

Calendar of Events

JANUARY 12, 2011
Negotiation Seminar
Hyatt Regency Woodfield
Schaumburg, Illinois

MARCH 20-23, 2011
Midwest Regional NECA Conf.
Marriott Harbor Beach Resort
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

MAY 10-12, 2011
NECA Legislative Conference
Mandarin Oriental
Washington D.C.

JULY 14-17, 2011
Summer Chapter Meeting
Grand Geneva Resort & Spa
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

AUGUST 2, 2011
12th Annual Chapter Golf Outing
Cantigny Golf Course
Wheaton, IL

OCTOBER 22-25, 2011
NECA National Convention
San Diego, California

Changes Within

The Northeastern Illinois Chapter of NECA, like many associations and organizations, has a number of officers, committees, subcommittees, a Board of Directors, and regional divisions. These are the groups that form a solid structure across the Chapter-wide area by serving the general membership with industry updates and carrying their voice. Again, like other organizations – these positions tend to change from term to term, creating opportunities for other members. Listed below are some changes you may have witnessed at the beginning of the New Year:

Officers:

Kevin Connelly,
Connelly Electric – President
Paul Hopkins,
St. Charles Union Electric – Secretary/
Treasurer (re-elected)

Board of Directors:

Aurora Division
Glen Hicks, Huen Electric (re-elect)

Elgin Division
Bill Lauderdale, Lauderdale Electric

DuPage Division
Kevin Connelly, Connelly Electric (re-elect)

Lake Division
Carl Ehr, Kelso-Burnett Electric

PLC Rep:

Tom Morton, L.L.D. Electric

Division Chairmen:

Aurora Division
Steve Spoerl, Gaffney's PMI

Elgin Division
Elroy Kadlec, Kadlec Electric (re-elect)

DuPage Division
Tony Mulizio, Preferred Electric

Lake Division
Tom Morton – L.L.D.
Electric (re-elect)



CIRCUIT

Breaking News | Winter 2011

Northeastern Illinois Chapter, NECA

Government Affairs & ECPAC Donations

The Dollar that Hollers

Let's face — no one wants to invest money in something that doesn't have a positive result associated with it. Warren Buffett didn't invest in *Geico* and *Coca-Cola* because he thought they were going to fail. Donald Trump doesn't invest in real estate in a geographical area that is not popular and established. It is the same feeling when a Contractor gives a donation to ECPAC (Electrical Construction Political Action Committee) on a yearly basis.

The question arises: "Where does my ECPAC donation go?" and "Did my donation have a positive effect in the political world?" This is a question that will always be in the minds of an ECPAC Contributor, for which there are only a few ways to answer.

It starts at the National NECA headquarters, specifically the Government Affairs department currently managed by Executive Director Lake Coulson and assisted by Kristen McDonough. Both have ongoing relationships with members of Congress – whether those members are Democrats or Republicans does not matter as long as they support the better needs of our industry. With that said, the political representatives who stick out the most by showing loyalty and cooperation are the ones that are under radar for counter-support, or contributions, from the Association. Additionally, a vast number of political representatives who receive

donations are embraced by direct requests from individual NECA Chapter executives or Contractors within.

After experiencing a queasy hangover from the early November 2010 political buzz, there have been some satisfying results from the NECA Government Affairs office – particularly from a letter sent out from Mr. Coulson shortly after Election Day. In the letter, it was calculated that of 183 House candidates who received PAC contributions – 164 were elected, making the success rate 89.6%. At the Senate level, 21 out of 26 candidates who have gotten ECPAC contributions won in the general election, making that success rate 91.3% (excluding three occasions where both a Republican and a Democrat were given contributions).

To be even more critical, there are some ways to find who those contributions go to and where they're coming from. An online web source called Open Secrets (www.opensecrets.org) will allow you to find candidates that were selected to receive ECPAC donations in the past or the present, whether it was from two months, or two years ago.

In all, it is good news that much of the NECA-supportive candidates did get in office and it could be better news to see what they are capable of while in Washington or Springfield, respectively. One hundred of those candidates are brand new faces, which will hopefully widen the gap of possibilities and ambitions that we as NECA members are looking to succeed. Special thanks goes out to all the ECPAC contributors of 2010, the PLC Members, and to the efforts of the Government Affairs office in Bethesda, MD.

