ACE’s 2020 Annual Maryland Legislative Dinner

The Alliance for Construction Excellence (ACE) sponsored its annual dinner with key lawmakers in Annapolis, Maryland on Wednesday, February 12th.

The photo on the left shows Chairman of the House Economic Matters Committee Chairman Derick Davis with Senate Finance Committee Chairman Brian Feldman visiting with SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Vice President Geoff Parks.

Many topics such as transparency, energy efficient buildings, workforce development, and worker misclassification were discussed. Senator Feldman has introduced a bill that ties clean energy to job creation. Other issues being discussed around the table were reducing the retainage on both private and public work, a proposed Bereavement Leave Bill that would also cover an employee’s pet, and amending prevailing wage to incorporate more projects.

ACE supports passage of House Bill 763 that would require that undisputed retainage proceeds retained by a unit or a certain contractor under a state procurement contract be paid within 90 days after the date of substantial completion.

Seated at the table are Senator Steven Hershey, Brian Feldman, Geoff Parks (CMC Sheet Metal), Kristi Nicholson (Comfort Control), and Senator Pamela Beidle.

Another prompt pay bill being supported by ACE is House Bill 747 that would reduce the number of days in which the state has to pay following submission of an invoice. If passed, the state would be required to pay within 15 days rather than the current policy of 30 days. It would also require each county and municipality to adopt a certain policy—reducing the number of days from 45 to 15 following receipt of an invoice after which the state owes interest on unpaid amounts. The bill would also repeal a requirement that a contractor submit an invoice within a certain amount of time in order to receive interest payments.

ACE has aggressively pursued lawmakers in the Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area for transparency in public procurement so that subcontractors can determine when a prime contractor has received any payment from a government agency—thus allowing contractors to pursue their own payments from the prime contractor or others.

This dinner event was held at Osteria Restaurant in Annapolis and contractors and association leaders representing MCA Metro Washington and MCA Baltimore; NECA Washington and NECA Maryland; and Washington ASA were in attendance.
February was another very busy month for our chapter! Because this is a year in which both the Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia, labor agreements are up for renewal, members from our labor committees traveled to Las Vegas to attend the Partners in Progress Conference. More than 500 contractors and union officials gathered to attend educational sessions and hear from our national leaders on critical issues impacting our businesses. This was also an opportune time to exchange ideas and learn what is happening in other parts of the country regarding union activities, trends in construction, and other challenges facing our industry.

SMART General President Joseph Sellers and SMACNA CEO Vince Sandusky addressed a joint session of labor leaders and contractors with key issues being workforce development, pension reform, technology in the workplace, and prefabrication.

While attending the conference a few of our chapter members took a side trip to the Las Vegas Sheet Metal Training Center. Rob Delawder, Mike Tabor, Vince McGowan and Bernie Brill had the opportunity to see first-hand one of the best facilities in the country. Mike Nobel, Business Agent for Local 100 joined them. During the tour our group met with Steve Vantine at the Las Vegas training center who showed our group some of the latest materials and training tools.

As you saw on page one of this newsletter, on February 12th our chapter participated in the annual ACE Legislative Dinner in Annapolis. Guests included key members of the House Economic Matters and Senate Finance Committees. It is so very important for these lawmakers to gain a better understanding of who we are and what we do because many of the laws impacting construction go through these committees. The best examples are Family Medical Leave, Worker Misclassification, Licensing, Prompt Pay, Project Labor Agreements, and much more.

As all of us understand, the construction trades have a tremendous impact on the development of this region! When it comes to jobs, training, tax revenues, the construction trades are at the center of these activities. Currently, the light is shining brightly on the need for a greater investment in our nation’s infrastructure along with energy conservation, clean energy, and workforce development. This is our time to step into the spotlight in promoting our industry.

SMACNA is leading the way in many areas and to take advantage of what is happening we need to stay on top of key issues. On April 30 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, SMACNA is holding a “Women in Construction Leadership Council Summit.” The meeting begins Thursday morning with breakfast and networking. Thursday evening includes an optional dine around. A tour of Milwaukee Tool’s headquarters is scheduled for Friday morning. Transportation will be provided from the hotel to Milwaukee Tool, and then to the airport for afternoon flights.

Another key SMACNA program happening soon is the Construction Employers Association (CEA) National Issues Conference in Washington, D.C. May 5—7. With 2020 being a presidential election year this annual conference takes on even more significance. Members will have the opportunity to visit their congressman’s and senator’s offices and discuss issues of key concern to our industry. This is also an opportune time to meet and exchange ideas with other sheet metal contractors from across the country...and the best part of it for most of us locally is that this meeting does not require an airplane ticket or hotel!

You don’t want to miss our own communications workshop on April 14th entitled “Communicate with Charisma, Clarity & Compassion.” This program will give you great pointers on improving communication skills helpful during business negotiations, dealing with customers, employees, and even family members.

Your membership in SMACNA is a valuable asset to you and your business. It will not only help you solve problems, but help to expand and make your business more profitable. Every member is encouraged to participate in these activities.
SMACNA alone and in conjunction with numerous coalitions and industry allies in the HVAC industry worked in 2018 and 2019 to enact an efficiency boosting tax extenders package. SMACNA and industry allies in the HVAC industry again advocated adding these important tax incentive provisions to H.R. 1865, the Consolidated Appropriations agreement (P.L. 116-94). They were retroactively included for 2018-19 and extended forward in 2020 as part of the items added to the budget package signed into law December 20, 2019.

