

National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones
National Press Building
529 14th Street NW, Suite 1071
Washington, DC 20045
202.331.1950



National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones Names Jeffrey Tafel as President

Washington, DC (December 28, 2021) — Association management leader Jeffrey J. Tafel, CAE, has been appointed President of the National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ). Tafel brings nearly 30 years of association management experience to NAFTZ, the collective voice of the Foreign-Trade Zones community in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

Currently, Tafel is CEO of the Home Builders Association of Western Michigan, which serves and represents the entire residential construction and remodeling community in Kalamazoo County and six surrounding counties. During his tenure, Tafel was responsible for increasing membership, non-dues revenue, and member engagement and retention for this trade association that advocates for attainable housing for all by promoting common sense housing policies and workforce development programs to bring new blood into skilled trades and construction management, while also constructing new homes in underserved neighborhoods in collaboration with other nonprofit partners in the region.

"We are very excited to have Jeff Taffel as our next President of NAFTZ as we look to advance our advocacy and education to help FTZ professionals realize their goals in our demanding industry," says Melissa Irmen, NAFTZ Board Chair. "His leadership will be invaluable as we grow our association and promote the U.S. Foreign-Trade Zone program to foster business growth, economic development and U.S. employment."

Previously, Tafel served as Executive Director of the IFMA (International Facility Management Association) Foundation where he was responsible for creation of the IFMA Foundation's Global Workforce Initiative to encourage Facility Management as a career of choice. He also served the members of IFMA as Director of Membership and Councils where he worked with the more than 130 chapters and special interest groups of IFMA around the world helping local volunteer boards to implement successful strategic plans and best practices to increase member value. Prior to IFMA, he was COO for the National Association of Credit Management of South Texas.

"It's a great honor and privilege to be part of an association that serves Foreign-Trade Zone service providers, operators and grantees while leading advocacy efforts for a program that plays a key role in keeping American jobs and helping U.S. businesses be more competitive in the global marketplace," said Tafel. "Throughout my career in association management, I've been guided by the goal of delivering value to members and finding unique ways to enhance and meet the association's mission. I am thrilled to join an organization that is led by a purpose to do just that."

In his volunteer life, Tafel has served on the Board of Directors of the Association Foundation Group, the Texas Society of Association Executives, and the Houston Society of Association Executives. He holds the Certified Association Executive credential from the American Society of Association Executives and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Michigan Technological University.

Tafel will assume his responsibilities as President of NAFTAZ on February 1, 2022.

NAFTZ engaged Kittleman & Associates to conduct a search for its new President. Kittleman & Associates is a national executive search firm that specializes in the recruitment of CEOs for tax-exempt nonprofit organizations, public charities and philanthropic organizations. Kittleman recruits leaders for the entire nonprofit sector including associations, advocacy and educational organizations, and foundations. For more information, visit www.kittlemansearch.com.

The National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ), established in 1973, represents more than 650 members, including FTZ grantees, operator/user companies and service providers. The organization serves as the FTZ program's principal educator and lead advocate in demonstrating the program's value and role in changing the political and economic environment of international trade. For more information, visit www.naftz.org.

The Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) program was created by Congress in 1934 to expedite and encourage foreign commerce. FTZs are secure areas within the United States that are considered to be outside of U.S. Customs territory for tariff purposes. FTZ benefits are available to any U.S.-based company. There are 195 active FTZs in the United States. More than 4,300 companies currently utilize the program.

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