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DCA NEWS

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**DCA History:
The Teens
and Beyond
Fall Meeting
Convention**



CONTENTS

- 04 DCA History: The Teens and Beyond – Soaring to New Heights
- 12 DCA Fall Meeting Wrap-Up
- 16 Committee News
- 19 Mid Year Meeting
- 20 DCA Annual Convention
- 22 Insights
- 25 Calendar
- 26 Member News





DCA Board of Directors, 50th Annual Convention 2011

DCA History

The Teens and Beyond - Soaring to New Heights

By 2010, it was clear that the new millennium had gotten off on the wrong foot, with one great tragedy after another—9/11, war in the Middle East, Hurricane Katrina, the Indian Ocean tsunami, and the Great Recession, just to name a few. And the troubles showed no signs of stopping: Just two weeks into the new year, a massive earthquake in Haiti left more than 200,000 dead and millions homeless. As for the U.S., despite worsening partisan gridlock in Washington, the nation was slowly grinding its way out of recession, and the new technologies of smartphones and social media still held the promise of bringing us all closer together than ever before. Five states had voted to allow gay marriage, the Kepler Space Telescope was busy discovering new planets around other stars, and the world had a new tallest building by far as the Burj Khalifa opened in Dubai. The DCA had weathered the recession better than

many and was enjoying the fruits of demand for cleaner fuels amid calls for greater domestic production and growing fears of climate change. As a major milestone anniversary neared, the stage was set for DCA to see some spectacular new growth.

A New Hand at the Tiller

In February 2010 the DCA ventured for the first time to Mexico for its annual convention, setting up shop at the Fiesta Americana Grand Resort in Los Cabos at the southern tip of Baja California. The convention marked a period of transition guided by DCA President Shepard Poole, who initiated a new strategic plan and hired Rob Darden to take over as Executive Vice President after Dennis Kennedy announced he would be retiring from his long-tenured post. Kennedy was inducted as an honorary member and treated to a special “roast.”



DCA New Website, DCANews, Directory & DCA E-News 2011

With a new strategic plan fresh in hand, Darden gave a state-of-the-industry address to outline the issues DCA would be tackling over the next few years. Vincent Giblin, general president of the International Union of Operating Engineers, also spoke at the meeting. Another milestone was the establishment of a new scholarship in honor of the late Curtis H. Allen, to be funded by Bentonite Performance Minerals. Kevin Miller, president of Miller Pipeline Corporation, Indianapolis, was elected as the next DCA president, and safety awards went to H&H Enterprises, H.L Chapman Pipeline Construction, Inc., and Minnesota Limited, Inc. The day before the convention closed on Feb. 27, a gargantuan 8.8 earthquake — the sixth largest ever recorded — struck off the coast of Chile, threatening the entire Pacific Rim with possible tsunamis. All 300 attendees were moved to higher ground in anticipation of the worst, but there were some brave souls who hung out at the infinity pool waiting for the wave. Luckily for all, the tsunami never materialized, but a rowdy game of water volleyball ensued.

The next convention would be a special one as the DCA celebrated its 50th anniversary at El Conquistador Resort & Golden Door Spa in Fajardo, Puerto Rico, where they were almost guaranteed sunny weather. Bruno Mars, Enrique Iglesias, and Pink were on the radio, the Arab Spring revolutions swept across the Middle East, and China was cracking down yet again on nosy reporters who dared to acknowledge the existence of protests against the government. The convention opened with a retrospective on the last 50 years, paying tribute to the generation that had built DCA into the great organization that it is, and introduced a new logo and website to the members. The annual auction topped \$400,000 for the first time and H & H Enterprises, Q3 Contracting, Inc., Mears Group, Inc., and Michels Corporation won the safety awards. The welcome dinner featured a trip across the water to beautiful Palomino Island, where everyone had fun

dancing, playing volleyball, and socializing. Guest speaker Brian Bowen, Professor of Practice at the School of Construction, College of Architecture at Georgia Institute of Technology, enlightened members on the history of construction, and Michael Rogers, "Futurist-in-Residence" for The New York Times, opined on what was yet to come. The Business Session featured a panel that highlighted the perspectives of suppliers and providers versus contractors. Gregory Dahl, ARB, Inc., became the next DCA president and ended the convention with an introduction to what the association hoped to achieve in the next 50 years. Later in the year, DCA debuted the first Professional Development Conference in November to bring education deeper into member companies' employee ranks, earning rave reviews from attendees.

In early 2012, President Obama was enjoying the lowest unemployment numbers in three years as Mitt Romney sought the Republican nomination to challenge him in the fall election. Egypt and Libya were in chaos after toppling their dictators, Somali pirates threatened shipping in East Africa, and the Zetas drug cartel terrorized Mexico. In February, the DCA sought refuge from the news at the Fairmont Orchid Resort on the Kohala Coast of Hawaii, where Kevin Michels of Michels Corporation took the reins as DCA president. In what would be his first appearance at DCA events, Jason Dorsey introduced his research on generational differences in the workplace at the keynote breakfast. Vacuworx sponsored a Super Bowl party on Sunday with food, fun, and prizes as the Giants beat the Patriots for the second time in five years. The auction followed that evening, raising \$415,000. Christopher Daum, senior managing director and officer with FMI Capital Advisors, Inc., comedian Frank King, and cookie mogul Wally "Famous" Amos were also featured speakers that week.

(continued on pg. 06)



DCA Washington, D.C. Fly-in

The year would end up being a strong one for the DCA thanks to newly discovered natural gas resources and a strong push to rehab and replace aging infrastructure. DCA had grown 18 percent since 2009, with over half of that in 2012, during a time when most associations in other industries were losing members. The organization also ramped up its government relations efforts with the help of Wyman Associates in Washington, D.C. and collaboration with the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) and other industry groups, while adding a new monthly publication, *DCA Insights*, to keep members better informed on the latest developments.

Rewriting the Record Books

Demand remained strong throughout 2013, but regulatory hurdles from the federal government and state and local budget shortages began to slow the pace of work. Industry worker shortages were increasingly becoming an issue, but at the 2013 DCA convention, Loews Miami Beach Hotel still hosted 400 attendees, the highest number in more than a decade. The upscale festivities included a dinner at the former Versace mansion, a luxury yacht cruise around Biscayne Bay, and a professional fashion consultant at the McLaughlin Spouses' Breakfast. Guest speakers included two-time world champion Eco-Challenge adventure racer and San Diego firefighter Robyn Benincasa and country music recording artist and Army Ranger Keni

Thomas, who served on the Ranger task force portrayed in the book and movie "Blackhawk Down." Tim Bell of Midwestern Contractors in Chicago was elected DCA president, Dave Nelson of Pilchuck Contractors was inducted as an honorary member, and the auction total rose to impressive new heights at over \$538,000. The event ended with a "Great Gatsby" Roaring 20s costume party, where gangsters and flappers enjoyed the bar's best "bootleg" and danced the night away. In the news, Syria was mired in civil war, the Carnival *Triumph* cruise ship was set adrift after a fire in the engine room, Asians ushered in the Year of the Snake, and a record-breaking blizzard slammed the northeastern U.S., cancelling thousands of flights and cutting power to 700,000 homes.

