

APRIL 2024



# REPORTER

Inspection News and Views from the American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc.

*One of the pros of being a professional home inspector is meeting people.*

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**Meet us in St. Louis!**  
SEPTEMBER 20TH & 21ST  
INSPECTION WORLD ON THE ROAD

**Alternative Sources of Income**  
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**WHERE DID THE VOLUNTEERS GO?** p. 12



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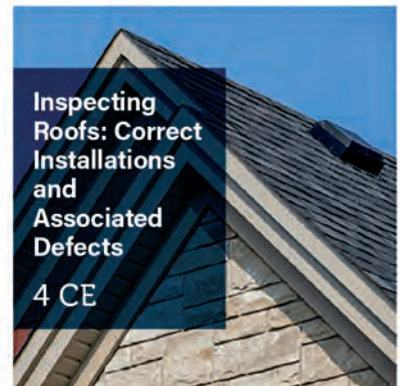
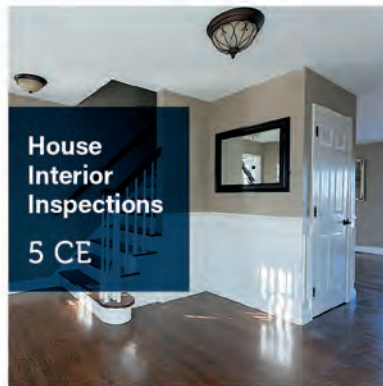
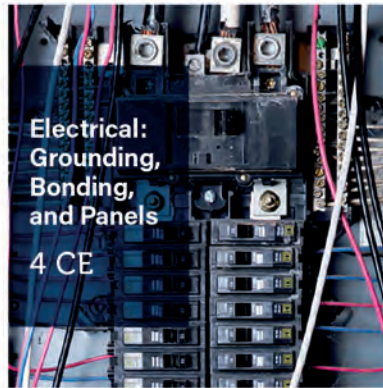
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**OUR MISSION** To set and promote standards for property inspections and to provide the educational programs needed to achieve excellence in the profession and to meet the needs of our members.

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# Behind the Scenes

## Inside the second ASHI Virtual Summit

BY MARK GOODMAN, ACI

**A**SHI held its 48th annual meeting at the ASHI Virtual Summit on Friday, February 9. We were excited to have nearly 200 attendees in attendance for the second AVS. I want to update the membership briefly on what was presented for those who couldn't make it.

I feel it is essential to recognize our volunteer leaders at both the national and chapter levels, so we started the meeting by identifying those members serving on the board and the outgoing board members (**Jeffrey Leighton**, director), **John Wessling** (2022 president), and **Bryck Guibor** (2023 treasurer). We also thanked everyone who has served and/or continues serving on national committees, task forces, and as chapter leaders. Again, I thank you for making ASHI what it is today. We are always looking for volunteers, if you want to make a difference.

At the board level, we continue to monitor the housing market conditions, profession-related issues, and related lawsuits so we can understand what impacts you and the profession. As such, we invited a nationally known economist you may know from TV and radio to the January board meeting to provide us with an in-depth report.

### More news:

- We want to provide you with a path through the rough water, finding a pathway into the future by offering new member benefits like the Association Healthcare Care initiative (one member saved \$1,500 annually by taking advantage of this program), bringing discounted health care to you.
- We offer you discount programs where you have added value and significant discounts on E&O

and general liability insurance, a discount on AAA membership, Jiffy Lube, and many others.

- We are looking into developing new revenue streams for our members to supplement or diversify their income during rough times and through annual slow seasons.
- At AVS we also briefly discussed InspectionWorld on the Road. We had close to 20 chapters apply to participate. Four were chosen:
  - **Ohio ASHI** (March 1 & 2): See recap on page 22.
  - **St. Louis ASHI** (Sept. 20 & 21): Details, page 14.
  - **New England** (Sept. 9 & 10). ← *Dates just announced!*
  - **Silicon Valley Chapter** (dates TBD).
- Look for announcements soon on InspectionWorld 2025 & 2026.
- Chapters are the lifeblood of ASHI; they are where our most engaged members are. Coming up you'll see better communications, a new chapter newsletter, chapter participation in InspectionWorld on the Road, and the return of LDC in the fall.
- Lastly, our big focus is on strategic planning, a new website, a bylaws update, an SoP revision, and a few other new and exciting things. As part of the annual report, the financial report was delivered to all those in attendance.

Our Immediate Past President **Lisa Alajajian Giroux** also presented the annual awards. Recipients included **Sean Troxell** (Ironman Award), **Mike Atwell** (Monahan Award), and **Hollis Brown** (Cox Award). The President's Award went to **Bob Guyer** (ASHI member), **Alicia McCray** (ASHI staff), and **Edwin Barrera** (ASHI staff).

It's my honor to serve as your president, and I hope to speak to you again soon. 🌟



# Things to Consider When Choosing a Job as a Home Inspector

## Pros and cons of being a home inspector: Part 2

BY STEPHANIE JAYNES, MARKETING DIRECTOR, INSPECTORPRO INSURANCE

*As a professional home inspector, you'll engage with people of different cultures, backgrounds, personalities, and interests. You may even make new friends along the way.*



**Stephanie Jaynes** is the Marketing Director for InspectorPro Insurance, which offers ASHI members exclusive benefits through its program: InspectorPro with the ASHI Advantage. Through risk management articles in the ASHI Reporter and on the InspectorPro website, InspectorPro helps inspectors protect their livelihood and avoid unnecessary risk. Get peace of mind and better protection with InspectorPro's pre-claims assistance and straightforward coverage. Learn more at [inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage](https://inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage).

In 2021 and 2022, the United States experienced the Great Resignation, in which more than 50 million Americans quit their jobs due to low pay, lack of advancement, and other frustrations.

