

THE BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE DISTRIBUTION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION



DCA NEWS

JULY / AUGUST 2025



**DCA Mid Year
Meeting**

**Committee
News**

Fall Meeting

Fireworks at the Lake Geneva Resort



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DCA 2025 Mid Year Meeting Wrap-Up

The weather gods smiled on DCA yet again as the 2025 Mid Year meeting came to pass. Weekend haze from Canadian wildfires dissipated just in time for the Monday, July 14, launch in the cozy resort town of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. This year's location held special meaning, honoring Wisconsin native and DCA Director of Administration, Teri Korson, the association's longest-serving staff member, who retired after more than 32 years of service. With many of DCA's founding companies hailing from the region, this became the best attended summer meeting in the last 10 years — just a few hours' road trip through classic Midwestern farm country.

Monday, July 14

Registration began late Monday morning in the lobby of the main ballroom at the Grand Geneva Resort &

Spa. Tables were laid out with classic Wisconsin favorites: bratwurst hot dogs, fried cheese curds, pretzels, and beer (of course), along with popcorn, cookies, and complimentary DCA baseball caps. The crowd trickled in slowly at first but soon filled the space with animated conversation.

In a change to the schedule from previous years, the registration party led straight into the Town Hall and Business Meeting. DCA Executive Vice President Rob Darden noted in the membership report that total membership was down from its peak of 237 companies in 2019 to just 184 today, due to factors ranging from financial hardship to mergers to loss of employee contacts. While the organization remains sound, Darden emphasized the importance of rebuilding its pre-COVID strength. Members also learned that, based on their



Business Session Speaker: Mark Bridgers

feedback, the 2026 annual convention in Miami would be shortened by one day to make travel home easier for everyone. Darden then called the DCA staff to the stage to recognize members old and new, but most importantly to thank Teri Korson, who recently completed 32 years of exemplary and invaluable service. Darden spoke about Korson's role in making DCA the world-class organization that it is today, for which she earned a long and heartfelt standing ovation.

The business session speaker was a familiar one to those who have been attending for a few years — Mark Bridgers of Continuum Capital, whose unique perspective on current and historical economics makes the “dismal science” considerably more understandable. In his presentation, “Trump 2.0: Where Are We Headed Now?” Bridgers pointed out that we are in a unique economic period with very few precedents, identifying just two — the 1890s and the 1960s-1970s. In the 1890s, Grover Cleveland became the first U.S. President to serve non-consecutive terms. The industrial revolution was in full swing; volatility was high; tariffs were the favored method to control trade; and farmers paid a high price. Cleveland, a proponent of tariffs, also presided over four economic panics. Bridgers then told the fascinating tale of how “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,” written in 1900 by

L. Frank Baum, was conceived as a political satire. Noting how the government then had similar economic goals to today, Bridgers discussed the concepts of building walls vs. bridges and Keynesian economics vs. monetarism. In the 1960s and '70s, the country was plagued with lower revenue and very high government spending, resulting in high inflation and nagging economic uncertainty that did not ease until Paul Volcker became chairman of the Federal Reserve under the Reagan administration.

From there Bridgers moved into current geopolitics, analyzing how strategic competition with China, the situation with Israel and Iran, and the Russia-Ukraine war could impact the U.S. On policy, the “Big Beautiful Bill” is favorable to the gas and construction industries, but while the U.S. economy is still expanding, pessimism is rising due to uncertainty over tariffs, consumer prices, exchange rates, and housing woes. Bridgers believes a recession is possible, but it will likely be short and shallow with little impact on the DCA. However, he also observed a recent upswing in contractor bankruptcies and a drop-off in historical financial performance for utility contractors over the last several years, with construction productivity flat or falling over the last two decades. He warned that these challenges could continue for some time before improving. Bridgers wrapped up with

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(l to r) 2024 DCA President Mark Albert and 2025-2026 DCA President Doug Reeves

suggestions to embrace artificial intelligence (AI) to improve productivity, policy effects on construction, and the unique challenges and opportunities of data center construction.

After Bridgers' veritable feast of food for thought, it was time for DCA to go outside and play. Members divided up into teams by bandana color for a resort-wide scavenger hunt. Each team followed clues leading to different locations around the property, where they found team challenges to score points and a clue to the next location. Over three hours, teams wound through conference rooms, indoor pools, golf courses, and wooded trails while answering trivia questions, hopping blindfolded, taking selfies with staff, and tossing frisbees before racing back to the main ballroom to beat the clock and tally up points. In the end, Team Navy won the top spot, with Team Lavender and Team Black close behind.

The welcome dinner capped off the day under an outdoor pavilion overlooking the resort's scenic golf course. A guitarist performed as the sun slowly set in a clear sky while children played games in the grass. Eagles and sandhill cranes could be seen flying home to roost for the night, and fireflies lit up the field behind the ice cream cart as darkness settled in. The idyllic Midwestern summer evening was a perfect way to relax ahead of the start of committee business on Tuesday.

Tuesday, July 15

Tuesday morning began with an unusual handover of leadership. Due to personal reasons, 2025 President Dan Carson had to step away from his position, and 2024 Past President Mark Albert passed the gavel to DCA Vice President Doug Reeves of Primoris Services Corporation, who will complete Carson's term and then begin his own at the 2026 Convention. Darden thanked Doug for stepping in and offered well wishes to the Carson family with hopes to see them return soon. Darden also announced that DCA would be making a Lyons' Grant to Texans on Mission, an organization supporting the victims of the July 4th floods in central Texas. Darden offered prayers to the victims, many from the Dallas and Houston area. Through the years, the Lyons' Grant has been used for a variety of reasons including when a community emergency or crisis occurs.

Next, it was time to introduce keynote speaker Joel Zeff, work culture expert, humorist, and author of the book, "Make the Right Choice: Creating a Positive, Innovative and Productive Work Life." He began with the observation that little kids celebrate everything and invited the audience to do the same by standing up with their hands in the air and yelling "TA-DA!" He was impressed that we actually did it, which was an excellent sign because being silly as a group means we feel like we're all in this together. Describing his own journey,



Team Challenge Winners

Zeff said he started as a reporter before trying improv comedy on the side and eventually combining the two into his current job. Next, he asked for three audience volunteers to help him with an exercise. One acted as a “driver” while the rest were “hitchhikers,” each bringing a different emotion into and out of the “car” with them as they came and went. The room quickly filled with laughter as the volunteers gamely portrayed happiness, anger, and fear. Zeff explained how the exercise demonstrated commitment and ownership from each of the players and positive support from the audience, contrasting that with the “bye-bye” people who inhabit every workplace, doing just enough to earn a paycheck and no more.