In February 2014, "The Lego Movie" competed with "The Monuments Men" on the big screen while Katy Perry's "Dark Horse" knocked Pharrell Williams' "Happy" out of the top spot on the music charts. Winter storms were pounding the east coast yet again, Germany was upset with the U.S. over spying allegations, Russia opened the Winter Olympics in Sochi, and legendary child star and U.S. diplomat Shirley Temple Black passed away. The DCA gathered at the Ritz-Carlton in Cancun, Mexico, for a week of fun at the beach, far from the cold and snow. The welcome reception transformed the Ritz-Carlton Ballroom into a tropical jungle, and Mayan fire dancers entertained the crowd. Grady Bell of Laney Directional Drilling Co. in Spring, Texas, was named the 2014 DCA



DCA Convention 2015 in New Orleans

president and the Business Session featured Mark Bridgers of Continuum Advisory Group, who gave a presentation on "What Pipeline Contractors & Engineers Need to Know." Other featured speakers were FDNY Chief Richard Picciotto, the highest ranking firefighter to survive the World Trade Center collapse; Clayton Anderson, former NASA astronaut; and Mac King, comedy magician. It was an astounding year for the auction, with the record total jumping by more than \$200,000 to a breathtaking high of \$728,360. Members also raised an additional \$73,000 to support honorary member and auctioneer Butch Graham's local Oklahoma chapter of the Special Forces Association. Butch and his wife Bonnie had hoped to raise \$2,500 to donate to the wives of disabled veterans for Christmas and were shocked by the generosity of DCA members. The week wrapped up with a Margaritaville-themed beach party featuring a Jimmy Buffett tribute band, parrots, margaritas (of course), buckets of beer, and grass skirts and parrot heads for the dance floor. For the remainder of the year DCA focused heavily on reaching out to other industry associations to work on improvements such as operator qualification (OQ) portability and safety issues like cross bore management. In his year-end letter, Rob Darden noted a perceptible shift where other groups were beginning to approach DCA for its expertise and leadership, which he accredited to DCA's exceptionally active membership

gaining more widespread notice.

Workforce issues came to the fore in 2015 as DCA held its first annual job fair and brainstormed new ways to connect with youths and attract them to the industry. The 2015 convention once again boasted 400 attendees as DCA members converged on the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. The welcome reception and dinner—complete with jazz band, dancers, fortune tellers, and plenty of refreshments—kicked off the week's theme at Mardi Gras World, where 80% of the floats for the carnival parade are designed and built. Frank Patterson of Patterson & Wilder Construction Co. Inc, in Birmingham, Alabama, became DCA president, and cousins Jack and Ken Gabrielse were inducted as an honorary members at the opening keynote breakfast, which featured Navy SEAL Rob O'Neill as speaker, otherwise known as the man who killed Bin Laden. Another breakfast was held at the National World War II Museum, where retired Army Lt. General Russel L. Honoré spoke about leading recovery efforts after hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005. Auction revenues leaped again to an astounding \$900,000, demonstrating the growing strength of the industry. Alpinist, wing-suit pilot, and BASE jumper Joby Ogwyn regaled the closing breakfast with his tales of derring-do, and the President's Dinner wrapped up the

(continued on pg. 08)



Butch Graham at his last DCA Auction, Naples, Fl., February 2017

proceedings with a Mardi Gras masked ball. Meanwhile, Brian Williams was out as the host of NBC Nightly News for exaggerating his record in covering the Iraq War, disgraced captain Francesco Schettino of the capsized cruise ship *Costa Concordia* was sentenced in Italy to 16 years in prison for manslaughter, and Ukraine faced the fast-growing threat of pro-Russian separatists within its borders. Boston, of course, was closed due to snow.

Ed Sheeran's "Thinking Out Loud" had just won Song of the Year when the DCA convened at the Naples Grande Beach Resort in Naples, Florida, for the 2016 convention. Pope Francis was touring some of the most desperate and crime-ridden areas of Mexico, and the gas industry was in the news as well — for all the wrong reasons. California state regulators announced that the state's largest ever methane leak, an underground natural gas pipeline rupture at the Aliso Canyon natural gas storage field that lasted almost four months, had finally been capped, allowing thousands of displaced Los Angeles residents to return home. Convention attendance hit a new record high of 450, with more first-timers than ever before. The tropical-themed welcome dinner took place at the Naples Botanical Gardens. Journalist and bestselling author Steve Hayes; Chris Daum, president and senior managing director of FMI Capital Advisors; Jeff Havens, an authority on generational differences; and award-winning keynote

speaker David Horsager graced the DCA stage with their inspiring and informative messages. Dale Anderson of Miller Pipeline, Indianapolis, took over as DCA president. The auction total dipped slightly from the previous year to a still-impressive \$890,000, and Executive VP Rob Darden presented longtime auctioneer and honorary member Butch Graham with a gift to commemorate his retirement from Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers. The week closed with an evening of ocean enchantment centered around a giant sandcastle. Important developments during the year included the creation of the Workforce Development Committee, the release of a position paper from DCA's Cross Bore Initiative that was presented at various industry events, and participation in a damage prevention study by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). Political outreach to lawmakers continued to advance, while new efforts were required to rebut the increasing objection to pipeline construction projects across the country. DCA also brought together a coalition of gas associations, training service providers and contractors to tackle the OQ portability issue head on.

The 2016 convention attendance record was shattered in 2017 as 490 members headed to the Grand Wailea Resort in Maui. Generational expert Jason Dorsey returned to impart his latest research on what it takes to recruit younger workers, and former Philadelphia



DCA Workforce Summit with Jason Dorsey of CGK

Eagles football player turned magician Jon Dorenbos entertained the breakfast crowd with his inspiring story. Dale Mykyte of Pe Ben USA, Inc. in Houston, Texas was elected DCA president and the annual auction soared once again, flirting with a million dollars this time but falling just short. Members also enjoyed a “Build Your Own Boat” team activity to benefit a local charity. Attendees that week could toast Queen Elizabeth II’s sapphire jubilee—the first English monarch to reign for 65 years—or debate the cabinet nominees of Donald Trump after his unexpected victory in the fall presidential election. The New England Patriots staged a dramatic comeback against the Atlanta Falcons to win the Super Bowl while Adele cleaned up at the Grammys, Native Americans protested the Dakota Access oil pipeline, and JFK Airport shut down due to a snowstorm. In April, the DCA published the first draft of an OQ integrity document and sent it to numerous industry and government agencies for feedback.

A Big Year

A bit of science fiction turned to reality as the next convention rolled around at the end of February 2018, with California giving the green light to allow driverless robot cars on state roads as soon as April. The Winter Olympics were closing in Pyeongchang, South Korea, President Trump announced tariffs on imported steel

and aluminum, and flooding rainstorms lashed the northeast. At the Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point, California, the DCA convention topped 500 members in attendance for the first time ever. The event kicked off with a southern California garden party at the historic Mission San Juan Capistrano, and the DCA past presidents received the special privilege of a dinner at the Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library, held in a replica of the East Room of the White House. At the Business Session, PHMSA Associate Administrator Alan Mayberry addressed the members on its mission to advance the safe transportation of energy and other hazardous materials. Mike Rowe addressed the keynote breakfast on the challenges of the shrinking skilled labor force in the U.S. DCA would later team up with Mike Rowe on a television series to raise awareness of the energy industry and the great jobs available. Afterward, Rob Darden presented Rowe with a check for his MikeroweWORKS Foundation, which provides financial assistance to those wanting to learn the skilled trades. The 2018 convention also introduced the members to SkillsUSA, an organization working to connect students with technical and skilled service occupations, as well as the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) where DCA became its first contractor member. Jay Osborn of Primoris Services Corp. took his turn at the helm of the DCA, and the

(continued on pg. 10)



Rob Darden with Mike Rowe on set during the taping of "Six Degrees"

annual auction finally cracked the million-dollar ceiling! Canadian author, writer, and political commentator Mark Steyn rounded out the week's speakers as the DCA concluded its most successful convention ever.