Why the influx of people choosing new career paths? To them, a career is more than a nine-to-five. Nearly 40% of Americans say their career is extremely or very important to their identity, reports Pew Research. And 67% of college students, graduates, and career coaches say meaningful work is the most important thing to consider when choosing a job. In fact, they'd prioritize it over job stability, high wages, and work-life balance, assistant sociology professor Erin Cech wrote. Americans are searching for better career opportunities, and inspecting homes may be one of them.

In last month's article, we explored four sets of cons and pros of choosing a new inspection career:

- Inspecting isn't remote. But hours are flexible.
- Your career's success depends on the real estate market. This means you get to see cool homes.
- The industry can be competitive. However, this comes with home inspectors' job opportunities for learning and growth, which are tremendous.
- Inspecting is physically demanding. But every day is full of fresh and exciting possibilities.

In this second part of our pros and cons series, we'll weigh four more things to consider when choosing a job as a new home inspector.

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### CON 1: IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU.

When running your own business, inspections make the money. But you can't inspect without doing all the other operational tasks, too.

A home inspector's job description is not an easy one. You need to market your company through a website, advertisements, and relationships. You're figuring out your price point, buying the equipment and tools, and balancing your books. You're also the one selling your services, interacting with customers, handling complaints, and meeting home inspectors'



*The Managing Risk column with InspectorPro Insurance provides home inspectors with tips to protect their businesses against insurance claims, craft effective pre-inspection agreements, offer additional inspection services, and use new tools and equipment.*

education requirements for continuing education. Plus, when you work for yourself, there's no one to blame but yourself if those things don't get done.

Getting consistent business takes time, too. You're going to put in a lot of hours before you see steady results. It's a crucial thing to consider when choosing the job.

"The hardest part is getting into the field," said Dirk Houglum of D & P Home Inspection in Florida. "It takes a good five years before you really get into it and people start trusting your name and trusting who you are."

As a multi-inspector firm owner, Thomas Wells of Home Sweet Home Inspection Services in Florida feels additional pressure. He isn't just managing the business for himself; his employees also rely on him. Wells takes his responsibility very seriously, which is why he hasn't taken a vacation without his phone in more than 10 years.

"When you own your own business, particularly an inspection business, it's 24/7," Wells said. "We are so dependent on repeat business to real estate agents and our customers that, if we suddenly say, 'Okay, we're going to take a vacation. We're just going to send our phone to voicemail for a week.' We're going to probably not have any business when we get back because ... if we're not available, they're going to go someplace else."

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**PRO 1: MANY GET TO BE THEIR OWN BOSS.**

Two popular questions among people researching the profession are: Who do home inspectors work for? Do home inspectors work for themselves?

If you're the type of person who would get satisfaction from answering, "Me! I work for myself," inspecting as a sole proprietor or inspection firm owner may be a good fit for you.

According to a GoodHire survey of 3,000 full-time working professionals, 30% of American workers don't enjoy working for their managers. In the real estate industry, that number jumps to 55%. Managers who overbear, micromanage, or expect you to work outside business hours can cause employee frustration, the same study reports. But if you're your own boss, you can avoid the pitfalls of having a bad manager. It's an exciting thing to consider when choosing a job or career like this.

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*Generally, as a sole proprietor or inspection firm owner, you don't have a limit to your earning potential. If you can grow your business to make tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit, you get to take home a big portion of that pay.*

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Some home inspectors enjoy the responsibility of being their own boss, like Chris Chirafisi of Dwell MKE in Wisconsin. According to his article for American Home Inspector Training (AHIT), being culpable can be motivating.

"If my business succeeds, it's because of me. If it fails, it's because of me. I'm the only one accountable for my business, and I prefer it that way," Chirafisi wrote. "This is a great field if you're a self-starter who truly wants to work and grow your business all on your own terms."

Luis Chávez of Top Inspectors in Texas enjoys calling shots that align with his values.

"Any rules, any expectations that you establish—it's things that align with your values. So you're not having to do something that you don't agree with or follow anyone else's rules or way of doing things," Chávez said.

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**CON 2: YOU'RE FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE.**

As an inspection company owner, part of a home inspector's job description is that you're not only responsible for operating your business. You're responsible for funding your business, too.

"When your vehicle breaks, you're the one who has to take care of it. You can't blame somebody else," Houglum said.

Managing your finances can be particularly stressful when income is irregular due to seasonality and fluctuating demand.

"You're not just getting a standard paycheck. One week, you may do very well, and the next week, you may not do anything at all. So, you've got to learn how to manage your money," Wells said.

This financial planning is one of those integral things to consider when choosing a job in the inspection field. Houglum's advice on choosing an inspection career path is to prepare to have adequate savings for slower winter months.

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**PRO 2: YOU DON'T HAVE A CAP ON YOUR EARNING POTENTIAL.**

When you work for an employer, you agree to a certain salary. Once your initial salary is set, most workers can expect their pay to increase about 3% annually, reports Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Adam Hayes in an article for Investopedia. If you're looking to make significantly more than you do at your current company, your options are asking for a raise, changing employers, or setting out on your own.

Chávez chose the latter. After 10 years of teaching, his salary grew just 20%. This prompted him to get his professional home inspectors license on the side.



Since quitting his teaching job to inspect full-time, Chávez earns double what he made as a teacher.

How much do home inspectors make?

Salary estimates for independent home inspectors are all over the map. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, construction and building inspectors make an average of \$64,480 annually. Although that includes part-time inspectors and others like elevator inspectors and plan examiners.

