting the value of Casual Market Atlanta for all exhibitors and attendees by improving communications and conducting surveys and focus groups to identify any areas of buyer friction that can be eliminated;
- Expanding member communications through the monthly newsletter, continuous social media connections, website updates and new quarterly interactive "townhall" meetings to facilitate ongoing member feedback; and,
- Planning another blockbuster educational conference for February 2027 to educate and elevate the membership.

Top objectives for our Solution Partners division include:

- Expanding the logistics conference to include supply chain management;
- Building on the successful Solution Partners webinar series;
- Exploring additional fund-raising opportunities to expand the Scholarship Program and build awareness of the program among all member companies; and,
- Expand communications between manufacturer/importer members and supplier members to highlight the valuable and diverse products and services offered by Solution Partner members.

The Mission of the American Home Furnishings Alliance is to promote the growth and global leadership of its member companies by:

- Providing exceptional advocacy;
- Promoting effective product and safety standards;
- Presenting relevant education; and
- Serving as the preeminent media resource on industry news and trends.

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