September 19, 2016

PMI Prepares for Transition of Long-Term CEO/Executive Director

ROLLING MEADOWS, Ill. – Sept. 19, 2016 – Transition plans are in the works as Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI) CEO/Executive Director Barbara C. Higgens announced plans today to embark on the next chapter of her life. Ms. Higgens will remain in her post at least through the end of 2017 and will be actively involved in the transition process.

Selected to lead PMI in 1998 from a field of 18 candidates, Ms. Higgens revamped the organization from her kitchen table as its first and only direct employee, hiring a dedicated in-house staff, securing office space and equipment, developing a strategic plan, restructuring meetings around key industry issues, and significantly enhancing the association’s membership value equation, while enhancing revenues and reserves.

“I’m very proud of the progress PMI has made during the past 18 years. We have stepped up to proactively embrace and facilitate change and are well-established as a reliable and trustworthy resource,” she said. “PMI is in wonderful shape with a myriad of successes under our belt, enhanced industry visibility, great volunteer leadership, consultants and staff, a strong membership roster and strong financials. It has been my pleasure and honor to lead this wonderful group. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of this industry.”

A committed consensus-builder, she co-founded the U.S.-based Plumbing Industry Leadership Coalition (PILC) in 2012 in an effort to bring domestic plumbing groups together. The group held its fifth meeting in April 2016. She is regularly invited to speak at international conferences including the BMA-UK (British Manufacturers Association); CEIR (International Valve Association); and the Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating (CIPH). She has been an enthusiastic member of the International Emerging Technology Symposium (IETS) and the Plumbing Efficiency Research Coalition (PERC).

In 2014, the Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce named Ms. Higgens Business Leader of the Year. She received the 2011 Robert P. Atkins Lifetime Achievement Award from the World Vision Storehouse for her charitable efforts on the procurement committee, and in 2013, PMI received the Crystal Vision Award for similar work under her leadership. In 2016, Ms. Higgens was named Chair of the Executive Committee for the Crystal Vision/World Vision Storehouse. Ms. Higgens has also served as Chair of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) Council of Manufacturing Associations (CMA) Council Board of Directors. She holds positions on a number of industry committees including the United States Department of Commerce Industry Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC).

Ms. Higgens’ responsibilities at PMI include overseeing legislative advocacy, legal actions, and codes/standards activities of the technical staff; coordinating the annual meetings; and networking with affiliate national and international associations, the board of directors, members, and prospective members. PMI’s current focus includes water efficiency; ensuring safe, clean drinking water (for example, through the PMI-sponsored and newly introduced national law to reduce lead in plumbing products); conformity assessment; fair trade initiatives; and outreach to policy makers and the next generation of workers.
Prior to joining PMI, Barbara was Marketing Director for Switchcraft Inc., a division of Raytheon Company. Her responsibilities encompassed the oversight of all marketing, advertising, and trade show activities, including product introductions and promotional events. Barbara was one of 35 employees selected from a pool of 75,000 to participate in Raytheon’s Advanced Management Program (AMP), an executive MBA program.

Barbara graduated from Northern Illinois University with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism, minoring in Marketing/Advertising. She is on the Board of Trustees of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, serves as a Marquee Ambassador for the Metropolis Performing Arts Center in Arlington Heights, Ill., and is on the Board of the North West Housing Partnership in Schaumburg, IL. She is active in a number of civic and social organizations, including Rotary International and P.E.O. She has played in the Chicago Highlanders Bagpipe Band for 10 years as a tenor drummer. (The Chicago Highlanders is the oldest pipe band in North America, having operated continuously since 1921). Plumbing and drumming comprise her life!

Barbara resides in Palatine, Ill., with her husband, William J. “Trey” Higens, President of Falcon Media, LLC. They are active members of St. Simon’s Episcopal Church in Arlington Heights. The couple has two married daughters, two granddaughters, and a grandson, with a new granddaughter on the way.

About PMI

Plumbing Manufacturers International is the voluntary, not-for-profit international industry association of manufacturers of plumbing products, serving as the Voice of the Plumbing Industry. Member companies produce 90 percent of the nation’s plumbing products and represent more than 150 brands. As part of its mission, PMI advocates for plumbing product performance and innovation contributing to water savings, sustainability, public health and safety, and consumer satisfaction. For information on PMI or its conferences, contact the organization at 1921 Rohlwing Road, Unit G, Rolling Meadows, IL, 60008; tel.: 847-481-5500; fax: 847-481-5501; www.safeplumbing.org.

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