

Alaska Chapter NECA

January 25, 2007
Alaska Chapter, NECA
www.alaskaneca.org

Chapter Calendar

February 6	Anchorage JATC
February 13	Safety Committee
February 14	Board Meeting/Membership Meeting
February 19	President's Day
February 22-25	Dist 6 Council Meeting in Phoenix

Tool Box Talks

February 05, 2007	Circuit Breaker Panelboards
February 12, 2007	Cold Weather Safety
February 19, 2007	Commercial Vehicles
February 26, 2007	Confined Space Pre-Planning

PRESIDENT'S DAY

The Chapter office will be closed for President's Day Monday, February 19, 2007.

National Electrical Code Panels Meet to Consider Comments

The National Electrical Code Committee recently held two weeks of meetings (November 30 - December 9) in Redondo Beach, CA. The purpose was to review and vote upon nearly 2,500 public comments on change proposals for the 2005 NEC. Individual technical subcommittees (known as *code-making panels*), met for as long as four days to review and vote on the public comments within their areas of responsibility.

Homeland Security Concerns

Each panel has jurisdiction over particular articles of the National Electrical Code; a list of panels with their scopes is shown on page 70-9 of the 2005 NEC. In addition to the 19 regular panels, a temporary CMP-20 was formed for this Code-revision cycle. Its mission was to write a new Article 585 on "Critical Operations Power Systems (COPS)," which will become part of the 2008 National Electrical Code.

New Article 585 applies to electrical systems that must keep critical operations going in the event of a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or other emergency that causes a power outage. These include air traffic control centers; police, fire, and civil defense facilities; hospitals; 911 call centers; certain government and infrastructure functions; and facilities that handle hazardous materials such as refineries and chemical plants.

Three-Stage Revision Process

The National Electrical Code is revised every three years to keep it abreast of evolving electrical technology and construction methods. This was the second cycle of meetings in the process leading up to the 2008 NEC. The 20 code-making panels also met earlier this year to consider change proposals. Following letter ballots and possible appeals, the next edition of the NEC will be approved at the National Fire Protection Association's annual meeting, to be held in Boston during June 2007.

NECA's Leading Role

The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) has been a major participant in the National Electrical Code process for nearly a century, and is one of the few organizations with representatives on

every code-making panel. NECA members also chair six panels (more than any other organization), serve on the Technical Correlating Committee (supervisory body for the NEC), and chair the NFPA Electrical Section.

“Other people in the Code process see NECA members as impartial experts dedicated to electrical safety,” observes Brooke Stauffer, NECA’s executive director of standards and safety. “Product manufacturers sometimes seem like they’re mainly interested in using the NEC to sell products. But since we contractors have no commercial axe to grind, that makes us the ‘white hats’ of the Code process.”

NECA’s Legislative Priorities For The 110th Congress

The new Congress is now in power, representing both new challenges and new opportunities for NECA and members working to protect our industry’s interests in legislative matters. Accordingly, our government affairs efforts will focus on a somewhat different set of priorities in the 110th legislature than were pursued with the 109th. Following is a list of NECA issues. For more indepth discussion, NECA contractors are referred to www.necanet.org/government/ for a newly posted video on how the change in Congress impacts contractors.

Repeal of 3% Withholding. As previously reported, a new tax law was passed last spring that includes a “stealth” provision which, starting in 2011, requires 3-percent withholding from payments on all contracts with federal, state and local governments. Repeal of this law is our Priority #1.

Immigration Law Reform. A public clamor for immigration law reform remains strong. NECA will be working to assure that nothing in immigration reform law will hold an employer responsible for the hiring practices of subcontractors or suppliers.

Preventing Unfair Cross-subsidized Competition. The new Democratic majority will allow us to bring back our language to prevent unfair utility competition.

Forbidding Bid Shopping & Bid Peddling on Federal Contracts. The sponsor of our anti-bid-shopping language, Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-11-PA), is now a high-ranking member of the House Government Reform Committee which handles this issue, so we will be pursuing it actively.

Enforcement of Federal Contracting Rules. The sponsor of our legislation to enforce penalties on scofflaw contractors – such as debarment for violators of contract requirements, including prevailing wage laws – Carolyn Maloney (D-14-NY), is also now in a high-ranking position in the new Congress and able to pursue its passage actively.

Estate Tax Reform. While permanent repeal of the estate tax is now dead, some modest reforms are still a possibility and will be explored.

H2B Visa Reform or Alternative. Recognizing the need to expedite solutions to short-term labor shortages, NECA is exploring legislative and regulatory alternatives to the slow, bureaucratic and cumbersome requirements for current H2B visas for foreign workers.

Insurance Issues. NECA recently opened a dialogue with the insurance industry to seek possible federal- and state-level solutions to the cost and availability problems affecting insurance products contractors need.

Health Care Costs & Reforms. Health care availability, cost and delivery mechanisms will be a major issue in the 110th Congress. However this issue shapes up, you can be sure NECA will be there to represent you.

Reform of the Alternative Minimum Tax. Reform (but not complete repeal) of the alternative minimum

tax is on the agenda for 2007. NECA will be supporting the strongest remedy available to eliminate this unfair provision in tax law.

“Green Building” Initiatives. Energy-efficient “green buildings” are now in vogue, and legislative initiatives to promote expansion of the concept are anticipated. NECA will be involved in this issue which could be of major benefit to electrical contractors.

FUTURE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.....

March 4-6, 2007	Chapter Manager's Institute/San Francisco, CA
March 11-14, 2007	District 10 Meeting/Kona, HI
March 22-24, 2007	IBEW Outside/Inside Construction Conference/Washington, DC
August 23-26, 2007	District Six Mini-Convention/Coeur d'Alene, ID
October 5-8, 2007	NECA Convention/San Francisco, CA
October 4-7, 2008	NECA Convention/Chicago, IL
September 12-15, 2009	NECA Convention/Seattle, WA

NFPA 70E Revision Cycle Begins

Over the last three years, NFPA 70E-2004 *Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace* has revolutionized safety attitudes in the electrical construction industry. Terms like PPE (personal protective equipment), arc-blast, and limited approach boundary are now commonly used to describe electrical hazards and safeguards, while NFPA 70E has become one of the National Fire Protection Association's best-selling publications.

Like the National Electrical Code (NEC) and other industry standards, NFPA 70E is revised at regular intervals to stay current with electrical construction methods and protection technologies.

2009 Cycle Begins

The revision cycle leading up to the 2009 edition of 70E will officially begin with a four-day Report on Proposals (ROP) meeting in Hilton Head Island, SC. From January 16-20, committee members will review, discuss, and vote upon 579 change proposals. Many of these involve the following two tables, which together form the heart of the NFPA 70E standard:

- Table 130.7(C)(9)(a) - *Hazard/Risk Category Classifications*
- Table 130.7(C)(10) - *Protective Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Matrix*

Because a large number of proposals was anticipated, the NFPA 70E committee held a pre-ROP meeting in Raleigh, NC on August 22-23. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss general concepts for reorganizing the standard and making it easier to use. NECA is represented on the NFPA 70E committee by John Luke of ESCO Electric Company, headquartered in Marion, OH.