

# ACCWPA

Air Conditioning Contractors Western Pennsylvania

January  
and  
February  
2026

## Inside:

- 2026 Meetings Update
- Cybersecurity – Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>
- Signs of Turnaround

Volume 21, Issue 1 & 2

## 2026 Meeting Dates

### 2026

#### January 15<sup>th</sup>

Board Meeting Only

#### February 12<sup>th</sup>

#### Cybersecurity

Phil Thompson  
Axis Networks, LLC  
The Sports Grille – Cranberry

#### March 12<sup>th</sup>

Federated Insurance Screening,  
Hiring, and Retaining Employees  
The Sports Grille – Cranberry

#### April 9<sup>th</sup>

Broccoli  
Empower your business with AI  
agents that answer every call ...  
Rival Sports Bar - Bridgeville

## ACCWPA

Air Conditioning Contractors Western Pennsylvania

*The mission of the Air Conditioning Contractors of Western PA is to assist its members in managing their companies more efficiently, therefore becoming more profitable, together with increasing their exposure and credibility within the community.*

FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION...  
ACCWPA  
724-687-7860  
pforcker@accwpa.org



## Cybersecurity

### Make plans to attend ACCWPA's first 2026 General Meeting February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting!

Cybersecurity has become an essential pillar of modern society, protecting the digital systems, networks, and data that power nearly every aspect of our daily lives. As cyber threats grow more sophisticated from phishing scams and ransomware attacks to large-scale data breaches business and individuals alike face increasing pressure to safeguard sensitive information. In this rapidly evolving landscape, effective cyber security is no longer optional; it is a critical responsibility that ensures trust, resilience, and safety in an interconnected world.

Join Us for this important topic ....

February 12<sup>th</sup>



Phil Thompson



Axis Networks, LLC

Registration Form on Page 3

Please RSVP no later than February 9<sup>th</sup> noon!

As 2025 ended, we want to thank our Contractor members, Associate members, and Vo-Tech members for your continued support. 2026 have brought several changes for ACCWPA. With fresh insights, we look forward to our planning meeting for 2026. As members of ACCWPA, we value your opinion on the association's educational offerings, benefits, and impact within the HVAC industry.

Happy New Year with hope that all great things happen for our ACCWPA Members!!!

-ACCWPA Board of Directors

## Here's How Axis Networks keeps you protected!

By Phil Thompson, Axis Networks

While the vulnerability described below didn't impact your infrastructure, it's a perfect example of why proactive security management matters. Threats emerge daily—we're here to keep you as protected as possible.

Recently, a critical vulnerability (CVE-2026-21858) was discovered in n8n, a popular automation platform with over 100 million downloads. This vulnerability could allow attackers to steal API credentials, bypass authentication, and access connected systems like Microsoft 365, Salesforce, and cloud storage. While we could never claim 100% protection of any system, here are just a few ways we are protecting your business.

**Rapid Response** - We patch vulnerabilities as quickly as possible both automated and based on alerts.

**Proactive Monitoring** - Just a couple of our tools SaaS Alerts and MDR detect suspicious activity 24/7.

**Credential/Session Control** - Immediate and automated replacement of potentially exposed credentials or removal of logged in sessions.

**Network Isolation** - Critical systems protected by being able to isolate individual machines before they become a problem.

**Comprehensive Cloud Backups** - Your cloud data is recoverable and available.

**Stay Secure – Axis Networks Team**

## Question of the Month . . .

By Federated

If you own a business, planning what happens to it after you pass away is important. This is called "estate planning," and it's a way to make sure your assets are handled the way you want to help keep your business running smoothly.

### Why Business Owners Need an Estate Plan

**Keeping Your Business Running:** An estate plan helps keep your business operating without interruption by **identifying successors** and outlining their responsibilities.

**Minimizing Taxes:** Proper planning may reduce estate, capital gains, and income taxes. You can use tools like trusts and life insurance policies to accomplish this.

**Avoiding Probate:** Probate is a legal process to settle someone's estate after they die, and it can be expensive and take a long time. Using tools like trusts can help avoid this.

**Protecting Family Interests:** Estate planning ensures your family's financial needs are taken care of and helps prevent arguments over who gets what.

### Key Considerations

**Succession Planning:** Decide whether to pass your business to the next generation or sell it to a third party.

**Asset Value Assessment:** Figure out how much your business and other assets are worth. This helps with taxes and deciding how to divide everything up.

