

Keeping It All In Balance, for the Sake of Public Safety

Emerging Leader Tomaselli balances his education, work and family life as he takes his place as part of the Next Generation of code officials



When Mike Tomaselli jumps off the plane in Dallas on May 21 to meet with the Emerging Leaders Membership Council (ELMC)'s Advisory Committee, he'll have just taken a short walk across a stage in College Park, Md., to pick up his Master's Degree in Fire Protection Engineering.

Both events mark an important transition in the 26-year-old's career and life.

Tomaselli has been working on his master's degree from University of Maryland while serving in Annapolis as Fire Protection Engineer for Anne Arundel County. Additionally, he is among seven young code officials tapped to help develop the International Code Council (ICC)'s newest Membership Council.

"If you want to progress in an upward manner in any job, you have to stay on top of the most up-to-date literature, new research and theories," Tomaselli said. "That made getting my master's degree a high priority."

He feels the same way about his involvement in the Emerging Leaders Membership Council, created in response to the looming retirements of Baby Boomer generation code professionals who are expected to leave a deep gap in the code safety industry.

The ELMC has a key role in ICC's Safety 2.0 Initiative, started in 2016 to guide our 63,000-member organization in adapting to changes in demographics, education trends and organizational needs of a new generation of code officials and leadership in America's built environment.

As a member of the ELMC Advisory Committee, Tomaselli and six other young code officials are completing the charter for approval by the ICC Board of Directors.

Now they will focus is on developing a social media strategy, promoting the codes profession to young people and exploring education options. Much of the committee's groundwork should be completed by September when the ELMC will hold its first election of Governing Committee members at the 2017 ICC Annual Conference in Columbus, Ohio.

"Not only is it an honor to be part of the Advisory Committee of a Membership Council, but just getting our charter drafted and sent to the ICC Board felt like a huge accomplishment," he said.

By Rick Hauffe, Senior Regional Manager, State and Local Government Relations, ICC

Keeping It All In Balance, for the Sake of Public Safety *continued*

“I look forward to our conference calls each month, knowing that this is what the other five Membership Councils did to get started. I think we can do quite a lot to support the mission of ICC and set a path that is unique and successful going forward.”

He didn’t expect to be meeting and networking with people from California, Maine, Georgia, Colorado and South Carolina at this point in his life.

“But here we are, working to expand our worlds and blazing a trail for others,” he said.

The ICC Board of Directors appointed Tomaselli and six others to serve on the Advisory Committee in September 2016. The others are Committee Chair Elizabeth Arrington of Versailles, Ky.; Ben Breadmore of Holder, Maine; Rebecca Brown of Summerville, S.C.; Andre Jaen of Denver, Colo., Jesse DeAnda of West Covina, Calif.; and Ryan Taylor of Atlanta, Ga. The group also will be “shadowing” board members, to further their exposure to responsibilities of Code Council leadership

Bryant, ICC Board Secretary-Treasurer, recruited his employee Tomaselli, for the Advisory Committee.

“He came over and asked if I would be interested,” Tomaselli said. “I already had a big interest in ICC and being involved, so when he asked, I pounced on it.”

Bryant said Tomaselli naturally stands out in the Annapolis office. He added that while Tomaselli has more than carried his load at work, it also takes a special commitment to earn Master’s Degree at University of Maryland.

“I know first hand the dedication it takes to complete that program,” Bryant said, referring to his daughter, who is enrolled in the same program.

Bryant said he’s grateful to those who mentored him, and it’s a role Bryant has tried to duplicate with others in the last 28 years. Recruiting Tomaselli to delve into the governance of ICC by enlisting him as a charter member of the ELMC was a way of paying it forward.

“I have had various mentors in my life who encouraged my participation in the bigger picture of the model codes organization,” Bryant said. “Paul Radauskas, Paul Myers, Henry Green, Tim Ryan and many others have helped me move to the next level throughout the association.

