

THE BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE DISTRIBUTION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION



DCA NEWS

JULY / AUGUST 2021



**DCA History
The 90's
Annual
Convention
Fall Meeting**



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DCA 1996 Convention Board of Directors

DCA History: The 90s - The Making of Modern Times

If the 70s ended in a malaise of misery and Muzak, the 80s went out in a blaze of neon glory. While Communist governments were crumbling all across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union seemed weaker every day, the United States had one of the most experienced presidents in its history, George H. W. Bush, with his hand on the tiller to guide everyone through the minefield. The Cold War was ending without a shot, and America was triumphant on the world stage. The music was glam, the hair was big, and the styles were bright and sharp. The DCA had sailed its way out of the doldrums that had hit the industry hard during the middle of the decade and was looking forward to prosperous times again.

The economy would stumble again before it could soar, but the cultural optimism of the 80s was riding on a one-way ticket to burnout. Exit Karate Kid's "You're the

best!" and enter Beck's "I'm a loser, baby." Grunge was just emerging on the rainy scene in Seattle as the Digital Age began in earnest, confidence in leadership eroded, and "Whatever!" became the new "Radical!" The Boomers might carry DCA to new heights if Gen X could just stop rolling their eyes...

Changing of the Guard

As the DCA convened in Hawaii for the first time in January 1990, the San Francisco 49ers were trouncing the Denver Broncos to win their fourth Super Bowl title. Trials were still ongoing for the Iran-Contra affair, the Exxon Valdez, and Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, while McDonalds opened its first restaurant in Moscow, and South Africa prepared to release Nelson Mandela from



DCA 1994 Convention Fun Run

prison. The Berlin Wall had fallen just three months earlier.

Back in Maui, the convention featured a tennis tournament and "Beach Olympics" along with lots of Hawaiian local flavor, while equipment innovation sessions were introduced during the business portion. 400 delegates set a new DCA attendance record in time to see Jim Upton retire as Executive Director, a position he had held since 1962, and pass the torch to Dennis Kennedy. Upton was immediately promoted to Honorary Member and J.R. "Scotty" McGlothin, of Distribution Pipeline Maintenance, Inc., was elected president to kick off the new decade.

Although the industry itself was doing well in 1990, the DCA found its membership shrinking as contractors merged or were acquired by larger entities, and the organization's finances were struggling as a result. Two joint labor management trusts were established that year with the UA and LIUNA, with both contributing funds to DCA to support the association's mission and operations. In the meantime, longtime members Butch Graham and Bob Lyons were hatching a new plan to raise revenue outside of dues which would change the DCA's fortunes

forever at the next convention.

The Gulf War with Iraq was just two days old when the DCA celebrated its 30th anniversary in Tucson, Arizona in 1991. Attendance was down to 250, but Graham brought his own version of "shock and awe" by spearheading the first ever DCA Annual Auction and raising \$33,000. Founding members Emerson Clark and Armon Bost became honorary members and Jack Gabrielse of InterCon Construction, Inc. took over as president. Mike Plank of Speed Shore spoke about OSHA regulations and the need for a "competent person" on the jobsite, and president and CEO of MichCon and MCN Corporation Stephen Ewing saw a bright future for natural gas in the Clean Air Act and the Energy Security Act. Previous president Scotty McGlothin expressed concern about the effects of federal overreach from the EPA, DER, and OSHA in creating excessive and unnecessary costs for contractors.

Attendance jumped by 20 percent for the 1992 convention at the PGA National Resort and Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. While members were having fun on the links, a 16-year-old Tiger Woods had just joined the

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DCA 1994 Annual Auction with Butch Graham

PGA. The Soviet Union was officially dead, war began in Bosnia, "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "I'm Too Sexy" boomed from portable CD players, and in Los Angeles a jury sat to decide the fate of four police officers in the beating of Rodney King. The convention topics du jour covered industry regulations, safety, and substance abuse, with featured speakers representing the Motor Carriers in the Federal Highway Administration and the Office of Pipeline Safety. Robert L. Meschi of The Hallen Construction Company was elected president.

By the time the 1993 convention rolled around, broken promises ("Read my lips...") and a flagging economy (and Ross Perot) had come back to bite George Bush in the election, leaving Bill Clinton in the Oval Office. Track suits and hi-top fades dueled with plaid shirts and Doc Martens for fashion supremacy. "Groundhog Day" and "Army of Darkness" gave members something to watch in theaters while stormy weather pounded Carlsbad, California, but the rain did little to dampen the success of the meeting. DCA recognized that trenchless construction and rehabilitation were becoming widely accepted methods across the industry. Robert Nyman

of Brooklyn Union Gas spoke about the potential impact of natural gas vehicles, and AGA president Michael Baly III discussed NTSB's concern over the safety of customer-owned lines and its push to make utilities responsible for them. Royce R. Heebner of Henkels & McCoy, Inc. took over as DCA President. Members also initiated a project to develop a computer-aided new employee safety orientation program which would be released in 1994. Shortly after the convention, a bomb went off in the parking garage of the World Trade Center as new enemies filled the void left by the Soviets.

Going Digital

The DCA returned to Hawaii in 1994, this time at the Hilton Waikoloa Village Resort with 320 attendees. Tonya Harding, Lorena Bobbitt, and the Menendez brothers dominated the gossip rags while Los Angeles cleaned up after the Northridge earthquake. Tom Allen of Tom Allen Construction, Co. assumed the DCA presidency, and speakers included NFL referee William Abberger and AGA chairman Robert Ridgley, who emphasized shared concerns with the DCA over drug testing and One-Call

Distribution Contractors Association
 1999 Fall Board of Directors Meeting
 November 17-19, 1999
 Crowne Plaza Suites ■ Dallas, Texas
LIST OF ATTENDEES

NAME	COMPANY	CITY, STATE
Allen, Tom	Tom Allen Construction Co.	Edwardsville, IL
Baskley, Elham	Ditch Witch	Ferry, OK
Bender, Jim	Sub-Surface Construction Co.	Comstock Park, MI
Boat, Jim	Midwestern Equipment Co.	Tulsa, OK
Brakley, Chris	TT Technologies, Inc.	Aurora, IL
Carpenter, Robert	Induseyond Construction	Houston, TX
Clapper, Tom	Troxair, Inc.	Groesville, TX
Coleman, Ed	Davey & Company	Madison, WI
Cowden, Jarrett	Vermorel Manufacturing Co.	Bella, IA
Cripps, Fred	Distribution Construction Co.	Greenville, NC
Dowdley, Conrad	Caterpillar, Inc.	Houston, TX
Dorcas, Lee	McDrey Manufacturing, Inc.	Tulsa, OK
Dickinson, Nolan	K.R. Beveridge Construction, Inc.	Pueblo West, CO
Donnelly, Jim & Mary	Pipeline & Gas Journal	Richardson, TX
Falkner, Dave	Aconite Corporation	St. Paul, MN
Fox, Dennis	American Augers, Inc.	West Salem, OH
Gabriele, Jack	InterCon Construction, Inc.	Madison, WI
Gabriele, Ken	Gab's Construction Co., Inc.	Wichigan, WI

DISTRIBUTION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
 Annual Convention
 February 17-21, 1999
 Coronado, California