**Legal Agreements:** Set up agreements, like a **Buy-Sell Agreement**, which makes it easier to transfer ownership when needed.

**Tax Planning Strategies:** Work with professionals to develop tax-efficient strategies for transferring assets.

**Updates to the Estate Plan:** Review your plan regularly to make sure it still fits your business, family situation, and any new tax laws. An attorney who specializes in estate and business succession can discuss a wide range of planning options.

These articles are for general information and risk prevention only and should not be considered legal or other expert advice. The recommendations herein may help reduce, but are not guaranteed to eliminate, any or all risk of loss. Examples shown are for illustrative purposes only. The information herein may be subject to, and is not a substitute for, any laws or regulations that may apply. Qualified counsel should be sought with questions specific to your circumstances. ©2025 Federated Mutual Insurance Company. Published Date: October 15, 2025

## ACCWPA

Corner



*Integrity is the  
essence of  
everything  
successful.*

**PEACE, LOVE  
and JOY  
thru out 2026!**

SmartWords  
One Kind  
Word can  
change  
someone's  
entire day!

## Inspiration

Work  
HARD  
Dream  
BIG  
Never  
GIVE UP

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Join Us Thursday – February 12<sup>th</sup>!

## **CYBERSECURITY**

Cybersecurity has become an essential pillar of modern society, protecting the digital systems, networks, and data that power nearly every aspect of our daily lives. As cyber threats grow more sophisticated from phishing scams and ransomware attacks to large-scale data breaches business and individuals alike face increasing pressure to safeguard sensitive information. In this rapidly evolving landscape, effective cyber security is no longer optional; it is a critical responsibility that ensures trust, resilience, and safety in an interconnected world.



**Phil Thompson**



Axis Networks

**Will update all of us on this important topic!**

Question and Answer to follow.

**The SPORTS GRILLE** - CRANBERRY

1294 Freedom Road  
Cranberry Twp., PA 06066

**3:00 pm** – Board Meeting ♦ **5:30 – 6:00 pm** - Social (cash bar)

**6:00 - 7:00 pm** – Guest Speaker Phil Thompson

**7:00 pm** – Dinner and Social resumes (cash bar)

**Dinner - \$55.00**

**RSVP – 724-687-7860, fax or email • No Cancellations after February 9<sup>th</sup> noon!**

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**\* Important – RSVP is a must! \***

Email: pforker@accwpa.org or fax (724) 687-7860

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

**The Sports Grille - \$55.00**

**NO Cancellations after February 9<sup>th</sup> - NOON. No shows will be billed.**

**IF YOU ALREADY MADE YOUR RESERVATIONS, THANKS!**

## Membership Benefits...

### Air Conditioning of Western PA

will continue to be your local industry partner,  
as we have been since 1950.

#### Annual Membership Brings You the Following Benefits:

- Networking events
- Discounts on seminar
- Current info from local suppliers
- Legislative efforts
- Local website
- Technical training courses
- Apprenticeship program  
State recognized
- Monthly newsletter
- Information of industry news  
changes within the industry
- Insurance for member's company discount
- Code enforcement updates • Local lobbying
- ACCWPA Apprenticeship School
- Voice for the local contractors
- Golf Outing / Trap Shoot
- Education opportunities for your technicians  
office staff – Associates bring in Mfg. Reps.
- Advocacy agenda promote contractor interest.
- Labor and HR legal advice before utilities
- Helping members to stay ahead of the curve
- 6-8 Monthly informative meetings



## Little about Our GUEST SPEAKER . . .

### Phil Thompson



Phil is co-owner of Axis Networks, where he and Shane Walters provide comprehensive managed IT and security services. With extensive experience managing real-world security challenges, Phil specializes in implementing practical security solutions, automated monitoring systems, and incident response strategies.

As chair of the Butler County Leadership class of 2025, Phil has developed a strong focus on small business growth and development, understanding the unique challenges these organizations face. His approach emphasizes translating complex security requirements into actionable strategies that organizations can implement effectively, regardless of size or technical sophistication.

