



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ERIC ASTRACHAN NAMED TCA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Eric Astrachan accepted the executive director position for the Tile Council of North America, Inc. (TCA) on March 1, 2004 succeeding Robert E. Daniels who has held the position for the past 10 years.

Robert Daniels will continue as TCA's Executive Director Emeritus. As the Corporate Secretary of International Trade Expositions, Mr. Daniels is working with National Trade Productions through the management transition of the 2004 Coverings show. He also manages the TCA Team, the tile and stone consulting subsidiary of the Tile Council, while volunteering his time as the Chairman of the Board for the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation.

In the 1990's Mr. Astrachan was a member of the Tile Council board and joined the Tile Council staff in 2001 as its Technical Director. Committed to maintaining the Tile Council's technical excellence, he managed the revision of the 2003-2004 TCA Handbook and the review of numerous standards. In 2003 he began managing all personnel and internal operations as the Deputy Executive Director.

"I am very pleased to welcome Eric Astrachan as the new Executive Director. Eric has a broad cross-cultural and international background together with experience in distributing and installing ceramic tile in the U.S.A. This, together with his entrepreneurial spirit, makes him unique qualified for leading the Tile Council of North America through the next period where we anticipate significant changes in the U.S. tile market and hopefully an expanded role for the Tile Council," said Svend Hovman, President of the Tile Council.

"This is an exciting time to be working for the Tile Council of North America," said Mr. Astrachan. "In addition to expanding our membership to Mexican ceramic tile manufacturers, we are involved in a number of new initiatives. There is renewed interest in our experimental kiln facility (the only one of its kind in North America) and the addition of Ms. Jones to our staff brings additional technical expertise and depth. North American manufacturers are developing important niches in glass and specialty tile, and the Tile Council recognizes the importance of helping these segments and developing standards for them. Our membership continues to grow, as well, with more manufacturers of installation products making new products for the ceramic tile industry. In April, with industry partners, we are beginning a 40 city educational tour to help specifiers better understand how to use the TCA Handbook and ANSI standards.

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TILE COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA, INC.

100 Clemson Research Boulevard . Anderson, South Carolina 29625 . Phone: 864-646-8453 . Fax: 864-646-2821



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On the world front, several additions and revisions have been, or soon will be, proposed to world standards, which the Tile Council will need to review carefully. Our Director of Product Standards, Mr. Noah Chitty, is a tremendous asset in that arena. Bob Daniels will continue as the chairman of the ISO committees dealing with tile and Dr. John Sanders of Clemson University accepted the role of Secretariat.

This is a busy year with additions to both the TCA Handbook and the ANSI A108, A118, and A136.1 standards. Also, our tile and stone consulting subsidiary, the TCA Team, continues to expand and is being called in on significant projects. Fortunately, our partnership with Clemson University is stronger than ever and allows us to bring significant scientific resources to bear when necessary. We are also forging stronger ties to other associations.

Our lab posted a record year in 2003, and 2004 is off to an even better start. We are also considering sponsored research in response to industry requests. With strategic alliances, our research capabilities, combining manufacturing, laboratory, and installation expertise, allows us to address questions that plague our industry.

Fortunately, with everything that is going on, Bob continues to work full-time for the Tile Council and although our offices are slightly further apart, we still get to talk and laugh a bit every day.”

A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, MA, Mr. Astrachan earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering from MIT while also majoring in management at the Sloan School of Management.

The Tile Council of North America, Inc. is a trade organization of American, Canadian, and Mexican ceramic tile manufacturers and related installation material manufacturers who are interested in promoting the use of ceramic tile in North America.

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Contact: Shannon Woodmansee, Director of Membership & Public Relations
864-646-8453

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