The extender part of the budget package includes the three efficiency incentives – 25C for residential efficiency improvements, 45L for new home construction and 179D for commercial buildings. The recently enacted package did not include substantive updates to the expired incentives but was still a very big victory for retrofit efficiency in 2019. A feature of H.R. 3301, now on the agenda for 2020, is to expand IRS Section 179D permanently while including more generous tax incentives to boost HVAC retrofits of commercial buildings. H.R. 3301 passed from the House Ways and Means Committee in late June and has deep support in the House and Senate. Committee Chairman, Representative Richard Neal (D-MA-1), has indicated he expects passage before the end of the 116th Congress on most provisions in the House bill.

SMACNA has actively supported H.R. 1869, the bipartisan “Restoring Investments in Improvements Act,” introduced by Representative Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-20). The retrofit incentive bill has 270 evenly divided bipartisan cosponsors and awaits passage in the Committee on Ways and Means. The tax provision would provide small business investment expensing incentives that are vital to businesses seeking to make their facilities more energy efficient, safe and operationally competitive. This important legislation will boost retrofit and renovation activity in the commercial and hospitality sectors of the economy and those related businesses supporting them. A companion bill, S. 803, has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Jones (D-AL) and Toomey (R-PA) with 60 cosponsors and is pending action in the Senate Finance Committee. Odds favor this bill passing in 2020.

SMACNA is also supporting H.R. 158, The Rehabilitation of Historic Schools Act, introduced by Representatives Dwight Evans (D-PA-3) and a dozen bipartisan cosponsors. H.R. 158 would allow rehabilitation expenditures for any building which is a qualified public educational facility to qualify for the rehabilitation tax credit and favorable private-public partnership (P3s) investments. This bill is to be added to this year’s infrastructure package.

Qualifying for 179D requires an independent, third-party firm to review the building to confirm the energy savings and potential tax deduction. Additionally, for businesses that are seeking 179D based on work performed on government-owned buildings, these companies are required to secure an allocation letter that allows the government entity to transfer the benefit to the taxpayer.

SMACNA/MCAMW Training
April 14
“Communicate with Charisma”

The fastest way to become a more effective, results-driven communicator is to clear out the verbal clutter and couched language that causes confusion. In this highly interactive workshop, you will learn to maximize the odds of getting the outcome you want. Keith Scott and Rebecca Klein Scott of TALLsmall Productions will reveal how to:

- Ditch the filler words (ah, um, like, you know, so….).
- Identify and replace weak phrases such as "I was just thinking," "I'm sorry but," "Let me tell you," "I kind of sort of feel that.." We'll reveal why these phrases need to go and how to get rid of them. These words appear as much in conversation as email.
- Craft emails that get better results.
- Adopt body language that encourages connection and displays confidence.
- Become a more active listener.
- Attendees will leave with tools they can put to use immediately to communicate more effectively. Participants will also learn what words and phrases to avoid and how to say more in fewer words.

This training is free for SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Members. Seating is limited so please register by April 3 at: www.smacnaatl.org/events/calendar/
“Supply Side”
A new regular feature spotlighting some of SMACNA Mid-Atlantic’s key industry suppliers.

New Products Announcement
By Hyojon Robbins

Milwaukee® is very excited to announce the launch of our new Personal Safety products. The initial line will include a range of hard hats, safety glasses, high visibility safety vests, respirators, and hearing protection, as well as an extension of our current gloves and lanyards offering.

Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical on jobsites, but many of the current solutions on the market have experienced very little change over time. This lack of innovation has led some users resorting to altering their jobsite protection to maximize productivity at the expense of safety.

Milwaukee® has taken the time to understand our users’ needs and develop PPE from the ground up. Milwaukee® strategically designed our new Hard Hats with BOLT™ Accessories to Adapt To Your Jobsite. The hard hats feature a BOLT™ Headlamp Mount that enables users to easily secure their headlamp to the front or back of their hard hat.

With our Milwaukee® Performance Safety Glasses and Performance Safety Glasses with Gasket, we have integrated lasting fog-free lenses allowing the user to move seamlessly from indoor to outdoor without fogging.

Our users will see the same commitment to innovation across all 7 categories of personal safety products.

MILWAUKEE® is laser focused on creating innovative solutions that help users stay safe and stay productive on the jobsite.

Questions? Please contact Hyojon Robbins
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Cell: (571) 329-0990

SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Welcomes
FESCO Energy, LLC

FESCO Energy is the association’s newest associate member. FESCO Energy is a turnkey integrator of energy projects including solar, battery, distributed energy, energy efficiency, and energy resiliency in all 50 states; a supplier of electricity and natural gas in all deregulated markets; and oil, propane and CNG in all States (where applicable). Awarded the “Most Innovative” company by the State of Maryland 2018.

FESCO’s approach offers a complete wrap of energy related services aimed at reducing costs, increasing sustainability and eliminating capital investment by helping companies lower the cost of utility expenses, and enhancing tenant comfort.

For more information, please contact Michelle Dukes at 240-345-9698 or by email at michelle.dukes@FESCOEnergy.com.

Save the Date!
Wednesday, June 10

Back by popular demand, a day of fishing, food, friendship, and fun. Let the bay’s most experienced captains take you to some of the best fishing spots. Your captain and first mate will provide all the equipment, clean and package all the fish caught, and make this a great day for everyone. Come out to fish, relax, and enjoy the comradery.

To sponsor a boat for this event, register online or call 301.446.0002. Deposits due by March 31. Eight people per boat.