



November 01, 2008

Alaska Chapter NECA Newsletter

www.alaskaneca.org

Chapter Calendar

November 4

November 4

November 11

November 11

November 12

November 14-19

November 27

December 5

Anchorage JATC

Election Day

Veteran's Day

Safety Committee

Board/Membership Meeting

IFEBP in San Antonio

Thanksgiving

Annual Meeting/Christmas Party

Tool Box Talks

November 03, 2008

November 10, 2008

November 17, 2008

November 24, 2008

The Safety Attitude

Tools, Hand and Power Tool Safety

Tools, Hydraulic and Pneumatic

Tools, Powder-Actuated

NECA 2008 Chicago a Success!

NECA 2008 Chicago is now in the history books. Over 10,000 industry professionals attended NECA's convention and trade show in Chicago during the 3 day event! If you were there, you know what a great success it was! If you missed it, you can watch videos, see pictures and get all the news from NECA 2008 Chicago on our exclusive convention blog. And get ready for even more opportunities at NECA 2009 Seattle! Thousands of electrical contracting professionals took in management seminars, product-and-services exhibits, general sessions and special entertainment over three days at the convention and trade show of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) in Chicago, Oct. 4-7.

NECA 2008 Chicago broke all previous attendance records for NECA's largest annual event, and Beth Ellis, NECA Executive Director, Convention/Exposition, wasn't surprised.

"We doubled the number of technical workshops offered at the NECA Show, and we had more pre-convention workshops than ever before," Ellis said. "NECA 2008 Chicago was dedicated to putting electrical contractors in touch with the information and the contacts they need to make their businesses more productive. We bring all aspects of the industry together in one location for one great event – and that saves them time and money!"

Interest in green building continues to have a major impact on the electrical industry. NECA 2008 Chicago included numerous resources for electrical contractors developing energy solutions for clients with sustainable building goals. It marked the first time NECA has partnered with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to produce "LEED for New Construction Technical Review," a full-day program for contractors and project managers. Other well-attended workshops on LED lighting and business opportunities in solar photovoltaic installations affirmed NECA's decision to expand, for the first time in 2008, to two full days of educational programs prior to the convention.

The NECA Show featured over 300 exhibitors from across the electrical construction industry and included the Green Alley, a section devoted to all-things-sustainable. The Green Alley got considerable traffic, thanks in part to a solar panel installation demo set up by IBEW Local 11 from the Los Angeles

area.

"I think this was the best trade show so far," commented NECA member Lew Frain of Con J. Franke Electric Inc. of Stockton, California. "I've been coming to the NECA Show for years now, and there's a new energy running through everyone. I think there are lots of new products and new vendors to explore. It's a sign of how much the entire industry has expanded."

Convention-goers enjoyed the improvisational humor of Chicago's Second City comedy troupe for Sunday's opening general session. Special sessions on Monday included a forum on labor relations issues and an eye-opening panel discussion on counterfeit electrical products. As Tuesday's keynote speaker, NBC's Bob Costas entertained the NECA crowd with stories from his sports casting career, and a special concert by Bruce Hornsby, Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder closed out the event in style on Tuesday evening.

Plans are already underway for NECA's next convention and trade show which will be held in Seattle, Sept. 12-15, 2009. Preliminary meeting information for NECA 2009 Seattle attendees and exhibitors, plus highlights from NECA 2008 Chicago, can be found on www.necaconvention.org.

NECA Adopts Formal Policy on Energy Independence at Board of Governors Meeting

Organization Focuses on Green Building at 2008 Convention, Trade Show

As economic worries grow and energy prices continue to rise, the National Electrical Contractors Association's (NECA) Board of Governors adopted an association-wide formal and comprehensive policy on energy independence at its annual meeting, Oct. 4.

The policy encourages investment in renewable and alternative energy product, modernizing and securing the national electric grid, and actively working to decrease U.S. reliance on oil and energy resources from other countries.

"This policy formalizes the ongoing commitment and expertise that NECA member electrical contractors offers to the growing market of green construction," explained NECA's Executive Director of Marketing Rob Colgan in a presentation to the Board of Governors. "NECA was an early industry leader in the development of photovoltaic solar technologies and continues to provide comprehensive solutions to customers that address the need to conserve, utilize efficiently, and safely distribute domestic forms of clean energy."

The formal resolution was recommended by participants an Energy Solutions Summit the organization hosted in July to explore the opportunities and existing expertise NECA members have already applied to the green construction market.

In addition to adopting the energy independence policy, NECA's annual convention and tradeshow are focusing on energy conservation and efficiency, green technology and renewable energy production. The "Green Alley" on the NECA Show floor spotlights environmentally-friendly products and services, and technical and management seminars on green electrical topics are a special education track for the convention.

