



“CONSTRUCTING A WAY FOR A BETTER FUTURE”

ECA NEWSLETTER

JOHNS SOAPBOX



Remember-this is an op-ed piece and I do not speak for the ECA or any of its members in this “Soapbox”. These are just my rambblings that hopefully you find thought provoking. Remember-these are my opinions, not those of the ECA or any of its member firms.

Are There Less Folks Driving Around in CA Today?

From Jack Webb many years ago-“Just the facts Ma’am”.

Are we driving less? If we are, is there less dollars going into the fund to repair our roads?

Two decades ago, some folks were already wringing their hands regarding autos getting better fuel mileage and this fact would reduce the fuel excise tax revenue that was needed for funding road repairs in the United States.

The increased fuel efficiency has certainly had an effect on tax revenues. Now we are seeing more Chevy Bolts, Rivians, Teslas, and other EVs on the road that also will reduce gas tax revenues.

Back in 2001, seven years before Tesla introduced its electric-powered Roadster and a dozen years before the more affordable Chevrolet Spark EV went on sale, lawmakers in Oregon recognized that the adoption of EVs and hybrids would eventually mean less revenue from the state’s gas tax, which would mean less money to pay for roads and bridges. So, they formed a committee to study the problem. After considering a tire tax, a battery tax and numerous other options, the committee concluded that Oregonians should be charged based on how many miles they drive.

Twenty-two years later, the Road User Fee Task Force continues to operate small pilot programs. But like most other states that have seen gas taxes start to evaporate, Oregon still doesn’t have a mandatory alternative revenue plan in place. Legislatures are in a bind: They can no longer afford to ignore the decline in gas-tax revenue, but all proposed solutions are problematic.

Continue on page 2



Inside this issue

John’s Soapbox.....	1
Board of Directors.....	2
New Members.....	3
Follow up on ECA Events.....	3
Committee News.....	4
Installation & Awards Dinner.....	5
Workers Comp.....	6
Emergency Response manual.....	6
Fire Clean up List.....	6
From the Desk of Jim Persons.....	7
Safety Classes.....	8
Sustaining Members.....	9
News you can use.....	11



Continued from page 1

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Electric vehicles currently account for only about 5% of new car sales in the U.S., but that figure will climb to at least 40% by 2030, according to S&P Global Mobility forecasts. Two years ago, President Biden signed an executive order calling for half of the vehicles sold in the U.S. to be electric by the end of the decade. A few states, such as California, have been even more aggressive, mandating that all new cars sold after 2035 meet zero-emission standards.

States pay for roads in a variety of ways, including vehicle registration fees and tolls, plus money from their general funds. Gasoline taxes account for a large portion of revenue, with the average U.S. rate currently at 32.3 cents a gallon at the state level along with 18.4 cents in federal tax. (Both figures are somewhat higher for diesel fuel.) Even without the impact of electric vehicles, gas-tax revenue is falling as new cars become more fuel efficient and Americans do less driving.

Consider this survey for local driving trends in Sonoma County (from SCTA):

Countywide VMT (vehicle miles travelled) declined 4.2% from 2017 to 2022.

From the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, in 2018 CA sold 15,589,042,965 gallons of gas and in 2022 CA sold 13,919,678,835 gallons of gas.

That is 12% less gallons of gas sold in 2022 than in 2018. That is a lot of tax revenue that 'aint happening anymore!

The question I have is will we continue to see the decline in Vehicle Miles Travelled and the decline in gas gallons sold in CA? I would guess "YES" as the current stated goals are for EV's to go from 5% to 35-50% of all vehicles on the road in the next decade or so in CA.

I started this op-ed out by asking if there are less folks driving today. The facts show the answer to that is "yes".

So where is our road repair funding going to come from?

I will continue this next week and give you some of the options being considered by the legislative experts in Sacramento!

For now, if it seems like there are less folks on the road, it is because there are less folks on the road!

That's All Folks

John

We want to highlight a member each week. What we need from you is a short paragraph on what is happening at your company. New employees, new logo, a new move, exciting new equipment! What ever you want to share about your company with our members.

Email mary@nceca.org with your spotlight information and send in photos if you have them!

ECA NEW MEMBERS

BC Engineering Group

William Butler
2800 Cleveland Blvd, Suite B
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707– 542-4321

[Sonoma County Civil Engineering Company | BC Engineering Group](#)
wb@bcengineeringgroup.com



BC Engineering Group
Civil Engineering & Land Planning

Ahlborn Fence and Steel, Inc.

