

# WATTS UP

July 01, 2007

Alaska Chapter NECA Newsletter

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

## Chapter Calendar

July 3

Anchorage JATC

July 4

Independence Day

July 8

NECA Open Golf Tournament

July 10

Safety Committee

July 11

Board Meeting/Membership Meeting Cancelled

## Tool Box Talks

July 02, 2007

Injury Prevention, Hands / Injury Prevention, Neck

July 09, 2007

Ladder Safety

July 16, 2007

Lift Trucks

July 23, 2007

Lockout/Tagout Energy Sources / Lockout/Tagout Procedures

July 30, 2007

Low Voltage, Indoors / Low Voltage, Outdoors

## INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Chapter office will be closed for Independence Day Wednesday, July 4, 2007.



## NECA Show Coupon Online

Know someone who could use a break? Get \$10 off the price of registration for 2007 NECA Show in San Francisco, Oct. 6-8. Show registration includes three days of access to more than 200 leading vendors from the electrical construction industry, plus admission to all Technical Workshops! Only one coupon per registration, but print as many coupons as needed to send to everyone in your company! Registration for NECA 2007 San Francisco, including the trade show, opens May 21. Download coupon now at <http://www.necaconvention.org/tradeshows>

## New Capitol Current Online video

Congressman Kendrick Meek (D-FL-17) discusses the next step in repealing the 3% withholding on government contracts in the latest Capitol Current Online.

Also, Nicole Blosser, NECA Director, Legislative Action, was interviewed on May 24 by Marc Bernier, a radio talk show host based in Florida. Blosser was invited on his show to discuss the 3% withholding issue while Bernier was hosting his show at the Hart Senate Building. While on air, Blosser was able to get Sen. Bob Corker to agree to co-sponsor the S. 777 repeal bill.

## Push For Repealing 3% Withholding Gains Ground But Still Needs Help

As you should be aware, a top legislative priority for NECA and the other 62 trade associations united in the Government Withholding Relief Coalition is winning repeal of a requirement that will otherwise take effect in 2011 and force federal, state, and local governments to withhold 3 percent from all payments for goods and services.

We are hopeful that a recent rash of co-sponsors in the House for a repeal measure will spur movement from the leadership, and we're also encouraged by developments with regard to a Defense Authorization bill. However, concerted constituent action is needed – now more than ever – to keep the momentum rolling.

When Rep. Kendrick Meek (D-FL-17) and Rep. Wally Herger (R-CA-2) introduced a repeal bill (HR 1023) in mid-February, it did not attract much attention at first. But during the past four weeks – following our Campaign for Quality Construction National Issues Conference – more than 65 members from both parties have signed on, raising the number of co-sponsors to 103. Including Meek, six Democrats and nine Republicans on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee are now sponsoring the measure.

Another promising development: Possibly signaling the first step toward repeal, the House Report on the recently passed Defense authorization bill directs the Department of Defense to assess the cost of complying with the 3% withholding requirement and to report findings to the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the House Committee on Armed Services by April 1, 2008. The report notes that “The committee is concerned that there may be significant costs associated with the management and implementation of such a withholding system, as well as potential cost and performance impacts for contractors.

#### How To Keep The Momentum Going

Featured in the latest edition of our Capitol Current Online, Rep. Meek indicated that the best way to move his bill forward is for its proponents to impress the need upon members of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures. He also said that it is critical that such contact take place this summer, “the sooner the better.

It is also imperative that U.S. Senators – particularly Democrats – be persuaded of the importance of eliminating the withholding threat. In March, Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho) introduced a repeal bill (S 777), but it has not fared as well as its House companion and has only four Republican co-sponsors. A larger number of bipartisan supporters would help move the bill toward passage.

Here are three effective ways to communicate with the lawmakers in the Senate:

1. E-mail your senators by visiting <http://www.necanet.org/writetocongress> Then, click on “Action Alerts” and click on “Co-sponsor Craig Bill.”
2. Call your senators. Then let NECA know that you made the calls with a simple e-mail, so we can follow-up with their office in Washington.
3. Or fax your senators your letter. Please copy NECA on any fax you send.

#### **New Capitol Current Online**

The latest Capitol Current Online video featuring NECA CEO John Grau discussing the importance of repealing the 3% withholding tax is cross-posted on NECA’s government affairs website and on Capitol Hill Broadcasting Network, a new streaming video website for The Hill newspaper. View the video on CHBN and click to make it rise in the ratings!

