



# WATTS UP

October 01, 2007

Alaska Chapter NECA Newsletter

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

## Chapter Calendar

October 2

Anchorage JATC

October 5-8

NECA Convention in San Francisco, CA

October 9

Safety Committee

October 10

Board Meeting/Membership Meeting Cancelled



## Tool Box Talks

October 01, 2007

Shock Hazards

October 08, 2007

Silica Dust

October 15, 2007

Slipping/Tripping Hazards

October 22, 2007

Testing: Pre-Op and Startup

October 29, 2007

The Safety Attitude

## Search for Brooke Stauffer Still Underway in Michigan Efforts So Far Unsuccessful



NECA staff deeply regrets to report that search efforts thus far have failed to locate wreckage of the private plane that was carrying NECA executive director of safety and standards Brooke Stauffer, and his fiancée Karen Dodds, both of Washington, D.C. Stauffer and Dodds departed on Aug. 24, from a small local airport on Mackinaw Island in Michigan, on what was to be a short sightseeing flight over Lake Huron to visit her family in the area of Bad Axe, Mich. Dodds was piloting the plane at the time of the disappearance.

An extensive search by the local Civil Air Patrol was turned over to the Michigan State Police after debris from a small plane washed onto the shore of Bois Blanc Island on Wednesday, Aug. 29. The Michigan State Police Underwater Recovery Unit is currently conducting an investigation along the Lake Huron shoreline. Search efforts are concentrated within the triangle connecting Mackinac Island, Bois Blanc Island and Hammond Bay, an area approximately two and one half miles wide. The state police have reported that the search will continue until the remains are recovered.

“Brooke’s loss is a terrible blow to all of us in the electrical industry,” said NECA CEO John Grau. “He possessed irreplaceable knowledge about the National Electrical Code, as well as the great ability to write about complex, highly technical subjects in a way that we could all understand.”

Stauffer had been recently appointed to head the National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) Electrical Section – an honor and recognition that he was one of the nation’s top code experts. He was an active participant in the NFPA code development process, serving on multiple technical committees and code-making panels and wrote several books about the National Electrical Code, including the NEC Style Manual.

“Brooke cares deeply about the electrical industry,” wrote Mark Early in *NEC Digest* on the NFPA website, [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). “He was the driving force behind the formation of the Inspection Initiative and the Electrical Code Coalition, which both sought to strengthen electrical inspectors and to promote adoption of the NEC.”

Stauffer also developed NECA’s highly regarded “National Electrical Installation Standards (NEIS)”, which set specific guidelines for a wide range of electrical installations.

In addition to his technical writing, Stauffer authored a children’s science fiction book and had several novels and stories in progress at the time of disappearance. His colleagues at NECA remember him first and foremost as a writer, whether it was his postcards from his travels or his notes taken in longhand on legal pads at various committee meetings.

Stauffer’s son, Christian, set up a blog at [karenandbrooke.blogspot.com](http://karenandbrooke.blogspot.com) where updates and information about the search are posted.

## **New NECA-Supported Bill Addresses Employee-Misclassification Abuse**

As announced in another article posted, an important NECA-supported bill on contractor accountability has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. *But, that’s not the only reason we’re cheering!* On the Senate side, there’s now a new bill (also developed with help from NECA and allies) that also confronts the problem of lawbreaking contractors robbing federal contracting opportunities away from the good guys.

It’s called “The Independent Contractor Proper Classification Act of 2007.” This bill (S2044) was recently introduced by Sens. Barack Obama (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), and Patty Murray (D-WA).

NECA supports this legislation, as it will protect workers, taxpayers and NECA contractors against the misclassification of employees by competitors – a problem that costs the government billions of dollars; denies thousands of Americans basic employee protections such as workers compensation and overtime pay; and puts honest, union-employing contractors (who properly classify field workers as employees, rather than independent contractors) at a substantial competitive disadvantage.

Specifically, S2044 would:

- remove tax code excuses for worker misclassification (Section 530);
- enable the IRS to provide clearer worker classification guidance;
- allow workers to challenge their classification status and provide whistle blower protections for those who challenge their classification; and
- require increased IRS and Labor Department cooperation to promote greater tax code and labor and employment law compliance.

## **Contractor Accountability Bill Introduced, NECA Issues Action Alert**

*Tired of competitors unfairly getting a leg up on you and your federal contract bids? Tired of non-union shops gaming the system while you’re playing by the rules? Here’s your chance to make a difference!*

NECA recently sent an Action Alert urging all member contractors to write to their representatives in Congress and ask them to co-sponsor the Contractors and Federal Spending Accountability Act of 2007 (HR 3033). This legislation recently introduced by Reps. Carolyn Maloney (D-14-NY) and Edolphus

Towns (D-10-NY) would raise the quality, performance and legal standards for the federal government procurement system and ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent only with law-abiding and taxpaying firms.

The bill aims to stop the federal government from doing business with lawbreakers. It would establish a centralized database on actions taken against federal contractors and require a description of each action so that contractors ineligible or debarred from receiving public contracts would no longer be able to slip through the cracks and steal future jobs from ethical contractors.

#### How to Write Your Representative

1. E-mail your Representative by visiting <http://www.necanet.org/private/government/> Click on "Write to Congress" and then "Cosponsor H.R. 3033" Or, go directly to <http://www.necanet.org/writetocongress>
2. Call your Representative. Then let us know that you made the call with an e-mail to [jjk@necanet.org](mailto:jjk@necanet.org)
3. Or, Fax your letter to your Representative. Please copy NECA on any fax you send at 301-215-4500

#### Broader Accountability Legislation Sought

HR 3033 contains provisions long-sought by NECA and other associations united in the Campaign for Quality Construction. In fact, it was developed by CQC members.

Now, the plan is to amend the measure as it undergoes markup in committee to include such items as Rep. Paul Kanjorski's (D-11-OH) bid listing measure and Rep. Tom Davis's (R-11-VA) prohibition on internet reverse auctions. The complete package proposed by the CQC would:

- Require certification that contractors are abiding by legal employment and workforce eligibility laws and are submitting proper withholding taxes if operating as independent contractors;
- Require a determination that contractors have a clean record of abiding by environmental, labor, antitrust, tax, anti-fraud, OSHA and federal state and local felony laws;
- Create a contractor accountability database for use by all contracting agencies;
- Maintain and enforce use of a centralized list (database) to be used by all federal agencies involved in construction of contractors debarred or otherwise ineligible to receive public contracts;
- Require bid listing or a close alternative;
- Forbid bid shopping and peddling;
- Exempt construction from use of internet reverse auction procedures;
- Require compliance with prevailing wage law;
- Require compliance with laws against employment of illegal workers.

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

December 15, 2007	Annual Meeting/Christmas Party
October 4-7, 2008	NECA Convention/Chicago, IL
September 12-15, 2009	NECA Convention/Seattle, WA