

THE BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE DISTRIBUTION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION



DCA NEWS

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2026



**The
Annual
Convention
Issue**

The Annual Convention Issue



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Outgoing DCA President Doug Reeves Stresses the Significance of Young Members & Associates Leading the Organization into a New Era



**2025 DCA President
Doug Reeves**

It has been a busy and productive year for the Distribution Contractors Association, marked by meaningful progress across several important initiatives. Our Members and Associates traveled to Washington, DC for a fly in where we met with key representatives to discuss critical industry issues and advocate for our shared priorities. At the same time, we placed a strong

emphasis on growing membership and increasing engagement, while continuing efforts to strengthen participation across our working committees. Amid some leadership transitions, we also worked on internal processes to better support our mission. These collective efforts reflect the dedication of our Members, Associates, Board, and staff, as they position DCA for continued momentum in the year ahead.

As I reflect on my time serving the Distribution Contractors Association, one of the most meaningful shifts I've witnessed is the pending generational transition taking place within our organization. We are moving from an established generation that often spent decades in the business into a new era led by younger professionals who bring fresh perspectives, new skills, and a genuine respect for the legacy they inherit. This transition is not about replacing experience; it is about transferring it. By intentionally engaging the next generation of leaders, we will ensure that the values, safety culture, and commitment to excellence that define the DCA continue to thrive long after today's leaders step aside.

This generational evolution is especially critical as the natural gas construction and energy landscape enters a period of significant change. Advancements in technology, heightened regulatory expectations, workforce challenges, and the broader conversation around energy reliability and sustainability demand adaptability and innovation. Younger professionals are stepping forward with fluency in data, technology, and new ways of thinking—while learning from the seasoned judgment of those who came before them. Together, this blend of experience and innovation positions the DCA to remain relevant, resilient, and influential. Our strength as an association has always come from anticipating change rather than reacting to it, and this leadership transition ensures we are prepared to guide our industry confidently into the future.

As I conclude my term as President, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the DCA staff and Board of Directors for their continued commitment to delivering high-quality events and conferences that are not only productive and impactful, but also welcoming and family friendly. These gatherings reflect the culture of collaboration and balance that makes this association special. I am also deeply grateful to the many members, associates, leaders, and mentors who supported and assisted me throughout my tenure. Serving as President of the DCA has been a true honor, and I am confident the association is well positioned for continued success in the years ahead.

Doug Reeves
Primoris Services Corporation
2025 DCA President

2026 Annual Convention

For the most up-to-date Convention information including schedules, speakers, auction bidding information, attire suggestions and more, please download the DCA Events App.

Please see pages 6-12 for Board of Director candidate profiles, and for a list of convention sponsors, please see pages 14-19.



2026 Board of Directors and Officers

The election of a new Board of Directors is one of the most important things that occurs at DCA's Annual Convention. The board helps direct the association through regularly scheduled board meetings and informal gatherings.

The board consists of four officers, a past president representative, two associate member representatives, six directors, a director at large, and the association's executive vice president. To help DCA's voting members become more familiar with the slate of candidates available for election to the 2026-27 Board of Directors, we have compiled some basic biographical information on each nominee.

2026 Officer Nominees



President:
Andy Miller
Alex E. Paris Contracting Co.

Andy Miller is the equipment fleet manager and director of special projects for Alex E. Paris Contracting Co., based in Atlasburg, Pennsylvania. The Alex Paris Company is a fourth generation full service heavy/civil/utility and pipeline contractor that has been in business for over 96 years servicing the Mid-Atlantic areas.

Brief work history: Miller graduated from Washington & Jefferson College with a B.A. in business and received his MBA from the University of Pittsburgh in 1987. He has been involved in the construction and heavy equipment industry since childhood. He joined the Alex Paris Company in 1993 and has been active in all aspects of the organization since. Miller attended his first DCA convention in 2012 and has served as co-chair of the Government Relations committee.

Family life: Miller and his wife, Becky, have three sons, Andrew and his wife Morgan, Owen and his wife Dawn, Clark, and grandchildren Banks, Aria, and Conley. They enjoy spending their free time with family and friends and traveling.



Vice President:
Chad Davis
Miller Pipeline

Chad Davis joined Miller Pipeline in 1997. He is the Executive Vice President of Operations and has served as a DCA director since 2023.

Brief work history: Chad Davis has built a distinguished career at Miller Pipeline since joining as a laborer in 1997. He advanced through the ranks to operator, foreman (2000), superintendent (2005), and Vice President of Operations (2011), before assuming his current role as Executive Vice President. In this position, he oversees

construction operations across the South-Central and Western United States.

Over the past decade, Chad has demonstrated exceptional leadership in managing large-scale projects, launching new ventures, and integrating acquired operations across the eastern and southern regions. He is an active member of the Distribution Contractors Association (DCA), various state gas associations, and other industry organizations.

In 2014, Chad received the Daniel Watters Individual Achievement Award, recognizing his loyalty, leadership, performance, and integrity, qualities that continue to set the standard for others. Outside of work, he supports the Children's Bureau of Indianapolis and volunteers annually with Habitat for Humanity.

Family life: Davis and his wife, Shara, have one son, Coy. In his spare time, Davis enjoys hunting, outdoor projects, coaching, and spending time with friends and family.



Treasurer:
Rob Hotz
ECI Contracting

Rob Hotz is the general manager of HDD operations for ECI Contracting located in West Concord, Minnesota.

