NFDA
NATIONAL FASTENER DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION

NFDA TODAY

YOUR NATIONAL FASTENER NEWS

NOVEMBER 2026



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Melissa Patel

Hi Fastener Friends!

Fall, football, and fastener conferences are in full swing and, here in the Midwest, we are already bracing for the winter season!

Over the past several months, our industry has had some great opportunities to come together, starting with IFE 2026 in its new host city, Phoenix! From the conversations I had, the feedback was positive. Attendance was strong, attendees spent more time engaging on the exhibition floor, and the walk between the hotels and convention center was a welcome opportunity to enjoy some sunshine!

NFDA was also represented at the Taiwan Industrial Fasteners Institute (TIFI) events, where we had the opportunity to celebrate alongside our industry friends, manufacturers, and partners in Taiwan. I want to extend a very public and heartfelt thank you to Scott Camp for representing our association so well. I know he had a full agenda, and the time and commitment involved were significant. Scott, I couldn't be more appreciative of your dedication and willingness to represent NFDA. Thank you! Scott will share more about the TIFI events in his update.

At the end of October, many of us came together for our Executive Summit in Palm Desert. What an impactful and inspiring couple of days! The discussions around AI and leadership challenged us to think differently about how we lead, operate, and prepare for the future. These sessions always give me an opportunity to reflect on what matters most and how we shape our direction and vision moving forward.

One common theme that resonated with me from both speakers was the importance of prioritization and communication with our teams. These are areas I am personally working on to improve, so the message couldn't have come at a better time. It's always refreshing to walk away with ideas that challenge us not only professionally, but personally as leaders.

Beyond the educational sessions, the highlight for me continues to be the genuine care, laughter, celebration, and support we share across this industry. At times, it truly feels like a family reunion, reconnecting with familiar faces we haven't seen in a while and building new relationships. Nothing beats it! If you have not attended an NFDA Executive Summit, I strongly encourage you to consider joining us in 2027. The few days away from the office are well worth the investment.

Another area NFDA has been focused on is expanding the value we bring to our members. We are thrilled to announce our recent partnership with the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors (NAW), which provides NFDA members with discounted NAW membership.

NAW offers valuable advocacy in Washington, D.C., on issues impacting wholesale distribution, helping strengthen our industry's voice at the table. In addition, NAW provides outstanding educational and networking opportunities, including presentations from industry leaders and interactive discussions with peers across specific business functions. These opportunities offer valuable perspectives and practical insights that members can bring back to their own organizations. If you have questions about NAW or would like to learn more, please reach out to me directly. I would be happy to connect you with a great resource.

As we look ahead to 2027, delivering meaningful member value remains a priority for NFDA. You will begin seeing more member video testimonials that highlight the people, experiences, and connections that make our association special. We are also working to improve how we communicate the benefits and opportunities available through NFDA. Our Marketing Committee has been hard at work developing some exciting initiatives, particularly around expanding our social media presence. Stay tuned!

As we approach the holiday season, I want to thank each of you for being part of this incredible industry and association. I wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a strong finish to 2026. Cheers!



ASSOCIATE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Scott Camp

The Power of Participation: Strengthening Relationships Across Borders

In my last newsletter submission, I shared some thoughts on the power of participation and the importance of staying engaged with our industry and one another. After an exceptionally busy and rewarding October, I find myself reflecting once again on just how meaningful that participation can be, not only professionally, but personally as well.

Our recent NFDA Executive Summit in Palm Desert, California, was a tremendous success. The strong attendance, exceptional level of member engagement, and outstanding lineup of speakers made for a truly rewarding experience. Beyond the quality of the program itself, what stood out most to me was the energy in the room and the genuine connections taking place among our members. These are the moments that remind us of the tremendous value our association brings to the industry.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Jamie, Amy, and the entire NFDA Board of Directors for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to delivering such a successful event. Their efforts certainly did not go unnoticed.

Strengthening Our Global Industry Partnerships

October also presented another meaningful opportunity, one that was particularly close to my heart.

I had the privilege of representing NFDA on behalf of our president, Melissa Patel, who was unable to attend the International Fastener Expo (IFE) in Phoenix, Arizona.

