

The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals



by Suzanne Mackenzie Barrows

History

In 1956, the National Swimming Pool Institute (NSPI) was established by members of the pool industry to provide a forum for discussion among industry professionals to elevate the standards of the swimming pool industry, to promote swimming and swimming pools, to educate the public about swimming pools, and to achieve uniformity in the regulations applied to swimming pools. NSPI was incorporated in Illinois as a non-profit corporation and was recognized as such with a 501c6 designation by the IRS, which designated the organization as a trade association. In 1980, after the International Spa and Tub Association became a part of the National Swimming Pool Institute, the name was changed to the National Spa & Pool Institute.

Today

In December 2004, to meet the opportunities of the growing pool, spa, hot tub, and recreational water industry, the Board of Directors and volunteer leadership of the association published a comprehensive short- and long-range strategic business plan to guide the association into the future and changed the name of the organization to The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP).

APSP serves as "The Global Source and Voice for the Recreational Water Industry" with an international membership of over 5200 companies in every segment and at every level of the pool, spa, hot tub, and recreational water industry. Association members range from large, multinational manufacturers that make the raw materials used to produce spas and pools and the sanitizing chemicals used to treat them, to small, one-person service firms that take care of the weekly servicing of pools, hot tubs, and water features. The membership spans the range of industry activities from the manufacturing, distribution, retailing, design, construction, installation, maintenance, renovation, operation, and service of pools, spas, hot tubs, recreational water facilities, and a variety of related products and services.

Services to members are extensive and continually under evaluation for improvement; they are administered through a national staff, nine regions, two affiliated associations, and 79 chapters throughout the U.S.

Millions of Pools and Spas—Many Built With Shotcrete

APSP has among its membership more than 1900 companies that are categorized as pool/spa builders or installers, including more than 1700 such companies in the U.S. and over 200 companies in the rest of the world. Of these 1900 builders and installers, many of them are shotcrete contractors. According to statistics made available by APSP, there are more than 4.5 million residential inground swimming pools in the U.S. alone, including more than 1 million such pools in California and over 600,000 in Florida. Many of these millions of pools are shotcrete pools.

Standard for the Design and Construction of Shotcrete Pools

APSP offers a publication titled *ANSI/NSPI-5 2003 Standard for Residential Inground Swimming Pools*. The objective of this standard is to provide recommended minimum guidelines for the design, equipment, installation, and use of shotcrete pools and other residential inground swimming pools. This standard was approved by the American National Standards Institute. The design requirements and construction practices in this standard are based upon sound engineering principles, research, and field experience. Copies of the standard can be ordered by contacting APSP (www.TheAPSP.org or call 703-838-0083).

Industry Outlook*

In the U.S. today, the recreational water industry is growing. While swimming pools and hot tubs have been a part of the American (and worldwide)

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leisure and fitness lifestyle for decades, the industry is still continuing to expand.

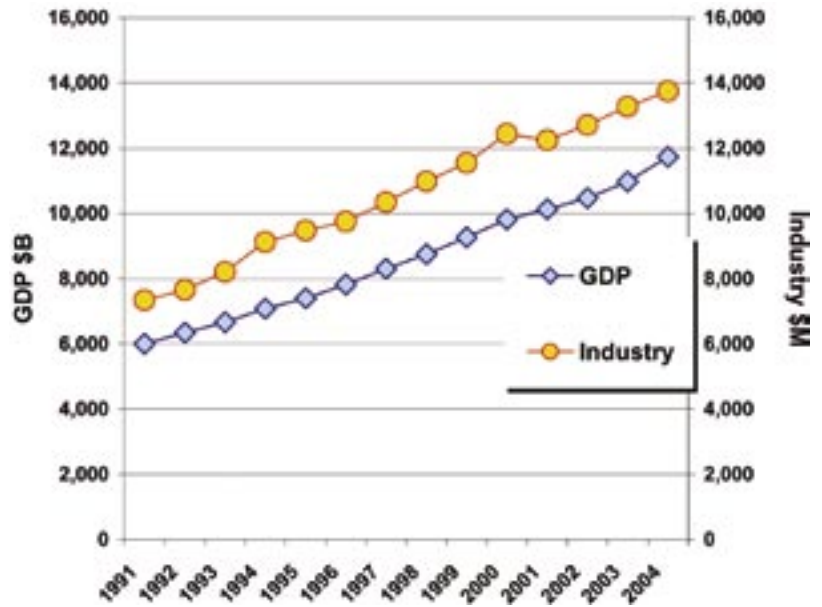
An estimated 13% of all U.S. households own a swimming pool, spa, or hot tub. Much of the growth of new pools and hot tubs has been occurring in the South and West, coincident with the population growth in both regions. Prospects for sustained growth in all industry segments is very positive, owing in part to this country's Baby Boomer generation entering retirement. As they retire, they'll be directing billions of dollars of personal wealth into various leisure pursuits including the purchase of swimming pools and hot tubs.

Moreover, the popularity of swimming pools, hot tubs, and related accessories will increase as more Americans channel discretionary income into projects such as home renovation and the creation of "backyard resorts." Today many families across the country are opting for so-called outdoor living rooms and outdoor kitchens that feature everything from all-weather home theaters to state-of-the-art cooking stations. And swimming pools and hot tubs are becoming the centerpiece of the backyard resort movement.

As a result, APSP forecasts an annual growth rate of 4 to 5% for pools and a rate of 10 to 15% for hot tubs within the foreseeable future.

The recreational water industry is a big business in this country. In fact, nearly half of all swimming pools and hot tubs in the world are in the U.S. Companies within the industry enjoy a preeminent reputation for product quality and technical innovation. So, given that less than one out of every seven U.S. households owns a pool or hot tub, the opportunity for sustained growth is significant.

**Except where noted, statistics included in this section are provided by P.K. Data, an Atlanta market research firm that has tracked the swimming pool and hot tub industry since 1992.*



The growth of the swimming pool and hot tub industry has kept pace with the growth of the overall U.S. economy. (Data: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis; P.K. Data estimates.)



Suzanne Mackenzie Barrows currently serves as the chief operations officer of The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals, the leading trade association for the recreational water industry.

Barrows has been involved with the swimming pool and hot tub industry since 1993 as a communications specialist. She is a frequent contributor to consumer publications and the media on the benefits of pool and hot tub ownership and safety.