"At NECA we aren't just talking about the importance of green solutions. We are dedicated to providing the resources our members need to remain competitive in the ever-evolving green market," acknowledged incoming NECA President Rex Ferry who presided over the Energy Solutions Summit and encouraged the Board of Governors to approve the proposed policy. Complete text of the resolution and adopted policy follows.

WHEREAS, the health and continued growth of the U.S. economy depend on reliable sources and distribution of electricity; and,

WHEREAS, sources to create that electricity should not be limited to a few existing fuels that are finite and exhaustible; and,

WHEREAS, electrical contractors are key to the creation, delivery and utilization of electricity.

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that NECA, through its Board of Governors, shall affirm its support for and acceptance of the following policy:

Policy 18

Energy Independence

The U.S. economy and national security depend on affordable, reliable electricity. The electrical industry advances economic growth and productivity, promotes business development and expansion, and

provides solid employment opportunities to American workers — both directly and indirectly. Since electricity is the fuel that runs our homes and businesses, growth in the use of electricity has coincided with growth in the nation's Gross Domestic Product ever since the end of World War II.

Our nation's access to affordable, reliable electricity depends on the smooth performance of a complex system. That system includes the generation of power, transmission, distribution and the installation and maintenance of the systems within buildings. Each of these elements is interconnected. Then, too, electricity, in its origin and delivery, is connected to other sources of energy. Any breakdown in these connections could have disastrous impacts on both the economy and the security of our nation.

The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) supports a multi-faceted approach to making the United States energy independent and commits its active participation in helping implement an energy policy premised on independence. Our association's efforts include working within the legislative and regulatory arenas and with other relevant entities to help improve electric reliability and infrastructure investment, maintain the diversity of all available fuel resources including nuclear energy, enhance energy efficiency, and increase use of renewable energy sources. NECA also encourages traditional producers of energy to embrace new methods that would create jobs, increase resource yield, and promote environmental and economic sustainability.

Electrical contractors who construct and maintain the infrastructure to generate, transmit, and distribute electrical power play a key role in the move towards domestic energy independence. The electrical contractors of the United States will be vital in ensuring the independence, security, and prosperity of America's economy.

NECA Presents 2008 Industry Partner Award to OSHA Agency Spearheaded High-Voltage Worker Safety Through Transmission & Distribution Partnership

As part of the National Electrical Contractor Association (NECA)'s annual convention being held this week in Chicago, this year's Industry Partner Award ceremony celebrated NECA's renewed Electrical Transmission & Distribution Partnership Agreement with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) by recognizing the leadership of Assistant Secretary of Labor Edwin G. Foulke, Jr. Assistance Secretary Foulke Accepts 2008 NECA Industry Partner Award for OSHA Established in 2004 with six founding members, the Partnership was originally intended to last for two years. But on Sept. 16, OSHA invited industry stakeholders, including NECA, NECA members MDU Construction Services Group, MYR Group and Quanta Services, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the Edison Electric Institute and leading U.S. line contractors to once more sign the agreement that will extend the formal collaboration for two more years.

The Partnership was first extended in 2006, demonstrating the organizations' commitment to improving worker safety in the high-voltage electric line construction industry. Today, the OSHA T & D Partnership covers an estimated 80 percent of total workers in the line construction industry.

During the luncheon program Assistant Secretary Foulke commended NECA members for making safety an industry-wide priority. "We don't often hear about the lives we save with our safety precautions, but through the T&D Partnership, we have concrete evidence that we are saving lives," Foulke said. "When we think of the families of your workers, you have to remember how important it is to them that you get your workers home safe and sound at the end of day. That's what the T&D Partnership is doing – making sure those workers get home safely."

"Leadership in safety, both for workers and end-users, is part of NECA's legacy and something I will continue to champion," said NECA President Elect Rex Ferry president of the organization Rex Ferry of Valley Electric Consolidated. "We are grateful to Assistant Secretary Foulke and OSHA for their cooperative approach to working with our industry."

The NECA Industry Partner Award recognizes those organizations or individuals that, though not members of the National Electrical Contractors Association, contribute to the electrical contracting industry's success through their decisions, actions, or cooperation with NECA. Previous winners of the Industry Partner Award include the National Fire Protection Agency (1996), Graybar Electric Co. (2004), and University of Kansas professor and ELECTRI International researcher Thomas E. Glavinich (2007).

NECA Political Leadership Summit Reaches Across the Aisle on Capitol Hill Brings Legislators Together on Energy, Small Business Issues

While the national party conventions offered constituents the opportunity to hear directly from political leaders, members of the National Electrical Contractors Assn. (NECA) **Political Leadership Council** (PLC) took their message to Capitol Hill last week, where they met with their elected officials, received a briefing on national economic issues, and discussed what's on the mind of small business owners directly with leaders making the decisions that affect their businesses.