While I was technically standing in for Melissa, I viewed this responsibility as something much more significant. It was an opportunity to represent an organization I deeply respect while engaging with another group of industry professionals who have played an important role throughout my career, the Taiwanese fastener manufacturing community.

For those less familiar, the Taiwan Industrial Fastener Institute (TIFI) is a leading industry association representing Taiwan's fastener manufacturers. The Taiwanese delegation was led by TIFI chairman Mr. Yung-Yu Tsai, a dear friend and respected industry leader with whom I have had the pleasure of working for more than 30 years.

Having the opportunity to participate in these events alongside someone with whom I share such a longstanding professional relationship made the experience especially meaningful.

Throughout IFE, I was honored to represent NFDA during TIFI's media day, panel discussions, and ribbon-cutting ceremony. However, the most significant highlight was participating in the formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NFDA and TIFI.







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This agreement represents an important step forward in strengthening cooperation between our two associations. Its objectives include fostering closer relationships among our respective members, expanding bilateral business opportunities, and supporting the sustainable growth and international competitiveness of the fastener industries in both Taiwan and the United States.

In an increasingly complex and interconnected global marketplace, relationships such as these are more important than ever. The exchange of knowledge, development of mutual trust, and willingness to collaborate across borders create opportunities that benefit our entire industry.

For me personally, participating in this milestone was both humbling and deeply gratifying.

The Value of Showing Up

I would also like to extend a special thank-you to Ed Smith and George Hunt III for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend several of these events. Their presence demonstrated support not only for NFDA and our Taiwanese industry partners but also provided encouragement to me personally. It was genuinely appreciated.

And while I was unfortunately unable to attend the TIFI Gala and dinner on Tuesday evening, I owe Ed an additional thank-you for representing us and, perhaps more importantly, for sparing everyone the experience of watching me embarrass myself on stage or on the dance floor! ☺

All joking aside, these experiences reinforce something I have come to appreciate more deeply over the years: the true strength of an association is not measured simply by the number of its members, but by the relationships we build, the contributions we make, and our willingness to show up for one another.

That, to me, is the real power of participation.

Looking Ahead

To everyone who participated in our October events, thank you for your continued engagement and support of NFDA. Your involvement is what makes our association strong and ensures that we continue to create meaningful value for our members and the broader fastener industry.

For those who were unable to join us, I encourage you to make plans to attend our next major in-person gathering, the 2027 NFDA Annual Meeting & ESPS, June 15–17 in St. Louis, Missouri.

I look forward to reconnecting with familiar faces, welcoming new ones, and continuing to build the relationships that make our industry and our association so special.

Until then, thank you for your continued participation, friendship, and commitment to NFDA.

NFDA STANDARDS ACTIVITY UPDATE – Q3 2026

Carmen Vertullo

If you are reading this, you must have a compelling interest in fastener standards, and you may even serve on a fastener standards committee or two. I am happy to receive any information you readers may have regarding fastener standards changes and committee activities. If you are not serving on a fastener standards committee, I want to encourage you to consider serving. Just email standards@nfda-fastener.org if you have something to share or want to find a fastener standards committee to join.

As I prepare this update, I realize that there have been some significant standards committee meetings in the past few weeks, and the dust has not settled enough to make a report on that activity. I apologize for that; I expected a major report in the update.

This update will not be exhaustive. Instead, it will focus on one specific standard change that has made significant progress and is one of the most important and groundbreaking standards changes in recent memory.

This change involves structural bolts. So, you may be inclined to not be interested if structural bolts are not your jam. You should be interested anyway, because the process of how this change idea came to be and progressed is of more importance than the change itself, and it informs us on how the fastener standards change process works.

The primary ASTM standard for high-strength structural bolts is ASTM F3125 / F3125M. In terms of updates, improvements, and additions, it is one of the most active fastener standards we have. Some recent changes include:

- The addition of metric size bolting
- Increasing the tensile strength of larger size grade A325 grade bolts
- At its inception, cancelling A325, A490, F1852 and F2280 and incorporating them as grades within the standard
- Designating approved coatings for each grade
- Increased the allowable sizes for TC bolts
- Changing the grade name of A325 and A490 to grade 120 and grade 150
- Added grade 144
- Allowed for alternate head markings to match the new grade names

These changes all make good sense, and consensus was easily reached on all of them. Against this backdrop has been the mother of all changes: allowing A490 grade 150 (and by extension grade 144) to be hot dip galvanized (HDG). This has probably been one of the most contentious changes the F16 Fastener Standards Committee has ever processed, and gaining consensus has not been possible as of yet.