## Upcoming Meetings!

### 2026

#### Meetings Schedule!

##### January 15<sup>th</sup>

Board Meeting Only

##### February 12<sup>th</sup>

##### Cybersecurity

Phil Thompson  
Axis Networks, LLC

*The Sports Grille – Cranberry*

##### March 12<sup>th</sup>

Federated Insurance Screening,  
Hiring, and Retaining Employees

*The Sports Grille – Cranberry*

##### April 9<sup>th</sup>

##### Broccoli

Empower your business with AI  
agents that answer every call ...

*Rival Sports Bar - Bridgeville*



**Work Hard in  
Silence, Let  
Success makes  
the Noise!**

**Make  
Today  
Amazing!**

**FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION...**

**ACCWPA**  
**724-687-7860**  
[pforker@accwpa.org](mailto:pforker@accwpa.org)





## Not a Contractor or Associate member?

We'd love to serve you, too.

For additional information visit

[www.accwpa.org](http://www.accwpa.org)

or call 724-687-7860

Email: [pforker@accwpa.org](mailto:pforker@accwpa.org)

### Additional reasons for membership are:

- Company membership applies to all employees of your firm.
- **NEW!! Contractors Free Associate Membership in Service RoundTable!!**
- Networking!!!
- Monthly meetings with informative presentations that benefit both the Contractor and Supplier.
- Relevant technical training and educational classes.
- 4-year Apprenticeship School with curriculum that is focused only on the HVAC industry!
- Monthly newsletters and email communications filled with industry information and updates.
- Insurance for member's company discount.
- Social Outings that everyone can participate
- And much more to come!



**Join today!**

**ACCWPA is the Professional Alliance designed exclusively for today's HVAC/R Contractor!**

## 2025 / 2026

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**BEAVER STEEL SERVICES, INC.**

Kurt Treser, 412-429-8860

**CARRIER ENTERPRISE BRYANT PGH.**

Mike Marhefky, 412-568-3404

**COMFORT SUPPLY**

Dave Heckler – 412-921-6600

**FEDERATED INSURANCE**

Kevin Sundberg – 559-547-9694

**FILTECH INC.**

Andy Komar – 412-461-1400

**GEO. V. HAMILTON, INC.**

Ed Wallace – 412-777-4405

**H. GERHARDT SUPPLY**

Harry R. Gerhardt – 412-279-4880

**HABEGGER HVAC CORP.**

C.J. Cameron – 412-469-1010

**HVAC DISTRIBUTORS**

Stan Polivka – 412-629-5500

**IRR Supply Centers**

Michael Garrison – 317-209-5732

**JOHNSTONE SUPPLY**

Ken Swank – 724-331-1663

**RTI Insurance Services**

Victor Wilkstrom – 724-485-9997

**R. E. MICHAEL, LLC**

Russ Murphy – 412-713-0823

**ROBERTSON HEATING SUPPLY**

Tim Leja – 412-922-4001

**STANDARD AIR & LITE CORP.**

Chris Belculfine – 412-920-6505



### Signs of a Turnaround:

**A stabilizing market, uneven construction activity, and easing rates set the stage for a cautious but improving 2026.**

By Hannah Belloli

Taken together, these economic and construction trends give HVAC businesses a clearer view of where opportunities — and risks — will show up next year.

For contractors and distributors, the message is to plan for a year that is better — but not necessarily booming. Residential HVAC demand appears to have reached its bottom, with replacement activity and improving existing home sales offering the strongest peaks. New construction will likely remain subdued, and private commercial work will stay selective.

“Because of how closely intertwined residential HVAC demand is with the housing market, the post-COVID slowdown in the housing market has put the brakes on HVAC demand,” Fisher said. “While I certainly don’t want to say that it can’t get any worse, I’d be very surprised to see further deterioration in the housing market. Consequently, I see the current levels of resi-HVAC demand as at or near the lowest levels distributors and contractors should expect.”

Public-sector infrastructure, data centers, and renovation work are expected to provide the most stable opportunities for HVACR contractors.

Fisher urged HVAC businesses to manage for profitability, track affordability pressures closely, and avoid overcommitting in an uncertain economic environment.

“Our general view of the market next year is one of cautious optimism — demand opportunities should grow relative to 2025, but HVAC businesses should manage for profitability and budget conservatively,” Fisher said. “The economic picture is incredibly uncertain right now, and the lack of recent market data is compounding that problem.”