Brief work history: Hotz currently leads ECI's Trenchless Division, which includes the sales, estimating, project management and construction operations teams. Hotz has a Master of Science degree in Civil/Geotechnical Engineering from Missouri University of Science & Technology and is a licensed Professional Engineer in 10 states. He previously served as manager of engineering, division manager, and vice president of operations at Laney. Prior to joining ECI, Hotz worked with GeoEngineers, Inc., Mears Group and Laney Group. Hotz is active in several industry associations, including DCA, ASCE, and NASTT. He and his wife started attending DCA functions in 2016 and have enjoyed the many friendships and connections made throughout the years as well

as the friends their children have made through DCA functions. Hotz has served as co-chair of the Trenchless & HDD committee, participated on the Strategic Vision and the Future Leaders' committees, and currently serves on the DCA Government Relations committee and DCA Board of Directors.

Family life: Hotz and his wife, Stephanie, have four children, Eleanor, Robert, Clara, and Hazel. They enjoy watching their kids participate in numerous activities and are active in their Church.



Director at Large:
Pete Fojtik
MP Technologies LLC

Pete Fojtik is a Regional Vice President for MP Technologies, LLC in Annandale, Minnesota. He was a DCA director from 2022-23 and has served as co-chair of the Workforce Development Committee. He currently serves on the Membership & Engagement and the Government Relations Committees.

Brief work history: Pete has over 38 years' experience in the utility distribution construction and energy services industry. Prior to his current role at MP Technologies, he was with the Michels Family of companies serving in varying management roles including President of Michels Utility Services, Inc., Vice President Gas Distribution, and General Manager of Gas Distribution of Michels Pipeline Construction. Prior to joining Michels, Pete worked with InfraSource/Quanta Services for over 20 years in varying capacities, starting with the company back in the Mueller Pipeliner days.

Fojtik earned a bachelor's degree in construction administration from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but literally began his career in the trenches, working his way up from a laborer/fuser through varying management roles. Pete has also served on the Center of Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) board of directors and on the American Gas Association (AGA) construction operations committee and workforce development task group.

Family life: Pete and his wife Wendy have 4 daughters: Brianne, Kyra, Shaye, and Jaime, and Cooper - the family dog. In his spare time Pete enjoys golfing, traveling, and spending time at the beach with his family.



Immediate Past President:
Doug Reeves
Primoris Services Corporation

Doug Reeves is president of the gas line business for Primoris Services Corporation (PSC), Little Canada, Minnesota.

Brief work history: Reeves began working in the utility industry in 1989, performing power pole and power line inspections in Indiana. A career change in 1990 initiated a shift to the natural gas industry, where Reeves performed and later managed code compliance services such as leak surveys and line locating throughout the upper Midwest. Reeves moved to Minnesota in 1997 and joined Q3 Contracting (Q3C) in 1998. During his time with Q3C, Reeves held multiple positions in field operations management and estimating. He was named president of Q3C in September 2017 and moved into the President role with PSC in April of 2024.

Family life: Reeves and his wife, Carol, have two children, Katie and Nathan. The Reeves family enjoys traveling and the outdoors including golf, hiking, and time at the cabin.



Past President Director:
Dale Mykyte
Pe Ben USA, Inc.

Dale purchased the U.S. assets of Pe Ben Industries Company Ltd in 2016 and became the Founder of Pe Ben USA, Inc.

Brief work history: He began his career as a labourer in the Alberta oilfields before joining Kaps Transport, western Canada's largest oil rig mover. In 1988, he joined Pe Ben Industries as Operations Manager. In 1995, Dale relocated from Edmonton to Houston to establish Pe Ben Industries' U.S. division. With very few industry contacts initially, he was solely responsible for launching and growing the company's U.S. operations. In January 2006, when Pe Ben Industries was acquired by the Mullen group, they had decided to divest itself of the US division, Dale seized the opportunity and successfully purchased the U.S. business unit.

Today, he remains actively involved in the industry, currently serving on the board of directors as director America North of IPLOCA and serving in the past on labor committees with the Pipeline Contractors Association of Canada, is an honorary member of the Pipe Line Contractors Association and is also a former board member and past president of the Distribution Contractors Association.

Family life: A native of Canada, Dale currently resides in Houston, Texas with his wife, Deborah. He has two adult sons, their wives and six grandchildren along with Debbie's two sons, their wives and 3 grandchildren.

Outside of work, he is passionate about spending time at their lake residence on Vancouver Island where he enjoys travelling to various remote locations on his off road side by side.

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Candidates for Contractor Member Director

Four to be elected for a two-year term and 1 for a one-year term.



Director:
Dan Britz
Michels Utility Services Inc.

Dan Britz joined Michels in 2023 and is the president of Michels Utility Services Inc., headquartered in Brownsville, Wisconsin.

Brief work history: Dan has more than 19 years of industry experience, beginning as a project manager overseeing transmission facility and maintenance projects across Central US. During this time, he expanded his knowledge and education and was promoted to president of Minnesota Limited in 2021. Dan navigated both dynamic market changes as well as multiple ownership changes during his tenure. In January 2024, Dan accepted the role of president for Michels Utility Services Inc. where he continues to develop strategy and organizational structure.

Britz graduated from Bemidji State University with a bachelor's degree in industrial technology and completed his Master of Business Administration from St. Cloud State University. Britz has been involved with multiple industry events and associations in his career. He served on the PLCA board of directors in 2022 and has been a member representative for the PLCA, DCA, INGAA, and various others. He was elected as a DCA director in 2024.

Family life: Dan and his wife, Amber, have two boys: Wyatt and Myles. They enjoy spending time on their family farm, hunting, fishing, time at the lake and filling time in between with football, wrestling and baseball season with the boys.



Director:
Randy Bunch
Eastern Utilities Services

Randy Bunch joined Eastern Utilities/Haugland Group in July of 2023 as Director of Trenchless Operations where he oversees all day-to-day trenchless operations. In May of 2025 he was promoted to VP of all trenchless operations.