On one side, there are those who want this change, mainly builders, but also suppliers, galvanizers, some producers, and some consultants.

On the other side, there are those who oppose the change, mainly some producers and some consultants.

At the core of the matter is (you guessed it) hydrogen embrittlement (HE).

Hydrogen embrittlement can affect high-strength bolting when hydrogen is introduced into the product during the plating or HDG process, called internal HE (IHE), and it can be caused by hydrogen from the environment produced by corrosion after the bolting is installed, called external HE (EHE). HE in any form causes the unexpected and catastrophic failure of fasteners after they have been installed.

If you are a fastener professional and not fully informed about hydrogen embrittlement, put it at the top of your to-do list. Email me at carmenv@carverem.com, and I will hook you up with the best resources.

Those who oppose the change fear that our processing for HDG and the reliability of the bolting are not adequate to ensure the prevention of HE, mainly external HE (EHE) but also internal HE (IHE) can be assured. Because these bolts are used in critical building applications and they are always highly stressed, they believe it is only a matter of time before a disaster occurs with HDG grade 150/A490 bolts.

Those who favor the change believe there is enough research to show that grade 150/A490 bolts, when properly heat-treated, are not susceptible to IHE or EHE, and certain precautions in the HDG process will preclude any chance of induced IHE or EHE, so grade 150/A490 bolts can be safely HDG.

As the ASTM Standards process requires, a ballot for the change has been written by a special task

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group and introduced by the F16 Structural Bolting Subcommittee. It has gone through several voting rounds (called ballots). Several negatives were received. The process requires the committee to discuss and debate the negatives and find them either persuasive or not persuasive. If any given negative is found to be persuasive, changes to the ballot are proposed to satisfy the voter and remove the negative vote.

For example, one negative came from a producer who was concerned that their bolts would be HDG by a third party, out of their control, and when a problem occurred, it would still be their head mark on the bolt and they would be held responsible. This negative was satisfied with a change that HDG of A490 bolts could only be done under the control of the producer.

I could not attend the latest ASTM F16 Fastener Standards Committee meeting in Jacksonville, FL, but I did attend online. I asked my friend and colleague, Dr. Salim Brahimi, to provide a synopsis of the activity on the ballot. Salim is the technical director of the Industrial Fastener Institute; he is a central figure in every fastener standards committee and has chaired most, if not all, of them at one time. Here is his take:

> *The topic of permitting hot-dip galvanizing (HDG) on Grade 150/A490 bolts has been under discussion within ASTM Subcommittee F16.02 for more than 20 years and has been the subject of evolving ballot proposals over the past six years. This effort followed three successive studies conducted in accordance with IFI-144 and ASTM F2660, which demonstrated that HDG satisfies all qualification requirements for use on Grade 150/A490 bolts, including resistance to internal hydrogen embrittlement (IHE) and environmentally hydrogen embrittlement (EHE) mechanisms such as stress corrosion cracking (SCC). The same test program was previously used to qualify zinc flake coatings.*
>
> *ASTM Subcommittee F16.02, which is responsible for ASTM F3125/F3125M, met in Jacksonville FL on November 2-3. The most recent ballot proposal to permit HDG on A490/150 ksi bolts received 86% approval at the subcommittee level and 90% approval at the main committee level, representing approximately 100 voting members. Six negative votes were received. Three were based on minor issues and were resolved through editorial revisions to the proposed wording.*
>
> *The remaining three negative votes were not resolved because they reflected philosophical concerns regarding the potential risk of stress corrosion cracking. These concerns continue to be expressed despite the substantial body of research supporting HDG, including studies conducted per IFI-144 and ASTM F2660, the successful qualification of zinc flake coatings using the same methodology, and decades of service experience with hot-dip galvanized metric structural bolts.*
>
> *As a result, the discussions did not achieve consensus. The task group will therefore develop a revised ballot proposal, which may include both 150 ksi and 144 ksi bolt grades, and will supplement the existing technical record with additional data to support further consideration by the committee.*

Thank you, Salim!