Zeff asked for three more volunteers and an activity from the audience. This time, Zeff and friend would be puppets talking about “fishing,” while the other two acted as puppeteers to move them around in accordance with the conversation. The audience was positively in stitches as arms and legs flopped about “casting a line” and “reeling in a fish.” Again, Zeff explained how this exercise demonstrated teamwork and the power of improv to help teammates be successful because it requires everyone to be present in the moment together. For his final game, Zeff and three more brave souls played what can only be described as “charades telephone.” With all but one volunteer out of the room, the audience tossed out suggestions for charades. As each new player came into the room, he who was “it” had to demonstrate “giraffe,” “roller coaster,” and “rockstar” (no, not “water well,” Mark!) with the other acknowledging silently when

they thought they had it, then doing the same for the next until the last person guessed out loud. Amazingly, the volunteers got all three right in the end, which Zeff said was very rare. This game, he said, demonstrated openness to change and flexibility, noting that improv requires you to stay in the game. While DCA often has funny guest speakers, Zeff got some of the loudest and longest laughs heard in recent memory, leaving moments to smile about for years to come.

The schedule then moved on to the first round of committee meetings. The Membership and Engagement Committee worked on recruitment and retention strategies while discussing the possibility of opening membership to other types of underground construction contractors beyond the gas industry, such as water and electric. The Future Leaders Committee focused on the Deep Dive webinar series along with networking and mentorship strategies for future events. The Workforce Development Committee then discussed changes to the Leadership Development program, upcoming trade events, and the new Technical Schools Subcommittee before introducing speaker Jason Nelson to talk about the Gas Utility Construction and Service degree program at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC).

Members then broke for the afternoon to enjoy a variety of local activities. Some played golf on the resort's beautiful course known as “The Beast;” others spent a successful day bass fishing on Lake Geneva or went ziplining through the canopy in the forested hills

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Ramona and Eric Van Dusseldorp, Matt Lind, Cory Lee, Dan Overton

around the lake. A vintage tour boat took members to see the many mansions of the rich and famous along the shore, while another group enjoyed a special tour of the historical Yerkes Observatory, which played a role in the discoveries of science luminaries such as astronomer George Ellery Hale and physicist Albert Einstein.

After a day of fun, guests gathered back at the main ballroom for Casino Night. Guests posed under a glowing "CASINO" sign for pictures before entering a ballroom transformed with card tables, craps, and other games of chance awaited as dealers shuffled their cards and counted chips in readiness. Dinner tables were decorated in red and black with dice and candles on each one. A magician roamed from table to table as members dined on street tacos, Chicago-style hot dogs, and roast beef sandwiches. Once members' bellies were full, the action shifted to the casino side of the room, where the chips and the cards were real, but the money wasn't. The dealers stayed busy all evening, and even the kids had a dealer of their own with a wheel of prizes out in the hall. When they weren't putting on their best poker face, conversations and laughter carried late into the evening.

Wednesday, July 16

On the third day of the Mid Year Meeting, members took a leisurely breakfast before jumping into the day's business meetings. The Trenchless and HDD Committee covered a wide range of subjects from white papers to mud management, including a presentation from Randy Bunch on HDD exit side safety monitoring. The Innovation and Technology Committee discussed outdoor heat

safety technology before introducing speaker John Rozum from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM). The Safety and Risk Management Committee questioned whether the "Energy Wheel" was a viable tool for hazard recognition and proposed an "Operational Excellence Day" as part of the next Safety Congress. The Government Relations Committee reviewed the events of the Midwest Regional Fly-In that happened in late June, along with the ramifications of the Big Beautiful Bill and creating a new working group on "AI and Energy."

After another afternoon of fishing, ziplining, and golf, which was threatened (yet undeterred) by inclement weather, members returned to the ballroom one final time for an old-fashioned 'indoor' picnic and family game night. Dinner was a Wisconsin-themed heart attack of brats, pierogis, mac and cheese, battered fish, fried cheese curds, and s'mores. Around the room and out into the hall were Skee-Ball, Jenga, air hockey, table hockey, Pop-A-Shot, cornhole, Connect Four, and ping-pong. Around the corner and down the hall, one room housed a bounce house while another featured a full laser tag course, with a parachute game in the hall outside. Children raced between a bounce house, laser tag, and parachute games while families and colleagues squared off in good-natured competition. The atmosphere was loud, spirited, and full of praise for the staff who made it all possible.

The DCA will convene next for the Fall Meeting October 29-31 at the Gaylord Texan Resort in Grapevine, Texas, between Dallas and Fort Worth. We look forward to seeing many of you there. ▲