The turnout would leap again to 600 the following year as members gathered at the Grand Hyatt Baha Mar Resort in Nassau, Bahamas, in March 2019. Tensions were high around the globe — anti-government demonstrations brought much of France to a standstill, Russia suspended its participation in a key Cold War-era arms treaty, China increased its military spending, and Venezuela had dueling presidents. The Bahamas were a welcome respite from so much sour news. The welcome dinner featured dancers in the colorful regalia of the Bahamian Junkanoo festival, and the week's activities included a Nassau walking tour, snorkeling, and swimming with the dolphins. Featured speakers included Derreck Kayongo, founder of the Global Soap Project; Australian rescue divers Dr. Craig Challen and Dr. Richard Harris, who were instrumental in the daring extraction of the Wild Boars soccer team and their coach from a flooded cave in Thailand; and Carey Lohrenz, the Navy's first female F-14 Tomcat carrier pilot. The DCA thanked Rob Darden for his first 10 years of service as executive director, noting that membership had increased from 48 contractors to 91 during his tenure. The auction fell just short of its previous high, raising \$974,000 for scholarships

and DCA initiatives. Incoming president Mike Hickey of Hallen Construction Company presided over what might have been the wildest closing dinner in DCA history—a 70s-themed costume party that made the Junkanoo parade look like a black-tie dinner. A few months later at the DCA Workforce Summit, Jason Dorsey and the team from the Center for Generational Kinetics (CGK) unveiled a *Take Action Playbook*, a joint project with DCA, which provides member company teams with the tools to assess their hiring needs and develop the best solutions to tailor their offerings to the Millennial and Gen Z mindset. DCA also agreed to sponsor Mike Rowe's new television show "Six Degrees" that romps through history showing how energy is tied to nearly everything. The Fall Meeting in New York featuring dinner atop One World Trade Center seemed a fitting end to DCA's most successful decade as the "post-9/11" era prepared to give way to the era of Covid-19.

"May you live in interesting times"

As the DCA begins its seventh decade of existence, the old Chinese curse "May you live in interesting times" has never seemed more appropriate. The 2020 convention at the Boca Raton Resort and Club in Florida squeezed in just days before much of the world went into lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic. Ben Nelson of Michels Pacific Energy in Santa Clara, California succeeded Mike



DCA Micro-sites: DCALetsGetToWork.com, www.DCATrenchless.com, www.OQIP.org

Hickey as DCA president, Chris Braehler was inducted as an honorary member, and the annual auction raised \$958,000. The convention featured a combination of Cuban and "Salute to Service" themes. Guest speakers included writer and businessman Gene Marks, Special Forces veterans Adam Carr and Jake Clark of the Save a Warrior (SAW) Foundation, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, political analyst Chris Stirewalt, and a surprise appearance by DCA favorite Mike Rowe. The convention wrapped up with a "USO Through the Decades" ball that featured more celebrity lookalikes than you could shake a stick at.

Upon leaving, the Miami airport was filled with worried cruise ship passengers debarking after news of other ships being stranded in quarantine after Covid-19 outbreaks onboard. The year was only starting to turn the world upside down. Violence filled the summer following the death of George Floyd and the economy crashed as lockdowns and mask mandates shuttered businesses around the world. The tumultuous presidential election ended the year with the election of Joe Biden and a new administration with a goal of crushing the fossil fuel industry.

The Mid Year Meeting became the Fall Meeting, and then the Fall Meeting became a virtual meeting, forcing everyone to learn how to Zoom, like it or not. A joint virtual Workforce Summit was held in conjunction with CEWD as well. Still, the gas and construction industries remained strong as the pandemic quickly made clear who the real "essential workers" were.

After a year and a half of staring at each other on computer screens, the miraculously rapid development of effective Covid-19 vaccines made it possible to finally meet in person again. A record-setting Safety Conference in April preceded the 2021 convention, which was originally scheduled for Hawaii in February, and then Scottsdale, Arizona, before finally taking place in Orlando, Florida, in July in place of the Mid Year Meeting. The Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes Orlando was a welcoming host to the 400 members and guests who

turned out to celebrate DCA's Diamond Anniversary, starting with a classic high school football Homecoming Reception. Ben Nelson saw his term as president extended for another year, reflecting the unusual times, and the auction revenues fell as expected, but managed a still-healthy \$560,000 total. Jon Dorenbos made his second DCA appearance as guest speaker, along with spoken word poet Sekou Andrews, and a Build a Bike event gave DCA members a chance to support local children's charities. The Diamonds & Stars Reception wrapped up the 60th anniversary events with special appearances by Lady Gaga and Elton John impersonators.

The OQ project, which DCA had been shepherding for several years, was formalized into the Operator Qualification Integrity Process or OQIP which became its own 501(c)(3) organization with www.OQIP.org as its electronic home. DCA also released two new micro-websites in 2021, www.DCALetsGetToWork.com and www.DCATrenchless.com, to help target the organization's messages on workforce issues and trenchless technology more directly. The release of Mike Rowe's "Six Degrees" show on the Discovery Channel in April also raised industry awareness and featured ads from DCA, Michels, and Artera highlighting the availability of high paying jobs and great careers.

These days, political rancor is reaching highs not seen in more than a century, the virus refuses to fade into history, and the gas industry is facing new pressures as the debate on climate change grows and a renewed opposition to natural gas rises. An organization born in the 60s, however, is no stranger to turbulence. It may take a couple of years to return to the record-high levels of activity that peaked in 2019, but the DCA's long track record of dedicated members, steady leadership, and consistent achievement leave it well equipped to tackle difficult times and ensure that its members can keep America's lights on for many decades to come. ▲



2021 DCA Fall Meeting Wrap-Up

The air was crisp and cool as DCA members gathered at the base of the Rocky Mountains in late October for the first Fall Meeting since 2019. The Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Denver hosted the long overdue event, just the third in-person meeting since the pandemic began. A dinner featuring a roast pig welcomed arriving guests on the evening of Wednesday, October 28, and the room full of plaid-clad members made quick work of the delicious desserts as boisterous conversation flowed over drinks.

The meeting quickly got down to business the next morning, starting with the Trenchless Committee (formerly known as the HDD Committee). A quick review of

updates to the DCA's trenchless website and an update from Grady Bell on the Underground Construction Technology (UCT) conference preceded the introduction of Matthew Izzard, executive director of the North American Society for Trenchless Technology (NASTT), and Alan Goodman of HammerHead Trenchless.

Formed in 1990, NASTT is a non-profit focused on education and fostering innovation of infrastructure development and management. Izzard noted that while the organization had strong academic and engineering representation, particularly in water transport, they were lacking perspective from the gas industry and from contractors, which they hope DCA can help them



Rob Darden

correct. Goodman discussed benefits offered by NASTT that include access to the world's largest online trenchless library; regional events and conferences like the No-Dig Show in Minneapolis in April 2021; and scholarships for utilities and municipalities to attend conferences. Potential collaborations with DCA could include technical papers, training workshops, and good practice courses, among others.