Sources: www.beginnersinvest.about.com/cs/warrenbuffett

CIRCUIT SPOTLIGHT



Check out Page 3 for what's happening with the NIU-NECA Student Chapter!

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Circuit Breaking News

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President's
Corner

ELROY KADLEC,
Kadlec Electric
President of Northeastern
Illinois Chapter, NECA

As many of the NECA members had heard – I have announced that I have stepped down as President at last year's end. My time, support, experience, and voice were valued as the leader of the Northeastern Illinois NECA Chapter and was handed to the next resilient NECA Member that feels they will lead by the same example. My participation in the several elements of NECA have opened my eyes to the business world and the electrical industry as a whole. I have sat on many committees – Trust Funds, Negotiations, Board of Directors, etc. – and have visited many conferences, conventions, and meetings – annual NECA Convention, Legislative Conference, Political Action Committee meetings, and many more.

With all the time and effort spent trying to better the industry, I found that one important element that I treasured the most was the voice that I carried. Whether it was an opinion on the Trust Fund Committee or an action I felt was best on the Board of Directors – I knew the message from the NECA Contractors was being heard.

The New Year is now here and in full swing as Bruce, Giuseppe, and the Chapter Negotiations Committee prepare for the Spring 2011 negotiation meetings for the Inside Agreement. Our Chapter will be in parallel sessions with the majority of the Chicago metro area chapters; Chicago, Eastern Illinois (Joliet), Northern Illinois (Rockford), and Northern Indiana – all, too, have Inside Agreements that are up in May, 2011. With communication throughout the Chapter offices, input from the NECA Field Reps, and guidance from the members – together we can achieve goals that benefit us all.

As I stretch out for the finish line of my Chapter Presidency – I encourage all NECA Contractors to speak up and voice their opinions about Labor Relations by returning the annual Negotiations Survey developed by the Chapter office. There is no better time to express the best interests of your company and your industry than in the next few months. Your input is important to us. Speak now; speak loud.

A story in Louisiana reveals “an unhealthy situation for the construction industry” stated by Ken Naquin, CEO of the Louisiana Associated General Contractors when describing bid battles. It seems that losing contractors are fighting for public work by attacking the winning contractors and scrutinizing their bid numbers. Public work project authorities are frequently being asked to re-evaluate the winning bid by various contractors to make sure their competitor has followed the state guidelines. In one case, New Orleans-

based contractor was awarded a \$76.8 million prison project after challenging a competitor's winning bid.

In hopes of happier times and a better market, it is unsure if the amount of scrutiny we see today is a positive or a negative. In some respects it could even teach us a few lessons. As every mother says – “Look both ways before you cross.”

Sources: www.osha.gov; www.bankinfosecurity.com; www.findarticles.com; www.necanet.org; www.dailycaller.com

The New Look of the NIU-NECA Student Chapter



The new Student Chapter officers at the raffle table with the CEET Dean, Dr. Promod Vohra.

The NIU-NECA Student Chapter began the new academic year with plenty of action and excitement. First of all, the Electrical Engineering department invited the Engineering Technology department to join the organization, which they gladly accepted. Representing the Engineering Technology students is Dr. Abdul Azad, a Technology department professor who will serve as co-Faculty Advisor. Officer elections also took place on the very first meeting of the year. The new active officers are:

Jonathan McGinley – President
T.J. Alimi – Vice President
Byron Anderson – Treasurer
Alec Dudgeon – Secretary/P.R.

The new crew wasted no time in planning two back-to-back events at the university. On October 16, 2010, the Student Chapter hosted a 50/50 Raffle contest during the NIU Alumni Association tailgating party. The NIU-NECA members found this to be a great way to interact with the NIU Alums, staff, and other student organizations while showing the school who they represent.

On October 23, 2010, the Student Chapter



Student Chapter members surrounded with spectators and exhibitors while they show off their booth!

engaged in the first annual NIU STEM Fest, which is a national Science and Engineering exposition. The event was not only open to the university, but also to the City of DeKalb and most of the surrounding region.

