

# GREAT GRIZZLY TIMES



# NCI

NORTH CENTRAL  
INDUSTRIES, INC.

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 @GREATGRIZZLYFIREWORKS

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### AN OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK FOR THE 2019 SEASON

By the time you get this newsletter, I am sure the fireworks season will be in full swing. Winter weather is moving out and spring is about to start. I am glad to report

that import shipments throughout the fall and winter were better than last year. We have much more inventory and at an earlier date.

We have aggressively developed a slew of new products both under our Great Grizzly brand but also under our new value price brand, Fire Factory. Our belief is that our customers have never told us that we have too many new products. This industry is about innovation and nothing is more fun than seeing new items.

We have just returned from the newest fireworks event which was hosted by NFA in Columbus, Georgia. This was the first time any fireworks association has held a spring event. Having talked with the association President, Don Lantis and his staff, I am relatively certain this event will continue for years to come. The NFA reported an exciting number of new members to their association as a result of this event. We met a substantial number of new fireworks retailers and wholesalers from this event as well. The shooting site was awesome and the hotel and venue staff was as good as it gets. For people that want to get a jump start to the season, I think this event will do exactly that.

Don't forget to visit our two spring demo events. I assure you that you will find both of them worthwhile. Our inaugural demo event in Georgia is on April 6th, 2019 and is worthy of your attendance. It will be held at the world-class Atlanta Motor Speedway. The venue itself is top-shelf and we are sure that after this year's event people in the fireworks industry will spread the word as to why seeing NCI's fireworks demo show at this event is a must do. There will be more than just fireworks at this event to wow the attendees.

We wish you the best season ever and hope to see you at one of our demos this spring!

Richard B. Shields  
President

# INTRODUCING FIRE FACTORY

Fire Factory is a new brand of fireworks created by Kurt Cowgill and myself (Steven Irvin). Its creation was inspired by our 30 combined years of experience in the industry and our time spent in China. This is our way of bringing our passion and commitment of fireworks to the market. Fire Factory isn't just a new logo or name it's about a new generation of Pyros. This brand is about honoring the past and forging the future. We will stand behind our new brand and products to create a commitment to product quality and customer success.



Sourcing high-quality products with a mix of the best effects from the past and today's innovative effects consumers are seeing for the first time is a core principle of Fire Factory. We leveraged our buying power and expertise to bring in a range of products that will be a tremendous value to the importer, wholesaler, retailer, and final consumer. No matter where you fall, the value these items bring will be in excess of what your dealer or distributor charges. We aren't peddling bottle rockets here, these products are the best of the best, dollar for dollar.

Every new item is worth taking a look at but we want to point out a some of our favorites. Afterglow is an industry first with the yellow plume or yellow lace effect. The red lace was new last year and received an overwhelmingly positive response so now it's time to see what other colors we can do! The Patriot Smoke is a large smoke device that emits red smoke out of one end, blue smoke out of the other end, and white smoke out of the center all at the same time. This is a new item in the industry that will have you feeling patriotic. Centrifuge and Outta Control are both spinning fountains that triple the size of their already outstanding performances. If you like tourbillion effects, you're going to love King of Kings and Twist of Fate. Everyone has to have zipper cakes in their showroom right? Ridiculousness 300 shot and Zombie House 115 shot have outstanding bright packaging and performances to match.

Fire Factory is not just a new brand, it is our inspiration for the next 30 years. We look forward to you joining the journey, it's going to be one hell of a ride!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve".

Steven Irvin  
Director of Operations





# VEGAS APA



I was fortunate enough to attend my 7th annual winter education conference this past February. The APA puts on a fun, productive, and educational conference. It usually marks the end of a brief slow time for fireworks importers & retailers and reminds us that after we return home its time to get back to work. The 2019 conference featured a good mix of professional development and regulatory sessions. Featured speakers this year were Best Selling Author Kevin McCarthy who had a powerful experience to share that involved serving time in federal prison for a crime he did not knowingly commit, as well as Attorney and Event Safety Advocate Steven Adelman who presented an engaging, interactive presentation focusing on a subject that was arrested and charged on the grounds of manufacture of an illegal explosive device which turned out to be a few boxes of Whipper Snappers, the tissue kind. He was found guilty

by the local court system but an appeals court eventually overturned not because they believed the Whipper Snappers were any less dangerous than the first judge ruled, but due to a statement the defendant made in the original police report that when considered exonerated him from the charges. It was all very interesting!