Keynote Breakfast Speaker Joel Zeff



(l to r) Joel Zeff, Caleb Scheve



Randy Rupp, Woody Ferrell



Nate Strother, Joel Zeff, Eli Pagel

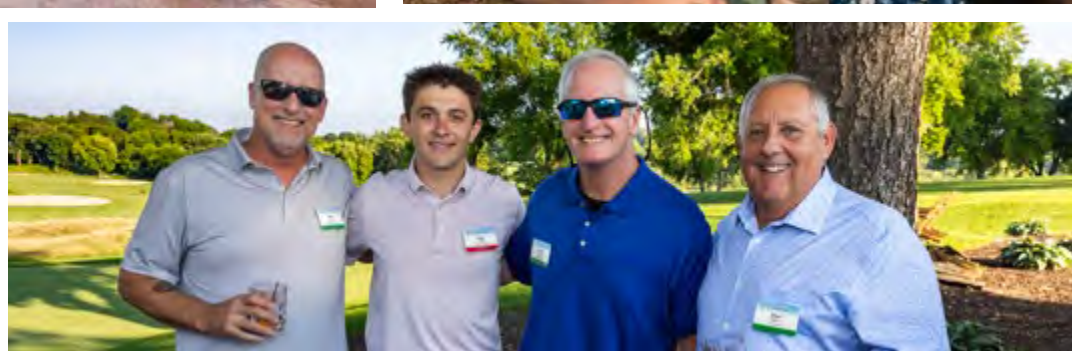
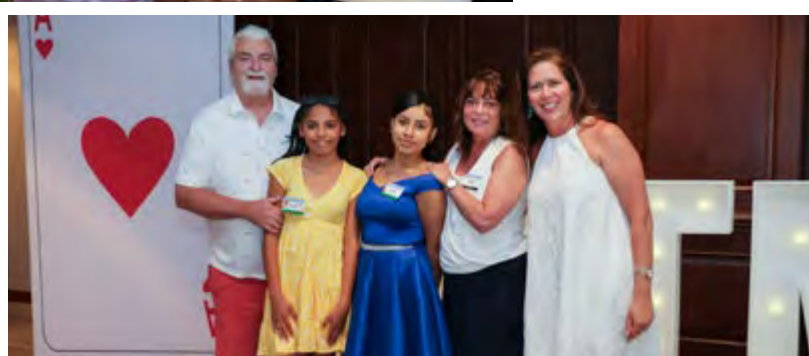


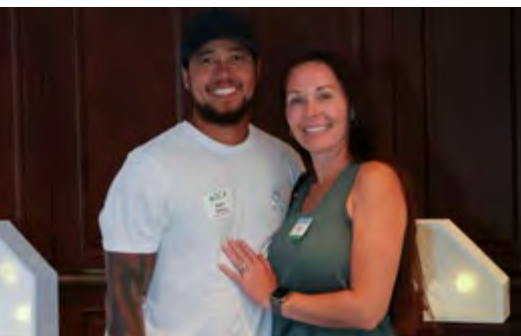
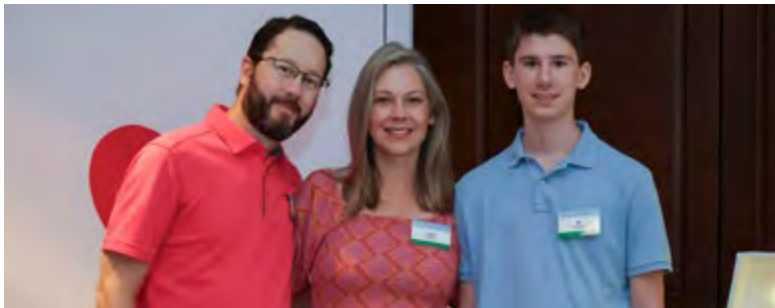
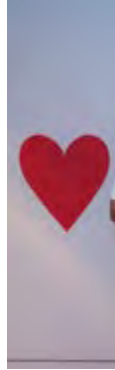
Joel Zeff, Kwynn Kirby



Mike Smith, Javen Moore









Committee News

July 14 — 17, 2025 Meetings



2025 Mid Year Meeting – Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

The DCA Board of Directors and its seven working committees met July 14–17, 2025, at the Grand Geneva Resort & Spa in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The meetings were productive and forward-looking, focused on member value, safety, innovation, and workforce development.

Board of Directors

The 2025 DCA Board of Directors met on Sunday, July 13. A wide range of organizational priorities were discussed including key leadership transitions, industry financial trends, membership growth, and changes to the upcoming 2026 convention schedule. Key updates included:

- **Leadership Changes:** On July 1, Dan Carson (Carson Corporation) announced his resignation as DCA president for personal reasons. Following our bylaws, Vice President Doug Reeves (Primoris Services Corporation) stepped into the president's role early to ensure continuity. Andy Miller (Alex E. Paris Contracting) will serve as vice president and treasurer until the 2026 elections in Miami. The Board of Directors

thanks Dan for his service and appreciates Doug and Andy for their willingness to lead during this transition.

- **2026 Convention Schedule:** To enhance attendee experience and reduce travel burdens, the 2026 Convention at Trump National Doral in Miami will be shortened by one day. The event will run Monday, February 23 through Thursday night, February 26, with the farewell breakfast and departures on Friday, February 27. This streamlined schedule preserves core programming while helping members manage travel time and costs. Registration opens December 1, 2025.
- **Honorary Membership:** DCA is proud to announce that 2005 Past President Keith Swerdfeger of K.R. Swerdfeger (now Miller Pipeline) will be inducted as an Honorary Member at the Miami convention. Keith's long tenure of supporting DCA and the industry makes this honor very appropriate. Congratulations Keith.
- **DCA & AGA Workshop:** Due to the continued inability of utilities to send individuals to many events, DCA is suspending the event for 2026. A new, enhanced event is planned for 2027.

- **Membership:** The Board discussed the need to grow and expand the contractor membership and pledged to support the efforts of the Membership and Engagement Committee in this effort.
- **Lyon's Grant for Texas Flood Relief:** The Board approved a \$10,000 donation from the Lyon's Grant to Texans on Mission to support flood relief efforts following the July 4 storms that affected Kerr County, Texas.

Leadership Council

The Leadership Council, which comprises the co-chairs of each working committee along with the Board of Directors, met on Monday, July 14, to discuss the strategic initiatives of DCA. The council reviewed the work of key committee initiatives and discussed how this aligns with the overall mission of DCA. This session reinforced the role of the committees as drivers of DCA's long-term growth and industry leadership.

Future Leaders Committee

The Future Leaders Committee focused on strengthening professional development and engagement. Kelsey Moreland was introduced as the new co-chair alongside Laura Mason, with recognition given to Elizabeth Michels-Schuelke for her contributions as her term as co-chair recently ended. New members were welcomed, and participants discussed the importance of networking and collaboration.

A major topic was the DCA Deep Dive webinar series. Future webinars — including sessions on the importance of mental health in construction and HDD best practices — are planned, with members encouraged to volunteer as presenters. DCA is looking to solicit new topics for the quarterly webinar series for 2026. If members are interested in presenting on a particular topic, they are encouraged to reach out to DCA staff. Committee members also explored ideas for networking such as pairing first-time attendees with mentors and enhancing personal profiles in the DCA directory to support stronger connections. The meeting concluded with a reminder of the importance of active participation in Deep Dive webinars and working committee initiatives.