Tyler Belair
1230 Century Court, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707-573-0742

[Ahlborn Companies.](#)
info@ahlbornco.com



Follow Up on ECA Events

ECA Annual General Membership Meeting-“Where’s Our Dam Water?”

For those who attended this event at Charlies in Windsor on November 16, thank you. Here is some follow up information regarding upcoming deadline on public comment that was discussed at the meeting, and many of you may want to “sound off” on the PG & E proposal that is currently recommending dam removal and draining of Lake Pillsbury amongst other things. I have included the following from Stuart Tiffen (Sonoma County Water Agency) for your benefit:

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) published the Initial Draft Surrender Application for the Potter Valley Project on Nov. 17. The draft is the first opportunity for public comment on the Initial Draft Surrender Application and providing comment is extremely important to promote the included New Eel-Russian Facility Proposal calling for continued diversions into the Russian River as one part of a regional solution. The deadline to submit comments on the Initial Draft Surrender Application is Dec. 22, 2023. Electronic submittal of comments is encouraged. Please submit comments to:

Tony Gigliotti, Senior Licensing Project Manager
Power Generation
12840 Bill Clark Way
Auburn, CA 95602
Email: PVSurrender@pge.com

Information about PG&E’s decommissioning process, including pertinent documents, is available at the following website: <http://pottervalleysurrenderproceeding.com>, using the password PV_Surrender. You can view the Proposal online at <https://sonomawater.org/pvp>.

Please feel free to make use of the sample language included below in your public comments to PG&E.

Best regards,

Stuart Tiffen, Senior Programs Specialist
Community and Government Affairs
Sonoma Water
Cell (707) 322-1223

Continued to page 10

COMMITTEE NEWS

ECA Executive Committee Meeting-next meeting is on Tuesday January 23, 2024, at 11:00 am. The Exec Committee meets every 4th Tuesday of the month in 2024 at 11:00-12:00 in the small NCBE conference room.

ECA Board of Director Meeting-next meeting will be held January 23, 2024, from 12-2:00pm. The Board of Directors meets every 4th Tuesday of the month from 12-1:30 pm in the NCBE main board room.

ECA Community Relations Committee-Chaired by Lacey Torkelson Smith, meets when there is a specific project to consider. The CR Committee will next meet and present two projects at our February Board meeting (Feb 27, 2024, from 12:00 to 1:30pm). Potential projects include the Children's Museum and the Boys and Girls Club of Healdsburg.

ECA Specification Committee-chaired by Casey Wood of GBI and Dale Smith of RCX, will next meet on January 24 from 4-5:30 pm and every other month on the 4th Wednesday of the month from then on.



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info@edclarkandassociates.com



Installation & Awards Dinner

Saturday, February 24th

**Hyatt Regency
170 Railroad Square
Santa Rosa, CA 95401**

Welcome incoming President:
Mike Gulley, Northwest General Engineering &
The 2024 ECA Board of Directors

We will be also honoring
Volunteers of the Year
Mary, Meghan & Robin Turner
Contractor of the Year
Tom Swegle, RCX, Inc.
Affiliate of the Year
Aaction Rents

The **Hermesmeyer Hall of Fame Award**
will be awarded to Dick Ghilotti, Ghilotti Construction
Posthumous – John Ramatici, Don Ramatici Insurance

To Register, click [HERE!](#) To Sponsor, click [HERE!](#)

Thank you to:

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Save the Dates for 2024!!!

Public Officials Night— Thursday, April 10, Sonoma Marin Fairgrounds
Father's Day "Show & Shine" Car Show—Sunday, June 16th, Juilliard Park
ECA's Golf Tournament—Friday, July 19th, Windsor Golf Club
Wine & Dozers Dinner and Auction—September 28, 2024, Graton Resort & Casino

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Worker's Compensation Endorsement By ECA-

HELLO!!! HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES PERSON TO CHECK OUT THE WORKERS COMP PROGRAM ECA HAS ENDORSED? Everybody likes to save money, don't they? Doesn't cost you a thing to consider this as an option! Jeff Okrepkie at 707-360-4338.