The committee then discussed how to overcome the challenges contractors face when trying to communicate to engineers and owners about field activities.

The Safety/Risk Management Committee was up next. Brad Heck of Miller Pipeline gave a brief history of the Operator Integrity Qualification Process OQIP, which began four or five years ago in Las Vegas with a like-minded group looking to streamline operator

qualifications and avoid duplication of effort. The original small task force has now become a 501 c3 non-profit coalition of companies and organizations. OQIP has its own logo and website and three active pilot programs testing the latest guidelines as the project continues to evolve.

The conversation turned next to safety award questionnaires and planning for the next Safety Conference, followed by an update from Kevin Parker of Mears Holding LLC, on opportunities to work with the INGAA Foundation on Pipeline Safety Management Systems (PSMS).

The Workforce Development Committee followed, starting with an update on the upcoming Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) conference. In addition to urging members to attend, the committee noted that DCA member Vivek Arora of Mears Holding LLC, would become chair of the CEWD board soon, dues had been reduced and associate members allowed to join, and that upcoming events would focus on diversity and decarbonization.

Turning to SkillsUSA, the organization is starting up live competitions again and looking for judges at local events. DCA members can reference the new playbook at www.dcaletsgettowork.com or contact the committee to get involved.

Attendees responded enthusiastically to a new distribution-focused video from BuildWitt.com. Reviewing offers from BuildWitt for future videos, members offered

(continued on pg. 14)



suggestions for how to use the videos for recruiting, what type of videos should be made next, and how to target post-service military members as well as students. The meeting concluded with presentations from four members on how to onboard employees into different areas. Perry Redman of Caterpillar showed how their machine simulators worked; Chad Davis of Miller Pipeline gave an overview of their Green to Gold mentorship program; Randy Rupp of Ditch Witch gave a history of training technology; and Dave Wisniewski of Vermeer showed how onsite mobile simulators assist in HDD training.

The Government Relations Committee had much to discuss, as always. The new vaccine mandates for government employees and contractors were a hot topic as members wondered aloud who qualifies as a federal employee or contractor, and how will this affect business if not everyone gets on board. Although surveys indicate that most contractors intend to comply, they are generally reluctant to require employees to vaccinate and are concerned that some employees may walk out if forced. An in-person vote showed members overwhelming support challenging the mandate and using the Muster system to contact officials.

At the time of the meeting, the infrastructure bill had passed the Senate and was waiting in the House, and discussion focused on whether or not a proposed methane tax would make it in, as well as on the \$16 billion allocated for infrastructure pilot projects such as hydrogen distribution. The committee briefly went over the latest developments in the Common Ground Alliance's (CGA) efforts to absorb the Gold Shovel Association (GSA) and coordinate standards for all stakeholders. Finally, Mark Bridgers of Continuum Capital presented the results of a Utility Locate & Damage Prevention study, showing \$61 billion in waste due to bad processes, lost time, and excess cost. The study included ratings of each state and custom recommendations for the worst states from a core list of 13 recommendations. Bridgers noted that this was the first study of its kind, and could be transformative in the location industry.

The day wrapped up with the Town Hall and Business Session. Executive Vice President Rob Darden gave a recap of the 60th anniversary convention, pointing out how the convention helped keep the association's finances strong, and hit all the highlights of DCA's ongoing programs, partners, and initiatives. Members got a taste of another new BuildWitt video as well. Mark



Bridgers then took the podium again to give his 2021-2022 Economic Overview. He added a bit more to the earlier discussions about Gold Shovel and waste in the locating industry. He then launched into a thorough look at all the factors driving the current inflation plaguing the economy and where things are likely headed. He cautioned that the history of DCA's market sector will not be a guide for the future this time — the economics of gas versus electric are being driven out of the system by government removal of choice, and gas contractors probably have about 10 to 15 years to figure out how to diversify because the natural gas market will eventually come to an end. He proposed a three-gas solution comprising natural gas, hydrogen, and carbon dioxide removal to help improve companies' survivability in future markets.

In comparing a 2011 economic forecast with current

reality, Bridgers observed that while GDP growth remains high for now at 4-5% and unemployment is falling, many of the factors at play are largely unprecedented, including all-time low labor participation, supply chain issues, and tariff concerns. The overall economic news for the industry is good at the moment, but Bridgers' words to the wise will doubtless be helpful in guiding members' plans for the future.

The day ended with a social reception featuring gourmet sliders and fries before members headed out on the town for a brewery crawl. The next DCA meeting will be the 2022 DCA Convention at The Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix, February 17-22. Come prepared for desert adventures, guest speakers like famed deep sea explorer Robert Ballard, and a Roaring 20s party you won't want to miss! ▲

Committee News

October 28 – 29, 2021 Meetings



The DCA Board of Directors (BOD) and four working committees met at the DCA Fall Meeting, October 27-29, 2021, at the Four Seasons Hotel in Denver.

Board of Directors

At the October 29 BOD meeting board members approved the 2022 Board of Directors' ballot:

- President – Kevin Parker, Mears Holding LLC
- Vice President – Ray Swerdfeger, K.R. Swerdfeger Construction Inc.
- Treasurer Mark Albert, AGI Construction
- Immediate Past President – Ben Nelson, Michels Energy Pacific Inc.
- Past President Director – Kevin Miller, Miller Pipeline
- Director nominees (three to be elected to a two-year term and one to be elected for a one-year term): Doug Anderson, Hydrovac Excavators II LLC; Bill Colson, Pretec Directional Drilling LLC; Pete Fojtik, Michels Utility Services; Jeff Green, Mears Group Inc.; Dana Heieie, Southeast Directional Drilling; and Doug Reeves, Primoris Services Corp.

- Directors (one year remaining on a two-year term): Dan Carson, Carson Corporation, and Jim Lagios, Atlas Trenchless; Director at Large – Chad Davis, Miller Pipeline; Senior Associate Member Director – Scott Cooper, Caterpillar Inc.
- Junior Associate Member Director nominees (one to be elected for two-year term): Sarah Mahlik, TT Technologies, and Randy Rupp, Ditch Witch.

A full write-up of the 2022 Board of Director nominees will appear in the Jan/Feb 2022 *DCA News*.

Elections will take place February 20, 2022, in conjunction with the 61st DCA Annual Convention in Phoenix.

The BOD announced that the 2022-23 scholarship amounts for the DCA-Dale R. Michels Scholarship and DCA-Curtis Allen Scholarship will total \$137,000 based on

the current allocation formula. The BOD also approved \$3,000 for the Upton Scholarship and received updates on the locating study, BuildWitt proposal, and the 2022 Convention.

Safety/Risk Management Committee

- Brad Heck, Director of Corporate Compliance, Miller Pipeline, presented on the Operator Qualification Integrity Process (OQIP) to attendees at the October 28 Safety/Risk Management committee meeting. OQIP was established to provide high credibility and validity in a universal approach to PHMSA's Operator Qualification expectations. OQIP is comprised of contractors, regulators, OQ providers, and operators.
- Pilot programs are ongoing in New Mexico, Washington, and Michigan.
- The OQIP group will meet November 3-5 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to vote on version 4.2 of OQIP.
- OQIP has a website <https://oqip.org/> and is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

The committee announced that the 2022 Safety Congress will be March 28-30 at the Hyatt Regency Austin, Texas. Registration for the event will open in February 2022. Questionnaires for the Arthur T. Everham Safety Award will be emailed in mid-November with a due date of early January. Award recipients will be announced at the February DCA Convention.