Government Relations Committee

The Government Relations Committee, co-chaired by Ed Fitzgerald and Matthew Patterson, focused on advocacy priorities and regulatory challenges.

- **Regional fly-ins:** Dustin Kraft reported on the successful Midwest Fly-In and stressed the need for broader participation in upcoming Northeast and Southeast visits. Colorado was identified as a key state for rapid-response advocacy.

- **Pipeline Safety Act:** Eben Wyman updated the group on reauthorization efforts, emphasizing the importance of a "clean bill" focused on damage prevention measures such as GIS use, line marking, and reduced exemptions. While DCA supports fuel choice and permit reform, the committee agreed these should not be tied to this legislation.
- **Rulemaking and OQ standards:** Members supported greater involvement in regulatory reviews, preferring an annual cycle. Inconsistent Operator Qualification (OQ) programs remain a challenge, and contractors were asked to provide input by August 4.
- **Permit reform:** Permit delays remain a major concern. The committee endorsed making FERC the lead agency to streamline reviews and limit misuse of the Clean Water Act for political delays.
- **Industry growth and tax policy:** DCA joined an EEIA-led letter linking energy infrastructure to AI growth. Members also noted the Big Beautiful Bill's 100% first-year equipment depreciation and discussed OSHA's proposed heat exposure rule, which DCA coalitions argue is too prescriptive.

Innovation & Technology Committee

The Innovation & Technology Committee, co-chaired by Eli Pagel and Jonathan Tippetts, celebrated its one-year anniversary with discussions on emerging technologies that can enhance safety and efficiency in the field. Subcommittees on technology, equipment, and safety were established to increase participation and idea generation.

A timely discussion focused on heat safety innovations, including self-cooling helmets, advanced hard hats, and wearable devices such as the WHOOP band. The Spotlight Safety app was also referenced by members in attendance, who said the tool has helped to improve field-level safety reporting. Members discussed the intersection of these technologies with OSHA standards and the importance of practical integration in the field.

The Committee welcomed guest speaker John Rozum from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), who shared insights on member needs, workforce development, and industry collaboration efforts. AEM's initiatives focus on industry advocacy, market data to make sound business decisions, technical and safety standards to increase compliance, and initiatives to address industry workforce shortages. The discussion noted that there is a consistent need across the industry to educate users to adapt to new technologies. It also

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addressed varying levels of acceptance among different generations of workers and the importance of clear communication.

Membership & Engagement Committee

The Membership & Engagement Committee, co-chaired by Scott Cooper and Kwynn Kirby, discussed recruitment, retention, and engagement strategies. Kirby reported on efforts to identify new contractor members, while also addressing at-risk members through testimonial campaigns, referral programs, and a membership recruitment contest.

The discussion included various strategies to improve member retention and engagement, with a focus on networking opportunities at events. A trial program of free attendance for first-time contractors at DCA events is available. Current members are encouraged to refer prospective contractor members to DCA staff to get them involved. The committee reviewed data from the 2025 Member Survey sent last spring indicating general satisfaction but noted areas for improvement in messaging to attract new members, specifically contractor members.

Plans to leverage upcoming expos such as the Utility Expo for promotion were discussed, alongside the need for better coordination and communication among members to enhance engagement. Overall, the group agreed on the importance of structured approaches to attract and retain contractors effectively. DCA plans to launch a friendly competition to encourage members to refer prospects to the organization. Additional details regarding the referral program will be sent to current members in late September 2025.

Safety & Risk Management Committee

The Safety & Risk Management Committee, co-chaired by Caleb Scheve and Eddie Ramos, welcomed Tim Schmitt of Michels Utility Services as the new secretary.

- **Benchmarking and Safety Culture:** Participation in the 2024 benchmarking study remained low, with only 40 of 82 companies responding. To increase value and engagement, new survey questions were introduced to track significant injuries and fatalities (SIF/PSIF) and proactive safety measures. Members emphasized the importance of leadership presence in the field, supported by a guidebook from the Construction Safety Research Alliance, which provides tools for improving leadership engagement and safety culture.
- **Supervisor Recognition and Safety Awards:** Building on existing recognition programs such as the Safety Person of the Year, the committee discussed creating a new award to specifically honor supervisors for

safety performance. A subcommittee will explore whether this should stand alone or be paired with existing awards.

- **Website Review and Hazard Recognition Tools:** The committee acknowledged the need to update the DCA eSafe website, removing outdated or irrelevant content and improving usability. A survey will be distributed to gather member input. Members also reviewed the Energy Wheel hazard recognition tool, noting its effectiveness for both seasoned professionals and new workers. Volunteers were invited to assist in evaluating its integration into DCA resources.
- **Subcommittees on HDD Incidents and Traffic Control:** Members discussed recent serious industry incidents, including fatalities from drilling operations and roadway intrusions. Volunteers were asked to support a new HDD incidents initiative, while Jason Cramer of Wright Traffic Control agreed to lead a traffic control subcommittee focused on practical solutions and best practices.
- **2026 Safety Congress Planning:** Planning is underway for the 2026 Safety Congress, with Tim Schmitt continuing in a leadership role. Members stressed the importance of engaging not only safety professionals but also operational staff, whose involvement is critical in implementing safety policies on job sites. Topics under consideration include energy-based safety approaches, regulatory updates, and practical field applications.

The meeting concluded with a call for members to share new technologies and best practices observed at upcoming industry expos, reinforcing the committee's role as a hub for innovation and continuous safety improvement.

Trenchless & HDD Committee

The Trenchless & HDD Committee, co-chaired by Javen Moore and Jim Lagios, met to discuss current initiatives and industry priorities. Members approved the February convention minutes and were reminded to check in via the DCA app.

Lagios proposed postponing the planned August Deep Dive webinar until October to allow for stronger contractor participation. Members also agreed to review the DCA website for outdated information by August 29. A new best practices white paper on planning and mapping for small rigs was introduced, led by Siggi Finnsson and Lagios, with additional contributions from Braxton Smith, Corey Maker, and Eli Pagel. The document will serve as a guide for contractors and is targeted for completion by the 2026 convention.