As you can see, if you are involved in the production, use, or sale of fasteners, it is imperative that you be involved in the standards committees that govern those products. This particular ballot will continue to move forward, and it will be addressed again at the next ASTM F16 meeting on May 3-4, 2027, in Rosemont (Chicago) IL.

Another important fastener standards organization for high-strength structural bolting is the Research Council on Structural Connections (RCSC), which focuses on installation and inspection procedures. The topic of HDG for A490 bolts has been a lively topic at their meetings for years as well. The next RCSC meeting is the week of June 7 in Denver CO. I am confident that the F16 committee will produce an affirmative ballot that will allow grade 150/A490 bolts to be HDG in the near future. This is my opinion and not in any way related to the NFDA, which does not take a position on such matters.

There are hundreds of fastener professionals around the world working to keep our fastener standards current. If you are one of these people, thank you. If you would like to be one of these people, you know the email.

Communication between NFDA members and the NFDA technical standard representative (the "Representative") through email or otherwise is provided by NFDA as a courtesy to its members. NFDA provides no assurance as to the accuracy, completeness, or timeliness of any statement made by the Representative to the member or fastener technical standards organizations. Neither NFDA nor the Representative makes any representation as to whether any statement of the Representative is consistent or compliant with fastener technical standards. Neither NFDA nor the Representative shall be responsible for any loss or damage suffered by the member or any other person as the direct or indirect result of any statement made by the representative.

Carmen Vertullo's appointment as the NFDA technical standards representative allows the NFDA membership not just visibility of standards activities, but also a voice in the process. NFDA members are encouraged to express their comments or concerns relating to fastener standards. The only way to influence the process is to stay engaged and participate.

MEMBERS CAN:

- Inquire about changes to drafts noted in quarterly reports
- Ask general standards related questions
- Raise suggested revisions or technical updates to standards
- Offer feedback to continue refinement of these articles

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NFDA CALENDAR

MARK YOUR 2027 CALENDARS FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

February 10, 2027	FTI Webinar for NFDA Members
April 14, 2027	Virtual Program
June 15-17, 2027	Annual Meeting & ESPS – St. Louis, MO
September 8, 2027	FTI Webinar for NFDA Members
October 27-29, 2027	Executive Summit – New Orleans, LA
December 8, 2027	Virtual Program

*Visit the NFDA website at **www.nfda-fastener.org** for our full event calendar and more information.*

NFDA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP FOR FASTENER TRAINING WEEK



The National Fastener Distributors Association (NFDA) recently awarded a scholarship for Fastener Training Week, an advanced fastener technical training program produced by the Fastener Training Institute, to Michael Abukhader, senior application engineer for Shamrock International.

The committee evaluated scholarship applicants based on employer recommendations, personal achievements, work experience, and an essay. Identifying information was redacted so that the team evaluating the applications did not know the names or employers of those applying.

The next deadline to apply for an NFDA Fastener Training Week scholarship is June 1, 2027. The application can be found at ***www.nfda-fastener.org/fastener-training-week-scholarship***

For more information about Fastener Training Week, visit ***www.fastenertraining.org***



YFP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Zech Williams

Hello again, my fastener friends!

It's hard to believe how quickly this year has gone by. The leaves are falling here in Indiana, which means the holidays and the end of another exciting year are right around the corner. I hope everyone had a wonderful summer filled with travel, time with family, and plenty of opportunities to recharge.

When I became president of YFP in January, the end of my term seemed a long way off. Now, as the year begins to wind down, I've been reflecting on what an incredible honor it has been to serve the fastener industry and YFP. The connections made, the conversations had, and the lessons learned will stay with me throughout the rest of my career. Serving as YFP president has been one of the greatest highlights of my career so far, and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to the YFP Board: Nihar Sinha, Hristijan Georgievski, Mallory Nichols, Craig Beaty, and Jake Glaser for your leadership, support, and countless contributions throughout the year. YFP would not be what it is without the time, energy, and dedication of this outstanding group of volunteers. Thank you for everything you do; your hard work truly does not go unnoticed.

