



WATTS UP

September 01, 2008

Alaska Chapter NECA Newsletter

www.alaskaneca.org

Chapter Calendar

September 1	Labor Day
September 2	Anchorage JATC
September 3-4	Inside Negotiations
September 9	Safety Committee
September 10	Board/Membership Meeting
October 4-7	NECA Convention/Chicago, IL
December 5	Annual Meeting/Christmas Party

Tool Box Talks

September 01, 2008	Power Lines
September 08, 2008	Personal Protective Equipment
September 15, 2008	PPE: Rubber
September 22, 2008	Responding to Your Customer's Unsafe Acts
September 29, 2008	Safety 101: General Guidelines

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>

"Strategies: How to Keep Your Business Bank Accounts Safe"

USA Today (07/25/08) Abrams, Rhonda

The recent collapse of a major U.S. bank highlights the need to understand the federal government's deposit insurance protections. The U.S. government, through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC), protects up to \$100,000 per individual, but that applies to all accounts an individual has at any one bank, including both business and personal accounts if the individual is the sole proprietor. Small businesses can easily have more than \$100,000 in their business bank accounts, which can include a business checking account, a money market account, and a certificate of deposit. Some retail operations and restaurants can have tens of thousands of dollars going through a bank account every month that could quickly exceed \$100,000. Additionally, many small business owners use the same bank for their business and personal accounts, as it is easier, and often necessary, to transfer funds between accounts. To make sure all your assets are protected, it is important to know a few specifics. The FDIC covers only \$100,000 per bank per "entity," which includes individuals, corporations, and legal partnerships, each of which can have separate FDIC insurance up to the \$100,000 limit. Sole proprietorships are not separate entities from the individual, so if your business is not incorporated or a LLC, your business accounts are not covered separately from your personal accounts. However, if a spouse is on a personal account, he or she is also insured up to \$100,000. Legal corporations, LLCs, and legal partnerships are separate entities. A legal partnership is a single entity with a \$100,000 insurance limit, no matter how many

partners are in the legal partnership. If you have more than \$100,000 in all your business and personal accounts, consider switching some funds to another FDIC-insured bank.

"Many Fans of L.E.D.'s Say This Bulb's Time Has Come" New York Times (07/28/08) P. C3 ; Taub, Eric A.

After years of light emitting diodes (LEDs) lighting traffic signs, companies have started using the artificial lighting to illuminate their buildings. Sentry Equipment has integrated LEDs with incandescent and fluorescent bulbs to light its facility in Oconomowoc, Wis. Since installing the LEDs, Sentry has saved \$7,000 a year in energy costs and will recover the extra money it spent on the installation in less than two years. The company will not need to change the bulbs for 20 years. Sentry is not the only organization to notice LEDs' potential. LEDs are now also used to light the orb that falls in Times Square on New Year's Eve, and negotiations are underway to possibly retrofit the Empire State Building with LED fixtures. The trend comes as the Big Three lighting companies are transitioning to more energy efficient technologies.

"The Next Generation" Energybiz (06/08) Vol. 5 , No. 3 , P. 44 ; Opalka, William

The utility industry is refining its recruiting strategies to fill the void left by retiring baby boomers. The need for skilled laborers is acute, particularly in the burgeoning wind energy sector, which is growing at such a rapid pace that some experts fear there may not be enough trained workers to operate it. "One of the key things about the industry is that it's growing so fast, all these programs combined from all these community colleges still won't provide enough trained workers," says Al Zeits, who founded a wind energy technology program at an Iowa community college four years ago. To address the problem, utilities have partnered with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) to spearhead training for the next generation of utility workers. Efforts are underway to develop a union-utility trust fund to underwrite training for incoming workers and hone the skills of current utility workers. "This is something we've done for quite a long time on the construction side with contractors contributing 1 percent of payroll," says IBEW director Jim Hunter. IBEW has proposed opening training centers in Arizona, Florida, Kansas, Michigan and Washington at former utility facilities by this summer. The Center for Energy Workforce Development, an industry consortium that serves the electric, gas and nuclear industries, is also working to identify best practices, training methods and curricula that can be taught at community colleges, or through apprenticeships. Pacific Gas & Electric's Power Pathway program is based on the apprenticeship model, providing students with on-the-job training, with the potential of full-time employment by the end of the course.