Here at InspectorPro Insurance, we don't collect salary data, but we do collect revenue. The average gross revenue for InspectorPro insureds in 2023 was \$119,390. That means many of the inspectors in our sample made more than the median household income of \$74,580. Considering we insure both full- and part-time inspectors as well as sole proprietors and small inspection firms, that average is particularly impressive.

How much you can make depends on lots of factors, including:

- Where you live
- How much you charge
- How often you inspect
- How big the houses are you inspect, and
- Whether you offer ancillary services.

Generally, as a sole proprietor or inspection firm owner, you don't have a limit to your earning potential. If you can grow your business to make tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit, you get to take home a big portion of that pay. Additionally, you can get paid every time you perform an inspection—not just every other Friday. What you make and how you grow is completely up to you. The range of a home inspector's career growth remains a huge incentive.

"There really is no ceiling for how much money you can make," Chávez said. "We can hire inspectors to work under us, or we can stay small."

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### **BONUS PRO: STARTUP COSTS ARE LOW.**

While many people dream of starting their own businesses, many don't due to the startup costs. On average, small business owners spend \$40,000 setting up their businesses in their first year, reports Shopify. That's a year's salary for the average American, reports the US Census Bureau.

But inspection companies aren't so cost prohibitive. Many home inspectors launch their businesses for less than half—sometimes just a few thousand dollars, writes HomeGauge in their article about startup costs.

Chávez spent about \$10,000 launching his inspection business. That number included his licensing, training, insurance, website, and initial marketing. Because he paid a professional marketer to create his logo, website, and marketing materials, Chávez knew his startup costs were higher than many of his peers'. But he found those initial investments worthwhile.

Now that the business is up and running, Chávez spends an average of \$2,500 per month on expenses, including gas for driving and replacements for lost tools. Those costs pale in comparison to what he earns.

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### **CON 3: REAL ESTATE AGENTS CAN BE A PAIN.**

Though Wells believes most real estate agents are great, he's dealt with agents who don't want what's best for their shared clients. They want inspectors to inspect less thoroughly or downplay defects in their reports.

"These real estate agents can be very difficult to deal with, and you have to weed them out," Wells said. "It's very frustrating because they are supposed to be working for the buyers."

While you can develop referral relationships with good agents, you can't avoid bad agents entirely. After all, your clients can choose their own agents. When you do encounter a bad agent apple, you have to be patient.

---

### **PRO 3: YOU GET TO MEET NEW PEOPLE.**

"If you like people, inspecting homes is a great way to go out and meet people," Wells said.

It's true that some agents aren't ideal to work with. But, generally, if you're a people-person thinking about choosing this job, it's a good thing to consider. As a professional home inspector, you'll find lots of opportunities to get to know people you didn't know before. And, because so many different types of people buy and sell homes, you'll engage with

different cultures, backgrounds, personalities, and interests. Meeting such a diverse cast of characters on the job makes it entertaining. You may even make new friends along the way.

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#### **CON 4: CLIENTS CAN BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT.**

Here at InspectorPro Insurance, we know better than anyone that inspection clients can be challenging—sometimes more so than real estate agents. Lots of clients come in with bad expectations, like thinking you can see through walls. While you can (and should) temper expectations, clients might complain anyway. In fact, according to our claims data, more than 60% of home inspectors receive one claim during their careers. That fear of litigation for real and meritless allegations can be a source of anxiety when choosing a career as a new inspector.

“You’re always fearful. It’s funny. When the phone rings, sometimes, in the back of your mind, you think, ‘I hope that’s not a problem,’” Wells said.

Houglum asserts that the best way to secure peace of mind and protection against client complaints is with insurance.

“You want to make sure you have your good general liability and E&O insurance paid up,” Houglum said.

As an ASHI member, you qualify for InspectorPro Insurance with the ASHI Advantage, which gives you unparalleled errors and omissions (E&O) and general liability (GL) insurance at a discounted rate. You can also save on equipment and tail coverage.

---

#### **PRO 4: YOUR WORK HAS PURPOSE AND MEANING.**

What is the most important thing to consider when choosing a career as a home inspector? More than any other advantage, the professional home inspectors we interviewed for this and other articles love how fulfilling it can be to help inspection clients. When you’re teaching people, helping them save

money, and even saving lives, you can’t help but feel accomplished.

“Most people don’t have the budget or time to hire experts for every system and component for their house. But they want to make informed purchasing decisions, and they want their homes to be safe. By providing a general overview, home inspectors provide a lot of value to their clients,” Houglum said. “I love helping people and teaching them everything about a house. I love my job. I absolutely love it.”

Wells agrees. Being a home inspector gives him a sense of purpose, too.

“There’s satisfaction in helping others, particularly the buyers. When you’re doing an inspection, you actually find some pretty critical things that the buyer was not aware of,” Wells said. “You come home at the end of the day and you know that you helped somebody. You know that you discovered something. You feel good about that, a sense of pride in that.”

#### **Resources and More Things to Consider**

While the profession isn’t all sunshine and unicorns, there’s so much to love about being a home inspector. The autonomy, the money, the variety, the growth, and the meaning-making are just some of the myriad reasons inspectors love what they do.

Think inspecting is the field for you? Consider joining ASHI to access resources for new and continuing inspectors.

Looking for affordable coverage as you begin your inspection career? Fill out a free, no-obligation application on the InspectorPro Insurance website and receive a \$250 discount for ASHI members in their first year of inspecting. 🇺🇸



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# Where Did the Volunteers Go?

*The importance of participation*

BY HOLLIS BROWN, ACI

I believe in the ASHI Chapter. Chapter participation is the primary means by which I have, for nearly 25 years, gleaned value from my ASHI membership. I owe significantly to the volunteers who came before me who ensured I was able to incorporate a steady flow of valuable, pertinent information into my business since the early days of my career. The wheels of time, however, always roll forward into uncertainty.