The Student Chapter is looking forward to a new 2011 semester with plenty of activities and meetings lined up. On Wednesday, January 26th and Thursday, January 27th – the Student Chapter officials are making a presentation to new incoming freshman and juniors. They are also planning to obtain a spot in the “Engineering Week” Expo on the Week of February 22nd. They expect to increase membership and get involved in more university activities!



Congratulations to both Cristian Guberna and Pathik Shah for winning the 2010 NIU-NECA Student Chapter Scholarships. Both students were active members of the organization and played a large part in the initiation of the program! We also reach out to Alec Dudgeon and Collan Davidson for winning the 2010 Peter Cattaneo Sr. Scholarship Awards. They, too, share their effort and participation in the Student Chapter organization. All of the Scholarship awardees were given at the October 8th NIU Scholarship Awards Ceremony, who was joined by our very own Sharron & Pete Cattaneo Jr. of Cattaneo Electric!

Bad times means increased Scrutiny



It is not a secret that the suffering economic times are causing changes in people's personal lives, changes in government, and changes in higher authority. Whether you're a project manager, supervisor, company accountant, receptionist, or even an employer – the change that you may be encountering the most is the amount of scrutiny in your job performance. While company-specific budgets are being cut and employee positions are being consolidated – someone of a higher authority is overlooking the activity of that budget beyond the cuts and also paying more attention to an employee's day-to-day responsibilities. This is also true as an employer being studied by a customer, and in our industry – a contractor being scrutinized by many levels of authority like a general contractor, client or customer, OSHA, municipalities, Unions,

IRS, FDIC, and believe or not – by other contractors.

In 2010, OSHA began revealing information about changes made within their Enhanced Enforcement Program. Some changes were so drastic that they had to rename the program to the Severe Violator Enforcement Program (SVEP), which is on the radar for many employers around the country because it has a high probability of causing increased costs and scrutiny. According to the OSHA website (www.osha.gov), the SVEP will “include mandatory follow-up inspections, increased company/corporate awareness of OSHA enforcement... and federal court enforcement...” It is also noted that these changes are targeted for repeat offenders and non-compliant employers, which doesn't apply to many NECA members, but may affect them through increased penalties and tougher enforcement guidelines.

Large government organizations like the FDIC and the IRS have also modified or added some items to their examination structure. In 2009, the FDIC actually increased their budget to include funding to temporarily hire more “team examiners” in order to crack down on a

number of banks – large and small. There was also news that the IRS was planning to hire thousands of new tax enforcement agents for increased scrutiny on businesses after the Health Care law was passed by Congress. This could potentially cause a level of increased scrutiny in areas other than just tax enforcement, and eventually lead to a jump in audits, examinations, and fines.

Scrutiny can also be viewed upon by local area affiliates as well. A general contractor or customer may be reviewing several parts of your business like labor, material, and change-order costs. Because of the power of the web – the ability to access resources, like material costs, can be detrimental to an employer's profit. Additionally, municipalities are finding ways to increase their workload by enforcing inspector authority and focusing more on local code requirements, which may or may not place a burden on contractors. Not to mention that because of the lack of electrical construction overall – Unions and their agents are making more frequent visits and paying more attention to the little work that's being performed.

Another unfortunate result of the declining times is the act of turning on each other.

New Member Update

The Chapter welcomes new NECA member firms **Valley Electrical Contractors, Inc.** represented by **Tom Cook**, and **O.R. Electrical Services, LLC** represented by **Hector & Ofelia Rivera**. Valley Electrical Contractors out of Oswego, IL has joined the Aurora Division as of October. O.R. Electrical Services hails from Bloomingdale, IL and will commence with the DuPage Division. Please give a warm welcome and a helping hand as you see these new members at the monthly Division meetings.

There's always room for more members at the NECA Chapter office! If there is any current member that knows a signatory contractor interested in joining the Association – please do not hesitate to contact Bruce or Giuseppe at the NECA office!

Did You Know...

⚡ Roy Sullivan, a Virginia National Park Ranger, has been struck by lightning seven different times throughout his life. He has been recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records* for being struck more recorded times than any other human being!

⚡ Just one spark of static electricity can equal up to 3,000 volts.

⚡ Early in their history, Christmas lights were so expensive that they were more commonly rented than sold. An electrically lighted tree was a status symbol in the early 1900s.

⚡ The City of San Francisco gets 25% of its energy from wind energy.