As the year comes to a close, so does another successful class of the YFP mentorship program. By all accounts, this year's participants built meaningful connections and relationships that will continue throughout their careers. One of the most rewarding parts of the program is seeing mentors and mentees continue meeting and supporting one another even after the official program has ended.

The application deadline for the 2027 program has recently passed. If you missed the opportunity to participate this year, be sure to mark your calendar and apply by November 1, 2027 for the 2028 program.

I'd also like to offer a huge congratulations to Lindsay Hanson of Brighton-Best International, the first-ever recipient of the YFP Trade Show Scholarship! Lindsay had the opportunity to attend the International Fastener Expo (IFE) this year and experience the event firsthand.

A special thank you goes to IFE and the Fastener Training Institute (FTI) for partnering with YFP on this new initiative. We truly could not offer this opportunity without your support.

Congratulations as well to Declan O'Connor, R&D engineer at CAMCAR Innovations, for being selected as the 2026 YFP Fastener Training Week Scholarship recipient! This is a wonderful accomplishment, and I'm excited for you to attend Fastener Training Week and work toward earning your Certified Fastener Specialist (CFS) certification.

If you're interested in attending Fastener Training Week and pursuing your CFS certification, be sure to apply next year. The application deadline is October 15, 2027.

Another sincere thank you goes to FTI for your continued support and partnership on this scholarship program.

We will be announcing the next book for the YFP Book Club in the next several weeks. I think we have another great book lined up for you all again. Be on the lookout for the announcement!

If you aren't already part of the YFP mailing list, be sure to sign up so you don't miss updates about what YFP is doing and the many ways you can get involved. You can sign up through the YFP section on the NFDA website.

As always, if you have any questions or ideas, please don't hesitate to reach out. We'd love to hear from you and have you be a part of the YFP community.

From my family to yours, I wish you a happy, healthy, and joyful holiday season. I hope you have the opportunity to slow down, enjoy time with the people you love, and look forward to all that the new year will bring.

Warmest wishes!

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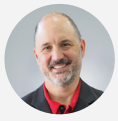

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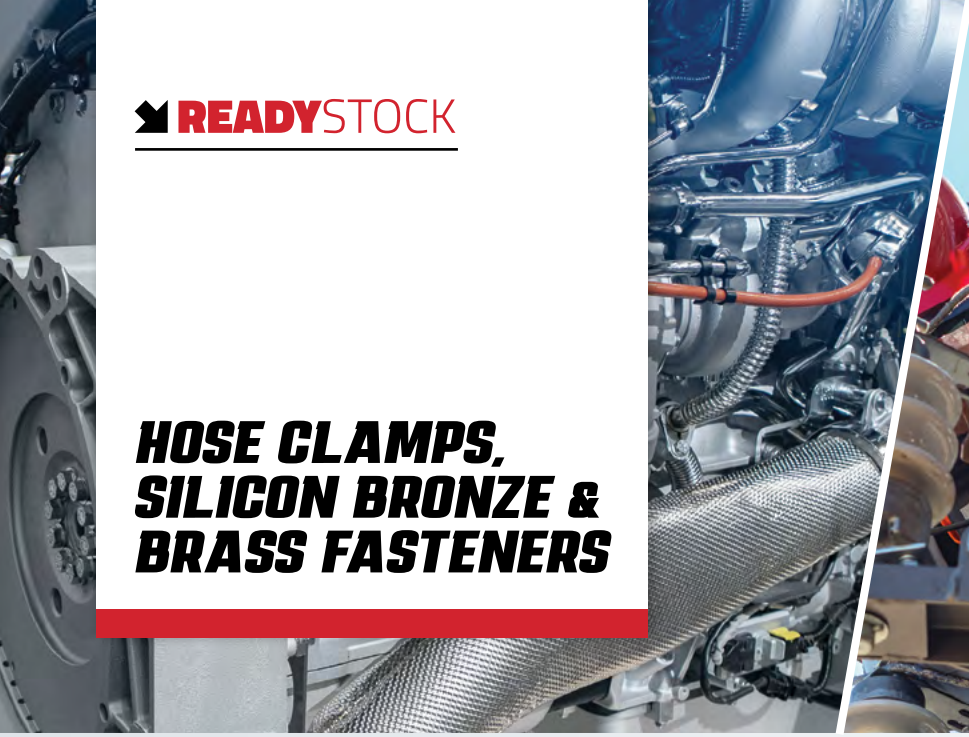





