

PCCA

Tackles Members' Top Issues in 2017

The Power & Communications Contractors Association (PCCA), following another strong year for both the association and the markets it serves, moves into 2017 with a full agenda. Priorities include increasing advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., addressing the shortage of qualified workers in the industry, and providing opportunities for members to meet with their colleagues from around the country and learn more about running successful construction businesses.

The PCCA will hold two meetings in 2017: its 72nd Annual Convention, in March, in Puerto Rico; and the Mid-Year Meeting in September, in Santa Barbara, CA.

These efforts are being led by 2016-2017 PCCA President Todd Myers, Kenneth G. Myers Construction Co.; the Government & Industry Affairs Committee, chaired by Jerrod Henschel, Michels Corporation; the Education Committee, chaired by Heath Sellenriek, Sellenriek Construction; and the 10-Year Planning Committee, chaired by Steve Sellenriek, Sellenriek Construction. Also, lending their time and wisdom are President-Elect Jim Dillahunt, Hensels & McCoy; 1st VP Larry Pribyl, MP Nexlevel; 2nd VP Dave Aubrey, Okay Construction; Treasurer John Fluharty, Mears Group; and Secretary Bob Breeden, ElectriCom.

Pounding the DC pavement

The PCCA Board voted in July 2015 to greatly expand its government relations efforts and to hire experienced industry advocate Eben Wyman to lead the charge. In 2016, the Government & Industry Affairs Committee, or PCCA's "citizen lobbyists" as Wyman calls them, traveled to D.C. on four occasions to meet with lawmakers, congressional staff, federal agencies, owners' groups and other industry associations. At these meetings, PCCA not only advocates on behalf of its members, but also educates people about power and

communication construction, and gathers information about initiatives that will impact the industry.

One initiative in 2016 that could tremendously impact the power and communication construction industry, as well as the greater excavation community, is the proposed Gold Shovel Standard (GSS). This new certification and monitoring program is intended to reduce damage to underground facilities during excavation, but instead singles out excavation contractors and subjects them to a new layer of training, reporting and information-sharing requirements. GSS began in the gas industry and is now being peddled in virtually all underground infrastructure markets.

PCCA, as a member of the Common Ground Alliance, believes that damage prevention is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders involved in the process, not just excavators. The PCCA position is that damage prevention requires mandatory participation in the one-call process (no exemptions), timely and accurate locating of facilities, and "potholing" by contractors. In the coming year, PCCA will continue promoting these three pillars of damage prevention and working with other excavation groups to oppose unfair burdens on the excavation community.

PCCA plans to maintain an aggressive advocacy agenda in 2017 and will be working with the President Trump administration and new Congress to facilitate infrastructure spending, tax reform and regulatory relief. In fact, the Trump transition team recently contacted a PCCA contractor for feedback on what the new administration can do to remove roadblocks to power and communications projects. The PCCA member relayed the importance of streamlining the electric transmission permitting process. For the broadband side, he sent them PCCA's position papers supporting accelerated distribution of FCC resources and the need to en-



PCCA 2016-17 President Todd Myers, Kenneth G. Myers Construction Co.

sure that broadband speed standards keep pace with consumer demand. PCCA is eager to maintain this dialog and be a resource for the new administration.

Who will do the work?

When talking to utility contractors about the issues that keep them awake at night, it doesn't take long before they get around to the acute shortage of qualified workers in the industry. It's an issue that cuts across all PCCA membership types: power and communication, contractors and vendors, big companies and small, privately and publicly owned, and in all regions of the country.

In 2016, PCCA created the PCCA Education & Research Foundation, in part to address the workforce shortage in the industry.

The association is moving forward with several initiatives aimed at alleviating the worker shortage. First,

PCCA established a fund to provide up to four scholarships per year for children of PCCA members and their employees. PCCA has begun accepting applications and will award its first scholarships for the start of the 2017-'18 school year.

At the same time, the PCCA Education Committee has been working on plans to develop and endorse a utility construction curriculum for technical schools and community colleges that can be transported around the nation. PCCA member Sellenriek Construction, in Jonesburg, MO, has been working on such a curriculum with the State Technical College of Missouri, and PCCA is developing a curriculum approach that can be implemented by other PCCA-member companies in their areas.

PCCA believes that one large obstacle to entry into the construction

industry for graduating high school students is their parents' desire for their children to get a college education. These two initiatives target that belief with both funding of higher education and the development of a higher education curriculum that directly addresses utility contractors' needs.

Meetings

In 2016, PCCA held its 71st Annual Convention in March at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, FL, where 375 attendees enjoyed topical educational sessions, the Annual Associates Exhibit, a rousing keynote from NFL and Vietnam War veteran Rocky Bleier, and plenty of good times for which PCCA is famous. PCCA also feted outgoing President Tim Killoren and honored the late Ken Atkinson with induction into the PCCA Hall of Fame.

The 2016 Mid-Year Meeting drew

more than 200 association members and their families to the Kalahari Waterpark in Sandusky, OH, in July. The meeting program was filled with educational opportunities, including sessions on employee motivation, retention and productivity; making sense of the 2016 elections; and a Leadership Development Program refresher on financial management. The Mid-Year also featured the induction of Herb Fluharty in the PCCA Hall of Fame, the always-popular Construction Industry Roundtable, the PCCA Golf Tournament and several relaxed networking events.

PCCA has two meetings slated for 2017: the annual convention, March 17-22, at the El San Juan Resort & Casino in Carolina, PR, and the Mid-Year Meeting, Sept. 20-23, at the Bacara Resort & Spa in Santa Barbara, CA.

For more information on the meetings and to learn more about PCCA, visit pccaweb.org.

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