George Petersen Insurance Agency

FIRE CLEAN UP LIST:

The Sonoma County Environmental Health Department, Transportation and Public Works, and James Gore's office are utilizing the ECA as a resource for debris testing, and debris cleanup for fire victims from the Kincade Fire. Please review the list that has been provided to the fire victims and the County, of ECA Firms that are interested and listed in various categories as being helpful in the fire aftermath. This is another benefit for ECA members and if you want to be included on the list, and are not, please contact mary@nceda.org. There is no charge for this. You can access the list by clicking [HERE](#)

EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANUAL

The updated 2023-2024 Emergency Response Manual is now available online!

In the event of an emergency, we have put together this manual to help our community receive quick service from our members.

Thank you to our sponsors for helping to get this manual completed. It is sent to city and county agencies in case of an emergency so they will know who to call for services, equipment and materials.

Click [HERE](#) for the manual.

Get Prepared Now! Here are some very useful tips from CalFire to get your own house/property "in shape" for fire season. [link](#)

Pocket Guide for CALOSHA For Contractors: Click [here](#) for the pocket guide you all need!

Roadwork in Sonoma County - Check out the County website for road info [here](#)



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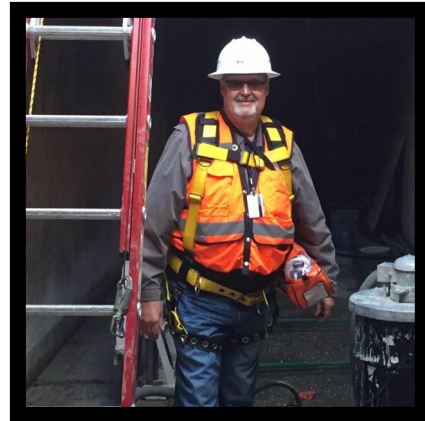
Office (707) 837-8408 or after hours (707) 478-2097

From the Desk of Jim Persons

Importance of Construction Safety

While the initial reason for improving construction safety may be to comply with workplace safety and health regulations, there are many other benefits to prioritizing construction safety, such as lessening the number of safety hazards and incidents.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.



Expert COVID-19 Safety info Available at a Discount

The Shelter in Place Orders issued by County Health Officers in Sonoma, Napa, and Mendocino - as well as the Governor, have highlighted for the building industry the need for all contractors to have an up-to-date written COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan.

This should be an addendum to your IIPP and safety meetings for COVID-19

Jim Persons, SafetyPride, an ECA member who serves as a consultant and safety instructor for ECA, is offering his services to our members and they will receive a 40% discount on his regular rates if you are a current member of ECA.

Contact Jim if you are interested in getting his help on COVID-19 related issues or other health and safety programs. email: jimpersons@safetypride.com or phone: 707-889-0881



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SAFETY TRAINING

CPR / First Aid

Thursday, January 4, 2024
9—11 am

Training includes bleeding control, strokes, seizures, broken bones and other life-threatening emergencies. Adult/child/infant CPR & airway obstruction management covered. This course is designed as both a course for first-timers and as a refresher.

click [HERE](#) for flyer

Traffic Control / Flagger Training

Thursday, January 4, 2024
1– 3 pm

This certified course will instruct on the fundamentals of keeping workers safe on California Highways and roads, how to erect traffic control zones, handling emergency situations, and more!

Click [HERE](#) for flyer!

Competent Person Trenching & Excavation

Thursday, January 11, 2024
1– 3 pm

The course will cover soil analysis, sloping, shoring and shielding, hazardous situations, excavation standards and more...

Click [HERE](#) for flyer!

Confined Space

Tuesday, January 30
1-3 pm

This course covers proper procedures for making entry into Permit Required Confined Spaces. Participants are prepared to operate in the capacity of Entrant, Attendant or Entry Supervisor during confined space operations. Participants are familiarized with CFR 1910.146 and how to properly employ the permit program. This course is a combination of classroom instruction and practical application in actual permit spaces utilizing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, meters and ventilation. This course is required by OSHA before an employee can enter a Permit Required Confined Space. *Certification of completion is provided.*

Click [HERE](#) for the registration flyer.