Brief work history: Bunch joined BNSF Railway in 1994 where he worked his way through the ranks holding several positions in his tenure with them. Starting as a laborer and eventually working his way to a supervisor. While employed at BNSF Railway Bunch attended many classes, and training programs at Johnson County

Community College in Kansas, such as leadership training, welding school, FRA (Federal Railroad Association) certifications and more. In 2008 Bunch started working in the Underground Construction industry for few different companies. (Gabe's Construction, Nomad Pipeline Services and Aaron Enterprises) working such positions as Directional Drill Foreman to Vice President of Operations.

Bunch has been an active member in the DCA since 2014. He currently serves as Director at Large on the Board of Directors. He also served as co-chair on the safety and risk committee from 2021-2024. And is still participating on both committees (safety and risk committee and HDD Trenchless Committee) in a subcommittee roll. And has participated in several other subcommittees and round table discussions that was focused on trenchless operations. Also attending special events to represent the DCA including the 2022 Below Ground Worker Demonstration Day in Washington D.C & Celebration of Construction at the National Mall in 2023.

Family life: Bunch and his wife Wendy have been married for 16 years and have 6 children and 5 grandchildren. They enjoy spending time with the family and friends, traveling the country and camping out and riding side X sides at a Private 6,400-acre utv ranch where they are members.



Director:
Jim Lagios
Atlas Trenchless LLC

Jim Lagios is the president of Atlas Trenchless, a successful, growing national HDD contractor based in Cold Spring, Minnesota. Atlas performs HDD and auger boring services throughout the U.S. in the gas, oil, and public works sectors. Lagios served as a DCA director from 2013-22.

Brief work history: Lagios started as a laborer for Michels Pipeline in the HDD division in 1989. He moved up through the ranks of several reputable HDD providers over the last 30+ years to his current position as president of Atlas Trenchless. Lagios' extensive hands-on experience in the HDD industry has earned him senior management positions in several high-profile HDD organizations throughout his career. He is often called upon by his peers in the industry for advice and solutions in tough drilling situations. He leads the Atlas team in their ongoing commitment as one of the safest, most highly qualified, reputable HDD contractors in the nation. This will be Lagios' fifth term on the Board of Directors.

Family life: Lagios, his wife Sherry, and their four children and grandchildren, always cherish and enjoy their time together. Lagios also enjoys hiking, hunting, and fishing.



Director:
Remi Coolsaet
R.L. Coolsaet Construction

Brief work history: Remi started working as a laborer for the family business, R.L. Coolsaet Construction, in 2008. While in college at Grand Valley State, he worked part time as a laborer on a directional drill crew. After graduating college, he has held various roles including office manager, OQ Administrator, Project Manager, and Construction Manager before becoming Vice President at R.L. Coolsaet in 2021.

He has a passion for the natural gas industry and enjoys spending time in field and helping to find constructive solutions to complicated problems that arise during inner-city construction projects and is proud to help usher the company into its 90th year in 2026.

Family life: Remi and his wife Robin are parents to two beautiful daughters, Casey & Violet. When they aren't out taking walks with their goldendoodle Rusty, Remi is probably playing beer league hockey.



Director:
Edward Fitzgerald
Hallen Construction

Brief work history: Ed started with Hallen Construction almost 39 years ago. The epitome of working your way up "the hard way". Ed has climbed the ladder during his career at Hallen Construction from Dispatcher to Senior Vice President of Operations. His passion and motivation are a testament to his continuing success with the company.

During his tenure with the company Ed has been involved with securing and running various contracts from Keyhole excavation to mains and services with Hallen's two biggest customers, National Grid and Con Edison.

Ed also was the lead in the creation of Hallen's Drafting and Paving departments. He also coordinated all New York City DOT and community relations responsibilities ensuring compliance and high customer satisfaction ratings.

Ed is also a member of the American Gas Association and Northeast Gas Association.

Family life: Ed has been blessed to be happily married for over 30 years to Susan Fitzgerald. They have three daughters; the two oldest Sierramarie and Alanna also work for the Hallen family. Summer vacations with family to Myrtle Beach and the Outer Banks are some of their best memories. Favorite time of the year is Christmas, Ed and Sue enjoy visiting New York City to see shows and capture the Holiday Spirit amongst all the lights of the city.



Director:
Thomas Jones
Primoris Services Corporation

Thomas Jones is the Sr Vice President West for Primoris responsible for the Gas Operations business in the Western US markets managing both ARB Underground and Snelson West.

Brief work history: Thomas Jones boasts over three decades of extensive experience within the utility industry, covering a diverse array of sectors such as gas operations, communications, and power delivery. His expertise is highlighted by his exceptional leadership in business operations, strategic planning, and fostering growth and business development, along with his profound knowledge of engineering and construction management.

Thomas Began his career as an intern at the City of Redding Electric Department as a Draftsman while attending college studying Civil Engineering. Thomas ultimately ended up with Power Engineers in Boise Idaho as a Project Manager before navigating his way to MasTec North America, Inc. where he was the Vice President for the Utility Services Group focusing on the growth of the Natural Gas, Midstream Pipeline, Power Delivery, and Communications infrastructure business across the US. Thomas started with Primoris in 2022 as the Vice President for the Utility Operations responsible for the Strategy and Development of the Utility Operations.

Currently serving at Primoris Services Corporation, Thomas plays a pivotal role in ensuring the delivery of outstanding services to clients, maintaining exemplary safety standards, spearheading growth initiatives, and enhancing the company's engagement both within the industry and the broader community, particularly in the areas of Utility Infrastructure.

Thomas Jones is active in national, state, and local associations including American Society of Civil Engineers, PCCA, PDI2, WEI, and the DCA. Additionally, Thomas is on the Board of Trustees for the LLS in Southern CA.

