



## Chapter Calendar

October 7	Anchorage JATC
October 4-7	NECA Convention/Chicago, IL
October 8	Board/Membership Meeting Cancelled
October 14	Inside Negotiations
October 14	Safety Committee
December 5	Annual Meeting/Christmas Party

## Tool Box Talks

October 06, 2008	Shock Hazards
October 13, 2008	Silica Dust
October 20, 2008	Slipping/Tripping Hazards
October 27, 2008	Testing: Pre-Op and Startup

## NECA 2008 Chicago Newsletter Now Online

The latest issue of Chicago Circuit is now online, and full of info about the upcoming NECA Convention and Trade Show in Chicago, Oct. 4-7. Get the inside scoop on pre-convention seminars and technical workshops, plus a chance to win free airfare to Chicago!

<http://www.necaconvention.org/news/index.cfm?fa=displayNewsletter&issueID=1021>

## 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](http://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](http://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