#### **"Summit Ruling Leaves OSHA in Difficult Position" Construction Labor Report Banner Vol. 53 , No. 2622 , P. 381 ; Wilczek, Yin**

A new ruling by the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission could exempt general contractors for safety violations caused by subcontractors. Currently, a general contractor can be cited for such violations if its employees, as well as those of its subcontractors, are exposed to a hazard because the general contractor is deemed to be in control of a worksite. The OSHA panel however concluded that the citation of a general contractor just because it controls a site runs contrary to federal regulations that require an employer to keep a safe worksite only for its workers. The ruling may be appealed by labor organizations and even OSHA itself. It is still unclear how the decision will impact state guidelines regarding worksite safety.

#### **"U.S. Boosts Wind Power Output as Politics, Costs Favor Its Use" Investor's Business Daily (06/04/07) P. A1 ; Katzeff, Paul**

Wind power output in the United States continues to rise amid pressure from special interest groups and the need to meet the country's growing power demand affordably. In 2006, wind accounted for 25.8 billion kilowatt hours (KWh) of electricity produced in the United States. Although the statistic is conservative when compared to coal, which accounted for 1.987 trillion KWh of electric power generated last year, it represents a turning point for wind power output. Last year, wind power use rose 45 percent, while coal generation increased only 1 percent, nuclear output 4.4 percent, and natural gas 34 percent. Oil generation saw the largest drop, falling 43 percent amid significant cost increases. Experts attribute the surge to economics and growing concern over climate change that has helped shape state efforts to require utilities to step up the amount of power generated from renewable energy sources. "Wind would not be advancing in the market the way it is today if it weren't within a competitive range costwise with other energy options," explains Randall Swisher of the American Wind Energy Association.

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

August 23-26, 2007	District Six Mini-Convention/Coeur d'Alene, ID
October 5-8, 2007	NECA Convention/San Francisco, CA
December 15, 2007	Annual Meeting/Christmas Party
October 4-7, 2008	NECA Convention/Chicago, IL
September 12-15, 2009	NECA Convention/Seattle, WA

## **2008 NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE APPROVED**

The 2008 National Electrical Code (NEC) was approved last week at the annual meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in Boston. Significant revisions to the 2008 NEC include:

Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) will now be required for most branch circuits in newly-constructed dwellings.

All receptacles installed in dwellings must be tamper-resistant type, starting in 2011.

Ground-fault circuit-interrupters (GFCI) requirements were expanded to cover more outlets in dwellings.

Definitions of "neutral conductor" and "neutral point" were added to Article 100.

Definitions and terminology relating to "grounding" and "bonding" were revised throughout the Code.

New requirements for selective coordination of overcurrent protection were added to Article 700 "Emergency Systems" and Article 701 "Legally-Required Standby Systems."

Four new articles were added to the Code:

- Article 355 Reinforced Thermosetting Resin Conduit: Type RTRC
- Article 522, Control Systems for Permanent Amusement Attractions
- Article 626, Electrified Truck Parking Space
- Article 708, Critical Operations Power Systems (COPS)

Article 780, Closed-Loop and Programmed Power Distribution, was deleted from the 2008 NEC. It covered a special cabling system for "smart houses" that was subsequently rendered obsolete by Internet-based control and communications schemes.

Rigid Nonmetallic Conduit (Type RNC) was renamed "PVC Conduit," a designation that conforms to common field practice.

### **Last-Minute Appeals**

Revision of the NEC and other NFPA standards is a three-step process:

1. Change proposals are submitted and considered by the twenty code-making panels responsible for different articles (short chapters) of the NEC.

2. Next, public comments are submitted to the CMPs.

3. Last, a new edition of the Code is approved at an annual meeting of the entire association.

Typically there are a number of appeals on the floor of the NFPA annual meeting, requesting last-minute revisions of the NEC. (NFPA adopted new procedures this year to streamline this process; for more information see <http://www.neca-neis.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=viewArticle&ARTICLEID=244&header=home>) At the June 7 meeting in Boston, 38 amending motions were presented, only 8 of which were approved.

#### How NECA Helps Create the NEC

Last week's meeting in Boston was the culmination of a 19-month revision process that began with the submission of change proposals to revise the NEC in November 2005. NECA is one of only a few organizations with representatives on every Code-Making Panel (CMP). In addition, NECA members chair five of the CMPs, there are two NECA representatives on the NEC Technical Correlating Committee, and a NECA person chairs the NFPA Electrical Section.

The 2008 National Electrical Code will be published in September. This allows time for training and study before jurisdictions began adopting the NEC for regulatory enforcement in January 2008, using it in their contractor licensing exams, etc.