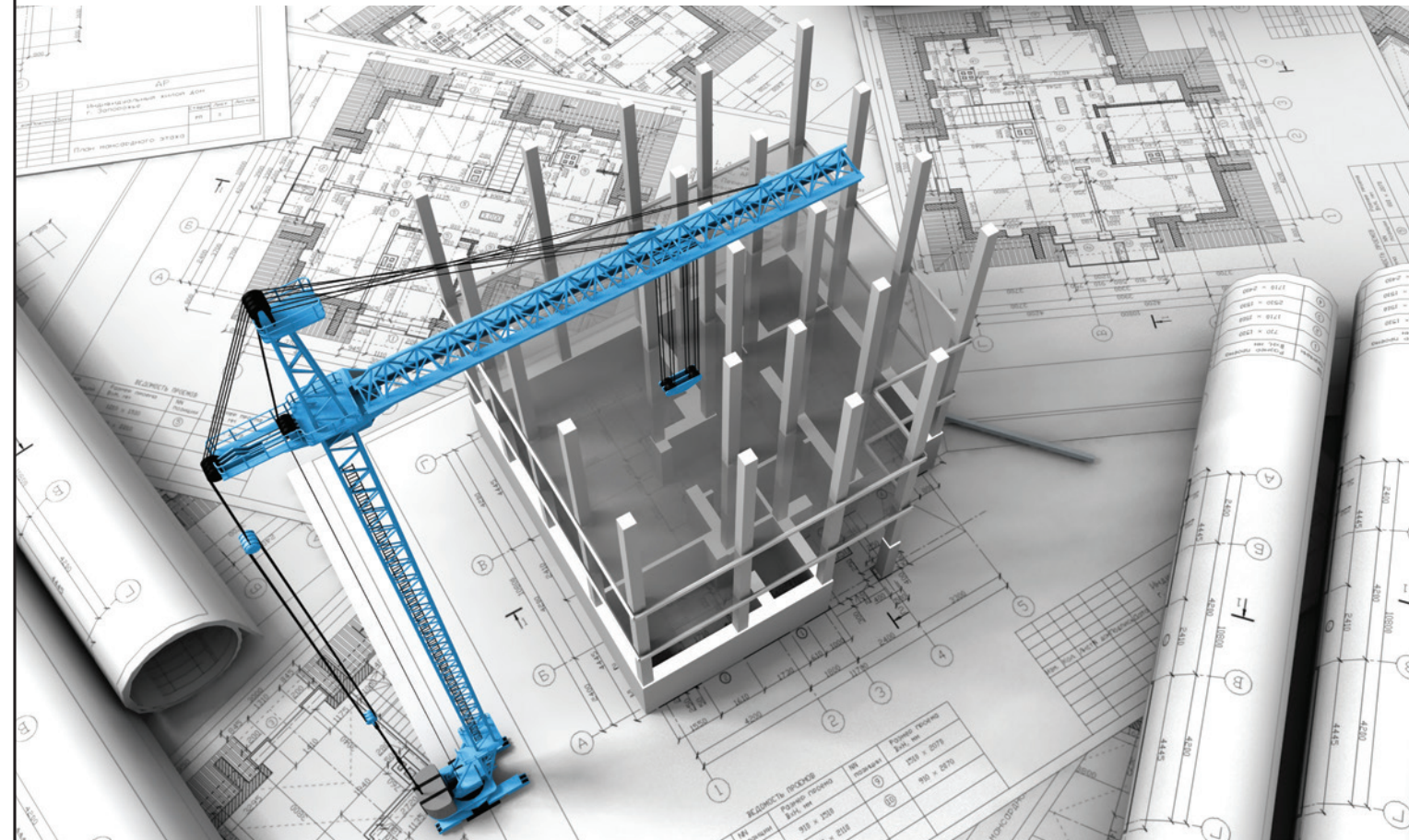
“Mike is one of those individuals who will be key to the membership and participation in ICC.”

Tomaselli is a member of the Maryland Building Officials Association and the Ameri-



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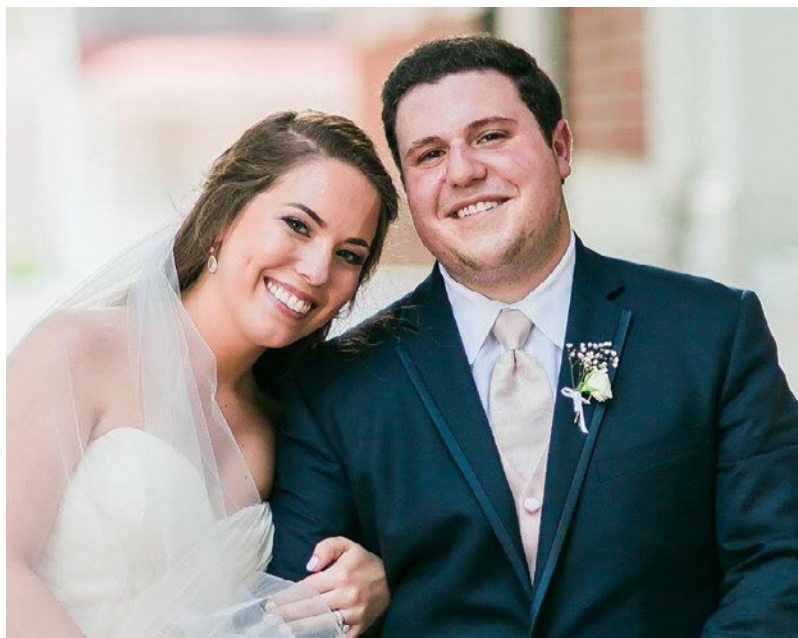
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can Fire Alarm Association. He serves as president of the Greater Baltimore Chapter of the American Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and on the board of the Chesapeake Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers.

All of this seems to leave little room for a private life, but he's prepared to make the balancing act work. He and his wife Shelby—in her fourth year of pharmacy school—were married in July 2016. With an eye on someday rearing children, he looks to his own parents as role models for balancing two challenging careers and raising three children where he grew up in Fairfield, N.J.



"My dad works in international imports and exports, and my mom is a registered nurse working in the trauma unit of a hospital," he said. "Growing up, my dad got us ready for school and made the lunches. We all kind of stepped up and pitched in.

"To be happy in your personal life and your career takes energy and effort. The key is finding that middle ground to keep balance."

Bryant brought Tomaselli to his first ICC Annual Conference in Kansas City, Mo., last fall. The experience confirmed his belief that his career was on the right track. Tomaselli knows he wants to keep learning, growing and climbing, including someday serving as President of the ICC Board of Directors.

He thinks others in their 20s also could be attracted to public service in the code profession, and ICC can help them learn how.

"This is a career where I can use my engineering background and my critical thinking skills," he said. "For people in my generation, it's a good combination. Everybody wants to feel their job makes a big difference to a lot of people in a very big way.

"In this business, you're part of something much larger than just enforcing a code book. You're making people safe in the buildings where they work, live and do activities. I think that's the job we do as code officials." **BSJO**

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