Family life: Thomas, and his Wife Cassaundra, live in Eagle, Idaho with their 4 boys and enjoy, Skiing, Backpacking, Hunting, and Travel.

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Three Directors with One Year Remaining on a Two-year Term



Director:
Bill Colson
Haugland Group LLC

Bill Colson is a Senior Project Manager & Business Development for Haugland Group.

Brief work history: Colson started in the industry in 1997 as an operator in the operating engineers. He worked his way through the ranks of operator, foreman, safety assistant, safety manager, project manager, and general manager. Colson has worked with many union pipeline contractors and HDD contractors across the nation. Colson has been attending and actively participating in the DCA since 2017, including becoming a co-chair of the Safety & Risk Management committee in 2018 and being elected to the board of directors in 2023.

Family life: Colson and his wife, Kelly, have four children between them, Matthew, Alex, Camrynn, and Morgan, and one granddaughter, Luna Marie. Colson enjoys traveling, fishing, and hunting. Colson also enjoys actively working within the industry through political, educational, and developmental aspects for betterment of the industry.



Director:
Nate Eastway
Gabe's Construction

Nate Eastway is the chief operating officer for Gabe's Construction Co. Inc., in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Brief work history: Eastway started with Gabe's in 2011 as the engineering & estimating manager and contract administrator after spending 8 years as a structural engineer for a consulting firm in Indianapolis. He then became the vice president of HDD & specialty projects in 2016, overseeing all aspects of Gabe's HDD and Specialty (Civil) work. In July 2023, Eastway became the chief operating officer as Gabe's added their telecom and wireless divisions to his responsibilities. He continues to be the responsible charge professional engineer for Gabe's.

Nate is active in national, state, and local associations of pipeline, gas, HVUG, water/wastewater, and telecom wireless industries. He is an active participant with the DCA, Pipeline Contractors Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, and the IEEE Insulated Conductors Committee. He started attending DCA functions in 2013. He served as the 2024 director-at-large, then was elected to a 2-year board term in 2025 and remains active on the Trenchless & HDD committee.

Family life: Eastway and his wife, Kristina Dykstra, have the most perfect mixed breed rescue dog named Udo, who is of interesting origins, and spent his formative canine years roaming the mean streets of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. They enjoy spending time with family, friends, and backcountry kayaking and backpacking. He also enjoys mild success at gardening. Nate is moderately successful with, and enjoys expanding, his collection of carnivorous plants.



Junior Associate Member Director:
Ken Hugen
RDO Equipment Co.

Ken Hugen joined the Vermeer organization in June of 1984 and is presently the general manager of Sales for RDO Equipment Co.'s Vermeer division in the US. RDO Equipment Co. distributes Vermeer industrial equipment in Minnesota, North Dakota, Northern Nevada, Oregon, California, and Hawaii.

Brief work history: In 1984 Hugen started in the parts department at Vermeer in Memphis, Tennessee then moved to a sales position selling in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi. In late 1985, he moved to Northern California taking an account manager position in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1991, he bought the Northern California Vermeer dealership with a partner, and they named it Vermeer, Inc. They opened locations in Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Fresno. For the next 13 years Hugen learned the ins and outs of the Vermeer dealer life serving at different times many of these key roles: aftermarket manager, sales manager, account manager, secretary treasurer and vice president of sales. In November 2004, RDO Equipment Co. purchased the Vermeer organizations in California and Oregon and Hugen stayed with RDO as General Manager of Northern California. In 2009, he accepted the role of general manager of sales for the RDO Vermeer Area of Responsibility (AOR) in the US, which is the current role he serves today. In this role he works in the gas and oil pipeline sector and works with corporate and key accounts. He was a leader in the creation of RDO's customer guarantee program, the RDO Promise, which was launched in 2010 and remains an instrumental part of the organization today.

Hugen is active in the pipeline and gas distribution industry association, as well as Vermeer product application and fleet ownership strategist. He started attending DCA functions in 2012. He regularly attends the convention, mid year and fall meetings. He currently holds the secretary position on the Government Relations Committee and has attended a Washington DC fly in.

Family life: Hugen and his wife, Deana, have three children: Travis, Christopher, and Olivia and four grandchildren from nine to newborn. They enjoy spending time with family, friends, love to travel, enjoy general aviation and they are AVID DIY project people.

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Candidates for Junior Associate Member Director

One to be elected for a two-year term



Junior Associate Member Director:
Matt Dvorak
Groeber

Matthew J Dvorak joined the Groeber organization in April of 2007 and is presently the Vice President of Sales over seeing all sales for Groeber.

Brief work history: Matt Dvorak brings more than 35 years of experience and a genuine passion for the natural gas industry. His career began in 1990 as an Engineering Technician for the Illinois Department of Transportation working in the heavy highway road construction field. In 1995, he joined Nicor Gas where he found the work he wanted to build his career around. In 2007 he joined GROEBNER as a Product Manager. He moved into Territory Manager and Area Manager roles that broadened his leadership experience and deepened his knowledge of the natural gas distribution industry. In 2014 he accepted the role of Vice President of Sales where he continues to guide and support a strong, customer-focused sales team. Matt is very active in the industry through his involvement with many natural gas organizations including the MEA, AGA and the Distribution Contractors Association. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Construction Management from Illinois State University.

Family life: Matt and his wife Linda have been married for 35 years. They have two children, Adam and Sarah, and three grandsons ranging from age three to one. They enjoy spending time with family and friends, love to travel, and spend as much time as possible enjoying the lake life at their summer home in Michigan.



Junior Associate Member Director:
Kwynn Kirby
American Augers

Kwynn Kirby began his career in the underground construction industry more than two decades ago and brings his underground equipment expertise and solutions-oriented experience in supporting contractors, dealers, and partners across North America. He currently serves as Corporate Account Sales Manager for The Ditch Witch Division, which includes the brands Ditch Witch, American Augers, Subsite, and HammerHead.