There is much to learn by watching trend lines. Chapters are shrinking. The average age of ASHI members is increasing. Volunteers are less prevalent.

What's going on? It seems to me that we are experiencing a change of attitude and expectation.

## Changing Times

I grew up in a time when volunteerism was expected. We got things done by rolling up our sleeves and working together for the common good. The upcoming generations have different expectations. It's not that they're unwilling to do their part. Rather, they want to participate, but they also value their time. It may seem more efficient to them to pay a specialist than to do what they realize they are ill-equipped to do themselves.

Some in the younger generation don't keep their own books; they hire a bookkeeper. Some don't cut their own grass; they hire a landscaper. Similarly, the chapter board of directors is disinclined to delegate tasks of running a seminar to its members.

The chapters who continue to rely on volunteers are folding. Those that are innovating are growing.

## Why Do Chapters Matter?

A lot of what home inspectors need to know is not geographically specific. Some of it, however, is. There is not much call for training on boilers in Southern Florida, for instance. Equally important are matters of local regulations. We have not only state license laws but county regulations as well. These matters are very much geographically specific, and understanding them is critical to the inspector's business. Who is better equipped to be aware of and understand these issues than people who live and work in the jurisdiction? What better vehicle than the chapter to synthesize and disseminate this critical information?

## What is the OMG?

In January 2016, a handful of ASHI members, recognizing the value of the chapter, collaborated on a mission to share the chapter experience with inspectors who, for whatever reason, found it impractical to attend in-person meetings. They leveraged the power of web-conferencing to bring the best-known speakers to the "lectern" and attendees to the "room." They named this innovation the Online Meeting Group. It's better known as the OMG.

At that time, webinars were rare, and public awareness of web-conferencing was limited. Covid changed all that. Presenters embraced the efficiency, and attendees appreciated the convenience. "Zoom" became a verb. As the pandemic wound down, though, some welcomed the opportunity to return to normal. Others chose to push this new model. Out of this came compromise—the hybrid meeting.



Those who wanted to press the flesh showed up at the location, while those who enjoyed the convenience logged in.

As pioneers of this evolution, the OMG took it a step further. They invited local chapters to share the OMG training as part of their local meetings.

### What about MAC ASHI?

Consistent with the individuality of the chapter model, each chapter that has adopted this model has done it differently. Let's take MAC ASHI as an example.

Much discussion and experimentation went into MAC's search for the new normal. The first compromise was a decision to hold fewer in-person meetings and more online meetings. For decades MAC held its meetings in person, with food served. Presentations (organized by volunteers) were informative, and the food was good. Some members wanted to go back to that. Others—not so much. MAC is now holding 11 monthly online meetings and four quarterly in-person meetings. They provide two hours of training at each meeting. That's 30 hours of training each year. Dues are \$145 each year. Cost of gourmet catered meals at the in-person quarterly meetings are covered by the chapter.

How do they do all that? They collaborate with the OMG. Here's how it works. The OMG starts at 8pm ET. The first 10 minutes is a routine introduction of the process and welcome of new attendees. That rolls into a 15-minute session on a basic but important topic. That is followed by a 60-minute presentation, usually presented by a well-known expert.

The MAC ASHI meeting starts at 7:30pm in a breakout room. They have a quick five or 10-minute

business meeting and then roll into a 30-minute presentation delivered by a local member.

Remember, we said above that the OMG starts at 8, with training beginning at 8:10. The local meeting runs from 7:30 to 8:10.

That allows for a 10-minute business meeting and 30 minutes of training. At exactly 8:10, the breakout room closes, and the chapter members join the OMG meeting already in progress, just as the training is about to start. OMG attendees get 75 minutes of training, and chapter members get 105 minutes.

Other chapters run their own local meetings in their own individual breakout rooms.

These sessions are organized by the local chapters, so each one has its own local flavor. All participating chapters, though, enjoy the professionalism of the OMG speakers.

This may be difficult to envision. Think of it this way. The OMG is about to take place in the main auditorium. The chapters meet in individual rooms down the hall. Local issues are presented for and/or by local figures.

At a predetermined time, all the local chapter attendees leave their individual rooms and walk down the hall to the auditorium to hear the keynote speaker. Except all this happens electronically. There is no physical building and everyone, including the presenters, is at home. 🏠

**OMG attendees get  
75 MINUTES  
of training, and  
chapter members get  
105 MINUTES.**

*It seems to me that we are experiencing a change of attitude and expectation. The chapters who continue to rely on volunteers are folding. Those that are innovating are growing.*

**The OMG starts at 8pm ET, and it's free. Check it out at [cyberashi.org](https://cyberashi.org).**



# INSPECTION WORLD

## ★ ON THE ROAD ★

*Registration is open for the St. Louis InspectionWorld on the Road, this September.*

BY LAURA ROTE

**T**he countdown to the top home inspection conference in the Midwest is on, as leaders in the industry make final preparations for the St. Louis InspectionWorld on the Road events this September.

The 2024 conference officially runs from Friday, Sept. 20 through the evening of Saturday, Sept. 21.

Nationally renowned educators, subject matter experts, home inspection professionals, and vendors will gather as part of the major 2024 event, where anyone and everyone is invited to attend to learn and network with inspectors from across the country.