1999 REGISTRATION LIST

Name	Company	City, State
Allen, Mark & Kim	Tom Allen Construction Co.	Edwardsville, IL
Allen, Tom & Sandy	Tom Allen Construction Co.	Edwardsville, IL
Anderson, Dale & Theresa	Mid-Atlantic Pipelines, Inc.	Newark, DE
Thompson, Kevin P. Director		
Archambault, John P. Donah	McLanghin Manufacturing Co.	Greenville, SC
Berry, Jack P. Foss	Mid-Mountain Contractors, Inc.	Kirkland, WA
Baskley, Elham & Karen	Ditch Witch	Ferry, OK
Bickendorf, Ted	Gas Research Institute	Chicago, IL
Bender, Jim & Kathy	Sub-Surface Construction Co.	Comstock Park, MI
Bender, Tom & Jill	Tom Allen Construction Co.	Edwardsville, IL
Black, Mary	Caterpillar, Inc.	Downs, IL
Bouquet, Tom P. Cahy	Ingersoll Rand Co.	Hatfield, PA
Bouquet, Mitch & Rhonda	Petrolis, Inc.	Sumner, WA
Boat, Adam & Kim	MaxxTMD, Inc.	St. Charles, IL
Boat, Aaron P. Serrano	Midwestern Equipment Co.	Tulsa, OK
Boat, Don P. Cherry	Midwestern Equipment Co.	Tulsa, OK
Brakley, Chris & Glenn	TT Technologies, Inc.	Aurora, IL
Brawley, Bob	Excite Box, Assortment Inc.	Highland, CO
Brewster, Dale & Pauline	Minnesota Lumber, Inc.	Regina, MN
Burke, Steve	Burke Pipeline Construction	Edmore, MI
Brown, Barry P. Mary-Lou	Pipeline Contractors Association - Canada	Oakville, ON
Bukacinski, John P. Ben	United Association	Washington, DC
Burley, Mark P. Dennis	Tucker & Rice	San Gabriel, CA
Rice, Mark Jr.		
Cannon, Richard	Photo Plus	Phoenix, AZ
Canady, James P. Linda	The Hubbell Co.	Louisville, KY
Chancellor, John	Distribution Contractors Association	Richardson, TX
Clapper, Tom & Amy	TROXAIR, Inc.	Groesville, TX
Coleman, Ed & Cheryl	Davey & Company	Madison, WI
Cookley, Rita P. Cannon	Distributor to Industry, Inc.	Whiting, NJ
Cookley, Bob & Barbara	Distribution Construction Co.	Tulsa, OK
Cookhart, Allan P. Eddy	R. L. Cookhart Construction Co.	Taylor, MI
Cookhart, Chris P. Kathy	R. L. Cookhart Construction Co.	Taylor, MI
Coolen, Jay	Pipeline Contractors Association - Canada	Oakville, ON
Cowden, Jarrett & Susan	Vermorel Manufacturing Co.	Bella, IA
Cripps, Fred & Barbara	Distribution Construction Co.	Fayetteville, NC
Tom, Matthew		
Cripps, Kevin P. Shannon	Distribution Construction Co.	Fayetteville, NC

DCA Event Materials from the 1990s

system participation from utilities. The rest of the year saw low interest rates lead to housing growth across the country, and the increasing popularity of the new-fangled World Wide Web led to new work for distribution contractors laying fiber optic cable. The previous fall had seen the debut of Mosaic, the first browser to make it easy for the average person to jump on the "Information Superhighway." Executive Vice President Dennis Kennedy predicted at the time that DCA "would never need a website." Meanwhile, deregulation was allowing more competitors into the distribution arena even as excessive environmental regulations made it harder to operate.

All eyes were on the O.J. Simpson trial in January 1995 as DCA convened at the scenic El Conquistador Resort in Las Croabas, Puerto Rico. Speakers from the Gas Research Institute, the AGA, and the Laborers' International Union graced the stage while new president Dennis Klumb of Arby Construction, Inc. leaned into strategies for thriving under increased competition. The organization held high hopes of working with the new Republican majority in Congress to ease the regulatory

burdens members struggled with. 1995 also saw the debut of the first DCA Safety Congress and awards recognizing Safety Director of the Year.

Reneging on its vow of just two years earlier, in 1996, DCA officially joined the Digital Age with its first website, dca-online.org. The group returned to Disney World in Orlando for its March convention, attracting a decade-high 475 attendees. Speaker Roger Cooper, group vice president of government relations and policy analysis for AGA, observed that the natural gas industry had grown 30 percent over the previous eight years while employing 15 percent fewer people. Frank Hanley, general president of the International Union of Operating Engineers, proposed a joint training venture with DCA as a "wise investment for the future." The DCA Employee Safety Orientation program was available on CD-ROM, and the 6th Annual Auction raised \$109,000 – its highest total yet. Joseph Purpura of Midwestern Contractors became president while Dale Michels, Dale Miller, and Bob Lyons joined the ranks of honorary members. In the

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DCA Historical Member Photos

halls, members weighed Bob Dole's chances of beating Clinton in the fall, fretted over big swings in the stock market, and philosophized over Dr. Jack Kevorkian while Alanis Morissette, Hootie and the Blowfish, and Tupac Shakur ruled the radio.

A Big Milestone

The Renaissance Esmeralda Resort in Indian Wells, California, played host to the 1997 DCA convention. The "Rendezvous at the Oasis" attracted 375 attendees along with Martin Maddaloni, general president of the United Association, and astronaut Col. Terence Hendricks as speakers and "Marilyn Monroe" as master of ceremonies. Hendricks' colleagues at NASA had completed a tune-up on the Hubble Space Telescope just the day before. T.D. Williamson won a "90 Seconds in the Spotlight" award with their video on butt fusion, and the auction rose to new heights with \$125,000 raised. Meanwhile, re-elected President Clinton was creating new trouble for himself with Monica Lewinsky even while the Whitewater investigation was still underway. On the closing day of the convention, Scottish researchers announced the cloning of Dolly the sheep, fire broke out on the Mir Space Station, and NBC aired "Schindler's List" uncensored to more than 65 million viewers.

Perhaps the most important development of the

late 90s was the observation by newly-elected DCA president David "Dan" Watters of Miller Pipeline Corp. that utilities' relationship with contractors was beginning to change. "Historically, utilities have utilized contractors as a peak-shaving supplement to their own workforces, with the service somewhat limited to digging ditches and installing pipes," he wrote in the 1997 DCA newsletter. Now, however, "Utilities are placing a strong emphasis on cost control, customer service, consolidating or reducing workforces, and outsourcing tasks that customarily have been done in-house." DCA had been explicitly pursuing such business conditions since it was founded in 1961, so for the DCA president to state it so matter-of-factly was a spectacularly understated validation of three-and-a-half decades of hard work. Watters urged members to put themselves in position to take advantage of these new opportunities by demonstrating dependable, quality, cost-effective service – such gains could be lost if contractors didn't hold up their end of the bargain, he said.

In 1998, the DCA was back at the Hilton Waikoloa Village Resort in Hawaii again. By then the Lewinsky story was following Clinton everywhere, even as he tried to address trouble brewing in the Persian Gulf, the Winter Olympics were starting in Nagano, Japan, and heavy rains lashed California while snow killed nine in Kentucky.



DCA Historical Member Photos

Renny Norman of the Gas Research Institute gave the keynote speech at the convention, the auction grew yet again, raking in \$164,700, and Snelson Companies won an unprecedented fifth straight Arthur T. Everham Safety Award. James R. Bender of Mueller Pipeliners, Inc./MRM, was elected president, but in an unusual turn of events he resigned due to a change in membership status, and the board appointed Dan Watters to serve a second term as president. The DCA also spent much of the year planning how to address the Department of Transportation's upcoming Operator Qualification (OQ) rule, which would be the most sweeping pipeline industry regulation since the 1970s. Merger and acquisition activity was heavy on the business front, and worrying data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed marked declines in the number of people choosing construction as an occupation.

One year later, everyone was staring at their computers and wondering if the Y2K bug would really make it all blow up. That February, Prince was already raking in the royalties off of *that* song, President Clinton was threatening military action against the Serbs in Kosovo, and "Office Space" debuted in theaters to the dull thud of a TPS report being stapled in an empty room. Nearly 400 attendees were ready to party like it's... well, you know... at the Loew's Coronado Resort

near San Diego. The first Dale R. Michels Scholarships were awarded to three students at the 38th annual convention as new president and proud son Pat Michels looked on, kicking off a great new tradition. At the auction, Bob Lyons entered DCA legend forever when he offered up his plaid sport coat to push the auction over its fundraising goal for the year, surpassing \$190,000 with the new addition of the silent auction. A hole-in-one by Don Owings at the golf tournament and a costume party to wrap up the show helped cement one of the most memorable conventions on record. The year also saw the OQ rule go into effect, amping up DCA's efforts to improve safety training, underground utility mapping and location, and hazard reduction even further.