Energy policy dominated much of the two-day meeting. NECA recently proposed a policy statement on "energy independence" emphasizing the need for the association to continue to work within the legislative and regulatory arenas to help improve electric reliability and infrastructure investment, maintain the diversity of available fuel resources, enhance energy efficiency, and increased use of renewable energy. Legislators who spoke at the PLC Summit welcomed this involvement.

Sen. John Ensign (R-NV), a strong advocate for increased use of solar technologies, complimented NECA's advocacy for renewable technologies. "By funding training in PV [photovoltaic] panel installation, NECA is making sure that the technology necessary to use renewable energy sources is correctly and safely installed," he said.

PLC members also heard from **Rep. Wally Herger** (R-CA), who spoke on his continued efforts to repeal the 3% withholding requirement that forces all government contractors to give up a percentage of their earnings. "This affects small businesses nationwide, business that can least afford this kind of burden right now," Herger said. NECA has been a vocal opponent of the unfair withholding tax.

Other legislators who joined the Summit's industry's reception at the U.S. Capitol included **Rep. John Porter** (R-NV), **Rep. Russ Carnahan** (D-MO), and 12 others. **Rep. Nydia Velazquez** (D-NY), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Small Business, was honored as Legislator of the Year in a special award given by PLC Chairman Jerry Nixon.

"The PLC has done a tremendous job in bolstering NECA's political action committee," said Lake Coulson, NECA executive director of government affairs. ECPAC was recently recognized as one of the 50 largest political action committees in the country. "Member involvement is crucial to any association's political outreach, and PLC members are tremendous advocates for their industry. Through ECPAC and the PLC, NECA is able to raise the industry's issues and profile on the national political stage. Our access to Washington insiders and policy-makers give us direction in the pursuit of our legislative priorities."

About ECPAC and the PLC: Founded in 1978, the Electrical Construction Political Action Committee (ECPAC) has helped elect scores of industry-friendly members of Congress. In 2001, NECA made the commitment to bring ECPAC to the \$1 million level. NECA members join the Political Leader Council (PLC) to show leadership in political activities; contributions to ECPAC are the primary method for demonstrating that commitment. ECPAC reached its \$1 million goal in 2004 and has exceeded that amount every year, making it the largest specialty contractor PAC in existence. ECPAC is also nationally ranked as one of the top 50 PACs in operation.

About NECA: NECA is the voice of the \$130 billion electrical construction industry that brings power, light, and communication technology to buildings and communities across the U.S. NECA's national office and 119 local chapters advance the industry through advocacy, education, research and standards development.. For more information, visit www.necanet.org.

"Skilled Trades Seek Workers"

Wall Street Journal (08/19/08) P. B1 ; Troianovski, Anton

Manufacturers, unions, and construction contractors are employing new recruitment strategies to attract younger talent. There are plenty of vacancies in the skilled labor sector, but few takers due to nagging misconceptions about the blue collar trade. Many people still view welding and pipe-fitting as being low-level positions that offer little money, status, or chance for advancement. To change this perception, unions and employers are turning to the Web, the military, and cable channel personality Mike Rowe to call attention to the benefits of a career in the skilled trades. Rowe recently appeared with construction equipment maker Terex at a trade show and has signed on to help the company recruit young workers. Rowe has also addressed employees of industrial supplies distributor W.W. Grainger to talk up the advantages of the business. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the National Electrical Contractors Association, meanwhile, have teamed up on an online campaign to get high school graduates to take an apprenticeship instead of attending college.

Renewed OSHA T&D Partnership Powering Line Safety To New Heights

The formal agreement between OSHA, leading line contractors, and NECA and other electrical industry associations that was signed on August 20, 2004, was originally set for a two-year duration, but it was renewed — and expanded — in 2006. Now, with much important groundwork done and much work left to do, the [**OSHA Transmission & Distribution Strategic Safety Partnership**](#) was extended again during a ceremony earlier this month at the Department of Labor in Washington, D.C.

One of only six national partnerships between employers and the federal job safety agency, the OSHA T&D Partnership is a formal collaboration of industry stakeholders working together to improve safety for workers in the electric line construction industry. The members are OSHA, NECA, the Edison Electric Institute (which represents utilities), IBEW, Asplundh Tree Expert Company, Henkels & McCoy, MDU Construction Services Group, Pike Electric, MYR Group, and Quanta Services. Partnership contractors employ about 80 percent of all T&D workers in the U.S.