Dana Heieie announced that his three-year position as Safety/Risk Committee vice-chairman will be ending at the 2022 DCA Convention. Anyone interested in the position should contact the committee chairs or the DCA office. Randy Bunch, Aaron Enterprises, volunteered to replace Heieie.

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 updated attendees on efforts since the July meeting.

- **Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD)**
 - Contractors were encouraged to join CEWD and attend the CEWD virtual summit co-sponsored by DCA November 16-18.
- **BuildWitt** – Attendees viewed three of the completed "A Day in the Life of a Gas Distribution Foreman" BuildWitt videos. The videos are available on the

DCALetsGetToWork.com site. BuildWitt has submitted a proposal to produce 10 videos for \$200,000 or 2 videos for \$40,000. Members interested in becoming involved with the project should contact Dave Wisniewski at Vermeer Corp. or the DCA office. A meeting would be set up with all who are interested later to go over the specific details and costs.

- **Member presentations** – Representatives gave brief presentations on their company's workforce initiatives: Perry Redmond, Caterpillar – *CAT Simulator*; Chad Davis, Miller Pipeline – *New Hire Program*; Randy Rupp, Ditch Witch – *Ditch Witch Training Technology*; and Dave Wisniewski, Vermeer Corp. – *Equipment Skills Training*.
- **Workforce sub-committee** – The subcommittee, formed in 2020, completed their SkillsUSA playbook. Attendees were encouraged to download the playbook at <https://www.dcaletsgettowork.com/#close> under "SkillsUSA – Playbook." Stephanie Metzler of Mears Group was given special thanks for her efforts in creating the document.
- **DCALetsGetToWork.com** – A microsite has been linked to the DCA website (www.dcaweb.org) called www.dcaletsgettowork.com. The microsite has information on Gen Z/Millennials, education, partners, and prospects. Attendees were encouraged to review the site and contact the DCA with any comments or suggestions.

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 of the committee.

Trenchless Committee (formerly HDD)

The Trenchless committee received an update on several discussion items at their October 28 meeting.

- **HDD 2022 reunion update** – DCA Past President Grady Bell gave an update on the January 26 HDD Reunion & Hall of Fame Reception that will be held at the Fort Worth, Texas, Convention Center in conjunction with UCT. Registration can be completed at <https://uctonline.com/hdd-hall-of-fame-reception/>.

(continued on pg. 18)

- **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. A link was sent to DCA members to encourage more clicks in search engines.
- **NASTT Presentation** – Matthew Izzard, executive director for NASTT, and Alan Goodman of HammerHead Trenchless gave a presentation on NASTT benefits for DCA members. NASTT would like to have more DCA contractors become involved in the organization.

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 Drilling and Dustin Kraft of Vermeer Corp.

Government Relations Committee

The Government Relations committee received updates on several pertinent topics. For more details about the following topics, please see the DCA Insights section of the *DCA News* on page 22.

- **OSHA vaccination mandate** – The committee chairs adjusted the agenda to allow time to discuss the pending vaccine mandates on employers. In September, the Biden administration issued a new federal mandate intended to address the Covid-19 pandemic through workplace vaccination requirements. The first came in the form of an Executive Order (EO) requiring federal employees and federal contractors to be fully vaccinated. The president then directed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) requiring all private sector employers with more than 100 employees to mandate vaccination or regular (weekly) testing of all workers. The mandate is not limited to vaccination. Covered contractors and subcontractors must require masking indoors for all individuals (including fully vaccinated employees and visitors) if there is high or substantial community transmission. Updates to the policy are not final. DCA will send emails on the latest policy updates as they are received.

- **Legislative report** – DCA is preparing a strong advocacy effort to oppose the “Build Back Better” (BBB) legislation, which currently includes language that would impose a methane fee on U.S. oil and gas producers. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and many Texas Democrats and others from gas-friendly states in the House have indicated they would oppose any language that would tax natural gas producers, saying a methane fee will raise costs associated with heating homes and fueling cars, and that is only duplicative policy. BBB has more than \$10 billion for carbon capture, transport, and storage, which will allow the pipeline industry to extend its critical role for several years, if not decades. Another \$8 billion is included for hydrogen, with no conditions related to how it is generated. The legislation also includes significant federal funding for municipal gas distribution replacement.
- **Common Ground Alliance (CGA)** – (CGA) is pursuing a memorandum of understanding with leaders of the Gold Shovel Association (GSA, formerly known as the Gold Shovel Standard). The idea is for CGA to absorb GSA and provide a new branch of the CGA. This CGA advisory committee would develop metrics to measure performance of all damage prevention stakeholders on a voluntary basis. More details would be addressed at the February 2022 meeting.

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.

Membership Committee

Due to time constraints, the Membership Committee did not meet during the DCA Fall Meeting, but will meet Friday, February 18, in conjunction with the DCA convention. 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. Brad Everett of Caterpillar and Mike Aydt of MP Technologies serve as vice-chairmen of the committee.

The next board of directors, leadership council, and committee meetings will be in conjunction with the 2022 DCA Convention, February 17-22, 2022, at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix, Arizona. ▲

DCA Mid Year Meeting – July 18-21, 2022
Coeur d’Alene Golf & Spa Resort, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

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For more information visit:
www.dcaweb.org/page/MidYearMeeting





**Register Now for the
2022 DCA Annual Convention**

**Thursday, February 17 – Tuesday, February 22
Arizona Biltmore, Phoenix, Arizona**



Insights



Implementation of Vaccination Mandate Put on Hold Pending Strong Opposition

As previously reported, the Biden administration issued sweeping new federal regulations intended to address the stubborn Covid-19 pandemic, most recently through workplace vaccination mandates. An executive order (EO) in September required that all federal employees and federal contractors be fully vaccinated. Soon after, the president directed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) requiring all private sector employers with more than 100 employees to mandate vaccination or ensure weekly Covid-19 testing of all workers.

There were several stipulations associated with these mandates, which only led to more questions and increased confusion among employers, especially in the construction industry. In the gas distribution space, many DCA members heard from utility customers that, because of a lack of direction about what constitutes being a “federal contractor,” they should consider themselves federal contractors to ensure for compliance with the ambiguous mandates.

This directive effectively removed the weekly testing option, presenting serious problems for many DCA companies where large numbers of workers had not been vaccinated and were more than reluctant to be strong-armed into becoming vaccinated. Because the industry continues to struggle with growing workforce capacity

challenges, losing more workers over contentious vaccine mandates is increasingly concerning in the utility construction industry.

DCA Grassroots Spring into Action

Using its prolific grassroots software program, DCA launched an advocacy campaign encouraging members to join lawmakers weighing in to the Biden administration about the harmful consequences of implementing the president’s EO and OSHA’s ETS.

“Our industry already faces a serious shortage of employees, and many of our members will lose a substantial percentage of their workforce if this policy goes into effect,” according to DCA’s message. DCA also pointed out that, because the ETS would not apply to companies with less than 100 employees, “it is possible that employees will simply move from large companies to smaller ones on the same job site,” which would greatly disrupt operations without improving workplace safety.

“As written, this only places yet another burden on employers and employees alike and may result in delays in critical gas distribution projects when the demand for a robust workforce is only increasing,” DCA said.