Brief work history: Kwynn's career began in the Service Department at Ditch Witch of Western Pennsylvania, where he worked alongside his father and developed

a strong technical foundation and appreciation for the industry. In 2005, he relocated to Tennessee to join Astec Underground and American Augers, serving as a Regional Sales Manager before advancing into the role of Ground Engaging Product Manager.

In 2012, Kwynn returned to American Augers as a Territory Manager, overseeing a broad and diverse region that included Canada, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. His ability to build strong dealer relationships, develop market strategies, and support customer success led to his promotion in 2018 to North American Sales Manager for American Augers.

Following The Toro Company's acquisition of Charles Machine Works in 2019, the Ditch Witch and American Augers sales organizations were integrated. As part of this transition, Kwynn assumed his current role as Corporate Account Sales Manager, supporting all brands within the Ditch Witch Division. Throughout his career, he has worked extensively with distributors and contractors nationwide, helping deliver practical solutions, technical expertise, and strategic guidance to address the daily challenges of underground construction.

In 2013, Kwynn attended his first DCA Annual Conference in Miami and has remained an active and dedicated participant in the association. He is also involved in several other industry organizations, including PCCA and PDI2. Currently, he serves as Co-Chair of the DCA Membership Committee and sits on the Trenchless Committee Board. In November 2025, he participated in a DCA Fly-In on the Hill in Washington, D.C., representing the Southeastern Region and advocating for the interests of the underground construction industry.

Family life: Kwynn and his wife, Melissa, are the proud parents of two children: Karter (12) and Katherine (8). The family enjoys spending time together, traveling, and participating in DCA events, with the Midyear Meetings becoming a favorite family tradition. The children especially enjoy reconnecting with friends they've made through the organization and learning more about the industry their dad is passionate about.

Outside of work, Kwynn can often be found exploring the Smoky Mountains with his family, sampling a rare bourbon, or cheering on Karter during football season and Katherine at cheer competitions in the Fall. He values family, community, and the lasting relationships he has built through his career in the underground construction industry.

2026 Annual Auction Donors

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Gold Sponsors (continued)



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Derrick Corp.
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Ditch Witch West
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Georg Fischer Central Plastics LLC
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REED Manufacturing Co. Inc.
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Vermeer Midwest
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www.crosscountryis.com



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**DCA wishes to thank all of the
2026 Annual Convention Sponsors**



Keith Swerdfeger Honorary Member

The Distribution Contractors Association Board of Directors, in recognition of distinguished and noteworthy service to the distribution construction industry and to this association, confer the highest honor to Keith Swerdfeger.

Elected 2026 Honorary Member.

Rocky Mountain Bedrock

A Tribute to Keith R. Swerdfeger

Keith Swerdfeger is kind of a big deal. He has his own Wikipedia entry; how cool is that? Public service has its perks, but long before he served in the Colorado House of Representatives — or as president of DCA — Keith's friends and colleagues knew he was something special. Keith has been an anchor for the community in his hometown of Pueblo for more than half a century. Whether in his capacity as a father, a businessman, or a public servant, Keith has served much of that time as a walking, talking definition of "dependable."

Shifting Sands

K.R. Swerdfeger Construction (KRSC) opened for business in 1968 with a grand total of one tractor, which Keith didn't even technically own. At 20 years old, he was already an experienced hand at multiple construction businesses, including his father's. After being hired and fired "about 50 times there one year," the self-described "smart-ass kid" with a new wife and a kid on the way decided work might be steadier if he worked for someone who couldn't fire him: himself. Unfortunately, you had to be 21 to buy a tractor, which he wasn't, so the tractor ended up in the name of his slightly more mature wife, Sharon.

Despite his desire to be "the biggest, baddest kid on the block with all that shiny iron," Keith quickly learned that it took a lot more than piss and vinegar to pay the bills. He learned a lot from his first two employees — old friends of his dad's — and gradually earned a newfound respect for the old man as well, even as their companies competed against each other. His team's combined experience taught Keith the value of learning from others in those early years of struggle. Among other things, he also learned that trust from the bottom up is as important as the top down, a handshake can be as good as a

contract, and a good contract lawyer is better than a handshake.

Deepening Layers

Whether business was good or bad, Keith and Sharon didn't have a hard time staying busy. The couple, who'd been high school sweethearts, started a family quickly after marriage and went on to have four kids: Kym, Stacey, Tracey, and Raymond. Sharon managed the books, the office, and the kids from home while Keith took whatever construction jobs he could find to make a buck, from highway construction to general excavation, trying his best to be innovative and stand out from the crowd. As time went on, the girls got into competitive softball, Raymond got into skateboarding and skiing, and KRSC got into underground utility work, which would become its specialty.

Along the way, Keith began to notice the true fruits of his labor. He watched as his employees got married, started families, and put down roots. He saw how they stayed with the company because they knew he trusted them and treated them well. He saw how loyalty translated to more success as his employees became his own best marketing tool for hiring. He saw them enjoying their lives outside of work as well, trusting that their employer understood that the job wasn't the only thing. Raised as he was on the values of the Greatest Generation, these experiences only served to further cement his character.