Representatives from all partners, including OSHA, serve on various task teams. Each team is involved with specific aspects of the project such as analyzing and updating statistical data to identify causative factors for accidents, documenting “best practices,” communicating findings, and developing and delivering an educational curriculum on T&D safety.

Accomplishments to date include the development and delivery of a specialized OSHA 10-hour course for workers, which addresses safe procedures for high-voltage work, and a special OSHA 20-hour program for supervisors and foremen emphasizing their responsibility to provide for employee safety. Thousands of employees in the T&D industry have already completed this training and are passing it along to their co-workers.

In addition, the partnership has thus far approved and published “Best Practices” on eight topics, and every employee working for a partner company is now required to follow the recommendations they contain. The following Best Practices are available on the partnership’s website at

www.powerlinesafety.org:

Job Briefings

Pre-use Inspection of Rubber Protective Equipment

Administrative Controls

Qualified Observer

Insulate and Isolate Safety Performance Check

Lock-to-Lock Use of Rubber Gloves and Sleeves

Cradle-to-Cradle Use of Insulating Rubber Gloves and Sleeves

Rubber Insulating PPE for the Live Line Tool Method on Distribution Lines

The ultimate goal of the partnership is to reduce the number of fatalities, injuries, and illnesses in the T&D industry, and the stakeholders have already made significant strides in that direction. For example, along with other good news, OSHA reports that the fatality rate per every 100,000 T&D workers has been reduced from 67.24 in 2003 to 24.55 in 2007, a 63.5 percent reduction. However, that rate is still nearly seven times higher than the average across the American workforce, justifying the continuation of the important efforts of the OSHA/T&D Partnership.

"How to Assemble an Employee Handbook"

Inc.com (08/01/08) Vol. 1 , No. 5 , P. 1

Many entrepreneurs find themselves too busy running their company to think about how to run it, only creating company policies when situations arise. However, creating policies in advance provides a measure of legal protection in the event that an employee sues for wrongful termination, harassment, or illegal discrimination. While not lawsuit-proof, a handbook establishes policies for the court and proves when the policy was put in place. Furthermore, establishing employment policies with a progressive, employee-friendly attitude can be a powerful tool for recruiting and sustaining morale. To create an employee handbook, first look at the big picture. Employee handbooks pit consistency against flexibility. Emphasizing at the beginning of the handbook that the handbook merely establishes general guidelines provides flexibility while establishing best practices. Be sure to address the legal issues. Harassment and discrimination guidelines must affirm that the company is an equal opportunity employer, that the company will not tolerate harassment or illegal discrimination, and outline the steps an employee should take to report violations. Identify as generally as possible the days and hours of the workweek, as well as rules for breaks and meals, as well as guidelines for determining which employees are salaried and which are hourly. Companies that work in potentially dangerous environments should detail a safety policy that

meets state and federal regulations. Explain employee benefits. Companies must allow for jury duty and workers' comp leave, and may states demand other leave options, such as for military service. Also outline any voluntary benefits, including insurance and retirement benefits, and family and bereavement leave. Require employees to acknowledge with a signed document that they have received and read the handbook, and that they will seek clarification on any unclear issue.

**"Green Goes Mainstream in New U.S. Workplaces"
Investor's Business Daily (08/21/08) Howell, Donna**

Nationwide, more building owners are adding energy-efficient, green features for financial and societal return on investment. Increasingly affordable green expertise and incentives such as faster city approval boost appeal. Ashley Katz, spokeswoman for the U.S. Green Building Council, stated: "We've definitely seen large growth in green buildings. For commercial projects, we generally say you can build a green building for not a penny more than a non-green." That is in such markets as Boston and San Francisco, contends Brooks Rainwater of The American Institute of Architects. He added: "But if you talk to someone in Salt Lake City, they're still seeing further cost in green design." However, those who do have to spend 1 percent to 2 percent more will likely recoup the additional outlay in the first couple of years, Katz assures. That is because green buildings typically save between 30 percent and 50 percent on energy bills. Los Angeles, Houston and the nation's capital are just three of the hot spots for green buildings. Symantec received high marks earlier in the year for its office campus in Culver City, Calif. Luigi Sciabarrasi, vice president of real estate at Symantec, remarked: "We believe the paybacks will be long term, with less attrition and sick days when you build healthier buildings." The Symantec facility boasts everything from a reflective membrane roof system to water-saving, dual-flush toilets.

FUTURE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.....

September 12-15, 2009	NECA Convention/Seattle, WA
October 2-5	NECA Convention/Boston, MA
October 22-25	NECA Convention/San Diego, CA
September 30-October 3	NECA Convention/Las Vegas, NV
October 12-15	NECA Convention/Washington, DC