Subcommittee Updates

- **Planning & Mapping:** Work is underway on the best practices white paper, with a focus on defining standards and addressing the unique needs of small rigs.
- **Technology as Best Practice:** Members highlighted the growing use of exit-side camera systems with Starlink-enabled live feeds and the Wyze app for remote monitoring. These tools improve safety, training, and communication, particularly during long crossings.
- **Safety:** Saul Lopez updated members on the Common Ground Alliance's sewer-locating best practices, which are being adopted in some states. The subcommittee emphasized flexibility rather than prescriptive rules.
- **Technology as Innovation:** Led by Zach Bissett and Dale Siever, the group sought input on narrowing the scope of innovation topics and considered closer coordination with the Innovation & Technology Committee.
- **Education for Engineers/Planners:** Colin Harris reported on outreach efforts, including lunch-and-learn sessions and presentations, while noting slowed progress due to health-related absences. The focus remains on educating engineers about HDD processes and design requirements.
- **Waste Management Discussion:** The committee also revisited the issue of waste disposal and the proposed national disposal database. Members expressed concern about compatibility with site-specific owner requirements and highlighted the long-standing costs and challenges associated with disposal. Education and awareness on waste management practices remain a priority.

Workforce Development Committee

The Workforce Development Committee, co-chaired by Matt Dvorak and Greg Sander, concentrated on advancing workforce recruitment and retention. The committee discussed challenges with the leadership development program's low attendance and discussed options to revise the programming for 2026 and beyond. While the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) has expanded its career clusters to include distribution and natural gas, SkillsUSA has yet to expand their competition categories to reflect the recent update. DCA intends to maintain partnerships with CEWD and SkillsUSA, and the Committee will be ready to contribute in a greater capacity once the competition categories are updated. DCA encourages all members to get involved with SkillsUSA on a local level to contribute to

the exploration and development of the future workforce across the skilled trades.

The committee welcomed guest speaker Jason Nelson from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC), who spoke on the importance of vocational training in the face of rising student debt and the impact of AI on traditional four-year degrees. Jason shared anecdotes of students who have achieved financial success through the skilled trades, noting that many earn six-figure salaries within nine months of graduation. The committee discussed the importance of engaging vocational students, supporting trade schools, and raising industry visibility to attract more students into gas-related careers. The workforce development subcommittee on technical schools continues to compile information to build out a database of available programs across the country to connect DCA members to those programs to identify potential employees as they complete their program.

Closing Notes

Committees continue to play a central role in advancing DCA's mission by addressing challenges, driving innovation, and strengthening industry engagement. The next meetings of the Board of Directors, Leadership Council and committees will take place at the Fall Meeting, October 29–31, in Grapevine, Texas.

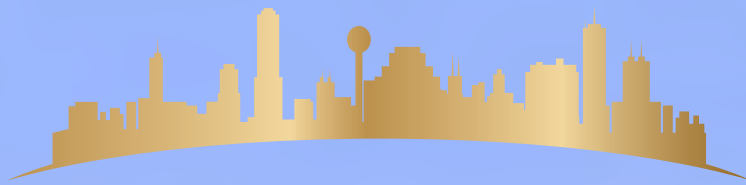
DCA's working committees are tasked with the advancement of the strategic goals of the DCA and solving problems facing the industry. The working committee structure provides DCA with the ability to leverage subject matter expertise, identify issues confronting the industry, and disseminate information to the association membership. In 2024, the DCA Board of Directors approved seven working committees tasked with a specific purpose, as outlined in its respective charter, that includes measurable goals and objectives.

The seven working committees include:

- Future Leaders
- Government Relations
- Innovation & Technology
- Membership & Engagement
- Safety & Risk Management
- Trenchless & HDD
- Workforce Development

For more information on how you can get involved with DCA's working committees and contribute to the advancement of our industry, reach out to Jacob Adams Mireles, Director of Membership (jadams@dcaweb.org). ▲

If you are interested in becoming an active member of any of the working committees, please contact Jacob Adams Mireles: jadams@dcaweb.org



DCA FALL MEETING

OCTOBER 29-31, 2025

GAYLORD TEXAN RESORT  GRAPEVINE, TX.



Registration is Open at dcaweb.org



Insights



DCA Responds to PHMSA Regulatory Review Initiative

In June, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) to solicit stakeholder feedback on whether to repeal or amend any requirements in the pipeline safety regulations. The ANPRM indicated that PHMSA is soliciting feedback on several concepts, including:

- Identification of regulatory provisions: any guidance — including interpretations of those regulations — that could impose undue burdens on identification, development, and use of domestic energy resources, or that are examples of government inefficiency
- The nature and magnitude of those burdens, including identification of affected entities
- Potential amendments, including rescission, to those regulatory provisions
- Incremental compliance costs and benefits anticipated from those amendments

- The technical feasibility, reasonableness, cost-effectiveness, and practicability of potential amendments

Importantly, PHMSA asks about incorporating “an explicit requirement to conduct retrospective regulatory reviews at specified intervals to eliminate undue burdens and improve government efficiency.” If regular reviews are established, PHMSA asks what intervals would be appropriate, and whether other stakeholders should be provided the opportunity to engage in these reviews.

Other questions posed in the ANPRM include if there are any consensus industry standards or recommended practices that should be incorporated by reference (IBR) into the regulations and what interpretations, approvals, or special permits should be incorporated into the regulations, also with the objectives of eliminating undue burdens or improving government efficiency.

PHMSA’s ANPRM also asks if there are any material, design, testing, construction, or corrosion control

requirements in the regulations that impose undue burdens on affected stakeholders.

This regulatory review follows several executive actions issued by the White House issued early in President Trump's second term. At the time this edition of Insights was written, DCA was finalizing comments in response to the ANPRM.

Positive Business Provisions Included in Budget Reconciliation Measure

As the dust settles after lawmakers' passage of this year's budget reconciliation measure, the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," fierce debate continues about the costs of extending President Trump's tax cuts, spending on measures to protect the border, and other high-profile issues.

However, there are a few very important tax incentives included in the reconciliation measure that DCA members should be aware of.

100% Bonus Depreciation

While bonus depreciation benefits business owners across all sectors, it plays an especially vital role in the construction industry. The provision permanently allows construction firms to fully deduct the cost of qualified equipment in the year they are purchased and placed in service. Instead of depreciating over the years, firms can take the full deduction immediately, reducing tax liability and freeing cash for project financing.