Around 1980, a good friend of Keith's dad, who was in the gas distribution business, suggested that he join the DCA. Keith joined up pretty quickly, but the gas business was still riding high at that time, so he and Sharon didn't find time to attend a convention until 1983, when the industry was struggling under the weight of a severe recession. At first, the "little Podunk contractors from Colorado" were a bit in awe of the corporate giants

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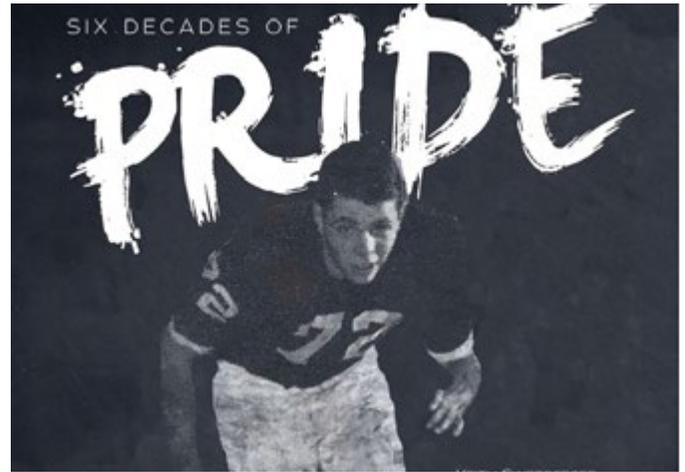
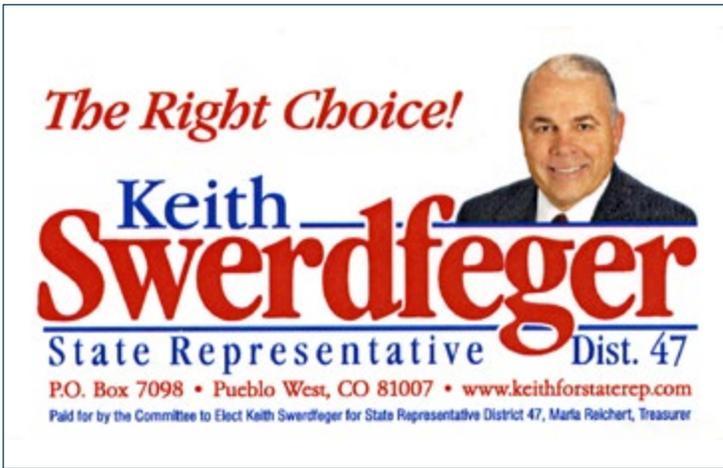


“Keith Swerdfeger is truly a DCA legend. He and his wife Sharon started a utility construction business from their home in 1968 and grew it into a respected force across Colorado. A few years ago, that legacy became part of the Miller Pipeline family, and we are incredibly fortunate to continue building on what Keith and his family created. Congratulations, Keith, this recognition is very well deserved.”

Dale A. Anderson
Chief Executive Officer, Artera Services







who attended that convention at Hotel del Coronado in California. They wondered, “What are we doing here?” Their minds were soon set at ease, however, by the welcoming atmosphere that greeted them. Keith was also impressed by the dedication among erstwhile competitors to solve problems collectively for the good of the industry. He had found his people.

Cementing a Legacy

Always one to get his hands dirty, Keith dove in and joined the Labor Committee, negotiating with the different unions for wage packages across each state. “That was an enlightening experience dealing with all the unions more on a unified contractor perspective,” he recalled. “I would say 99% of the time, the relationship in those meetings was pretty doggone good, be it discussing wages or working conditions. In our relationship with the unions, it could be confrontational sometimes, but at the end of the meeting, we all came together.”

Keith’s consistency earned him a spot on the board of directors, where he continued to work his way up until 2004, when he became president of the DCA. Hot topics during his tenure included the overhaul of the 2002 Pipeline Safety Act, operator qualification standards, and drug testing for utility workers. That same year, Keith took his first stab at politics, running for a seat in the Colorado

House of Representatives. Though he came up just short and swore he wouldn’t do that again, he eventually changed his mind and won that seat in 2010, serving a single term before returning home.

In the meantime, Keith and Sharon had grown their company into one of the largest underground utility companies in Colorado with 250-500 employees and a \$10 million annual payroll across six states. Keith is quick to credit his employees, many of whom have been with the company for 30 years or more, for the company’s growth. He also made sure that his successes benefited the community by serving on boards and commissions for such organizations and businesses as United Way of Pueblo County, Colorado Correction Industries, the Pueblo Regional Building Department, Wells Fargo Bank, the FirstOak Bank, Colorado Contractors Association, the People to People Ambassador Program, Pueblo Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO), the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, and Colorado State University Pueblo’s Hasan School of Business, to name a few. When PEDCO experienced a leadership vacuum, Keith served a year as executive director for only a dollar and helped bring the Vestas wind turbine factory to Pueblo.

Despite his “advanced degree” from the School of Hard Knocks, Keith and Sharon have emphasized formal

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“Congratulations on becoming an Honorary Member of the DCA. You and your company have represented this organization very well, for many years, and your ‘tell it like it is’ way of doing business has benefited the industry, for sure! A well-deserved honor.”

Kevin Miller
Miller Pipeline





education at home and proudly watched all four of their children graduate from college. When Keith served in the state house, Raymond took up responsibility for the company alongside sister Tracey. Kym and Stacey both went into teaching. They have since made Keith a proud grandfather of nine and great-grandfather of two. Since the sale of KRSC to Artera Services in 2021, the company has operated as the mountain region of Miller Pipeline, an Artera gas distribution business unit. Raymond serves as vice president of construction, while Keith serves as chairman of the board.

In his semi-retirement, Keith still remains active in the DCA, having attended four fly-ins to Washington, D.C., to meet with legislators over industry concerns. When he's not doing chores at his place in the country or attending games for his grandkids, Keith enjoys restoring cars from the 1920s and '30s. Needless to say, the sedentary life isn't for him.