CORPORATE MEMBER SPONSORS



BUSINESS MEMBER SPONSORS



Continued from page 3

[Sample public comment email]

Dec. XX, 2023

Tony Gigliotti
Senior Licensing Project Manager
Power Generation
12840 Bill Clark Way
Auburn, CA 95602
Email: PVsurrender@pge.com

Subject: Support for New Eel-Russian Facility

Dear Mr. Gigliotti,

We are pleased to see and strongly support the inclusion of the New Eel-Russian Facility Proposal in the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) Initial Draft Surrender Application published on Nov. 17, 2023. Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, the Round Valley Indian Tribes and Sonoma Water submitted the proposal to PG&E in July to preserve water diversions into the Russian River, while also prioritizing upstream and downstream fish migration in the Eel River. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, County of Humboldt, California Trout and Trout Unlimited subsequently signed on to a revised proposal in November.

The Proposal seeks to maintain diversions into the Russian River watershed while not delaying PG&E's plans to remove Scott Dam and Cape Horn Dam. The proposed New Eel-Russian Facility would provide for fish migration past the new diversion facilities while allowing water to be transferred to the Russian River when flows are high enough in the Eel River. These diversions are critical to the health of the Russian River watershed, to ongoing water supply for numerous communities in Sonoma, Mendocino and Marin counties, and to Russian River fisheries.

Russian River water users have made significant strides in reducing water use, improving water use efficiency, and developing alternative supplies (for example, Sonoma Water and its retail water customers take nearly 40 percent less water from the Russian River than they did 20 years ago, despite a growing population). However, halting the diversions, even temporarily, would directly threaten the drinking water supply for more than 97,000 people living in Russian River communities -- and would make the drinking water supply for 600,000 additional people less reliable.

The lack of diverted water would cause tens of millions of dollars of economic damage per year, result in drastic conservation measures and increased water rates, curtail needed new housing, and increase the region's vulnerability to droughts, wildfires and climate change. For these reasons, we support the New Eel-Russian Facility Proposal and are encouraged that it was included in the Initial Draft Surrender Application by PG&E.

Thank you for your consideration,

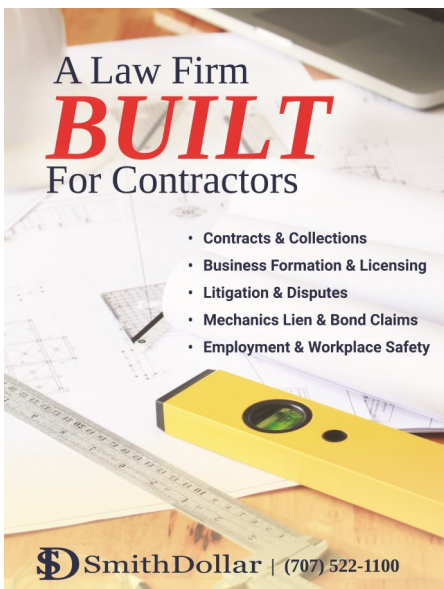
Name
Agency/Organization

The ECA will be submitting a "public comment letter" on behalf of our membership, but many of you may wish to submit your own. All of the information you need to do that is highlighted above.

Again-thanks to Matt Storm and Glenn Smith and their respective firms Granite Construction and Smith Dollar Attorneys at Law for sponsoring this very important annual ECA GMM last month!

NEWS YOU CAN USE

1. Sonoma Raceway repaving for first time in 23 years-[Sonoma Raceway Completely Repaving Road Course For First Time In 23 Years - Roadracing World Magazine | Motorcycle Riding, Racing & Tech News](#)
2. Cheaper to Build Housing in Marin County than in Windsor? This is a very interesting article-[How higher costs can hurt local housing construction \(northbaybusinessjournal.com\)](#)
3. California will see growth in 2024, just may not outperform other areas in the USA-[California's economy will see slow growth in 2024, economists say. Here's why \(northbaybusinessjournal.com\)](#)



Northern California Engineering Contractors Association

The ECA, and its Board of Directors, has been the voice of the engineering construction industry for over 40 years.

The foundation of the ECA has been to address local needs and issues.

The purpose and goal of ECA and its staff are to provide services to the members that help them run their businesses safely, efficiently, and in compliance with the many rules and regulations and mandates of government.

The working committees are the heart and soul of the ECA. The committees are comprised of ECA members.

The committees promote events that enable the ECA to fund community projects that include: Fathers Day "Show & Shine" Car Show, Public Officials Night, the Golf Tournament, and, the "Days of Wine & Dozers" Auction Dinner.

If you would like to join a committee, please email mary@nceca.org ~ We would love to have you!



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