On the eve of the big triple-zero, the 80s prediction of a big decade for DCA had come to pass. The modern organization as we know it today had begun to take shape with new traditions like the auction, scholarships, and Safety Congress, membership was on the rise again, and new sources of funding promised better member services in years ahead. The ditch diggers joined the digital tribe despite initial hesitation, and the founders' visions were at last coming to fruition. It hadn't all been smooth sailing, of course, but – whatever! Spoil the DCA's party? As if; duh! ▲



DCA Board of Directors

DCA 2021 Annual Convention Wrap-Up

After almost a year and a half of Zoom meetings, cancellations, and rescheduling, the DCA was ready to celebrate its 60th anniversary in style and in person at the Annual Convention, July 27-31. Fortunately, the resourceful DCA staff was up to the task of making it happen. The Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes Orlando in Florida was the stage as the convention replaced the Mid Year summer meeting this year. With vaccines finally easing the travel restrictions of the pandemic, more than 380 members, guests, and children came prepared to make the Diamond Anniversary a gem to remember.

Tuesday, July 27

The convention opened on Tuesday with the unusual first step of holding the typically brief Membership Committee meeting early, before registration. After the usual business of reviewing members gained and lost, the committee pointed out that more than 70 new members would be in attendance this year and opened discussion on how the committee could better serve them. The most popular suggestion was to have the Membership Committee also function as a welcome committee, recruiting volunteers to act as mentors for new members to show them the ropes, introduce them around, and help them fit in. Not surprisingly, several members quickly stepped up to volunteer for the effort.

Shortly after, the Registration Party started in the lobby outside the Ritz-Carlton Ballroom. The turnout was encouragingly strong and the conversation boisterous as

familiar faces gathered around tables of hors d'oeuvres and sweets to catch up and commiserate on all that had occurred since they last saw each other way back in February of 2020. The open bar stayed busy, while Vacuworx raffled off prizes to continue its annual tradition. The afternoon reception was just the opening act, however.

As the evening rolled around, the crowd returned to the ballroom for the DCA Homecoming Reception and Welcome Dinner, where staff members passed out green and white mums to the ladies as they walked past beer pong tables and a display dedicated to Bob Lyons and Dennis Kennedy featuring photo albums and Bob's famous plaid jacket. Once inside, tables were decked out with green and white ribbons, pompoms, megaphones, foam fingers, and footballs, and waiters dressed like referees bustled about. Strings of lights and flags crisscrossed the room above foosball tables, truck tailgate bars, and a taco truck dessert bar as a DJ queued up 60s and 70s hits. After everyone settled in to a dinner of BBQ, burgers, brats, and beer, the action kicked off with, of course, a homecoming parade circling the room complete with marching band, cheerleaders, stilt and pogo walkers, and a float carrying the Homecoming King and Queen – none other than DCA President Ben Nelson and his wife, Katie. The sponsoring Caterpillar team marched along wearing company football jerseys and carrying flags, eliciting cheers and whistles. After some introductions, honors, and homecoming festivities,

the parade would make a second sweep around the hall before the night wound down.

Wednesday, July 28, Morning

Committee meetings began in earnest on Wednesday. The Safety/Risk Management Committee got the morning started with a presentation from Brian Dresel of Energy Worldnet on "The Normalization of Deviance," in which he used the Challenger and Columbia space shuttle disasters and the wreck of the Costa Concordia cruise ship to illustrate how complacency and shortcuts lead to disaster. Tying it back to the gas industry, he showed how a 30-minute fix could have prevented the fatal Harlem gas explosion in 2014 and how a \$19 million, 9,000-gallon jet fuel leak at Milwaukee's General Mitchell Airport resulted from a technician falsifying readings when they became too tedious for him, and repairs went unmade. Dresel cautioned the audience that "done right every time" should be the standard as organizations build a safety culture, learning to look for signs of complacency and confronting it before it's too late. Perry Redman of Caterpillar followed Dresel to preview the company's upcoming 2021 Executive Leadership Safety Summit on September 27-30. The online digital conference will focus on ways that executives and senior safety and operations managers can improve safety culture, including two days of workshops.

The Workforce Development Committee meeting began with the introduction of new vice-chairmen Dave Wisniewski of Vermeer Corp. and Pete Fojtik of Michels Utility Services. Topics of discussion included the upcoming Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) Workforce Summit in November in Washington, D.C.; the Workforce Subcommittee's continuing work with SkillsUSA and the SkillsUSA Playbook under final development; and collaboration with BuildWitt.com on the video project. Attendees were treated to a video preview of "A Day in the Life of David Dutton" for BuildWitt and the trailer for Mike Rowe's "Six Degrees" along with a Michels ad to air during the program. The chairs noted that Mike Rowe's show on the Discovery Channel had already prompted 30 resumes to be sent to the DCA thus far. Members weighed in on the need to recruit ex-military and legal immigrants, discussed Vacuworx's partnership with an Oklahoma homeschool association, and considered how construction companies can do a better job marketing themselves.

The Opening Keynote lunch began when magician, "America's Got Talent" alum, and former Philadelphia Eagle Jon Dorenbos, took the stage, making his second DCA appearance. Dorenbos entertained the crowd with a variety of amazing card tricks while relating the long and difficult journey that made him the man he is today. The most pivotal event was when his father murdered his mother when Dorenbos was only 12. For years, including



DCA President Ben and Katie Nelson

through an NFL career shortened by emergency heart surgery, he held on to the anger. Eventually, though, he learned how to control his narrative instead of letting it control him. His mantra became, "let your worst moment refine you, not define you" in the words of his college coach. Becoming a father made him reconsider his relationship with his own father and ultimately decide to forgive him, realizing he had no excuse to not be a better person.

Wednesday, July 28, Afternoon

After lunch it was back to business with the HDD Committee, newly renamed the Trenchless Committee to be more inclusive of other technologies. Dave Wisniewski gave an update on the recent DCA panel at the Underground Construction Technology (UCT) conference in Nashville, noting that the supply of new infrastructure work, combined with the shortage of workers, could drive up wages. This was followed by a request to help drive traffic to the dcatrenchless.com micro-site and an update on the OSU Mud Study, now published and available for copies. DCA Past President Grady Bell of Bell Trenchless Consulting and Dr. Sam Ariaratnam of Arizona State University spoke briefly on how to promote DCA to business owners and engineers and how to interact with academia and with the Army Corps of Engineers. The rest of the session belonged to Andy Bremner of Vermeer for his presentation on "Electric Horizontal Directional Drilling." Bremner covered relevant questions about reduced emissions, optics, reliability, cost of ownership, up-front investment vs. long-term

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Opening Group Lunch & Keynote

savings, reduced noise and fluid spills, and the younger generations' greater familiarity with electric platforms and controls, as opposed to the older analog types. While diesel still has a place at the table, electric will eventually become the standard and is already more common in Europe. With giant forest fires convincing electric companies like PG&E that burying cables is worth the cost, demand for HDD is expected to grow well into the future.

The Government Relations Committee wrapped up the committee meetings for the day with more discussion on the fuel choice battle going on in state legislatures across the country and DCA's responsibility to be proactive in its advocacy. Zack Perconti of Wyman Associates reprised his demonstration of the Muster grassroots program presented in the March virtual meeting. The group then discussed effective arguments against gas bans, such as freedom to choose what to cook with, educating the public and politicians on the practical obstacles to carbon neutrality, collective action in concert with other organizations, and the shortage of electrical generating capacity in places like New York. Eben Wyman brought up the question of whether DCA should weigh in on government-mandated Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) and legal paths for immigrant workers before closing with a discussion of DCA's use of social media to educate, which drew a strong response from the membership.

Wednesday evening it was time for the DCA Annual Auction. Members perused the silent auction tables, all decked out with faux diamonds, while enjoying the buffet prior to the live auction. TV screens displayed

bids on items ranging from work equipment, rentals, and business advertisements to trips, jewelry, electronics, guns, and even a child's toy car. When it was time to sit down for the live auction, members were treated to a recount of the Bob Lyons' jacket story from the late 1990s, wherein he took off his colorful jacket and put it up for auction at the last minute to push the total over the fundraising goal just when it threatened to come up short. Since then, the DCA Annual Auction has raised more than \$10 million total to fund scholarships and programs. The bidding was lively as always as the auctioneer pattered away to sell drill bits, tractors, hunting trips, diamond necklaces, golf outings, hole openers, drilling mud, truck rentals, and dinner for ten in Cancun, among many other bargains. By the end of the night, the silent and live auctions combined raised over \$560,000.