While 2026 may not deliver a full recovery, it is shaping up as a turning point — one where HVAC companies can begin moving from defense to cautious, strategic growth.

**February 14<sup>th</sup> remembers your Valentine!**



**WELCOME NEW MEMBER...**

**MRT Contracting Company**  
1456 Main Street - Pittsburgh, PA 15241  
412-651-1266  
John Lugaila  
ilugaila1@gmail.com

Every Job is a  
**SELF-  
PORTRAIT**  
Of the Person  
who does it.  
Autograph your  
work  
with  
Excellence!

AUTHOR UNKNOWN



**ACCWPA**  
**Newsletter and**  
**all notices:**

If you like to get our  
ACCWPA Newsletter  
send your  
email address to:  
[pforaker@accwpa.org](mailto:pforaker@accwpa.org)



# ACCWPA

Air Conditioning Contractors Western Pennsylvania

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WITH 7 PITTSBURGH AREA LOCATIONS

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S. Hills • Monroeville  
Strip District • Greensburg

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MUELLER  
INDUSTRIES

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CRANBERRY TWP.....	1245 Freedom Rd. ....	724-772-3855
GREENSBURG.....	990 Broad St. ....	724-836-6319
MONROEVILLE.....	1616 McClure Rd. ....	724-733-7577
PITTSBURGH.....	952 Noblestown Rd. ....	412-922-0500
WHEATLAND.....	10 Mill St. ....	724-347-3774
WASHINGTON.....	84 Stewart Ave. ....	724-222-6720

# ACCWPA

Air Conditioning Contractors Western Pennsylvania

# ACCWPA

Air Conditioning Contractors Western Pennsylvania

**PROUD AFFILIATE PARTNER WITH!!**

Service Roundtable Affiliate Association



**AWESOME CONTRACTOR BENEFIT!**

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Tom Baney, 412-920-6505

Johnstone Supply  
Ken Swank - 724-331-1663

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PENN COMMERCIAL INC.  
Marianne albert, 724-222-5330

ROSEDALE TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
Kara Chan - 412-512-6200

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Mike Angela, 412-529-8680

WESTERN AREA CAREER  
& TECHNOLOGY CENTER  
Rob Rossell - 724-809-4047

## Be There Fund™

(Must be an ACCWPA member to Win!)

Next General Meeting - \$90.00



**HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!**



126 Resolution Drive • Mars, PA 16046-3719 • 724-687-7860

## **ACCWPA is the Professional Alliance designed exclusively for today's HVAC/R Contractor!**

### **Membership Advantages:**

Networking with other contractors. This source of information is invaluable in handling problems within your own company. ACCWPA members help fellow members to be successful!



ACCWPA distributes ACCWPA Newsletters monthly to members and selected non-members, so that all those in the HVAC/R industry can keep informed of issues regarding our trade, and Chapter activities. We hope the non-members will see this newsletter as an example of the quality services that ACCWPA provides.

Contributions or suggestions can be emailed to [pforker@accwpa.org](mailto:pforker@accwpa.org)

**ACCWPA is proud to be a Service Roundtable Affiliate Associate.**



### **ACCWPA Upcoming Events**

#### **2026**

##### **January 15<sup>th</sup>**

Board Meeting Only

##### **February 12<sup>th</sup>**

##### **Cybersecurity**

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Broccoli  
Empower your business with AI agents that answer every call ...  
*Rival Sports Bar – Bridgeville*

### **2026 Officers and Directors**



<b>PRESIDENT:</b> John Wilcox, SUREWAY Htg. & Clg. & Plbg.	412-706-2477
<b>VICE PRESIDENT:</b> Steve Boehmer, Boehmer HVAC	412-381-4100
<b>TREASURER:</b> Chuck Rauch, Shearer Heating & Cooling	724-222-1830
<b>SECRETARY:</b> Dave Williams, A-Air Company	412-728-5148
<b>CONTRACTOR DIRECTORS:</b> James Murphy, Pelles Heating & Cooling Rob Champe, Shearer Heating & Cooling	724-625-2444 724-222-1830
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<b>SPECIAL ADVISOR:</b> Steve Woodring, Wade Heating & Cooling	412-787-1341

<b>Executive Director:</b> Pat Forker <a href="mailto:pforker@accwpa.org">pforker@accwpa.org</a>	Office/Fax 724-687-7860 Cell 412-760-5792
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