A leading reason for bonus depreciation is to encourage expedited equipment upgrades. The measure encourages replacing old machinery with newer, more efficient equipment, reducing maintenance downtime and increasing productivity.

Section 179 Expensing

Alongside bonus depreciation, the bill strengthens the IRS tax code's popular Section 179 expensing provision. This gives smaller businesses, including construction and specialty contractors, greater flexibility to immediately deduct investments in essential assets. By broadening eligibility and expanding deduction limits, the legislation levels the playing field for firms of all sizes and enables more strategic capital allocation.

Businesses can expense up to \$2.5 million of qualifying purchases under Sec. 179 in this year's reconciliation package. This is not only for equipment, but also software, vehicles, and certain improvements to non-residential property (roofs, HVAC, fire protection, security

systems). Smaller contractors can write off a larger share of capital purchases, closing the gap with larger firms.

Qualified Production Property (Section 168(n))

Sec. 168(n) of the tax code is special for the construction industry in that the provision allows 100% expensing for new nonresidential property, such as warehouses, fabrication and fabrication shops, or prefabrication facilities used in U.S. production activities. The provision also allows contractors to invest in their own operational infrastructure, such as integrated construction plants or new headquarters.

Coalition Continues Strong Push for NEPA Reform

As efforts to reform the permitting process for infrastructure projects continue, DCA and industry allies remain strong advocates for modernizing the system to better support timely development. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is leading a coalition of groups (including DCA) that is conducting what is known as the Permit America to Build campaign, which focuses on improvements to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), the bedrock statute that most environmental policy is based on.

The coalition recently wrote a letter to 16 executive branch agencies in support of the Trump Administration's comprehensive effort to modernize the permitting process, saying the revision and removal of portions of existing regulations and other actions represent important steps forward in addressing long-standing challenges that have hindered infrastructure development and responsible use of federal natural resources, delivering tangible benefits to communities and local economies.

The coalition's letter reflected real concern regarding current NEPA policy. "We support NEPA's goals to better inform federal decision-making and the public's understanding of significant environmental impacts," the letter states. "However, the current NEPA process has become overly complex, slow, and burdensome, often delaying critical projects without yielding corresponding benefits. The amendments to NEPA represent the first steps toward developing a coherent and concise environmental review process, and we urge federal agencies to build on this progress by focusing on several key principles when implementing NEPA updates: predictability, efficiency, and transparency."

The president's steps not only enhance the ability to build but also foster economic opportunities by supporting energy affordability and reliability, driving

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innovations in manufacturing, and positioning America to lead in the global race for artificial intelligence (AI) leadership, among other benefits. The administration's strategy, strengthening energy and national security while supporting environmental progress, and the administration's commitment to these reforms will play an important role in unlocking the potential of public and private investments. Reform will help foster innovation and ensure that America's communities thrive in a competitive global economy.

The fight over permit reform is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, but the coalition's latest effort clearly shows industry commitment to push all agencies to follow the president's lead on reforming the process to get important projects off the ground.

Secretary Defends Department of Energy Budget at House Hearing

The House Committee on Energy & Commerce (E&C) recently reviewed the Department of Energy's (DOE) FY2026 budget request, which prioritizes energy independence, infrastructure, and workforce stability. Secretary Chris Wright defended the budget, highlighting regulatory rollbacks and strategic energy plans.

The Department of Energy (DOE) has faced heightened scrutiny from lawmakers regarding its budget and strategic direction. At the hearing, Secretary Wright fielded questions on a range of topics, from regulatory frameworks to project funding. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle pressed DOE for clarity on its approach to balancing environmental concerns with the nation's energy needs. The discussion underscored the complexity of advancing infrastructure initiatives, particularly as the energy sector evolves and new technologies emerge.

The budget debate highlighted growing tension over how best to streamline the permitting process for critical energy and infrastructure projects. Several participants underscored the urgency of permit reform, especially in light of delays that have hampered pipeline expansions and grid modernization efforts. Industry leaders and

energy advocates urged Congress to clarify the rules and improve interagency cooperation, stressing that predictable, timely permitting is essential for safeguarding energy reliability and driving investment in next-generation technologies.

Additionally, discussions touched upon the need for stable long-term policy frameworks to support innovation, foster public-private partnerships, and enable a smoother transition to cleaner energy sources without undermining economic competitiveness. Lawmakers and stakeholders alike acknowledged that achieving these goals would require not just legislative action but ongoing dialogue among federal agencies, states, and industry participants.

Stakeholders also highlighted the critical role of workforce development programs in ensuring the talent pool keeps pace with industry transformation. Several underscored the necessity of robust training, apprenticeships, and partnerships with educational institutions to support both incumbent workers and new entrants in the energy sector. As the energy landscape becomes increasingly complex, there is a clear need for thoughtful, well-structured public policy, which will be essential to support innovation, stabilize markets, and protect national security interests.

As the hearing progressed, heated exchanges broke out over the scope and pace of the DOE's regulatory agenda. Proponents of expedited fossil fuel project approvals pointed to supply chain vulnerabilities and recent energy price volatility as justification for a more pragmatic, all-of-the-above approach. Democrats, however, cautioned that rolling back efficiency standards and delaying renewables deployment could ultimately undermine U.S. competitiveness in the global energy transition and exacerbate climate risks.

While most of these high-profile debates are likely to continue for years to come, it is refreshing to see that the discussion is again about how to secure an "all of the above" energy strategy. ▲



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Calendar

2025 & 2026 DCA and Industry Events

2025

SEPTEMBER 16-18

Global Damage Prevention Summit
Hilton Anatole Hotel
Dallas, Texas
www.actsnowinc.com/globaldps/registration

OCTOBER 14

DCA Deep Dive: The Importance of Mental Health in Construction Teams Webinar
jadams@dcaweb.org

OCTOBER 29-31

DCA Fall Meeting
Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center
Grapevine, Texas
dcaweb.org

2026

JANUARY 27-29

Underground Infrastructure Conference (UIC)
Henry B. González Convention Center
San Antonio, Texas
ui-conference.com

2026 (cont.)