Thursday, July 29

Thursday's opening lunch kicked the convention off for earnest. It started with a U.S. Army Color guard presenting the Colors, National Anthem, and Pledge of Allegiance.

Vince King, VP National Sales, McElroy, gave the invocation. This was followed by a video tribute to all the essential workers performed by award winning singer Chris Mann.

At the conclusion of the video, Executive Vice President Rob Darden asked those who worked as essential or someone in their family to please stand to be recognized.

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Annual Auction



(L to R): Kwynn Kirby, Steve Seabolt & Rob Hill with Closest to the Pin Winner Brad Everett



(L to R): Kwynn Kirby, Steve Seabolt & Rob Hill with Golf Winners: Bill Solomon, Tom Krug & Matt Marino



DCA Past Presidents Meeting



Jon Dorenbos



Sekou Andrews

Rob Darden then relayed the good news that membership remained strong, with only a 7% loss during the pandemic, and that the DCA's finances remained in sound shape as well thanks to generous members and wise investment. After reviewing future event locations, Darden discussed the results of the latest DCA Member Survey, which featured a lot of positive feedback. He then introduced a video commemorating DCA's 60th anniversary narrated by none other than Mike Rowe. As photos and footage from the past six decades scrolled by, Rowe told the story of the DCA's birth in the early 1960s and its many challenges and accomplishments over the years to improve the work and life of its members. He spoke of the common bonds of safety and professionalism and the family atmosphere that knits everyone together, and of the promise that such a strong foundation holds for the future as the DCA looks forward. After a long ovation for the moving tribute, the Town Hall concluded with the presentation of the Dale R. Michels Scholarship, which saw more non-traditional student applicants this year. Fourteen students received a total of \$105,000 and six other students received Curtis H. Allen scholarships.

After breakfast, members divided into 25 teams for the day's big activity, Build-a-Bike. Inspired by the Build-a-Boat competition at a past convention, the purpose of Build-a-Bike was to give bicycles to underprivileged kids in the Orlando area affiliated with the After-School All-Stars and Latino Leadership organizations. Teams competed for the most bikes built and most points earned through team-building activities, and each team had to prepare for a cheer-off in case of a tie. Points challenges ranged from trivia questions to acting out funny scenarios, and many teams split into challenge and builder groups to keep things flowing smoothly. The top teams built as many as five bikes and earned up to

10,000 points, earning gold, silver, and bronze medals for their efforts. At the end came the real reward, however: seeing the children come in and claim their bikes with excited squeals and smiling faces.

Friday, July 30

Another great keynote speaker took his turn to energize the crowd at Friday's breakfast – Sekou Andrews, a highly decorated and sought-after spoken word poet who specializes in addressing corporate audiences. A cross between Tony Robbins, William Shakespeare, and Bob Marley, Andrews' way with words and infectious energy quickly brought the room to life. His message focused on the various stages of moving up in life, from getting bigger to getting better, sometimes getting back to where you were when you get knocked back down, and learning how to inspire others to join your ride up as well. He gave lyrical advice on borrowing acting and performing techniques to improve your public speaking and connecting to people through storytelling, letting them know you've struggled too. Andrews shared his own struggles to become a new father (much like Jon Dorenbos) and spoke on the value of allowing yourself to just be human. "No matter what business you're in, you're in the business of inspiration," he observed, showing how community, family, and business are all intertwined. "A stage is a stage is a stage," he said, and people need to prepare themselves to perform well in any situation, as we never know what's coming next.

The final event of the week was the Diamonds & Stars Closing Reception and Dinner. The ballroom was decked out with diamonds, of course, and feather boas on every table, colorful pillars and psychedelic decorations and guitars throughout the room. A live band on stage belted out everything from Sinatra to 70s classics to "Uptown Funk." Ben Nelson addressed



(L to R): Katie Nelson, Rob Darden & Jessica Fox



(L to R): John Duff & Jon Heinen



Build-a-Bike Winners

the assembly with his take on the DCA's past, present, and future, noting that his term as president had been extended for another year due to the pandemic's disruption of Board of Director business and thanking Rob Darden for his forward-thinking leadership in keeping the organization on track despite the challenges. Dave Wisniewski followed with a speech about teamwork and leadership inspired by coaching legend Vince Lombardi, praising the keynote speakers, the children's organizations at Build-a-Bike, and finally the essential workers who have carried us through these trying times. After the announcement of the golf tournament winners, Rob Darden and Katie Nelson held the drawing for the convention's biggest prize, a \$16,000 diamond ring, which was won by lucky first-timer Jessica Fox of Wright

Traffic Control. Finally, it was time to party. A Lady Gaga impersonator came out to perform several of her top hits and warm up the stage for the real diva, (not the real) Elton John! Servers passed out disco sunglasses while Elton killed it on stage, getting the crowd dancing and even singing the high notes on "Crocodile Rock." From there the house band kept the fun going well past everyone's bedtime.

Going forward, the DCA plans to return to its regular event schedule, barring any new surprises from COVID-19. The Fall Meeting will be held October 27-29, 2021, at the Four Seasons in Denver, Colorado. Until then, the staff wishes everyone safe travels, steady work, and above all good health to ensure that the DCA's next 60 years start off even better than the last. ▲





Committee News

July 27 - 28, 2021 Meetings



The DCA Board of Directors (BOD), Leadership Council, and the five working committees held their first in-person meetings since the pandemic began, in conjunction with the DCA 60th Annual Convention in Orlando, July 27-31, 2021.

Board of Directors

At the BOD meeting Tuesday, July 27, board members discussed the status of special projects:

- **Membership engagement study** – The BOD received a summary of the DCA Membership Engagement Study that was conducted by the Center for Generational Kinetics (CGK) in May. Jason Dorsey of CGK will be presenting the results of the study at the DCA Fall Meeting, October 27-29 in Denver.
- **Strategic vision committee** – The BOD approved the creation of the Strategic Vision Committee to lay out a strategy for the next 3 to 5 years. The committee will have members cycle on and off.
- **BuildWit! Video update** – The initial project that began in January with four DCA members is now complete and the videos will be posted on the DCA Let's Get to Work microsite. Two of the videos were viewed at the July 28 Workforce Committee meeting.
- **Muster** – The BOD received an update on Muster, the grassroots tool to send personalized mass emails to

national, state, and local officials. The Government Relations committee will be assisting members to sign up and become involved.

- **HDD Committee** – Board members voted to change the name of the HDD Committee to the Trenchless Committee to broaden the scope of its charge.

DCA Board Members also thanked fellow board member Steve Dockendorf for his years of service on the BOD and serving as chairman of the Government Relations committee. Dockendorf announced that he was retiring from NPL Construction as of July 31.

Leadership Council

The Leadership Council also met Tuesday, July 27, at the Ritz-Carlton Orlando. The council reviewed actions of the DCA BOD from their earlier meeting. DCA working committee chairmen each gave a brief outline of the topics their committee would be discussing in their individual meetings.

The Leadership Council is comprised of the elected chairs and vice chairs of each of the working committees, the president and vice president of the board, and the executive vice president. The purpose of the Leadership Council is to coordinate the strategic direction of the DCA, as directed by the BOD.

Membership Committee

The Membership committee met on Tuesday, July 27, as well. The committee reviewed the list of inactive contractors and noted that list was considerably larger due to COVID-19 and meetings being held virtually. The committee also noted that several inactive members had attended the 2020-21 DCA hosted virtual meetings.

- **Membership summary** – Attendees reviewed the membership report presented to the DCA BOD. Since the March BOD meeting, one new contractor member and four new associate members had joined DCA. Three contractors and nine associate members had been dropped, resigned, or merged with other members. Current membership totals were 92 contractor members and 129 associate members.
- **Prospective and resigned members** – The chairmen noted that the pandemic and the resulting economic conditions have hurt the associate members. Attendees were asked to reach out to members who have dropped and encourage them to rejoin the DCA. Chairmen will also be contacting prospective members about membership benefits and the upcoming Fall Meeting in Denver.
- **2021 DCA Impact Purchasing study draft** – Attendees discussed sending the study out sooner to allow results to be reported in October. This would assist member companies in budgeting for the upcoming year.
- **New member mentorship** – Attendees had suggestions to help first time attendees feel more welcome at in-person events: a 15–20-minute zoom call prior to the event to answer event questions; assign each new company an “ambassador” for orientation; and chairmen to reach out to new attendees personally.