This month, the DCA will recognize Keith R. Swerdfeger for his lifetime of achievement, service, and dedication as an honorary member, joining a short list in the DCA's long history. The DCA and the underground construction industry as a whole can raise a toast to the "smart-ass kid" from Colorado, because lives like his are the bedrock that mountains are built on. ▲

"I have nothing but admiration for a man like Keith. To listen to his story of how he got to where he is today is pretty humbling. At a young age, starting with nothing but the sheer will to succeed, he built his company into a formidable player in the Telcom, Gas Pipeline Transmission and Distribution, Sewer and Water Utilities, along with considerable Excavation and Site Preparation Capability. It was all very impressive. He's humble, smart, a good listener, and has great ability to see opportunities and act on them. Keith and Sharon are both good friends, and the kind of people you just want to be around.

Congratulations Keith."

Dave Holcomb

Vice President - Regional Manager
TT Technologies, Inc.

Congratulations Keith!

Registration is Open for the DCA Safety Congress

The Kimpton Brice Hotel, Savannah, Georgia

April 8-10, 2026

Register at www.dcaweb.org



Calendar

2026 & 2027 DCA and Industry Events

2026

FEBRUARY 23-27

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

MARCH 3 – 7

CONEXPO-CON/AGG
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.conexpoconagg.com

MARCH 24

DCA Deep Dive Webinar:
Traffic Control Strategies to
Mitigate and Prevent Vehicle Intrusions
jadams@dcaweb.org
dcaweb.org

APRIL 8 – 10

Safety Congress
The Kimpton Brice Hotel
Savannah, Georgia
dcaweb.org

2026 (cont.)

APRIL 20-24

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

JUNE 22 – 26

SkillsUSA TechSPO
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Georgia
info@skillsusa.org

JULY 20 – 23

DCA Mid Year Meeting
Everline Resort & Spa
Olympic Valley (Lake Tahoe), California
dcaweb.org

2027

FEBRUARY 22-27

DCA Annual Convention
Terranea Resort
Rancho Palos Verdes, California
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 Jacob Adams Mireles at jadams@dcaweb.org.

Insights



House Making Significant Progress on Permit Reform

It's no secret that the permitting process related to getting important energy projects off the ground has been an enduring issue facing the energy/construction industry for decades. Lawmakers from both parties, alongside advocacy groups and industry stakeholders, have long expressed that lengthy regulatory reviews often delay critical projects and impede economic growth.

While incremental progress has been made over the past several years, outdated permit requirements continue to hamper critical energy projects, especially those related to fossil fuels. However, following legislation passed in recent years, historic federal investments in American infrastructure have been made in a variety of markets (including renewable energy), and these investments have resulted in bipartisan efforts to get projects off the ground faster and in a more efficient way.

The concepts of this legislation were first contemplated

in late 2024 in response to growing bipartisan calls to address inefficiencies in federal infrastructure approval processes. A series of hearings and stakeholder discussions throughout the spring and summer of last year helped shape the bill's key provisions, emphasizing the need for expedited permitting, enhanced interagency coordination, and robust public engagement.

Using Momentum

Last fall, the "Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act" (H.R. 4776) was introduced, authored by Reps. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.), chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, along with Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine).

The SPEED Act includes several important provisions, including the following:

- **Scope:** Environmental reviews are limited to impacts

closely connected to the project, excluding speculative or non-proximate effects.

- *Setting clear deadlines:* The bill establishes firm timelines for environmental reviews and requires agencies to determine application completeness within 60 days.
- *Reforming judicial review:* The SPEED Act prevents federal agencies from rescinding or altering completed environmental documents unless ordered by a court or agreed to in writing by the applicant. The bill also shortens the statute of limitations for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) legal challenges to 150 days.
- *Reducing duplication:* The SPEED Act allows federal agencies to rely on environmental reviews previously completed under other federal or state laws if they serve a similar function to NEPA.
- *Providing project certainty:* The bill prohibits federal agencies from withdrawing or rescinding completed environmental documents for political reasons unless a court order is issued.

Using this momentum, House leaders, supported by DCA and hundreds of industry organizations and labor unions, were able to pass H.R. 4776 on December 18, 2025, on a vote of 221-196. The legislation is now with the Senate, where the bill faces the formidable 60-vote gateway to passage. Final passage will take a lot more work, but supporters of permit reform are enthusiastic about the bill's prospects this year.

Biden-Era Emission Standards for Appliances Overturned Under House-Passed Legislation

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce (E&C) has been busy, advancing a slate of bills designed to rein in energy efficiency standards that were finalized or proposed by the Biden administration.

In late 2025 and into early 2026, lawmakers scheduled markups and votes on legislation that would roll back federal efficiency requirements on products ranging from household appliances to commercial equipment. These measures have targeted standards that would raise performance requirements that manufacturers must meet to sell products nationwide.

Much of this legislation stems from Republican concerns that stricter efficiency rules will drive up upfront costs for consumers and limit product choice. Some proposals would also reshape how energy efficiency standards are set, including reducing mandatory review

requirements and giving manufacturers more ability to challenge or modify standards. The following describes some of the legislation recently approved by the House E&C Committee.

- The Don't Mess with My Home Appliances Act (H.R. 4626) would restrict the Department of Energy (DOE) from issuing new or revised energy efficiency standards unless they are technologically feasible and economically justified, with required consideration of minimum energy or water savings thresholds and impacts on low-income households.
- The Homeowner Energy Freedom Act (H.R. 4758) would repeal sections of the Inflation Reduction Act, specifically targeting financial support for stricter energy conservation building codes, high-efficiency home rebate programs, and energy efficiency contractor training grants.
- The Saving Homeowners from Overregulation with Exceptional Rinsing (SHOWER) Act (H.R. 4593) would codify the definition of a showerhead according to a widely recognized industry standard, ensuring regulatory clarity.