NECA Board of Governors 2008 Meeting Materials Now Online

The next meeting of the Board of Governors will be held in the Imperial Ballroom of The Fairmont Chicago (200 North Columbus Drive) in Chicago, IL on **Saturday, October 4, 2008**. Whether you're representing a NECA chapter or just want to know what business the Board will cover, meeting details and materials are now posted on NECA's website. <http://www.necanet.org/about/about-neca/governance/?fa=meeting>

Special Session on Counterfeit Electrical Products at NECA 2008 Chicago

The increase in electrical contractors' concern about counterfeit products is so significant that **ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR** magazine will be sponsoring a special panel discussion on counterfeit electrical products at the NECA Convention and Trade Show, Oct. 7, in Chicago. The special one-hour session on **Counterfeit Products: Can You Be Sued?** will feature panelists from across the electrical construction industry, including product manufacturers, distributors, contractors, as well as a legal expert in the liability issues counterfeit products pose for all. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentations.

"Location Incentives: Valuable Tax Breaks for Businesses" Tax Hotline (08/08) Vol. 28 , No. 8 , P. 5 ; Plostock, Mark A.

The federal government offers tax breaks for companies to establish operations in economically distressed areas, and state and local governments also provide incentives to draw businesses to their communities. Governments offer a variety of tax breaks, collectively called location tax incentives, which

can include abatements, credits deduction, and exemptions. Abatements are the reduction of real estate tax for a limited time. Credits are dollar-for-dollar savings off federal and/or state and local taxes for rehabilitating real estate and creating jobs. Deductions are subtractions from income subject to tax for investments in equipment within designated areas. Exemptions are income items that are not subject to tax. Federal tax breaks include employment credits of 20 percent of wages up to \$15,000, enhanced Section 179 deductions for equipment purchases and an additional \$35,000 limit on annual purchases, and special capital gains rules for sales of assets located within qualified areas. There are three types of federal qualified zones—empowerment zones, enterprise communities, and renewal communities. Qualified zones can be in both urban and rural locations, and descriptions are available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. However, not every tax break is available for each designated area. For example, the enhanced Section 179 deduction for equipment purchases applies to empowerment zones and renewal communities but not to enterprise communities, and a full exclusion for capital gains from the sale of certain assets held more than five years applies only to renewal communities.

"Five Strategies to Keep Your Construction Business Profitable During An Economic Slowdown" Associated Construction Publications (07/22/08)

California-based management solutions company D. Brown Management offers five strategic tips for construction companies looking to stay profitable amid a troublesome economy. The first strategy is to evaluate the entire budget to find everything that can reduce expenses, ranging from cutting down on paper use and driving to perhaps reconsidering salaries or headcount. The second strategy is to bolster the company's marketing efforts; companies that respond to economic problems by cutting marketing and promotions budgets are doing exactly the opposite of what they should. Third, companies should take advantage of the opportunity to review all of their existing contracts--from the accounting contracts to the breakroom vending-machine supplier--and renegotiate all that they can. Fourth, the companies should reconnect themselves with their existing and past clients, reminding them of the company's offerings, using such techniques as phone calls, marketing materials, or even golf days or client appreciation dinners to recognize their loyalty and valuable business. Finally, it may be a good idea to hire an expert to offer ideas on improving process and workflow and adjusting the business plan: "If you take the time to design the processes correctly and stay focused, goals will naturally be achieved as a byproduct," says David Brown, president of D. Brown Management.

"Protect Your Employees & Your Business" Facility Safety Management (08/01/08) P. 9 ; Kraft, J.R.

Signs and markers can be utilized to make a workplace safer for employees within the manufacturing industry. Every facility should receive a safety audit from a professional to ensure that signs are OSHA and ANSI compliant. Safety audits should begin in the parking lot and remote workspaces and continue into the office and warehouses. Parking lot signs should be a minimum of 18 inches tall and 12 inches wide and should be constructed out of aluminum. Maintenance sheds, waste storage spaces, and loading docks may also necessitate safety signs, and biological hazard signs must be displayed if they contain any dangerous chemicals. Because forklifts and loading docks pose carbon monoxide risks, they should be marked with warning signs and provided with fire extinguishers. Floor marking tape should also be used in any hazardous areas. High voltage signs should be placed on electric panels, load capacity signs on overhead storage compartments, and pipe markers on process pipes. Chemical storage areas should be equipped with proper signage, markers, container labels, fire extinguishers, and "no smoking" signs.

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