The charge of the Membership committee is to actively solicit and evaluate potential DCA members and make recommendations on member programs and awards to help recruit and retain members in the association. The 2021 vice-chairmen are Mike Ayd of MP Technologies and Brad Everett of Caterpillar.

Safety/Risk Management Committee

Attendees at the July 28 Safety/Risk Management committee meeting heard presentations from Brian Dresel, Executive Director of Compliance for Energy Worldnet and Perry Redman, Manager of Corporate Pipeline Accounts for Caterpillar.

Dresel's presentation, the Normalization of Deviance, emphasized how complacency and shortcuts can lead to disaster. He reminded attendees to look for and understand the warning signs, be a positive example for others to follow, and do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

Redman gave a brief presentation on Caterpillar's Virtual Executive Leadership Safety Summit, September 27-30. Members interested in attending should contact

Rachel Proper at proper_rachel_l@cat.com to be added to the invitation list.

The committee also received an update on the 2021 Safety Congress held in April at the Gaylord Texan Resort in Grapevine, Texas. Ken Crook of ARB and Caleb Scheve of Price Gregory served as chairmen of the first in-person DCA event since February 2020.

Nate Healey of Michels Utility Services received the 2020 Safety Director of the Year award. Rory Folsom of ARB Inc. earned Safety Person of the Year honors.

The 2022 Safety Congress will be March 28-30 at the Hyatt Regency Austin. Registration for the event will open in February 2022.

The charge of the Safety/Risk Management committee is to review all information concerning safety in the industry and safe jobsite practices. The committee also has oversight for the Arthur T. Everham Safety Award and the Annual Safety Congress. Bill Colson of PreTec Directional Drilling and Dana Heieie of Southeast Directional Drilling are vice-chairmen.

Workforce Development Committee

The Workforce Development committee meeting updated attendees on efforts since the March Virtual Spring Meeting.

- **Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD)** – The CEWD Workforce Summit will be held virtually November 16-18. DCA is a co-sponsor of the event. Contractors were encouraged to join CEWD, attend the summit, and become involved with the organization.
- **Workforce subcommittee** – The subcommittee, formed in 2020, is focusing on getting involved in local and state welding programs through SkillsUSA. Stephanie Metzler of Mears Group is the liaison for DCA members, SkillsUSA, and schools. A state-by-state SkillsUSA Playbook is also being finalized and will be uploaded to the DCA Let's Get to Work microsite when completed.
- **BuildWitt** – Attendees viewed two of the completed “A Day in the Life of a Contractor” BuildWitt videos. Special thanks were given to John Deere Construction & Forestry Division, United Rental Trench Safety, Mears, and Vermeer Corp. for sponsoring the project. The videos will be uploaded to DCALetsGetToWork.com.
- **Mike Rowe's 6 Degrees** – Attendees viewed one of the ads that is currently running on the Discovery Channel for Mike Rowe's 6 Degrees.
- **DCALetsGetToWork.com** – A microsite has been linked to the DCA website (www.dcaweb.org) called www.dcaletsgettowork.com. The microsite has information on prospects, Gen Z/Millennials, education, partners, and prospects. Attendees were encouraged to review the site and contact the DCA with any comments or suggestions.

(continued on pg. 20)

The charge of the Workforce Development committee is to develop, coordinate, and implement strategies to support the growth of the expanding work force within the industry. The committee accomplishes this through the promotion of the industry as a career by using the vast knowledge and leadership of the DCA membership and promoting coordination with other industry professionals and national organizations. Dave Wisniewski of Vermeer Corp. and Pete Fojtik of Michels Utility Services are the vice-chairmen.

Trenchless Committee (formerly HDD)

The newly renamed Trenchless committee received an update on several discussion items at their July 28 meeting.

- **2021 UCT Panel update** – Panel moderator Dave Wisniewski of Vermeer gave a brief update on the recent panel that presented at the July UCT in Nashville. Panelists Eben Wyman of Wyman Associates and Mark Bridgers of Continuum gave 10-minute updates on government relations and the economy. Five industry related questions on the infrastructure dilemma, post-covid environment, and the regulatory package were then discussed.
- **Trenchless committee micro page** – The chairmen gave an update on the DCA Trenchless Microsite www.dcatrenchless.com. The site is linked to the DCA website, www.dcaweb.org, and is currently a baseline with new content, including videos and jobsite photos, being added. The focus of the site will gradually transition from HDD to trenchless in general. The site needs to be shared with others to drive up attention.
- **OSU Mud Study update** – The study has concluded and the paper has been published. Members that need a copy or summary should contact Kelvin Self of Ditch Witch.
- **HDD presentation** – Andy Bremner of Vermeer presented "Electric Horizontal Directional Drilling."

The charge of the Trenchless committee is to support safety, training, technical developments, and voluntary operational guides that sustain professional practices and contractors in trenchless technology. The vice-chairmen of the committee are Rob Hotz of Laney Group and Dustin Kraft of Vermeer Corp.

Government Relations Committee

The Government Relations committee met Wednesday, July 28, and received updates on several pertinent topics. For more details about the following topics, please see the DCA Insights section of the DCA News.

- **State-level advocacy re: natural gas bans and "fuel choice"** – DCA continues to participate in an ad hoc coalition working at the state level to support "fuel choice" legislation and oppose restrictive measures that would limit access to natural gas through mandated electrification in future building codes or other ways of cutting off consumers from access to natural gas. The coalition is making this a consumer choice issue, and the large and diverse membership of the coalition will help push the message that Americans do not want the government to decide whether or not they can utilize clean burning natural gas, such as cooking on a gas range.
- **DCA grassroots platform – Muster demonstration** – During a presentation on DCA's new grassroots advocacy program, Muster, DCA members whose company information was already in the network participated in a campaign in "real time."
- **Future role of pipelines** – DCA recently developed a new position paper on the future of natural gas as a dependable source of clean energy and the importance of pipeline infrastructure. Topics in the paper include clean-burning natural gas, carbon capture, and hydrogen as a promising alternative.
- **Status of infrastructure package and impacts on natural gas** – The infrastructure package is generally viewed as positive for the construction industry. Markets such as water/sewer, broadband, and surface transportation will benefit. While most provisions addressing climate are not generally good for natural gas, others that encourage pipeline infrastructure for both carbon-capture and hydrogen are being considered during the infrastructure debate.
- **OQ Integrity Process update** – The OQ Integrity Process (OQIP) team recently achieved its status as a non-profit organization, and a governance committee is in the process of being named. The OQIP pilot programs are expected to begin in earnest at the beginning of 2022.

The charge of the Government Relations committee is to target specific regulatory and legislative items and report their findings through the following publications: *DCA Insights*, *DCA News*, and the DCA website. The current vice-chairmen of the committee are Mark Albert of AGI Construction and John Lamerton of Wyo-Ben.

The next BOD, leadership council, and committee meetings will be in conjunction with the 2021 DCA Fall Meeting, October 27-29, at the Four Seasons Hotel, Denver. ▲

If you are interested in becoming an active member of any of the working committees, please contact the DCA office.



DCA FALL MEETING

OCTOBER 27-29, 2021

FOUR SEASONS ■ DENVER, CO.



Insights



Senate Approves Infrastructure Package, Congress Moves Toward Budget Reconciliation

On August 10, 2021, the Senate passed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package that includes spending for roads, bridges, electric vehicles, broadband, water infrastructure, and grid resilience. Importantly, the legislation includes some promising provisions for the pipeline industry, including funding for initiatives for carbon capture, use, and storage (CCUS) and increased use of hydrogen as a future source of American energy.

Passage of the Senate infrastructure bill marked the first installment of Democratic leaders' "two-track" strategy to enact much of President Biden's economic agenda. Next up will be legislation that would provide \$3.5 trillion in wide-reaching social policy and additional spending.