Federal Court Challenges Put Hold on ETS

In addition, the ETS faced multiple legal challenges from businesses, conservative groups, and Republican attorney generals that said the agency doesn’t have the author-

ity to mandate vaccines. On November 6, a federal appeals court in New Orleans put the rule on hold, saying it was “a one-size-fits-all sledgehammer” that was far too broad. Ten days later, all state challenges to the mandate were consolidated in a federal appeals court in Ohio.

Lawyers for the Biden administration said the mandate was needed to reduce transmission of the virus in workplaces, asking that the ETS be allowed to move ahead with the rule. Nonetheless, at the time this article was written, the ETS remained indefinitely on hold.

In early December the Biden administration's mandate for employees of federal contractors to be vaccinated was halted nationwide amid a slew of several challenges from states that say the president overstepped his authority in requiring the Covid-19 shots. The mandate on federal contractors would apply to roughly a quarter of the U.S. workforce and affects companies that do business with the federal government, including giants such as Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, and General Motors Company.

The latest order followed a federal judge's granting of a preliminary injunction in a lawsuit involving several states, all of them arguing that the administration lacks the authority to require vaccinations and the mandates violate the U.S. Constitution.

Senate Moves to Block Mandate Though CRA

Pushback on these mandates has not been limited to the courts. In December, the Senate moved to nullify the vaccine mandate through the Congressional Review Act (CRA). CRA is a little-known and rarely used oversight tool that empowers Congress to quickly review new federal regulations issued by government agencies and, by passage of a joint resolution, to overrule a regulation.

Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), a centrist from what is usually considered a “red state,” voted for a resolution offered by Republicans to overturn the vaccine mandate for large employers.

Tester is the second Senate Democrat to support overturning Biden's employer vaccine mandate under the CRA. Tester joined Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV), another strong centrist who is commonly a thorn in the side of Senate progressives. The two Democrats voted with all Republican senators to pass the resolution, with Tester saying “I'm not crazy about mandates,” and Manchin stating he “will strongly support a bill to overturn the federal government vaccine mandate for private businesses.”

The resolution passed on a 52-48 vote on December 8, and Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.) specifically thanked a small number of associations (including DCA) for their support and talked about industry impacts of the mandates on the Senate floor.

At press time, the resolution was heading to the House, where Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) was not planning to even schedule a vote on the measure. Republicans could force the Speaker's hand if they were able to get a majority of the House to sign a discharge petition to require a floor vote. While this was not likely, the Senate

action coupled with progress being made in the courts was encouraging.

Supply Chain Crisis Increasing by the Day

What was once considered a short-term inconvenience as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic has become a national nightmare for all industries. The common burden of supply chain disruption is more than driving up prices — it has resulted in a widespread shortage of goods across the country.

Supply chain disruption started more than a year ago as governments and corporations responded to the Covid-19 pandemic, which created a million small interruptions. That, combined with exploding consumer demand, has resulted in a transportation bottleneck. Port backlogs became a focal point of national media attention, where a long line of cargo ships off the California coast were front and center.

As importers tried to shove more products through that bottleneck, the situation got worse, and the backlog and associated factory closures, labor issues, and equipment shortages were referred to as the “supply chain crisis.”

Supply chains rely on workers and equipment, and when neither is readily available, delays and rising costs usually result. Transportation costs are high and getting higher and goods harder to come by, so companies have to do what they have to in order to provide the biggest benefit to their customers.

When will we see the light at the end of the tunnel? This is anything but clear, and if/when the ports on the West Coast start to function again, there still won't be enough trucks on the road or truck drivers to drive them, or delivery vans out in the streets. And of course hysteria over future Covid-19 variants can always cause new shut-downs and delays in the future.

All supply chains are different, but there are some indicators to watch to understand the health of the system in the grand scheme. Experts say those will show the first glimmers of light at the end of the tunnel. Some say they're already starting to show.

In response, DCA and more than 100 national organizations representing a broad range of industries signed an “Open Letter” to President Biden regarding five immediate supply chain solutions. These are:

- **Younger Driver Pilot Program.** The coalition encouraged the establishment of a new apprenticeship program to allow younger drivers (18-20) to drive commercial vehicles state-to-state.
- **Promotion of Careers in Transportation and the Supply Chain.** The coalition is encouraging federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation and Department of Labor, to collaborate with industry and state and local partners to promote transportation and supply chain occupations, particularly commercial truck driving.

(continued on pg. 24)

- **Hours of Service Relief.** The letter reiterated a longtime 'ask' of the construction industry — relief from burdensome driver "hours-of-service" regulations, focusing on flexibility during the supply chain crisis, particularly at ports.
- **Flexibility in Vaccine Mandates.** The groups asked the administration for relief in pending vaccine mandates, specifically naming transportation and supply chain occupations, including construction.
- **Flow of Goods through Ports.** The letter encouraged the Administration to continue to investigate the causes of inefficiencies at our nation's largest ports and to work with industry to minimize supply chain bottlenecks.

Industry Study Takes Hard Look at Challenges to Damage Prevention Programs

Underground damage prevention programs and challenges associated with facility locating prior to excavation construction operations have been of concern to DCA members for decades. In a recent study issued by the excavation construction industry, inefficiencies in the nation's 811 system were found to cost \$61 billion a year in waste. The study also identified the sources of excess costs.

The study, "811 Emergency," includes an in-depth examination of 811 operations in every state and Washington D.C. It shows that these costs and the increased risk to public safety could be substantially reduced if states with the worst records would adopt more effective practices and procedures already in use in other parts of the country.

The review was commissioned by the Infrastructure Protection Coalition. This is a group of associations representing broadband, electric, natural gas, pipeline, transportation, sewer, and water industries who design, construct, maintain, or locate these underground systems with both union and non-union workforces. DCA is proud to be a key sponsor of this important initiative.

"This study takes a deep dive into areas of damage prevention that don't get enough attention," said Rob Darden, executive vice president, DCA. "Preventing damages to underground facilities takes more than calling 811 – facilities have to be located and accurately marked, and marked on time according to state law. Increasingly, these responsibilities are not being met in the field, and the impacts are being recognized across the country."

The study takes an in-depth look at a range of issues surrounding facility locating, including finance, insurance, federal and state regulation, and other factors. Recommendations suggest that states provide no exemptions in the damage prevention in state law, require damages to be reported, and ensure balanced enforcement. The study indicates that policymakers may

need to restructure the state's penalty structure to make this possible.

Other recommendations include development of a third-party damage prevention board, establishment of effective performance metrics, requiring a "positive response" by operators when they fulfill their locating responsibilities, and a commitment to strive for continuous improvement.

The study was provided to a range of federal and state agencies that oversee the nation's pipeline safety program, as well as industry organizations.

"DCA hopes government entities will consider the findings of this study when damage prevention statutes are evaluated," Darden added. "Damage prevention is only possible when all key stakeholders meet their responsibilities in the process. This study provides needed information about what works and what doesn't in state law, as well as recommendations for improvements to state damage prevention programs."

A handful of states evaluated in the study – Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin — along with the District of Columbia account for more than 20% of the national waste. In addition, \$13 billion is lost in these states because of 811 policies that lack teeth, including a lack of mandated reporting of damage to underground facilities, the study showed.

The review found waste and cost overruns largely were caused by:

- Utilities and third-party locators needlessly sent out to locate lines for construction projects that then do not happen.
- Poor instructions given to locators, wasting time or creating additional work.
- Locate marks being destroyed by construction and then needing to be reinstalled.
- Contractor wait time when location efforts exceed the legal notice period.