A highlight of the conference was APA's announcement that they will begin the roll out of the association's new e-learning tool, APA University. See the article on page 7 to see what it is all about.

The last thing I will touch on is to inform everyone that I was nominated and accepted to serve my third term as Treasurer of the American Pyrotechnics Safety & Education Foundation board of directors. I have been involved

with the APSEF and have served as a board member since its inception. The tremendous progress that this foundation has made in 5 years is really remarkable, and I can report that there is a strong drive among the current board members to push forward and place the curriculum that we have developed, with the support of the APA membership, to state-owned and private school corporations. We have lots of expertise on our board of directors and I am confident that we are in a position to meet and exceed our goals. At this point, we have our product, and now it is all about marketing that product and being in a position to create supplemental materials that will aid the product or the placement. Our mission remains focused on creating fireworks safety and education programs for youth.



The goal of this education initiative Celebrate Safely, is to instill in young people an understanding of how consumer fireworks should be used appropriately, discourage the misuse of fireworks, and decrease the number of fireworks-related injuries in the U.S.



*Continued on page 5*

# LADIES BEHIND THE FUSE

As a woman in the fireworks industry, I often find myself wondering about other women who work with or around fireworks. I've been curious about how they started their journey in the industry and where it has taken them. My curiosity has sent me on a mission to speak with the ladies behind the fuse.



*"We're being very productive while we're enjoying ourselves."*

Women have always had a hand in fireworks, all the way from the production in China to many of our hometowns. I think it's time we shine a light on the women leading the charge in the fireworks industry. Not to say our male counterparts aren't interesting, but there is something to be said about the women who find passion in the pyro world.

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with, and interviewing, Sam Christenson. Fresh out of college from the University of Missouri, at only 23 years old, Sam went straight to work with our friends at Spirit of '76 Fireworks. 2019 is the first year Sam will spend in the industry as a full-time employee. She completed a year-long internship with them in 2018 and happily accepted the role of Content Marketing Specialist.

When I say this girl is full of positive energy, I mean it! If you didn't have a passion for this industry before speaking with her, you're certain to leave with one. I had the opportunity to meet Sam at the first ever Spring NFA in Columbus, GA. We sat high in the stands overlooking the tradeshow, talking fireworks and soaking it all in.

During the interview, I asked Sam what she loved the most about being in this industry. Sam had a long list of reasons why she loves working in Fireworks. From traveling the world, being around others who share her passion, the artistry of fireworks, and that's just to name a few. The NFA tradeshow is a particular favorite of hers. She explained, "We're being very productive while we're enjoying ourselves." And what could be better than feeling like you're not working... while you're working?

Fireworks have taken Sam to many new places in her two short years in our industry. She's been all over the US (Georgia, Iowa, Colorado, and Kansas) for numerous fireworks conventions and even to China this past year! She spoke of her trip to China with excitement and an eagerness to revisit. To her surprise she found herself meeting with suppliers in their factories and making key decisions on production design. Along with gathering a massive amount of content from her China trip, Sam has a lot of footage just waiting for her to dive into. The fireworks industry is keeping her on the go, and she welcomes it with an enthusiastic smile. This is only the beginning for Sam as she sees herself continuing her path in fireworks and expanding her efforts. I think it's safe to say that we will be seeing a lot more of her as she makes her way further into the wonderful world of fireworks.

I hope you're as excited as I am to continue meeting and hearing from the women lighting a spark all around the world. I encourage you to tune in to our social media to continue learning more about the women of fireworks. You can find Sam on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter at @76Fireworks. You can also follow NCI on social media at [www.facebook.com/ncigreatgrizzly](https://www.facebook.com/ncigreatgrizzly) and on Instagram @ncifireworks, until next time!