Two weeks after the Senate vote, Democrats in the House postponed a vote to advance the president's plan to expand social programs, when liberals and centrists remained at odds over which bill should be considered priority. Plans to vote on passage of the budget plan were cancelled after hours of closed-door talks failed to overcome internal party divisions. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) hoped to approve the budget outline quickly in order to enable lawmakers to begin filling in the details on a sweeping package that would boost spending on child-care, education, and other social programs, and would raise taxes on the wealthy and the corporations. House Democrats, meanwhile, refused to go along, saying the House must first pass the infrastructure bill that has already won approval by Republicans and Democrats in the Senate.

Liberals in the House worry about losing leverage on the

social -spending effort if they pass the infrastructure bill first. That said, at the time this article was written, the "social infrastructure" bill was not necessarily doomed. Speaker Pelosi, who is unquestionably effective in securing votes, will have the opportunity to bring the budget bill up again, presumably after leaning on both sides of the Democratic divide. The House vote would allow Democrats to pass the social -spending measure on a simple majority vote in the Senate, rather than the 60 votes required for most legislation in that chamber. The Senate is split 50-50 between Republicans and Democrats, with Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris casting any tie-breaking vote.

The fact that this fight was happening as the Biden Administration was facing sharp criticism over the Taliban's swift takeover of Afghanistan after 20 years of war only complicated things.

With that description of the political 'lay of the land,' let's look at why DCA should feel pretty good about the possibility of an infrastructure package making it across the finish line.

Broad Range of Energy Provisions

While the Senate infrastructure package is not exactly friendly to fossil fuels or the industries that engage in those markets, there is some promise for the pipeline industry in the measure. The bill, some 2,700 pages long, includes major climate change priorities, such as \$7.5 billion for a network of electric-vehicle chargers. However, approximately \$2.5 billion of that funding could go to support vehicles that burn natural gas and propane. The bill also includes more than \$10 billion for CCUS, along with \$8 billion for hydrogen with no requirement that it supports "green" (made from 'clean' sources) or "blue" (from fossil fuels) hydrogen.

Specifically, the bill includes provisions that would support carbon capture efforts, including:

- Establishing a “Carbon Dioxide Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Program” under the Department of Energy to facilitate private sector investment in the carbon transportation infrastructure necessary to deploy CCUS through low-interest loans. Loans would be available to cover up to 80% of eligible project costs, including costs related to environmental permitting, engineering and design, property acquisition, environmental mitigation, and legal and technical consultant fees for project financing.
- Expanding DOE’s Carbon Storage Validation and Testing program to provide funding for the development of new or expanded commercial large-scale carbon capture projects and associated infrastructure. This would include funding for the feasibility, site characterization, permitting, and construction of such facilities and infrastructure, including pipeline construction.
- Authorizing \$5 million annually through 2026 for the permitting of carbon storage projects both by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and an additional \$50 million for states to establish and conduct “geologic sequestration” activities.
- Authorizing the Department of the Interior to permit offshore carbon capture on the Outer Continental Shelf.
- Authorizing funding for projects that contribute to the development of four regional direct air capture hubs that would consist of a network of projects, potential carbon utilization and transport infrastructure, subsurface resources, and sequestration infrastructure.
- Authorizing approximately \$3.5 billion annually through 2025 for large-scale carbon capture pilot projects and carbon capture demonstration projects.

The bill also includes ambitious hydrogen-related provisions, including the creation of a clean hydrogen strategy and investment of billions to lay the foundation for a national hydrogen economy. “Clean hydrogen” is defined as hydrogen produced in compliance with emissions standards “including production from any fuel source,” although it also requires that DOE (working with EPA) develop an initial standard for the carbon intensity of “clean” hydrogen within days of enactment.

Specifically, the bill would authorize \$8 billion annually from 2022 through 2026 for efforts to increase use of hydrogen by:

- Expanding the goals and activities of DOE’s existing hydrogen research and development program to:
 - advance R&D to demonstrate and commercialize the use of hydrogen in the transportation, utility, industrial, commercial, and residential sectors
 - demonstrate a standard of clean hydrogen production in the transportation, utility, industrial, commercial, and residential sectors by 2040
- Expanding those activities to include:
 - those that advance and support the production of clean hydrogen from diverse energy sources
 - use of hydrogen for commercial, industrial, and residential electric power generation
 - use of hydrogen in industrial applications such as steelmaking and cement
 - use of hydrogen as a residential and commercial fuel source

The standard must support clean hydrogen production from fossil fuels with CCUS, hydrogen-carrier fuels (including ethanol and methanol), and renewable energy resources, including biomass, nuclear energy, and any other methods. The standard also must define the term “clean hydrogen” to mean hydrogen produced with a carbon intensity “equal to or less than two kilograms of carbon dioxide-equivalent per kilogram of hydrogen produced,” and take into consideration technological and economic feasibility.

At the time this piece was written, specific provisions from progressive Democrats were uncertain, but anticipated to likely address policy related to methane and other greenhouse gases in the upcoming budget reconciliation bill that will include far stronger climate measures than the infrastructure legislation. According to Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass), a lead supporter of the Green New Deal, “this budget resolution will be a generational investment in the future of our people and our planet.” In other words, we have more work ahead of us.

Gas Distribution Provision for Municipalities in Infrastructure Package

On a very positive note, there is language in the infrastructure package that would authorize \$1B for municipalities to replace gas distribution lines, specifically those made out of cast iron. DCA members are already performing quality work to replace antiquated gas distribution infrastructure at a rapid pace, but public gas utilities are looking for support for additional funding for municipal gas distribution replacement. DCA was asked to weigh in with support to Congress and regulatory agencies, making the point that our industry can meet this demand. DCA provided information regarding our significant work to address workforce capacity challenges in the gas distribution construction industry.

This funding was originally proposed by the Biden Administration, which released a fact sheet / memo which pointed out some infrastructure provisions that may not have received significant attention from the national media, including the following:

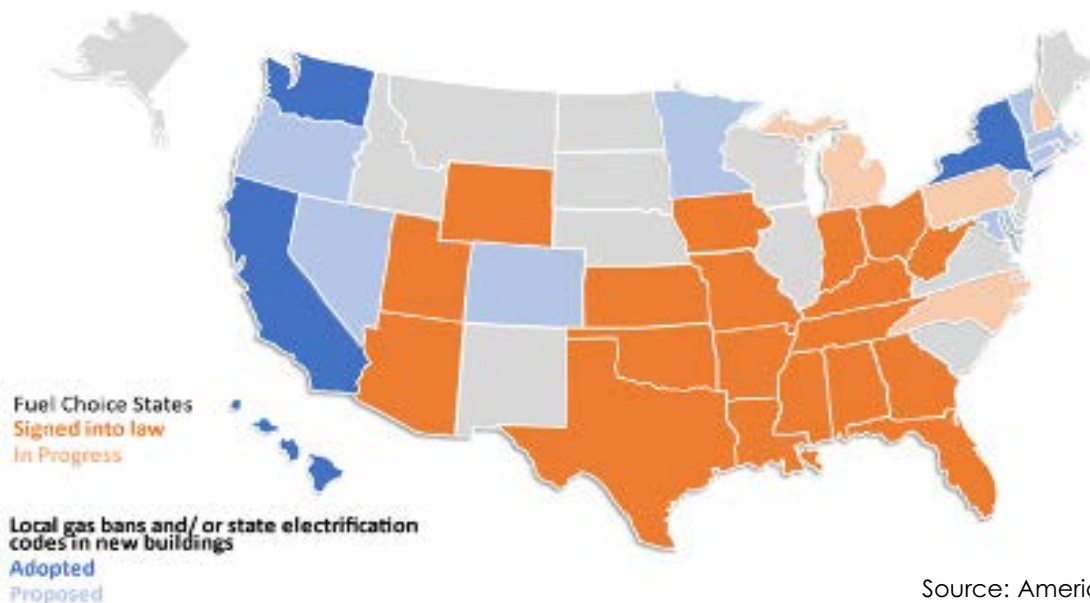
“Pipeline safety: More than 20,000 miles of cast iron pipelines – much of which was installed in the 1800’s and early 1900’s – transports natural gas underneath communities in the U.S. This infrastructure, which is prone to leaks and fugitive methane emissions, is mostly located in disadvantaged areas including older cities like Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, New York, and St. Louis. Since 2010, the U.S. has experienced thousands of pipeline incidents, resulting in hundreds of injuries and deaths, tens of thousands of evacuations, and more than \$4 billion in damages. The bill includes \$1 billion for the “Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program” to modernize natural gas distribution pipelines, reducing incidents and fatalities, and avoiding economic losses.”