This study comes at a critical time for the nation's infrastructure, with the potential for trillions of dollars to be committed for new projects. The recent passage of national infrastructure legislation will result in tens of thousands of miles of natural gas, highway, bridge, road, broadband, and water and sewer infrastructure construction, all of which will be near existing underground utilities.

DCA and other sponsors of the 811 Emergency report will work to improve damage prevention programs, operations, and practices through advocacy at both the federal and state level. ▲



Eben M. Wyman, Principal – eben@wymanassociates.net

Calendar

DCA & Industry Events

2022

JANUARY 25-27

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

JANUARY 26

HDD Reunion and Hall of Fame Reception
Fort Worth Convention Center
(in conjunction with UCT)
Fort Worth, Texas
www.uctonline.com/hdd-hall-of-fame-reception

FEBRUARY 17-22

DCA 61st Annual Convention
Arizona Biltmore
Phoenix, Arizona
www.dcaweb.org

FEBRUARY 22-26

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

2022 (cont.)

MARCH 1-3

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

MARCH 4-6

Power & Communication Contractors
Association (PCCA) Convention
Fairmont Scottsdale Princess
Scottsdale, Arizona
www.pccaweb.org

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



Michels Construction, Inc.

Michels Expands Marine Operations with Two Acquisitions

Michels Construction, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Michels Corporation, has acquired two companies, PCi Dredging and Great Lakes Diving and Salvage, adding to its already robust marine construction services.

Michels Construction, Inc. is a leader in the design and construction of structurally sound, value-engineered foundations and industrial building solutions, and performs marine work on lakes, rivers, and inlets.

PCi Dredging uses dredging and related services to enhance, expand, and restore waterways and shorelands. In addition to improving navigability, PCi Dredging performs work to improve environmental conditions, including floodwater holding and remediation of contaminated soil. PCi Dredging was established in 1978 by Kent Petersen as the Petersen Companies, Inc. Like Michels, PCi Dredging was family owned and operated.

Great Lakes Diving & Salvage uses trained and certified divers to provide inland and offshore underwater construction and diving services. Great Lakes Diving & Salvage serves customers in the civil construction and engineering markets, including federal, state, municipal, and private sector needs. In addition to underwater construction, Great Lakes Diving & Salvage's experience includes design, fabrication, and installation of underwater solutions.

"Growing to meet the evolving needs of our customers and markets is part of the Michels mindset," said Phillip Michels, Senior Group Vice President, Michels Corporation. "Sometimes that happens organically; other times it is through acquisitions. In all cases, our decisions are based

on finding new ways to provide our customers with the services they need and the commitments to safety, quality, and innovation they expect from us.

"The more we worked with PCi Dredging and Great Lakes Diving & Salvage, the more we realized these two companies augmented our services and were in alignment with our values and vision," he said.

The acquisition will allow the PCi Dredging and Great Lakes Diving & Salvage staffs to continue to perform their essential and highly specialized services, while being supported by the leadership, equipment, and resources of Michels Construction, Inc. and the Michels Family of Companies.

"My family and I are proud of what we have accomplished with PCi Dredging," said Mark Petersen, Vice President, PCi Dredging. "We are excited to move ahead to another family-owned business with strong traditions and a great future."

"Michels and Great Lakes Diving both have strong reputations in the marine construction industry," said Tommy Gouin, Vice President, Great Lakes Diving & Salvage. "More importantly, we share a commitment to quality and culture that makes us a natural fit."



Vermeer MV Solutions

Vermeer MV Solutions New Facility Officially Open

Vermeer MV Solutions celebrated the grand opening of their new, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Piedmont, South Carolina, with a ribbon-cutting event in late November. The facility is located on 43 acres, the facility

provides more than 130,000 square feet manufacturing workspace plus air-conditioned break rooms, conditioned air on the factory floor, and a market offering healthy break options for all team members. The facility has the option to expand the footprint even further with future growth.

The new facility marks an intentional investment by Vermeer Corporation to keep more than 150 manufacturing jobs in South Carolina for the growing Vermeer MV Solutions business, which was formed by Vermeer Corporation's acquisition and integration of Vac-Tron Equipment and McLaughlin Group, Inc.

It is also intended to better serve the strengthening vacuum excavation industry.

"The Vermeer MV Solutions team every day here and in Florida come to work and lead the market in vacuum excavation," Vermeer President, Industrial Solutions Doug Hundt said. "We anticipate a lot of volume through this facility and it will become Vermeer's center of excellence for truck vac excavation."



Komatsu Founder Meitaro Takeuchi, 1921s

Komatsu Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Komatsu Ltd. — a global manufacturer and supplier of equipment, technologies and services for the construction, forklift, mining, industrial and forestry markets — celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2021.

Komatsu was established in Komatsu City, Japan, in 1921, then grew over the next century through investments and acquisitions, connecting people and technology to "solve challenges and meet society's needs," Komatsu stated.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Komatsu has a presence in 140 countries and directly employs more than 60,000 people through its facilities, distributors and dealers.

Companies worldwide have used Komatsu equipment and services to develop modern infrastructure, extract fundamental minerals, maintain forests and create technology and consumer products.

"Towards the next 100 years, we will create value through manufacturing and technology innovation to empower a sustainable future where businesses, people, and our planet thrive together," said Komatsu Ltd. President and CEO Hiroyuki Ogawa in a 100th anniversary message.



ISCO Industries

ISCO Unveils Massive Expansion in Louisville

ISCO Industries is further strengthening its customer service capabilities by expanding the company's Riverport plant in Louisville, Kentucky. The project adds a new 46,000-square-foot building to the existing campus.

The company's shipping and warehousing operation will move into the new section of the building. This will allow fabrication to expand in the existing structure. It will also free up space for ISCO's fusion machine rental repair and refurbishment. "ISCO is growing right along with the demand for HDPE pipe and products," says Phil Foley, the vice president of manufacturing.

"Our customers have come to expect the absolute best service from our team, so we are reinvesting in our facilities to make sure that service remains the best in the business."

ISCO serves a variety of markets across the globe including municipal, industrial, power, waterworks, golf, and landfill. The company is also expanding its plants in several other states.

The Houston, Texas location is adding a 40,000-square-foot structure. In Midland, Texas, they have purchased 10 additional acres and are constructing a new 24,500-square-foot warehouse and maintenance shop. A 43,000-square-foot warehouse is being added to the existing Kingman, Arizona fabrication plant.

(continued on pg. 28)



HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS PROGRAM

Precision Pipeline IPLOCA

Precision Pipeline Receives IPLOCA Corporate Social Responsibility Award

Precision Pipeline, LLC (PPL) announces its Human Trafficking Awareness Program was named the 2021 recipient of the International Pipe Line & Offshore Contractors Association (IPLOCA) Corporate Social Responsibility Award. PPL is leading the energy industry in a fight against human trafficking with a training program that educates and equips individuals to know the red flags of human trafficking and empowers them to report the crime.

Human trafficking is when people are illegally bought and sold for forced labor or commercial sex. Traffickers use force, fraud and coercion, including abduction, deception, torture and/or the abuse of power, to prey upon their victims' vulnerabilities while profiting off their exploitation. Once becoming aware of this widespread problem, PPL recognized they could make a positive impact in communities by training their workforce to know the signs and be part of the solution to help stop this crime. "We are honored to be recognized as IPLOCA's 2021 Corporate Social Responsibility Award recipient," says Rachel Johnson, Public Relations Manager for PPL. "Human trafficking awareness has become part of our culture and this award gives us another opportunity to spread awareness, engage and influence others to take a stand against human trafficking."