*Nicole*



*Continued from page 3*

So far our efforts have been mainly funded by the APA membership through various fundraisers, donations, and pledges. If you feel inclined to get involved and would like to make a donation or want more information, please contact me anytime and I am willing to answer those questions. Donating is easy at [www.celebratesafely.org](http://www.celebratesafely.org) and any amount is appreciated. For those looking for a tax write off and willing to give \$500.00 or more annually for a period of 5 years, we have a special giving program that will yield you some additional perks & recognition. Thank you for the consideration, this is near & dear to my heart!



I'll wrap up by saying I'm extremely excited about the fireworks line up we are bringing in for 2019. From the new effects to the over the top packaging that is going to make our items an easy sell for you, it's truly all about quality fireworks, both in performance and package, offered at a price that will give you the opportunity to offer your customers an exceptional value! Everybody wins when the importer, the retail, and the consumer all satisfy their desire for value, and that is what we have and will continue to focus on for many years to come. Best Wishes for a spectacular 2019 fireworks season!

**KURT**

Kurt Cowgill  
Vice President

## HOT & CHERRY BOMB

There is a lot going on this year in the product and brand development department at NCI. We have outdone ourselves once again with over 100 new items, NCI's new brand Fire Factory, and 2 other new supplier brands. What can we say other than WE LOVE FIREWORKS! We have put a tremendous amount of effort into these items and can't wait for you to see them all.

NCI focuses on offering the best products possible. To us, this means not only offering our brands but also the best brands that are out there. We believe that if we continue to innovate Great Grizzly and our newest lineup Fire Factory, along with searching out the best products from the top suppliers, that we have created the best mix of products in the industry. It is with this method of product development that we are proud to announce the addition of Hot and Cherry Bomb brand products to our lineup.



Cherry Bomb is the name that consumers everywhere ask for. It is a reflection of a time when there were far fewer regulations and products were far more explosive. The Cherry Bomb items of today are, of course in compliance with today's regulations, but the name still has the same appeal and draw to consumers. We are offering 2 items from Cherry Bomb this year but look for more to come in the future.

Hot Fireworks is a long-time partner of NCI and has helped produce some of our industry-leading Great Grizzly items. Over the course of our relationship, they have grown to produce an impressive line of their own brand. We are offering the best of the best that Hot Fireworks has to offer and encourage you to check them out on our website and new items catalog. You will not be disappointed!





**NCI**  
NORTH CENTRAL  
INDUSTRIES, INC.



# DEMO NIGHTS 2019

**GEORGIA**  
SATURDAY, APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup>  
FOREST PARK WHOLESALE OFFICE  
ATLANTA MOTOR SPEEDWAY

**INDIANA**  
SATURDAY, MAY 11<sup>TH</sup>  
NORTH CENTRAL INDUSTRIES  
MUNCIE WHOLESALE OFFICE

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EACH DEMO VISIT US AT  
[WWW.GREATGRIZZLY.COM](http://WWW.GREATGRIZZLY.COM)**

## **CREDIT CARD AUTHORIZATION POLICY**

North Central Industries, Inc. will be enforcing our credit card authorization policy in order to protect our customers as well as ourselves from fraudulent transactions. For in person transactions be prepared to show ID. Phone transactions will require a Credit Card Authorization Form as well as a copy of your ID. These can be faxed or emailed. If you have any questions prior to ordering please contact Kim Reynard, Office Manager, in order to prevent a delay in shipment.



# APA UNIVERSITY

APA University is an online learning center available to APA members as an additional resource to advance the knowledge and skills needed to assist them in performing their jobs in a safe and effective way. The University is a perfect addition to a company's current new hire training program or as a refresher program for seasoned employees.

