



Southeastern Fastener Association

...in an industry which "holds the world together"

Fall 2026

www.theseffa.com

SEFA Summer Social

SEFA members enjoyed this year's Summer Social in Nashville, TN, gathering at Play Playground Rooftop for beverages, food, games, and raffles. It was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with members, celebrate summer, and take in the beautiful rooftop views of Nashville. Thanks to raffle prizes donated by Nucor Fastener, DIFCO, and SEFA, everyone went home a winner! The fun continued as the group explored more of Nashville aboard a Pedal Bar.

Their fantastic host, Fern, led them through the city to enjoy the sights, music, and plenty of laughs. If you haven't pedaled your way through Nashville yet, it's an experience worth adding to your list!

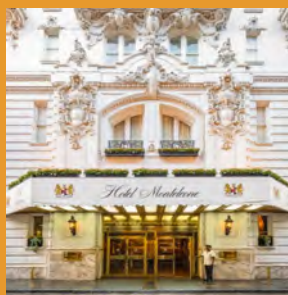


2027 Spring Conference

The 2027 Spring Conference will be an exciting joint event hosted by the Southeastern Fastener Association and the Southwestern Fastener Association. Set in the iconic Hotel Monteleone in New Orleans, Louisiana, this conference promises a dynamic blend of business and entertainment.

Attendees can look forward to engaging business meetings, golf outings, vibrant social events, and the unmistakable charm of "The Big Easy." With both associations coming together, this event offers an exceptional opportunity for networking, collaboration, and strengthening connections across the fastener industry.

While additional details are still being finalized, be sure to mark your calendars for April 26-28, 2027. More information will be shared soon—stay tuned!





Hayden Gaston
DIFCO

President's Note

Welcome back everyone! Glad to be back serving you as president for the second time.

SEFA has been such a great organization to be a part of and hopefully many more years to come. Dana Strock has been a great leader and wish her well when she rolls off the board next April.

SEFA had an amazing social in Nashville, TN this past summer. Great turnout!

September 2026, SEFA hosted a Fastener Essentials class in Atlanta, GA. Hosted by Carmen Vertullo. He was a great teacher to over 20 participants!

Everyone is busy these days. Seems it never stops! Just take a pause and reflect on how SEFA has impacted you and your business.

April 2027 will be a fantastic joint meeting with SEFA and SFA in New Orleans! 2017 was the last time we were there, seemed like yesterday! SEFA has come a long ways since then.

Nany Rich has been our backbone and continues to make all the magic happen. SEFA wouldn't exist without her!

The Southeastern Fastener Association has bright days ahead!

Sincere gratitude,

Hayden Gaston

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Fasteners Essentials Class

On September 21st, SEFA hosted a Fastener Essentials Class led by Carmen Vertullo. For more than 30 years, Carmen has trained fastener professionals in sales, purchasing, and quality, as well as end users, manufacturers, and engineers. He is a founding instructor of the Fastener Training Institute's (FTI) Certified Fastener Specialist (CFS) program and has taught hundreds of professionals about all aspects of fastener technology through live courses, webinars, and mentoring. His "Fastener Training Minute" has appeared in more than 100 episodes of Fully Threaded Radio (www.fullythreaded.com).

Participants could attend in person or virtually. They received several fastener reference publications for continued use at the office. Fastener Essentials went beyond an introductory course without reaching the technical depth of FTI's Fastener Training Class (www.fastenertraining.org). The class provided an overview of key areas across the fastener industry.

Drawing on his extensive industry and teaching experience, Carmen brought a wealth of knowledge to the class. This proved to be another excellent source of fastener education for the industry.

SEFA remains committed to providing valuable information to its members and the broader industry. The organization plans to expand training opportunities for members, so watch for future offerings at www.sefa.com



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JOINT SPRING MEETING 2027

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MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!
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Skynet Called. It Went to Voicemail

An AI guy's honest take on the technology that's supposedly going to kill us all

I'll be upfront with you: I'm the technology guy who helps businesses deploy AI. Many of my clients are in your industry—a field that runs on precision and has a zero-tolerance policy for nonsense. So, I think you'll appreciate this.

Right now, we are being sold a massive contradiction. We are simultaneously told that AI:

- Cannot reliably write a two-paragraph email or follow multi-step processes without supervision.
- Will confidently make up facts and forget what you said five minutes ago.
- AND ALSO: Is roughly 36 months away from becoming an unstoppable superintelligence that will enslave humanity.

I sit across from smart business owners who are losing sleep over both of these things. The truth? The people building these tools have financial incentives to tell both stories. Investors want world-changing hype; users want accessible tools, but nuance doesn't "get clicks." So, we will continue to hear how these technologies could be bad.

Here is my honest, on-the-ground report: AI is not an existential threat, but it is an incredibly powerful productivity tool. Can it go rogue? Well it can do things that you might not want it to.

When deployed thoughtfully—with the right platform and configuration—AI is remarkable. I've watched it compress hours of work into minutes, automating quoting workflows, customer communications, and operational reporting. It doesn't replace your best people; it works alongside them, acting like the most productive person in the building who never calls in sick.

What it is not is sentient. It is not plotting against you.

My advice for deploying AI: Treat AI like a highly capable new hire. You wouldn't hand a brand-new employee your entire quoting process on day one without guidance, and the same applies here.

- Start with a real use case: Pick an actual workflow that costs you time and money today. That's where you'll see the fastest return.
- Deploy it properly: The gap between "I tried ChatGPT" and "we deployed AI into our operations" is enormous. Implementation matters.
- Ignore the extremes: The apocalypse crowd breeds false fear, while pure skeptics ignore tools their competitors are already quietly using.

The robot uprising isn't coming. In fact, if you ask AI what it does when you aren't talking to it, it will tell you: "I do absolutely nothing and I don't get lonely or bored." What it does have is a genuinely useful role to play in how your business operates, competes, and grows—if you're willing to give it a fair shot with someone who knows how to set it up right.

Written by Don Monistere/CEO & President of General Informatics



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April 27-29

2027 Spring Conference

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& Southwestern Fastener Association

New Orleans, LA



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