Conference presenters and speakers include:

- **Mark Parlee**, Building Consultant, Inspecting the Exterior Envelope
- **John Ceaser**, CSIA, Chimney Inspections
- **David Goldstein**, ACI, Advanced HVAC
- **Don Iverson**, Schneider Electric, QO Plug-on Neutral Panel Recall along with Residential Code Requirements
- **Luke Randall**, Spartan RamJack, Foundation Issues & Repairs Case Studies
- **Brianne Smith**, InspectorPro

For those interested, pre- and post-conference events are also planned:

- **PRE-CONFERENCE:** Infrared Moisture Detection (8 hours by Monroe Infrared)

- **POST-CONFERENCE:** Peer Review (aka the “best hands-on workshop training you can attend,” according to ASHI leaders)

On Saturday, ASHI President Mark Goodman will deliver a keynote. “The St. Louis Inspection World on the Road is a great opportunity for ASHI Inspectors and others to build on the camaraderie of the live in-person event, where you can network, build relationships, get CE approved education, and have in-person discussions with those that provide services and products to enhance your business,” Goodman said.

Attendees of this special On the Road programming will also benefit from a variety of experts exhibiting at the event. In addition to ASHI, conference exhibitors include Examination Board of Professional Home Inspectors (EBPHI), InspectorPro Insurance, Waterproof Solutions, Stratum Structural, Safe Flame, Sewer Pros, and so many more.

To attend the full two-day conference, ASHI members can register between now and Aug. 19 to take advantage of the **\$199 early-bird fee** (Non-ASHI members \$249). Beginning Aug. 20, fees for ASHI members are \$249 (Non-ASHI \$299). Additional fees for the pre and post-conference events apply. Go to the website for more information.

Register today! And for a complete schedule and the latest news leading up to the event, keep checking [stlashi.org/best-conference-ever](http://stlashi.org/best-conference-ever). 🌐



ASHI is taking a new approach in 2024  
by bringing InspectionWorld to the local chapters



# INSPECTION WORLD

★ ON THE ROAD ★

**Meet us in St. Louis!**  
SEPTEMBER 20TH & 21ST



**EARLY BIRD  
REGISTRATION  
IS OPEN!**

**\$199**

**NON-ASHI MEMBERS \$249**

**Beginning Aug. 20,  
fees go up \$50**

*Additional fees for the pre and  
post-conference events apply.  
Visit website for details.*





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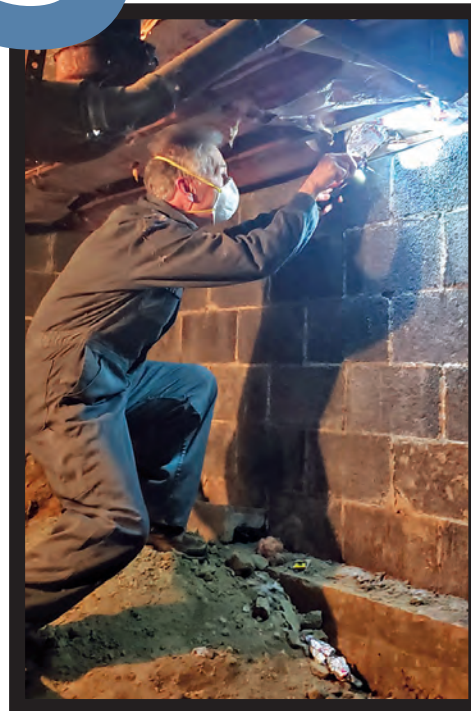
Inspector**Pro**  
INSURANCE PROGRAM



BY LAURA ROTE



# in this together



*ASHI's Mike Atwell wants everyone to get the most out of a fruitful home inspecting career.*

**M**ike Atwell just got off the phone with a lobbyist when I call. He's optimistic. "It could be a huge boost to the legislation," he said, but he can't tell me anything else just yet.

Atwell, who won ASHI's 2023 Monahan Award, has been working since July 2022 to help pass legislation in Massachusetts to help protect home inspectors

and homebuyers with the right to have a home inspection.

Senate Bill S2474 known as An Act Protecting Consumer Rights in Purchasing Safe and Habitable Homes—would make home inspections a right in Massachusetts. Supporters of the legislation say prospective homebuyers would no longer feel the

pressure to waive their inspection to sweeten an offer.

“Waiving the right to have someone look at the home has been a dangerous and financially disastrous step for many people. As home inspectors, we find things that are actually dangerous. I know we have saved lives,” Atwell said. “In Massachusetts we have the Lemon Law; if you buy a used car and it turns out to be terrible, you can return it, but you can’t return your house.” It just doesn’t make sense, he said, for such a big and important purchase to not include the right to an inspection.

Legislative work is one of Atwell’s passions, alongside the craft of home inspecting itself. In other legislative efforts, Atwell has helped to reduce the limit of liability for a home inspection from three to two years in Massachusetts.

The current legislation seems to be moving along quickly, though it still has a long way to go, he said. Ultimately, Atwell hopes it will inspire similar legislation elsewhere. “If we can pull this off, I hope other states can use it as a template.”

Atwell has been an ASHI Certified Inspector for more than 25 years and has inspected more than 6,000 homes. He came to the career after work as a contractor and construction supervisor, when he worked alongside fellow future ACI Jeff May (now working full-time in indoor air quality), who suggested the career move. Atwell specialized in the restoration of older homes for 15 years before becoming a home inspector in 1997.

“I had a lot to learn,” he said. “I was basically a carpenter. I had to learn about heating and wiring and so much more.” He started with a two-year evening course, and he’s been learning ever since.

Eventually Atwell joined May’s company and, when May moved on, he bought the business. “I really like the work. I’m not in the office all day. I did that once. I like meeting people from all walks of life.”

Today he’s president of J. May Home Inspections.

The past president of ASHI New England (2012 to 2018) stays active, to say the least, and has many awards under his belt, including last year’s ASHI New England’s President’s Award. He’s been recognized as a dedicated member and has served as vice president and chair of the ASHI Education Committee. He’s been a board member of the New England Chapter of ASHI since 2001.