The University has the ability to track, record and facilitate training modules to satisfy some of the key training requirements of DOT, FMCSA, PHMSA, and OSHA. This initial phase of APA University is being offered as a benefit to members and includes courses such as:

- Transportation of Fireworks & Hazardous Material Handling Safety, Refresher Training
- General DOT Transport Security Refresher Training
- Back Injury Prevention
- Ergonomics Awareness
- First Aid Training
- Environmental Health and Awareness
- Hazard Communication Training
- Ladder Safety
- Many More



The web module is mobile adaptive so employees that work in the field or outside of an office setting can use their smart phones or tablets to complete the training. A company administrator will be able to assign training modules with a timeline and receive notification that they have or have not been completed.

If this sounds like something that would help you and your business, I encourage you to consider joining the APA to take advantage of this new resource along with many of the other perks that come with supporting the Association that is at the forefront of preserving and promoting fireworks use, safety, and responsible regulation of the fireworks industry.

## NCI VETERAN PROMOTED TO WAREHOUSE MANAGER



We are pleased to announce that our former Assistant Warehouse Manager, Sean Alexander, is now our permanent Warehouse Manager. Sean has worked at NCI for over 21 years. He started out working for us part-time for a couple of seasons before starting full-time in 1998. Sean has a wife and two sons, one of whom works for NCI part-time as well. In his spare time, Sean enjoys camping, hiking, and watching football. Sean doesn't have many changes planned for the warehouse this season and will continue to provide the same great services that customers are accustomed to at NCI. Please introduce yourself to Sean if you visit the warehouse this season.



**ARE YOU COVERED?**

NCI OFFERS ADDITIONAL INSURED CERTIFICATES  
FOR PRODUCT & PREMISE!  
CONTACT NICOLE FOR MORE INFORMATION.  
[NICOLEB@GREATGRIZZLY.COM](mailto:NICOLEB@GREATGRIZZLY.COM)

# ROLL CALL!

## YOUR NCI STAFF:

**RICHARD B. SHIELDS**  
PRESIDENT/OWNER - 43RD SEASON

**KURT COWGILL**  
VICE PRESIDENT - 13TH SEASON

**STEVEN IRVIN**  
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS - 4TH SEASON

**KIM REYNARD**  
OFFICE MANAGER - 4TH SEASON

**NICOLE BURNETT**  
MARKETING & SALES ASSOC. - 5TH SEASON

**ANGELIC WOOD**  
CUSTOMER SERVICE / AP - 5TH SEASON

**JEFF BRANDENBURG**  
VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES, GA DIV. - 2ND SEASON

**A.J. BURNS**  
GENERAL MANAGER, GA DIV. - 3RD SEASON

**DENISHA MILLER**  
OFFICE MANAGER, GA DIV. - 2ND SEASON

**SEAN ALEXANDER**  
WAREHOUSE MANAGER - 21ST SEASON

**JACK MILLER**  
PRODUCTION MANAGER - 31ST SEASON

**BRENDA SAID**  
ASST. PRODUCTION MANAGER - 22ND SEASON

**FREDDIE CHEN**  
CHINA AGENT - 16TH SEASON

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### PYROTECHNICS GUILD INTERNATIONAL

2019 CONVENTION  
CAM-PLEX MULTI-EVENT FACILITIES, GILLETTE, WY  
AUG 10-16TH, 2019  
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PGI:  
[WWW.PGI.ORG](http://WWW.PGI.ORG)

### NATIONAL FIREWORKS ASSOCIATION

NFA EXPO, BRANSON, MO  
SEPT 9-13TH, 2019  
FOR INFORMATION ON NFA'S EXPO:  
[WWW.NATIONALFIREWORKS.ORG](http://WWW.NATIONALFIREWORKS.ORG)

### AMERICAN PYROTECHNICS ASSOCIATION (APA)

2019 ANNUAL CONVENTION  
RITZ CARLTON GOLF RESORT, NAPLES, FL  
SEPT 23-27TH, 2019  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (301) 907-8181 OR  
[WWW.AMERICANPYRO.COM](http://WWW.AMERICANPYRO.COM)