After collaboration with industry partners, DCA expressed full support for the \$1 billion for public gas distribution replacement projects, along with information regarding the association’s workforce development efforts.

Majority of States Now Engaged in Fight Over Natural Gas Future

Because DCA continues to be heavily engaged in what has essentially become a holy war at the state level over if and how state governments can interfere with consumer choice when it comes to available fuel sources, another

(continued on pg. 24)



Source: American Gas Association

update seems to be in order. While DCA remains concerned with the many states that are considering legislation that would substantially reduce and even eliminate the role of natural gas, we're also very encouraged by the increasing number of states that have enacted or proposed "fuel choice" laws that essentially ban the implementation of laws that would ban natural gas.

As previously reported, DCA is working with an ad hoc coalition to push back on harmful legislation that would mandate electrification through future building codes and/or other methods while supporting fuel choice measures. As you'll see in the updated map provided above, there are now many more states that have enacted or proposed fuel choice legislation than have advanced gas ban bills.

Make no mistake, the fact that progress has been made at the state level has not led DCA or any member of this important coalition to rest on their laurels. This important issue will continue for the foreseeable future and DCA needs to keep an "all hands-on deck" approach to these state-level issues.

Broad-Based Coalition Continues Fight Against Increased Insurance Requirements

As the Senate was working on its version of a surface transportation bill which was included in the bipartisan infrastructure package, a broad, multi-industry coalition continued to discourage efforts by congressional Democrats to increase the minimum liability insurance requirements for motor carriers, including those in the construction industry, from \$750,000 to \$2 million. Besides being wholly unnecessary and doing nothing to improve highway safety, this would jeopardize countless blue-collar jobs and countless small and family-owned businesses.

In separate letters to both the Senate Republican and Democratic Leadership, this coalition made the point that

increasing motor carriers' minimum liability requirements "would affect all businesses transporting property, not just long-haul trucking operations. As illustrated by the diversity of our coalition, the impact would be felt in many sectors of the economy that have been working to help our nation recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the agriculture, construction, manufacturing, towing, and materials industries."

Additionally, past federal research has demonstrated such a change is entirely unnecessary. A congressionally-required study has shown that the vast majority of truck-involved crashes have relatively small cost consequences, and the existing minimum of \$750,000 covers costs in over 99% of crashes involving a commercial motor vehicle.

The coalition was not afraid to call out the true advocates of this shortsighted policy. "Proposals to raise minimum liability coverage are nothing more than an opportunity for trial lawyers to receive higher payouts from settlements and decisions at the expense of American businesses," the coalition letter stated. "If this policy were to become law, we are concerned it would encourage more and increasingly costly lawsuits against our members for crashes in which they are most often not responsible."

The coalition was encouraged that the Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee did not include this provision in the language of the Senate's highway bill, which passed with a strong bipartisan vote of 25-3, and suggested that the omission of this policy demonstrates there is not enough support for it to pass the Senate as part of any bipartisan bill. However, the increase was included in House legislation, so this fight is far from over.

As the debate over American infrastructure policy continues, we sincerely hope DCA members will continue to be engaged in our advocacy efforts, both at the federal and state level. ▲



Eben M. Wyman

Principal

eben@wymanassociates.net

Calendar

DCA & Industry Events

2021

OCTOBER 20

CEWD EnergyCareers 2021
Virtual Meeting
www.cewd.org

OCTOBER 27-29

DCA Fall Meeting
Four Seasons Hotel Denver
Denver, Colorado
www.dcaweb.org

NOVEMBER 16-18

CEWD 2021
Workforce Development Summit
Virtual Meeting
www.cewd.org

NOVEMBER 17-18

Pipeline Leadership Conference
Embassy Suites
The Woodlands, Texas
www.plconference.com

2022

JANUARY 25-27

Underground Technology Conference (UCT)
Fort Worth Convention Center
Fort Worth, Texas
www.uctonline.com

2022 (cont.)

FEBRUARY 14-18

Pipe Line Contractors Association
(PLCA) Annual Convention
Sheraton Wild Horse Pass
Phoenix, Arizona
www.plca.org

MARCH 1-3

Global Excavation Safety Conference
Phoenix, Arizona
www.globalexavationsafetyconference.com

MARCH 28-30

DCA Safety Congress
Hyatt Regency Austin
Austin, Texas
www.dcaweb.org

APRIL 11-13

DCA & AGA Workshop
The Ritz-Carlton - Chicago
Chicago, Illinois
www.dcaweb.org

ATTENTION ALL DCA MEMBERS!

So you do not miss out on future meeting and event notices, please have your company's IT representative whitelist all emails from dcaweb.org. If you have any questions, please contact Teri Korson at tkorson@dcaweb.org.

Member News



Patrick D. Michels

Patrick D. Michels Elected to National Academy of Construction

The National Academy of Construction (NAC) has elected Patrick D. Michels, president and CEO of Michels Corporation, headquartered in Brownsville, WI, as a member of its class of

2021. He will be formally inducted October 21 during the NAC annual meeting.

In electing Michels, NAC cited him for his "expansive leadership in service to heavy civil, infrastructure, energy, utility, and transportation sectors and innovative approaches in guiding businesses and affiliate companies."

Wayne Crew, General Secretary of the Academy, said, "Our 2021 class is diverse, experienced, and dedicated. Pat Michels is a most deserving new member. His dedication to improving our nation's infrastructure and his leadership in the pipelines, transportation, and energy sectors is exemplary. We welcome him."

Other new members for 2021 include Joseph Aiello, Burcu Akinci, Jon Avery, Burçin Becerik-Gerber, Denise Berger, Susan Bogus, Abbigail Brown, Tim Byers, Bo Calbert, Randy Castro, Cheryl McKissack Daniel, Jeff Ehret, Marcos Díaz González, Christine Flaherty, Thomas Foley, Gretchen Gagel, and Michael Garvin.

Also elected to the Academy were: Howard Goldberg, KN Gunalan, Sandy Hamby, John Hooper, Barb Jackson, Ashok Kothari, Robert C. Lanham, Jr., Randy Larson, Cris Liban, Keith Manning, Vilas Mujumdar, Eric Nichol, Karen Rae, Mike Rigsby, Janaka Ruwanpura, Rich Schrader, Miroslaw Skibniewski, Ed Smith, Sue Steele, and Rao Surampalli.

Election criteria for NAC is rigorous: leadership, exceptional service, a continued commitment to making

a contribution, past recognition by peers for innovation, and being recognized as "best of the best."

Michels' company was established by his father in 1959 as a gas pipeline and telephone cable company. He began his career with the company's line and cable division as a laborer, advanced to general superintendent, and then served as vice president of the division for nine years before becoming president of the corporation in 1998. Today, Michels Corporation is one of the top 50 energy and infrastructure contractors in North America. Under his leadership, the company operates worldwide, has more than 40 U.S. offices, three offices in Canada, and supports 8,000 employees. The company was recognized as the number one pipeline contractor in the U.S. In 2016, Michels was awarded the Pipeline Leadership Award by North American Oil and Gas Pipelines magazine. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from St. Norbert College in DePere, Wisconsin.



(l to r) Randy Hayes, Vacuworx; Kip Eideberg, AEM; Bill Solomon, Vacuworx; Rep. Hern

U.S. Rep. Hern Visits Tulsa Rig Iron and Vacuworx

The Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), Tulsa Rig Iron, and Vacuworx hosted Congressman Kevin Hern for two "I Make America" events in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The events highlighted the importance of American equipment manufacturing and celebrated the men and women who work to build a better and brighter future for themselves and their communities.

"Equipment manufacturing supports 77,200 jobs for Oklahomans and contributes \$6.9 billion to our state's economy each year," Hern said. "I want to see our critical goods made right here in Oklahoma and across the U.S., revitalizing the U.S. manufacturing sector. I appreciated the opportunity to visit with the Association of Equipment Manufacturers and hardworking Tulsans at both the Tulsa Rig Iron and Vacuworx facilities to see American equipment manufacturing at its finest."