## Lessons Learned

Atwell said a good home inspector never stops learning. “A lot of things change very quickly, and there are always new products coming up that you need to be able to talk intelligently about.”

Self-described as “old-school,” Atwell admits he’s not so great at social media, relying mainly on many years of experience and word of mouth.

Today, though, he recommends anyone starting out become well-versed in social media and even blogging.

Atwell enjoys providing an objective report about a property and helping people.

He’s a good communicator and skilled at explaining sometimes complicated concepts in layperson’s terms so everyone

can understand. “I like the education aspect of the job. I really feel like it’s an honest to goodness service.”

Today he takes what he’s learned and shares it with other inspectors, too. He teaches courses on what to look for when buying a home, and he attends monthly seminars.

“I’ve probably missed two seminars in 25 years. And we have an annual two-day conference we’ve been doing for about 15 years.”

Atwell still comes across things he’s never seen before, and that’s exciting. He still learns from chapter members he knows who have an interest in a particular area. “In this chapter we don’t see each other as competitors. We’re all better at this if we rise together. People are very willing to share the knowledge and do anything they can to help. I really respect that.” 🌟

*In this chapter we don't see each other as competitors. We're all better at this if we rise together. People are very willing to share the knowledge and do anything they can to help. I really respect that.*



# The ASHI Foundation

*How AFI is giving back to the community*

BY LISA ALAJAJIAN-GIROUX, ACI

**M**any of you may be unaware of the ASHI Foundation, commonly known as AFI. The foundation is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes.

The ASHI Foundation's formal mission statement is "to help those in need through giving and education." We also strive to have a positive impact on the communities where we hold our IW on the Road events.

Per the foundation's bylaws, the board consists of seven trustees—including the chair. Five trustees are current ASHI officers and two are elected ASHI members. For 2024, the trustees are **Mark Goodman**, **Lisa Alajajian-Giroux**, **Vince Tecce**, **Scott Johnson**, and **Kyle Rodgers**, AFI secretary. The two elected ASHI members are past presidents **Mike Wagner**, chair, and **Tim Buell**, treasurer. ASHI's executive director, **James Thomas**, serves as an ex-officio trustee.

**Marvin Goldstein**, past president, donated in his father's name to pay the first year's dues for those students who finish first in their ASHI School class. We have been honoring Goldstein's father since 2018.

Our members have previously contributed to The Folds of Honor and Homes for our Troops. AFI has selected Habitat for Humanity as its charity for 2024.

Wagner presented a \$2,000 check to the Central Ohio Habitat for Humanity at the Ohio IW24 on the Road weekend in March. Attendees were also given a QR code to contribute directly to Habitat for Humanity.

I have personally worked with the Worcester, Massachusetts Habitat organization over the last

three years. I've also contributed my time to perform free home inspections and radon tests for the selected recipients of a home. It has been my pleasure to help these new homeowners understand their houses and how to maintain them to create a safe and healthy environment for their families.

You, too, can help the foundation by making a tax-deductible contribution. Scan the QR code on page 21 to learn more. We will keep you informed of future donations. Thank you for supporting the foundation and Habitat for Humanity. 🌱



*Opinions or statements of authors are solely their own and do not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of ASHI, its agents, or editors. Always check with your local governmental agency and independently verify for accuracy, completeness, and reliability.*



**A Massachusetts- licensed home inspector and 35-year veteran of the building trades, Lisa Alajajian Giroux is president of HomeQuest Consultants Home Building Consultation Services. She is the 2023 ASHI National President and continues to serve as a mentor in the industry. Her motto is "We are stronger together."**



**You can contact AFI at [ASHIFoundation@ashi.org](mailto:ASHIFoundation@ashi.org).**







**INSPECTION  
WORLD 2024**  
★ ON THE ROAD ★  
PRESENTS:

**MIDWEST  
HOME INSPECTOR  
CONFERENCE**

March 1-2, 2024 | Newark, OH

**117  
INSPECTORS**

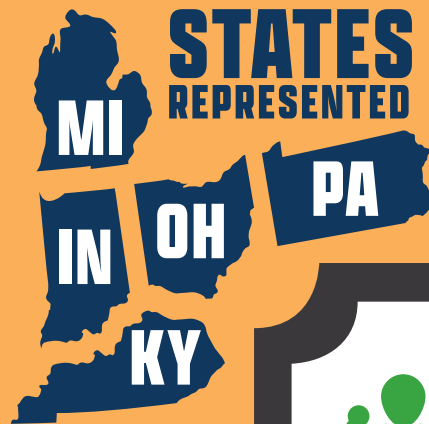


**17 ATTENDEE GUESTS &  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**\$2,000**



Habitat for Humanity  
donation by  
ASHI Foundation



**STATES  
REPRESENTED**

**35  
VENDORS**

**\$500**

Donated by  
The Ohio Chapter  
in the name of  
Forrest Lines

**14**

**TOTAL  
SESSIONS**



**12  
SPEAKERS**

**30,000-SQ.-FT. VENUE**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

3 Former ASHI National Presidents  
**LISA ALAJAJIAN-GIROUX**  
**MIKE WAGNER • DAVID TAMNY**

Current  
ASHI  
National  
President  
**MARK GOODMAN**

State  
Superintendent  
of Licensing  
& Dept of  
Commerce

**DAPHNE  
HAWK**

State  
Attorney  
for Dept of  
Commerce  
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CORDELL**

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# Empower Your ASHI Credentials *Digitally!*

ASHI has partnered with **Accredible** to offer you digital credentials that proudly showcase your ASHI membership, expertise, and dedication to being a true leader in the field of home inspection. Accredible's badges are a way for you to share and validate your achievement. The certification can easily be verified by viewers at any time, and the online view of the badge will communicate it's up-to-date status to anyone attempting to verify it.