FEBRUARY 11-15

2025 PLCA Convention
Arizona Biltmore
Phoenix, Arizona
www.plca.org

FEBRUARY 23-28

DCA Annual Convention
Trump National Doral
Miami, Florida
dcaweb.org

MARCH 3 – 7

Con-Expo
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.conexpoconag.com

MARCH 23 – 25

Safety Congress
Thompson Nashville Hotel
Nashville, Tennessee
dcaweb.org

APRIL 20-24

Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada (PLCAC) Convention
Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa
Maui, Hawaii
www.pipeline.ca

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 Jacob Adams Mireles at jadams@dcaweb.org.



Save the Date for the DCA Convention

Trump National Doral
Miami, Florida
February 23 – 28, 2026



Member News



Roger Mohr

In Memoriam: Roger Mohr

The DCA is saddened to share the passing of Roger Bernard Mohr, age 76, on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, in Dallas. Roger was a valued member of the DCA community through his years of service with John Deere. His contributions and presence within our association will be deeply missed.

Roger retired from John Deere in 2017 with 45 years of distinguished service. He was most known for his creation of the John Deere Corporate Business Division in 1998, which is dedicated to understanding and servicing the needs of large accounts. In 2016, Roger was the second person awarded the lifetime title of John Deere Senior Fellow for his expertise in large account management and for his respected and trusted guidance both to John Deere and the industry. He was widely known in the industry and associations for his passion, foresight, knowledge, and relentless customer focus. Upon receiving this recognition from John Deere's CEO at the time, Sam Allen, Roger said this: "I literally grew up with John Deere, as my father and mother owned two agricultural dealerships in Iowa. These customers were also our friends, and friends don't let friends down. As a result, I have always tried to build relationships with our customers and have great empathy for their situation." Roger also treasured his relationships with his colleagues, and it brought him great joy to see others succeed.

Roger was born on January 2, 1949, in Davenport, Iowa, the oldest son of Tony and Margaret Mohr. He graduated from Assumption High School, where he was a three-sport athlete participating in football, basketball, and track. After high school, Roger attended Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1971. On his first day at Loras in 1967, Roger met Sarah Jane Dull, the love of his life and biggest supporter on life's journey. They were married on October 13, 1973, and went on to have three children, celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary last year.

Roger was a devoted family man who will be remembered for his kindness, great sense of humor, and unwavering enthusiasm. He loved to ride his bicycle and cherished the annual "Rugged Trek" with his fellow biking friends, a tradition that he enjoyed for over 35 years. He was a passionate supporter of his favorite sports teams, the Iowa Hawkeyes and the Notre Dame Fighting Irish.

Roger was also a man of faith and a dedicated parishioner, most recently at All Saints Catholic Church in Dallas. He was a loving father, mentor, role model, and trusted confidant to his children and freely shared his wisdom and expertise with all. Late in his life, nothing gave him greater pleasure than spending time with his eight grandchildren. Whether it was going on vacations with them, watching them play sports (and reporting all the details to the broader family through his "Mohr Sports Network" emails), or just shuttling them around town, he loved getting to know them personally and being a part of their lives.

Roger is survived by his wife of 51 years, Sarah, daughter Kate, sons Tony and Bill, sister Ladonna Czachowski, brother Richard Mohr, great aunt Theresa Osborn, and his eight grandchildren: Nick, Ellie, Tyler, Samantha, Lincoln, Hayden, Luke, and Henry.

Memorials may be made to Loras College, the Toy Tractor Museum (Roger thoroughly enjoyed collecting toy tractors as a hobby), or the Kerr County Flood Relief Fund.



In Memoriam: Geoffrey Isbell

It is with great sadness that DCA announces the passing of Geoffrey Warren Isbell, president of Energy WorldNet (EWN), on Thursday, July 17, 2025, in Grapevine, Texas, at the age of 60.

Born October 22, 1964, in Lubbock, Texas, to Cecil Isbell and Kathleen Penix (Grima), Geoffrey built a life defined by commitment — to his family, to his work, and to the people around him. He married Suzanne “Suzy” Van Pelt on September 1, 1984, in Vernon, Texas, beginning a 40-year partnership marked by loyalty and love.

A graduate of the University of North Texas, Geoffrey, known to most as Geoff, ran a successful ironwork business before beginning a new chapter at EWN. Geoff joined EWN in 2006, serving in several key leadership roles, including most recently as president. He was a friend to everyone, leading with professionalism, insight, and a warm, collegial spirit. He was a tireless advocate for safety and compliance across the utility and pipeline industries. His unwavering reliability, persuasive leadership, and deep industry knowledge made him a trusted voice and a steady presence in every initiative he touched.

Geoff generously shared his expertise through active involvement on countless committees and organizations across the industry, including the Distribution Contractors Association, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Petroleum Institute, the Alabama Natural Gas Association, and many other industry and leadership organizations. His thoughtful input on DCA's Operator Qualification Integrity Process (OQIP) initiative was monumentally influential in shaping OQIP into the program it is today.

Beyond his professional impact, Geoff was a mentor, colleague, and dear friend. His unwavering faith, wisdom, and kindness shaped EWN and touched many lives. Outside of work, he enjoyed fly fishing in Colorado,

camping, firearm safety and instruction, rock climbing with his sons, and working on his property. To his family, Geoff was a dedicated provider leading with consistent support, strong faith, and a commitment to excellence.

He is survived by his wife, Suzy Isbell; his four children, Bryson, Dalton, Saule, and Asa; and by his grandchildren, Lilah Jean and a grandson expected in December. He is also survived by his sisters, Kathy and Mary, and his brother, Patrick. He was preceded in death by his parents, Cecil Isbell and Kathleen Grima.

Geoff's legacy lives on not only in the family and company he helped build, but in the values that he lived by and the lives he impacted. He will be deeply missed by those who knew him and had the honor of working with him and remembered always by those who loved him.



GROEBNER Honored with 2025 Minnesota Family Business Award

Recognized by Twin Cities Business for nearly 50 years of family leadership, service, and impact

GROEBNER has been named a 2025 honoree of the Minnesota Family Business Awards by Twin Cities Business. This award celebrates the contributions of family-owned businesses that help shape Minnesota's economy and community, and for GROEBNER, this recognition is a meaningful reflection of the values the company was built on.

