



# WATTS UP

January 01, 2008

Alaska Chapter NECA Newsletter

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

## Chapter Calendar

- January 1                      **New Year's Day**
- January 1                      **Anchorage JATC**
- January 8                      **Safety Committee**
- January 9                      **Board/Membership Meeting**

## Tool Box Talks

- January 07, 2008              **Aerial/Scissor Lifts**
- January 14, 2008              **Arc Blast/Fault Hazards**
- January 21, 2008              **Assured Grounding, GFCI Protection, Temp Power**
- January 28, 2008              **Blood Borne Pathogens**

## Pared-Down Energy Bill Signed Into Law - December 19, 2007

***Contractors could benefit from new energy-efficiency standards for federal property. Energy act also provides boost for biofuels, new standards for appliances ... and obsolescence for incandescent light bulbs.***

After a year of rhetoric, lobbying, veto threats and negotiations, President Bush moved quickly this morning to sign into law the pared down energy bill that was approved yesterday in the House of Representatives on a 314 to 100 vote. The measure revises legislation that got hung up in the Senate last week due to a controversial tax package.

In its revised form, it still provides some new work opportunities for electrical contractors, but not nearly as many as before the cuts, and a hoped-for boost for wind and solar projects was deleted.

In order to escape the president's veto threat, congressional leaders dropped a tax package that would have reduced breaks for the biggest oil and gas companies and extended breaks for wind and solar projects. Also removed from consideration was a provision requiring utilities to generate 15% of their power from solar, wind and other renewable technologies and a provision that would have imposed prevailing-wage requirements on certain federally funded projects for the first time.

The centerpiece of what's left is a new fuel-efficiency standard for automobile makers which will require that new passenger vehicles average 35 miles per gallon by 2020, a 40 percent increase from today's 25-mile average. "By 2020, the measure could reduce U.S. oil use by 1.1 million barrels a day, more than half the oil exported by Kuwait or Venezuela and equivalent of taking 28 million of today's vehicles off the road," according to The Washington Post.

The new law also mandates the use of 36 billion gallons annually of corn-based ethanol and other biofuels using feedstocks by 2022. None of these biofuels are commercially produced today, so these provisions could create a windfall for farmers and agribusiness, but they will also generate new

controversies since the technologies to support the change has yet to be developed and the potential economic and environmental impacts are uncertain.

What may be of more interest to electrical contractors is a requirement for the federal government to make all of its buildings carbon-neutral through energy efficiency and clean energy use by 2030. The General Services Administration is the country's biggest landlord," said Andrew Goldberg, chief lobbyist for the American Institute of Architects. "This will help transform the marketplace for systems and equipment that make buildings more energy efficient and reduce the reliance on fossil fuel."

In addition, the law sets new efficiency standards for appliances, which may result in some new installation and maintenance opportunities for contractors. And, it will phase out conventional incandescents, starting in 2012, with 100-watt bulbs, ultimately ceding the lighting market to more efficient compact fluorescent bulbs and light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

NECA is currently analyzing the new energy law and will provide additional information as it becomes clear how our members will be affected.

## **Lake Coulson Joins NECA Staff as Government Affairs Executive Director**

BETHESDA, MD - The National Electrical Contractors Association is pleased to announce that Lake Coulson will assume leadership of NECA's government affairs program beginning January 1, 2008. Coulson will succeed long-time Executive Director of Government Affairs Robert L. White upon White's retirement from NECA.

Coulson comes to NECA from the national office of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association, where he has served as Vice President, Government Relations, since 2000. He has extensive experience in lobbying Congressional leaders on behalf of the specialty contracting industry and has worked closely with NECA on issues including repeal of the 3% withholding law, immigration reform, estate tax repeal, and unfair utility competition.

Coulson will also assume responsibility for ECPAC, NECA's \$1 million-plus political action committee for the electrical construction industry.

"NECA's government affairs activities have grown considerably in the last three years, and I'm excited that Lake will be joining us," said John Grau, NECA CEO. "He has the experience and knowledge about the business and labor issues that are currently affecting our members, as well as the construction industry as a whole."

NECA also has a growing constituent action program that links a member of the association directly with one of the elected representatives. These NECA Key Contacts provide Congressional leaders with critical information from a constituent's point of view and have proven essential in moving key legislation forward.

ECPAC and the Key Contact program were both established through the efforts of outgoing NECA Executive Director of Government Affairs Bob White. White was recently honored with NECA's *Association Executive Distinguished Service Award* for his 37 years of service to NECA and the electrical construction industry.

At PHCC's National Association, Coulson was instrumental in securing legislation that ensures a competitive environment for small business contractors. He coordinated bi-partisan effort to amend energy bill to ensure separation of utilities and affiliates and was elected to serve as President of National Alliance for Fair Competition.

"I am looking forward to joining the NECA staff and continuing in the storied tradition of advocating for the electrical contractor industry," Coulson said. "During my tenure at PHCC, I worked frequently with NECA

staff on a variety of contractor-related issues, and I am thrilled for the chance to work with such a terrific organization.”

Prior to joining PHCC’s national staff, Coulson served as Director, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs for the Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute and as Manager, Government Affairs for the National Electrical Manufacturers Association. He earned his bachelors degree in economics from the University of Delaware and his master’s degree in public policy from the University of Maryland.

The National Electrical Contractors Association is the voice of the \$100 billion industry responsible for bringing power and communication systems to buildings and communities. NECA’s national office and 120 local chapters advance the electrical contracting industry through advocacy, education, research and standards development. NECA celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2001. For more information, visit [www.necanet.org](http://www.necanet.org).

### **FUTURE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.....**

|                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| October 4-7, 2008     | NECA Convention/Chicago, IL |
| September 12-15, 2009 | NECA Convention/Seattle, WA |



### **NECA NewsCast**

NECA NewsCast offers an insider’s view to the news, events, and people shaping the electrical construction industry. Please visit <http://www.necanet.org/newscast/> to watch.

Please visit