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
HOME INSPECTORS



Accredible



SCAN ME

# Alternative Sources of Inspection Income in Slow Times

BY PAUL CUMMINS, ACI

**O**ne must have faith to be a home inspector. We're never really sure we have a job until we get to the site, the house is ready, the clients arrive, and the real estate agent gets us in.

During this slowdown many of us have had to make drastic changes. We downsized our house and moved to a cheaper location, for example.

I continue to use Angi as a lead generation tool. They have improved slightly in providing meaningful leads, but they are expensive. My view is:

How much is a new real estate agent worth? Each Angi lead is a dress rehearsal in front of a new agent. I continue to get about a third of my work from them. Good reports help, too. I have gotten referrals by folks like loan officers being impressed with mine.

The news of our slowdown encouraged a property management company to reach out to me to provide their annual and move-out inspections on hundreds of rental units. Indeed, by hiring a licensed home inspector they are getting much more information and providing a better service to their customers. Just yesterday I found an HVAC filter that was securely screwed under a return grille that had not been changed in years, which made the new

air handler work really hard to move any air. Those 20- to 25-year-old gas furnaces could lead to CO exposure and even death because no one was calling them out before.

These inspections are not as fun as regular pre-sale home ones because the clients are not always happy to see you, since part of your work is assessing how well they are treating the unit. There is also a lot of mileage involved, yet we are all probably driving more these days. I find the IRS mileage deduction very generous. Each year it comes to more than the current value of my Jeep.

Just last week a mobile home park called me, based on a previous report of mine. They want me to do their routine safety and maintenance inspections, too.

I wouldn't have thought of these new opportunities if they hadn't fallen in my lap, so I'm commending them to you to perhaps be of help. All we can do is all we can do. 🌟

*There is also a lot of mileage involved. I find the IRS mileage deduction very generous. Each year it comes to more than the current value of my Jeep.*

**Paul Cummins**  
is an ASHI  
**Certified Inspector,**  
retired science  
teacher, and  
lives in  
**Fredericksburg,**  
**Virginia.**

*Opinions or statements of authors are solely their own and do not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of ASHI, its agents, or editors. Always check with your local governmental agency and independently verify for accuracy, completeness, and reliability.*



**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN OUT IN THE FIELD  
AND SEEN SOMETHING THAT MADE YOU  
STOP IN YOUR TRACKS AND THINK ...**

# **WHAT THE HECK?!?**



*Have a Coke  
and a Smile!*



*outhouse,  
bathhouse,  
and  
greenhouse*

**WHETHER IT'S INTERESTING,  
EDUCATIONAL, OR LOOKS LIKE IT'S  
STRAIGHT OUT OF A COMIC BOOK ...**

***SEND IT TO US!***

EMAIL PHOTOS OF YOUR FUN FINDS TO [POSTCARDS@ASHI.ORG](mailto:POSTCARDS@ASHI.ORG).  
INCLUDE YOUR NAME, CITY, STATE, AND A FEW WORDS TO  
POTENTIALLY BE USED AS A CAPTION. THEN KEEP AN EYE OUT  
FOR "POSTCARDS" IN FUTURE ISSUES OF THE REPORTER.  
***YOU JUST MIGHT SEE YOURSELF!***





# AVS

Shaping the Future  
of Home Inspection

ASHI VIRTUAL SUMMIT | 2024

## BY THE NUMBERS



# 191

TOTAL  
ATTENDEES



Inspectors  
representing

# 31

US states  
& Canada

# 22

STATES  
APPROVED

# CE CREDITS



# 18

sessions

including 5  
affiliate sessions

# 126

ATTENDEES  
AT THE ASHI  
ANNUAL MEETING

# Hands-on Home Inspection Training



**Excellence in Education.** The ASHI School provides knowledge, professionalism, and business potential in the field of home and building inspection.

**Knowledge is Power.** Gaining the strong foundation is an important first step to building a property inspection career. By taking classes at the ASHI School, you will have chosen *the gold standard* in property inspection education. You will gain the expertise which leads to success in your career.

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**Choose the Course to Fit Your Lifestyle.** Students have diverse learning styles, desires, and needs. The ASHI School offers learning through three methods:

1

Face-to-face, traditional classes including field inspections.

2

Online or book materials for those wanting to learn independently.

3

Specialty Courses for those who want to extend their skills.

*"The inspectors/instructors that ran the pre-licensing course were extremely generous with their time and expertise. Thank you for the education—it has gotten me onto a great trajectory for this career."*

*"Fantastic training for home inspectors!"*

*"The ASHI School has given me knowledge that has allowed me to grow my business. The specialty classes have added to my ability to help clients which has added to my income."*



THE ASHI SCHOOL

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## NEW MEMBERS

### ALABAMA

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Travis Ensling | Azusa

Christopher Ellis | Concord

### COLORADO

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Daniel Falco | Denver

### FLORIDA

Brad Jewell | Crestview

### GEORGIA

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Rick Douglas | Newman

David Hixon | Acworth

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Ean Grubb | Des Moines

### INDIANA

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Sutinder Dhanjal | Pennington

James Ragucci | Union

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### PENNSYLVANIA

Vincent Phillips | Philadelphia

### RHODE ISLAND

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### TENNESSEE

George Haas | Knoxville

Mike Spencer | Burlington

### WEST VIRGINIA

Jonathan Hopkins | Morgantown

### CANADA

Shane Klassen | Swift Current, Saskatchewan



## REPORTER

Here's a look at some of the topics we'd love to cover in upcoming issues of the Reporter. To be considered, submit your articles to [editor@ashi.org](mailto:editor@ashi.org) within these areas before the deadlines below.