While much remains to be done to restore common sense to energy efficiency policy, DCA appreciates the ongoing work of the House E&C Committee to review and, if necessary, revoke some of the more harmful actions presented during the previous administration.

States Weigh in on Latest Change to WOTUS Rule

Permitting requirements related to "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) regulations were established to determine which water bodies fall under federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act (CWA). Because the CWA regulates discharges and dredge activities, the scope of WOTUS has major implications for the energy and construction industries. Over the past decade, WOTUS has been one of the most contested regulatory definitions in U.S. environmental policy, shaped by changing administrations, court rulings, and ongoing regulatory revisions.

The CWA authorizes federal oversight of "navigable waters," defined in the statute as "waters of the United States, including the territorial seas." Congress did not further define this term, leaving EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to interpret it through regulations. WOTUS generally includes traditionally navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas, tributaries, and certain

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wetlands. The extent to which smaller streams, ephemeral waters, and wetlands are included has been the central legal and policy dispute.

After decades of back and forth in federal court, the EPA and the Army Corps proposed a new WOTUS rule in November of last year that is intended to codify a landmark Supreme Court case to provide a consistent and effective regulatory framework. The proposal seeks to define key terms such as “relatively permanent waters,” “continuous surface connection,” and “tributary,” and to clarify exclusions such as groundwater, certain ditches, and prior converted cropland. The EPA says the goal is to provide a “clear and durable” definition that reduces regulatory uncertainty and litigation risk.

In January of this year, a coalition of 20 mostly Republican-led states submitted comments urging the EPA to ensure its proposed WOTUS definition “does not overstep state authority over intrastate waters.” The states’ attorney general argued that the new rule should reinforce state primacy, limiting federal jurisdiction to waters with a continuous surface connection to navigable waters, as outlined in the Supreme Court’s 2023 *Sackett v. EPA* decision.

The states requested further clarification that federal authority applies only to waters indistinguishable from navigable waters and that seasonal or temporary waters remain under state control. In contrast, other states have stated that the proposed rule could reduce protections for seasonal and ephemeral streams, potentially impacting wetlands, wildlife, and endangered species, and limiting the ability of landowners and agencies to consult with federal authorities on habitat conservation.

EPA Proposes Updates to CWA Section 401 Certification Process

Several past editions of *DCA Insights* have reported on industry efforts to curb abuses of state authority under Section 401 of the CWA, which allows state authorities to review infrastructure project applications to ensure they are consistent with state water quality standards. All too often, states oppose or simply delay a project application for political purposes rather than on factors directly related to water quality.

In another step in the right direction toward permit reform, the EPA recently announced a proposed rule to revise the implementation of CWA Sec. 401, intending to clarify the scope of water quality certifications and standardize procedures for states and authorized tribes.

The proposal would establish timelines, define

certification requirements, and limit CWA Sec. 401 reviews to water quality–related issues specified by the CWA. The EPA intends for the rule to improve predictability in the permitting process for infrastructure and development projects. EPA stated that the rule responds to implementation issues associated with the Biden administration’s 2023 CWA Sec. 401 rule and follows earlier guidance and public input gathered in 2025.

If finalized, the changes would seek to “balance federal oversight with state and tribal roles in water quality protection while reducing delays in certification decisions.”

Industry Pushes Back on Department of Labor (DOL) “Joint Employer” Standard

On January 12, 2026, the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace (CDW) submitted a letter to the House of Representatives regarding the Save Local Business Act (H.R. 4366). The letter specifically addresses the “joint employer” standard under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). CDW, representing over 70 organizations, urged Congress to pass this legislation to provide “predictability and stability” following years of drastic shifts in joint-employer liability standards between different administrations.

The joint employer issue centers on determining when two or more businesses share responsibility for the same employees under current labor law. The debate focuses on whether a company must have “direct and immediate” control over essential employment terms, such as hiring, firing, and wages, to be considered a joint employer.

Shifts in the joint employer standard could significantly impact the construction industry by altering the scope of liability and bargaining obligations for contractors and subcontractors. If the standard is broadened to include indirect or reserved control, general contractors may be held responsible for the employment practices of subcontractors, increasing their legal and compliance risks.

Conversely, a narrower standard focused on “direct and immediate” control provides clarity, allowing construction firms to manage partnerships and workforce arrangements with greater confidence and predictability. CDW’s letter addresses multiple issues related to when a company or organization should be considered a joint employer and subject to federal regulations.

Definition of control: The CDW argues that an entity

should only be considered a joint employer if it exercises "direct and immediate" control over the essential terms and conditions of employment (such as hiring, firing, and wages).

Protection of business models: The letter claims that current expansive standards threaten proven business models like franchising and jeopardize small businesses by making them liable for the actions of other entities.

Clarity and liability: CDW asserts the bill would restore clarity to federal labor policy by ensuring that only the appropriate parties are brought to the bargaining table or held responsible for labor violations.

CDW emphasized the importance of legislative consistency, noting that businesses and workers alike benefit from a predictable regulatory environment. By advocating for clear definitions and balanced policies, the coalition aims to foster economic growth while safeguarding worker protection.

It is worth noting that while CDW supports H.R. 4366, it

has also recently campaigned heavily against the Faster Labor Contracts Act (FLCA). In letters sent throughout late 2025 and early 2026, CDW criticized this bill for good reasons. "Mandatory binding arbitration," which forces employers and employees into contracts dictated by a government-appointed arbitrator if an agreement isn't reached within 120 days, is a provision that only invites government influence over employer/employee relations. Over the years, CDW has said the regulation will "strip workers of their right to vote" on their own employment contracts.

DCA appreciates all industry efforts to preserve clarity for employers and employees and protect established business models. ▲



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DCA NEWS is a bi-monthly publication of
Distribution Contractors Association
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