



**For immediate release**

**The Wire Association International, Inc.**

## **Keynote speakers set to inspire industry with AI and partnership concepts at Wire Expo 2026**

**May 6-7, 2026 - Baird Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA**

**Madison, Connecticut, USA – March 6, 2026** – The Wire Association International, Inc. (WAI) reports that two keynote speakers will headline on consecutive days at its biennial Wire Expo event May 6-7, 2026, at the Baird Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. All Wire Expo content is built around this year's theme: *“Accelerating Progress Together ~ Where wire, innovation & industry connect.”*

### ***Keynote Addresses***

First up on Wednesday, May 6, is John W. Mellowes, CEO & Owner, Charter Manufacturing Co. Inc., with his keynote presentation *“Charter Steel: Built on Partnership - Navigating the Complexities of Today's Steel Market.”* In his address, Mellowes will describe how Charter's partnership-driven culture forms the foundation for navigating a rapidly evolving steel market. Mellowes will be recognized at Wire Expo as the recipient of the 2026 WAI Champion Award given in honor of his leadership and his company's sustained support of the Wire Association International, Inc. and its educational mission.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital transformation will come to the forefront during the keynote presentation on Thursday, May 7, when Dr. John Sviokla, Co-Founder, GAI Insights, and Executive Fellow at the Harvard Business School, will share how new economic value can be created through the use of AI and digital capabilities.

### ***MORE EVENT HIGHLIGHTS***

#### ***New Format***

For the first time the conference program will be staged in the WAI Theater within the exhibit hall giving all registrants immediate access to educational presentations, exhibits, and free, cross-over entry to the co-located Electrical Wire Processing Technology Expo (EWPTTE) in the adjacent hall.

#### ***Exhibits***

Wire Expo will feature displays from more than 150 exhibiting companies in Hall B of the Baird Center. Exhibit hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on May 6 and 7, respectively.

#### ***Education***

The educational program presents 20 sessions in the WAI Theater organized into complementary paths:

- **Day 1: Integrated Manufacturing Excellence** focuses on the manufacturing life cycle from raw materials through finished wire and cable; and
- **Day 2: Digital Transformation & Industry 4.0** during which sessions explore applications of artificial intelligence, automation, data analytics, smart factories, predictive quality, and connected manufacturing systems.

Program add-ons include the popular pre-conference *Fundamentals of Wire Manufacturing* course, (May 5) and the *Advanced Extrusion Workshop* (May 6), both held at the Milwaukee Hyatt Regency; as well as the Charter Steel plant tour (May 6).

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***Fundamentals of Wire Manufacturing Course - Tuesday, May 5***

This one-day, pre-conference training course covers the following and includes course materials, breaks, lunch, and networking happy hour. It requires separate registration.

- Mechanics of wiredrawing;
- Drawing dies;
- Lubrication in the wiredrawing process;
- Wire breaks and surface damage;
- Stranding and cabling;
- Introduction to ferrous metallurgy;
- Introduction to extrusion;
- Cleaning and coating of rod and wire;
- Electrical testing;
- Ferrous testing and properties;
- Marking and printing;
- Ferrous heat treatment; and
- Wire and cable manufacturing problem solving.

***Young Professionals Outing - Tuesday, May 5***

Designed for early-career professionals and emerging leaders, this new activity offers a casual, fun networking opportunity from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Milwaukee's 3rd Street Market Hall. The site, less than two blocks from the Baird Center, features two Top Golf swing suites and a trendy food hall. Participants will receive a voucher for use at any of the hall's 18 vendors. This event is open to *Fundamentals of Wire Manufacturing* course participants and eligible Wire Expo registrants who will be notified as part of their registration communications. No additional registration is required.

***Charter Steel Plant Tour - Wednesday, May 6***

The tour offers a comprehensive experience that brings the steelmaking process to life. From melt to roll and processing, visitors will see how Charter turns scrap into high-quality carbon and alloy wire and bar products through precision, technology, and craftsmanship. Visitors will see how Charter partners with customers to deliver consistent, high-performance steel. The tour requires separate registration that includes transportation, listening headset, and PPE. Space is limited.

***Advanced Extrusion Workshop - Wednesday, May 6***

Led by David Skinner, VP of Operations, Joe Tools, Inc. and Richard Chamberlain, Hawkins Consulting, LLC, the four-hour workshop provides a hands-on opportunity for professionals to deepen their understanding of wire extrusion processes. This in-depth session builds on concepts introduced in WAI's *Fundamentals of Wire Manufacturing Course*. The workshop affords participants a view of up-close demonstrations of extrusion tooling, crossheads, and extrusion screws while connecting with industry peers and field experts. It requires separate registration that includes workshop materials and lunch.

***Welcome Reception - Wednesday, May 6***

WAI will hold its Welcome Reception at the Baird Center's 4th floor Ballroom Terrace from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. to the backdrop of a live jazz band. It requires separate registration.

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***Resource Center Social Hour - Wednesday, May 6***

WAI will host a social hour in its Resource Center in exhibit Hall B from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. providing all registrants networking opportunities with fellow members and industry leaders.

***Lodging:***

The Milwaukee Hyatt Regency is the official conference hotel, with two additional properties included in the Wire Expo hotel block. Indoor access connects the Hyatt to the Baird Center. Additional details and booking links are available at: [wireexpo26.com](http://wireexpo26.com).

***Registration:***

The “Full Show Floor Access” registration option includes both the conference sessions and the exhibits. Advance registration rates—available through April 24, 2026—are \$125 for existing and new members and \$225 for non-members. On-site registration will be available for the conference and exhibit access, however advance registration is required for educational add-ons.

For full detail on speakers and schedule, and to register visit the event website: [wireexpo26.com](http://wireexpo26.com).

*WAI, founded in 1930, is a not-for-profit association with 1700 individual members in 38 countries and Wire Journal International subscribers in 94 countries. The association serves the educational needs of the wire and cable manufacturing industry through a variety of products and services. WAI manages the Interwire Conference & Trade Exhibition and Wire Expo; it publishes the Wire Journal International and the Wire Journal International Reference Guide.*

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