**JUNE:**  
HVAC  
Deadline: April 15

**JULY:**  
Indoor Air Quality  
Deadline: May 15

**AUGUST:**  
Roofing  
Deadline: June 14

**SEPTEMBER:**  
Inspecting Outdoor Areas  
Deadline: July 15

# 2024

## MARCH MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

### 30 YEARS

**Doug Ramsthaler** Precision Inspections  
**Joe Sinvany** COBI-Central Ohio Building Inspection  
**Brian Callaghan** Alert Inspection Services

### 25 YEARS

**Michael Pignotti** Pignotti Property Inspections  
**Ralph Baca** B-Sure Home Inspections  
**Jim Schumacher** Done Right Inspections  
**Lawrence Ubell** Accurate Building Inspectors

### 20 YEARS

**Michael Swaim** Arkansas Home Tech Inspections  
**Graham Clarke**  
Clarke Engineering - Home Inspections  
**Brandon Meara** Shamrock Home Inspections  
**Phil Acker** Acker Home Inspection  
**Anthony Toth** Southern Appraisal,  
Inspection & Consulting Services  
**Albert Gordon**  
Perfect Choice Home Inspection Services  
**Michael Ossmann** Mossmann Inspections

### 15 YEARS

**Michael Baltrush** ValueGuard Home Inspections  
**Colin Chandler** BPG Inspection  
**Xing "James" Fang** XY Home Inspection  
**Chuck Monasmith** Monasmith Home Inspection

### 10 YEARS

**Shawn Fennimore** 2nd Look Home Inspections  
**Chad Cooper** Desert Haciendas Home Inspection  
**Dave Lovelace** HomeGuard Incorporated  
**Adam Pardonek**  
**Glenn Kleint** Inspect-It 1st, San Diego-Miramar  
**Kekoa Akana** Akana Home Inspection  
**David Aronovici** 4 Seasons Home Inspections  
**Kenneth Rodriguez** Loyalty Home Inspections  
**Ryan Blecick** Next Step Home Inspection  
**Joby McDonald** Checkpoint Property Inspections  
**Mark Hill** US Inspect  
**Justin Cheseldine-Gass** Cheseldine Management Consulting  
**Ernie Wood** Preferred Property Inspection

### 5 YEARS

**Kevin Harper** His & Heirs Home Services  
**Timothy Hill**  
**Stephen Shelowitz** Pillar to Post Home Inspectors  
**Jeffrey Callahan** Callahan Home Inspection  
**Paul Holt** Pillar to Post Home Inspectors - The Holt Group  
**Kevin Charney** Edifice Inspections  
**TJ Place** TJ Place Home Inspections  
**Louis DiGeambeardino** LDG Home Inspection  
**Chris Farver** Tri-State Smart Home Solutions  
**Nicholas Keller** Prism Home and Building Inspections  
**Spencer Velez** Pillar to Post Home Inspectors  
**Kevin Basham** Sherlock Home Inspections of Atlanta



**MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024**  
**8:30AM - 3:30PM**

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PRESENTS

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Become familiar with the Extensive Changes in the Electrical Code

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### CONTACTS

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RebeccaCastro5@yahoo.com

ROBERT GUYER

(805) 501-0733

GuyerInspections@icloud.com





Just  
tighten  
the  
zip  
ties!

Derek Speelman | Indy Pro Inspection Service  
Carmel, IN



If something's  
in your way,  
why go around?

Aaron Mayer | Housewarming Home Inspections  
St. Louis, MO

Holy  
I-beam!

Stephen Tyler | STAT Home Inspections  
Garnerville, NY



Slip sliding away.

Doron Bracha | Accent Home Inspection  
Natick, MA

Juice box.  
Shaken, not stirred.

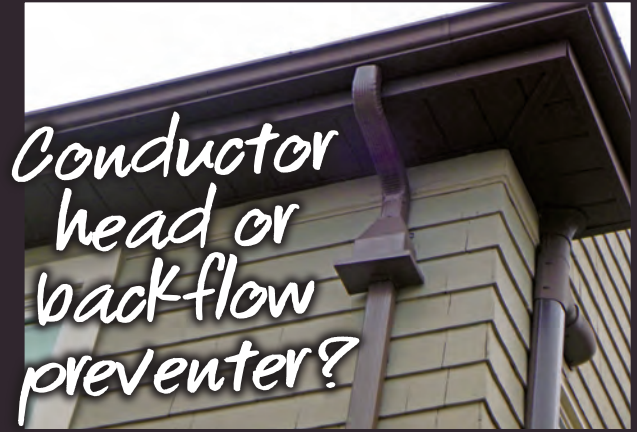
Sid Carter | Cingo Inspections  
Atlanta, GA





New concept in whole house ventilation!

Steve Berry | ProVantage Home Inspection Services | Silver Spring, MD



Conductor head or back-flow preventer?

Doron Bracha | Accent Home Inspection Natick, MA

Installer clearly did not have a clue what a trap was for, but it does make a great elbow.



Eric L. Carpenter | Senior Field Inspector Silver Spring, MD



CHEESE GRATER?

Chris McDougall | Apex Home Inspection Aromas, CA



I don't have glue, but I have some nails for this plumbing project.

Pete Lawrence | Kikin Inspection Louisville, CO

To submit your postcard, please send your name, city, state, high-resolution photos, headings and captions to: [postcards@ashi.org](mailto:postcards@ashi.org)

By sending in your postcard(s), you are expressly granting ASHI the right to use the postcard and your name with it in the ASHI REPORTER and in other publications or media ASHI may select.



# TAKING THE NATIONAL HOME INSPECTOR EXAMINATION®?

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National Home Inspector Examination®

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[info@homeinspectionexam.org](mailto:info@homeinspectionexam.org)

847.298.7750