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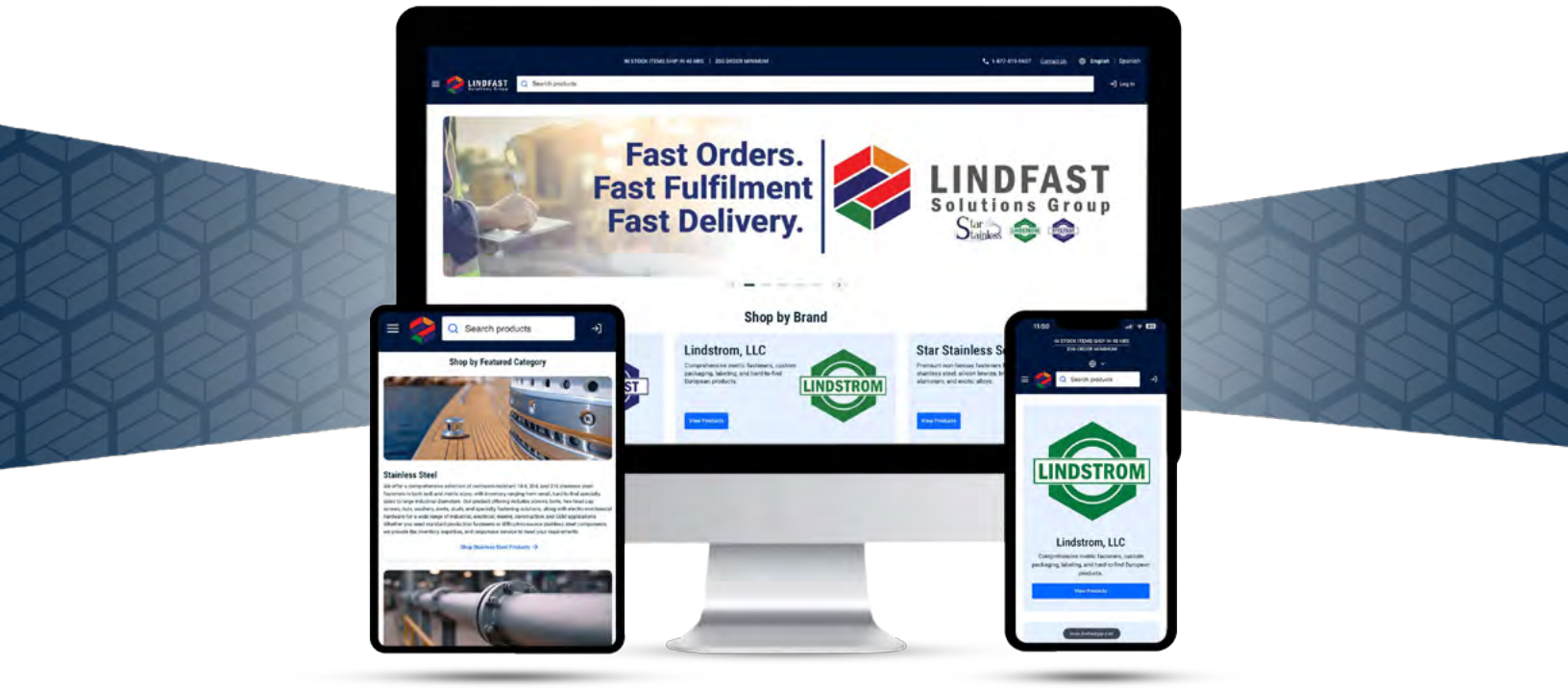

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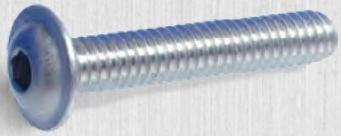



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International Fastener Expo

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