Created with the help of anti-human trafficking organizations and experts, PPL's Human Trafficking Awareness Program is delivered to all areas of the organization. Since beginning the program in 2019, more than 6,500 individuals have been trained across the country.

"We are 100% committed to safety, the communities we work in and to being part of something bigger than the project. We will continue to train all employees to know the signs of human trafficking and empower them to report this crime," states Bobby Poteete, President of PPL.

(continued on pg. 30)

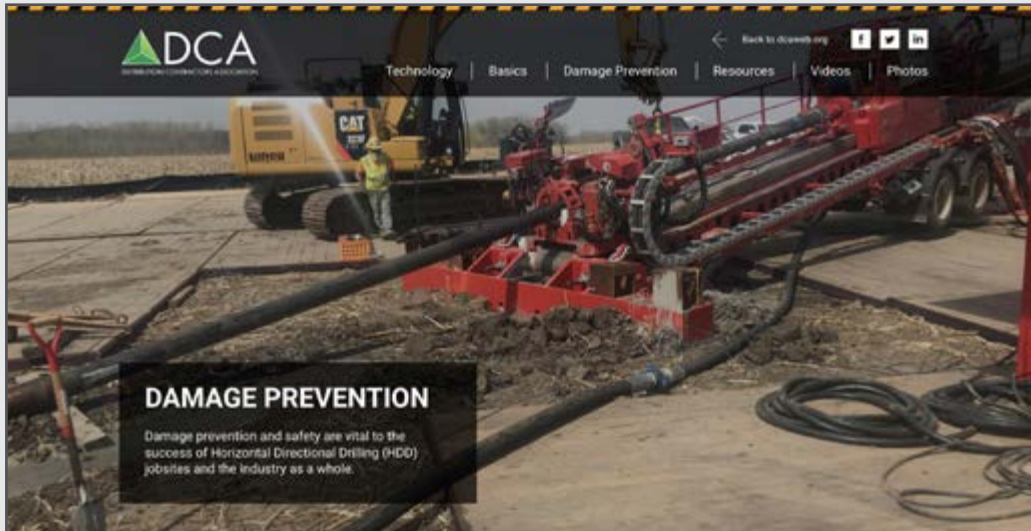


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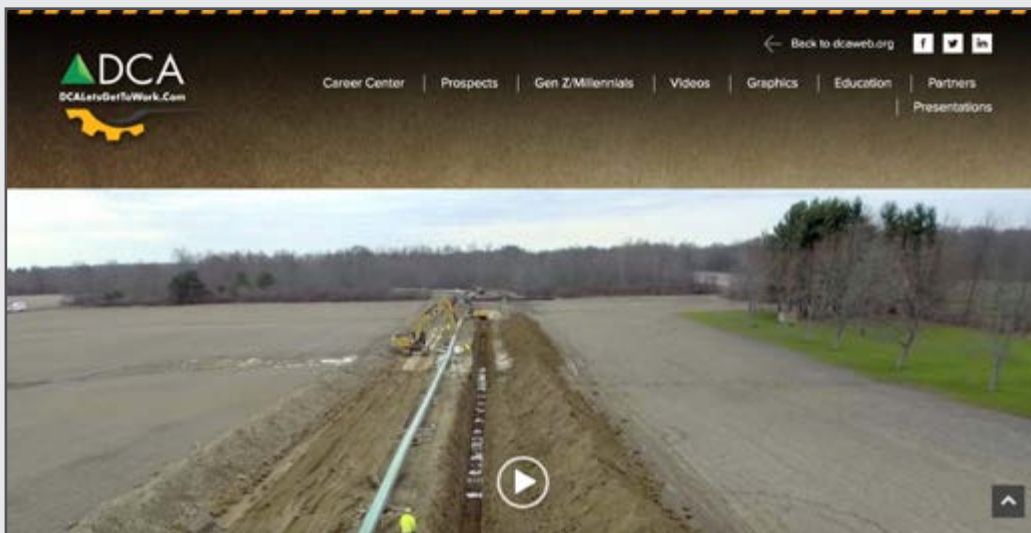
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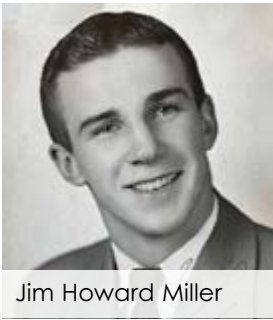
Visit These DCA Microsites

DCATrenchless.com



DCALetsGetToWork.com





Jim Howard Miller

In Memoriam – James “Jim” Howard Miller

DCA Past President James “Jim” Howard Miller died in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at age 87. He is survived by his wife, Roselyn “Roz” Miller, six grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

As a high-schooler in Wisconsin, Jim was an all-state athlete in both football and basketball. His athletic success earned him a scholarship at the University of Wisconsin, where he played varsity football for three years. He was drafted by the

NFL's Chicago Cardinals, but decided to pursue a business career instead.

Jim's professional career was highlighted by his service as President of Mueller Pipeliners, an upper-Midwest natural gas utility construction company headquartered in the Milwaukee area. His strong business and executive skills helped build the company into a regional leader. He served in the DCA for many years, including as president in 1983.

Upon retirement, he and Roz moved back to the Eau Claire, Wisconsin, area, buying a lake home in Cameron where he enjoyed fishing, golfing, and the annual deer hunt. He was a lifetime W-Club member and long-time football season ticket holder. ▲




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Featured DCA Member Websites



Blackeagle Energy Services

www.blackeagleenergyservices.com

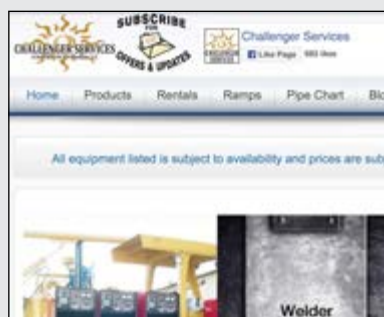
Blackeagle Energy Services is a premier provider of services to energy companies since 1986. They specialize in building and maintaining the nation's energy infrastructure, pipeline and facility construction, integrity management, field maintenance, and fabrication. From the Rocky Mountains, to the Gulf States, across the Great Plains and into the Northeast they follow a proven, systematic approach to building and maintaining assets that reduces project risk and consistently produces desired outcomes for utility owners.



Drilling Mud Direct (DMD)

www.muddirect.net

Drilling Mud Direct (DMD) provides a cost-effective solution for high yield bentonite and drilling additives delivered direct to the horizontal directional drilling (HDD) industry. Their mission at Drilling Mud Direct, is to service the drilling fluid needs of the construction industries all around the globe. Having been in the horizontal directional drilling industry for years, they understand that high quality products with competitive pricing and on-time delivery are three major components to helping customers succeed.



Challenger Services

www.challengerservices.com

Challenger Services offers utility and pipeline construction equipment to onshore contractors throughout the world. They focus on both equipment and support items. The company's equipment capability includes pipelayers, pipelayer attachments, pipe benders, vacuumlifts, pipecarriers, low ground pressure pipe trailers, hydrotest pumps and other specialized equipment. Support items include welding machines, holiday detectors, slings, spreader bars, external clamps, pipe locators and accessories.



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