In 1976, after two decades in the energy and manufacturing industries, Chuck Groebner founded GROEBNER with a simple goal: to provide the natural gas industry with a reliable, service-focused source for high-quality distribution products. He started small, operating out

(continued on pg. 28)

of the trunk of his car and earning commissions as a manufacturers' representative. But as the needs of the industry grew, so did Groebner's vision. He was soon asked to begin stocking inventory — a pivotal shift that marked the beginning of GROEBNER as a distributor.

This change brought Groebner's son, Joe Groebner, into the business in 1980. Together, they shipped products out of an apartment and eventually opened the company's first warehouse in Minnesota. Their combined leadership shaped GROEBNER's philosophy of treating customers like family, solving problems with empathy, and delivering solutions built on trust. Those early years laid the foundation for the company's continued growth and deep relationships across the natural gas industry.

Over the decades, GROEBNER has expanded from a single location to four warehouse facilities in Minnesota, Illinois, Kansas, and Texas, supported by a sales and

service team that spans the country. In 2018, the third generation of family leadership joined the company when Carissa Skorczewski and Curt Groebner came on board. In 2021, Skorczewski was named president. One year later, she and Curt Groebner became owners of the company, continuing the legacy of family leadership and long-term vision.

"This recognition is meaningful because it honors not just our history, but how we've grown by staying true to who we are," said Skorczewski. "Our success has always been rooted in strong relationships, a deep understanding of our customers, and a commitment to doing what's right, not just what's easy."

GROEBNER is honored by this recognition and looks forward to continuing to serve the natural gas industry with the same dedication and care that has guided it for nearly 50 years.



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Volvo Construction Equipment to Expand Production in North America

As part of a larger global industrial footprint investment to support growing customer demand, Volvo Construction Equipment will begin producing crawler excavators and large wheel loaders in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania.

- Shippensburg will add capabilities to produce mid- to large-size excavators, thereby increasing its global industrial footprint and improving flexibility.
- The total global investment of \$261 million aims to strengthen Volvo CE's crawler excavator position across three main production sites in South Korea, Sweden and the United States.
- In addition, the Shippensburg site will add four large wheel loader models to its current wheel loader production.
- Production plans to start in the first half of 2026.

Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE) is making a significant investment to expand production worldwide. For crawler excavators, three main sites will see approximately \$261 million invested to expand crawler excavator production to meet growing customer demands, mitigate supply chain risks and reduce reliance on long-distance logistics. These sites include Shippensburg, Penn., USA; Changwon, South Korea; and a location in Sweden.

In Shippensburg, Volvo CE will not only add crawler excavator production but also expand wheel loader production to include large wheel loaders. Currently, soil and asphalt compactors and mid-size wheel loaders are manufactured at the Shippensburg factory.

Updates will be made to the existing space within the factory to install assembly lines, integrate more automation technologies into the manufacturing process and train employees, with the goal to be production-ready in the first half of 2026.

Investment aims to bolster global machine availability

In a rapidly evolving market, strategically enhancing production capacity and flexibility will allow the OEM to meet current and future customer demands more effectively, according to Melker Jernberg, Head of Volvo CE.

"We must respond to growing demand, and we're excited to expand our facilities to serve our customers better," said Jernberg. "This investment underscores our commitment to quality and innovation, allowing us to deliver even greater value."

By expanding production capabilities in key markets, Volvo CE will reduce dependency on any single site and become less reliant on long-distance logistics. Supply chain risks will also be mitigated by expanding domestic supplier bases, allowing the OEM to more nimbly manage any economic or regulatory challenges.

Jernberg says that fostering collaboration with local suppliers and customers will better position the company for sustained growth and innovation without compromising the high standards that Volvo CE equipment is known for.

North America to see reduced lead times and improved machine supply

"Bringing excavator production to North America and growing the range of wheel loader models built here has always been part of our long-term industrial plan, so it's exciting to finally share this news with our employees, dealers and customers," said Scott Young, Head of Region North America. "This increase in production capacity means that over 50% of our North American machine supply can be built here in Shippensburg, resulting in shorter lead times while also creating opportunities for supplier growth."

Volvo CE acquired the Shippensburg site in 2007 from Ingersoll Rand and relocated its regional headquarters there in 2012. On top of recent investments, Volvo CE will invest approximately \$40 million locally over the next five years. Today's announcement is a win for central Pennsylvania, as it shows the company's continued commitment to the local community and its economic vitality.

(continued on pg. 30)



New Vermeer RH9 Rock Drill Head Expands Dual Rod HDD Solutions

The Vermeer RH9 rock drill head is the newest addition to the company's rock tooling lineup for dual-rod horizontal directional drills.

This specialty tool is designed for installing small diameter utilities, including single fiber conduit lines compatible with Vermeer D23x30DR S3 and D40x55DR S3 horizontal directional drilling (HDD) equipment. The RH9's precision-engineered design helps reduce the overall footprint of HDD installations, while its field-rebuildable components support reliable performance in rock drilling applications.

"The RH9's compact design is ideal for contractors working with smaller diameter and shallow bore applications," said Cody Mecham, product manager

at Vermeer. "This specialty tool functions like a scalpel for precise rock drilling projects that don't require larger diameter holes. Its lighter weight and shorter profile give crews better handling in the field with less equipment needed, making it particularly valuable for telecom installations in rock conditions."

The RH9 features a two-degree bend near the front of the tool for responsive steerability, similar to other Vermeer rock drill heads. It comes with multiple configuration options to meet diverse operational needs, including both direct connect and starter rod options. Contractors can choose between a smaller unit with 8-in. (20.32-cm) sonde housing or the standard 15-in. (38.1-cm) configuration to match their specific requirements. While the 15-in. sonde configuration is common in the U.S. market, the smaller unit provides international contractors with a more compact solution for shallower telecom work where the depth capabilities of larger sondes aren't required.

The RH9 drill head is compatible with tricone and PDC (polycrystalline diamond compact) bits for various rock formations. Along with the established RH10 and RH15 models, the RH9 joins the rock drill head product line from Vermeer, giving contractors a comprehensive range of options to match their specific drilling requirements. ▲



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