"I Make America," AEM's national grassroots campaign, advocates for the policies that are critical to the industry's long-term growth and prosperity. Earlier this year, AEM launched "Year of Action," an initiative designed to educate and mobilize the 2.8 million men and women of the equipment manufacturing industry in support of its top policy priorities.

"Tulsa Rig Iron was honored to host Congressman Hern at our Kiefer facility," said Terry Flynn, vice president of sales and marketing of Tulsa Rig Iron. "Thanks to the support of leaders like Rep. Hern, we can continue to manufacture critical components for the equipment that builds and powers America. We are encouraged to hear about his efforts on Capitol Hill that will allow our company and our industry to thrive in Oklahoma."

"The challenge lies in recognizing that having choices carries the responsibility to make them wisely," said Bill Solomon, president of Vacuworx. "Our guiding principles are we care about people, we are relentless on our focus on value for our customers and employees, and we are committed to safety. We appreciate having the opportunity to share our thoughts with Representative Hern, as well as his longstanding support of small businesses."

"Manufacturing is the backbone of the American economy, and equipment manufacturers such as Tulsa Rig Iron and Vacuworx are the beating heart of communities across the great state of Oklahoma," said Kip Eideberg, AEM's senior vice president of government and industry relations. "The 77,000 men and women who build world class equipment in Oklahoma are not afraid of rolling up their sleeves and working hard."



John Deere Acquires Bear Flag Robotics to Accelerate Autonomous Technology on the Farm

Deere & Company has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Silicon Valley-based startup Bear Flag Robotics for \$250 million.

Founded in 2017, Bear Flag Robotics develops autonomous driving technology compatible with existing machines. The deal accelerates the development and delivery of automation and autonomy on the farm and supports John Deere's long-term strategy to create smarter machines with advanced technology to support individual customer needs.

"Deere views autonomy as an important step forward in enabling farmers to leverage their resources strategically to feed the world and create more sustainable and profitable operations," said Jahmy Hindman, chief technology officer at John Deere.

Deere first started working with Bear Flag in 2019 as part of the company's Startup Collaborator program, an initiative focused on enhancing work with startup companies whose technology could add value for Deere customers. Since then, Bear Flag has successfully deployed its autonomous solution on a limited number of farms in the U.S.

"One of the biggest challenges farmers face today is the availability of skilled labor to execute time-sensitive operations that impact farming outcomes. Autonomy offers a safe and productive alternative to address that challenge head on," said Iginio Cafiero, co-founder and CEO of Bear Flag Robotics. "Bear Flag's mission to

(continued on pg. 28)

increase global food production and reduce the cost of growing food through machine automation is aligned with Deere's and we're excited to join the Deere team to bring autonomy to more farms."

Deere & Company (www.JohnDeere.com) is a world leader in providing advanced products, technology, and services for customers whose work is revolutionizing agriculture and construction — those who cultivate, harvest, transform, enrich, and build upon the land to meet the world's increasing need for food, fuel, shelter, and infrastructure.

Bear Flag Robotics' (www.BearFlagRobotics.com) mission is to increase global food production while decreasing the cost of growing food through machine automation. The company makes autonomous technology for agricultural tractors, increasing safety, reliability, and profitability on farms.



Doosan Infracore

Hyundai Buys Doosan, But Will Grow Both Equipment Brands

Doosan Infracore - maker of earthmoving equipment and attachments in North America - is now officially a subsidiary of the newly created Hyundai Genuine (HG)

(continued on pg. 30)

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CONTRACTOR MEMBERS

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Westheimer Rd., Ste. 1650
Houston, TX 77056
(713) 985-6442
Website: www.mears.net

Vivek Arora, Chief Administrative Officer;
varora@quantaservices.com
Kevin Parker, Vice President – Health, Safety & Environment;
kevin.parker@mears.net

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

HammerHead Trenchless

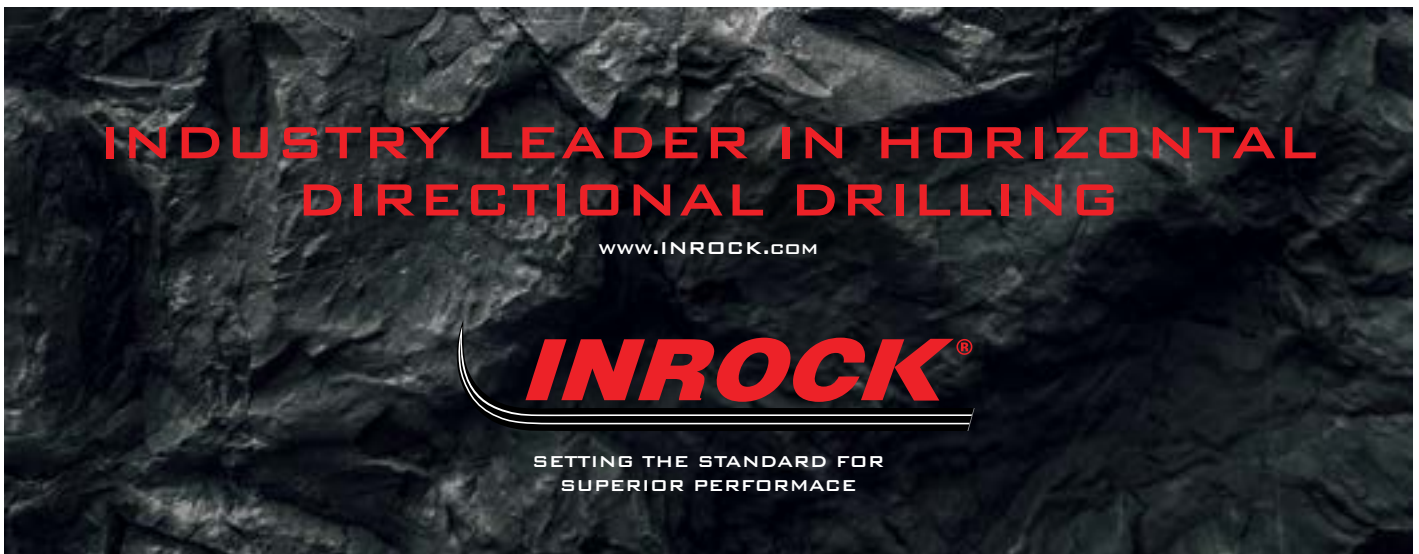
500 S CP Ave.
Lake Mills, WI 53551
(800) 331-6653 or (920) 648-4848
Website: www.hammerheadtrenchless.com

Jeff Urbanski, Senior Manager – Marketing & Training Services;
jurbanski@hhtrenchless.com
Alan Goodman, Market Development Manager;
agoodman@hhtrenchless.com
Jeff Gabrielse, Managing Director;
jgabrielse@hhtrenchless.com

Repurposed Materials Inc.

13505 E. 112th Ave.
Brighton, CO 80603
(303) 321-1471
Website: www.repurposedmaterialsinc.com

Damon Carson, President;
damon@repurposedmaterialsinc.com



group, alongside Hyundai Construction Equipment (HCE).

The two entities will act as independent construction equipment companies under Hyundai Heavy Industries Holdings Co. (HHIH). HG will act as the intermediary company of HHIH Group's construction equipment businesses and will be leading both Doosan Infracore and HCE to maximize the company's efforts and focus on the construction equipment industry.

"Together the two brands will combine as a global top player, putting us much closer to achieving the goal of becoming a global top 5 player," a statement from Doosan Infracore said.

"The plan is to manage overlapping investments and invest heavily in areas like future technologies and innovation," the statement continued. "Doosan

Infracore will be working diligently to commercialize Concept-X and develop cutting-edge products such as electric excavators, battery packs, hybrid fuel cells and other next-generation products. By focusing on each company's areas of strength, HG will be able to advance the development of these types of products to gain a competitive edge in the global market."

Finally, Doosan Infracore reported the two companies will continue to compete in good faith in all areas, including technology, production, purchasing, sales and quality. "This will enable our business to expand and associate with other companies operated by the whole HHI group," the company said. ▲



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