



January 22, 2024

"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 ramblings that hopefully you find thought provoking. Remember-these are my opinions, not those of the ECA or any of its member firms.



Blindfolds the Key to Generational Wealth?

Traditionally, folks in the USA have taken the road of home ownership as the sure, steady, and relatively "bullet proof" way to grow wealth over your life-time. Oh, sure, some of us have had a huge "helping hand" to move up that wealth ladder from our parents, but many have not and still been able to leave more wealth to their children than they received. Home ownership has, for decades, provided a hedge against inflation, and an incentive to forced equity savings as we saw home values rise year over year even though our mortgage payments stayed stable.

It is a whole new ballgame for young people now.

In the last three years, the average cost of a mortgage payment went from \$1740/month to over \$3400/month while wages stayed the same.

A hidden increase of cost in home ownership has unfortunately, come to our attention in the last year or so. Home insurance premiums. Last year, the big insurers told legislators that they need to increase their rates in a big way to cover fire and flood events that cost the insurers dearly. The State Insurance Commissioner and the Legislature, basically told the insurers that nobody should be uninsured in CA and huge rate increases would be too draconian ([Insurance looms as California Legislature nears end of session - CalMatters](#)). Well, the "poker game" was on and the insurers like Allstate, Nationwide, State Farm, and Farmers told State Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara, "we will get out of the California market".

Uh, oh. What to do now ([Opinion | How will CA address home insurance market meltdown? \(calmatters.org\)](#))?

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Continued from page 1

If those big insurers left CA, the only remedy was the FAIR ACT which provides insurance in limited coverages for astronomical costs. That wasn't good so Governor Newsom stepped in and kicked the can to Lara who capitulated to the big insurance firms and allowed them to raise rates by 20% or more.

Now, if you are a prospective home buyer, you need to cover an average mortgage cost of \$3400 + /month and proof of insurance that is often too expensive for you to qualify for the home loan.

We all know the drill on why home prices are so high:

- *Interest rates caused by government spending too much money,
- *Regulatory requirements to building that add thousands of dollars to the price of a new and existing home,
- *Climate change changes in building materials have certainly not lowered costs,
- *And insurance costs have gone up dramatically.

Ok, John-you "Debbie Downer", what do you suggest?

Surprisingly, I have the following possible fixes that should stir some conversations:

- A. Pass the fire tax that will hopefully lower insurance rates down the road.
- B. Shut down our border so we do not need as much housing in the lower price sectors.
- C. Provide more tax relief for mortgage interest deductions.
- D. Stop spending our tax money on nonsense.
- E. Suspend some of the more expensive regulations for building and materials that might promote more profit margin for builders and developers in the short term.
- F. In the short term, help your kids out to buy their first home.
- G. Double up with ADU's and Granny units so families can take care of one another on one property instead of two.
- H. **Shower together to save water. Blindfolds optional.**

That's All Folks

John

ECA Installation Dinner on 2-24-24 is shaping up to be memorable. The Nominating Committee and 2023 Board of Directors did the ECA and industry proud by selecting the late John Ramatici and the icon Dick Ghilotti as our Hall of Fame inductees. Please get your sponsorships in and get your table attendees together for this wonderful occasion.

Thank you to:

[Ghilotti Construction](#)—Premier Sponsor
[Advanced Stormwater Protection](#)—Awards & Gifts Sponsor
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[United Rentals Trench Safety](#)—Dessert & Coffee Bar Sponsor

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. Our new Officers for 2024 are:

President Mike Gulley of Northwest General Engineering

Vice President Dan Giordano of Argonaut Constructors

Treasurer Kimber Lenning Carpenter of Kadon Trucking

Secretary Matt Storm of Granite Construction

Past President Antonio Mencarini of Ghilotti Construction Company

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 Car Show Committee—Chaired by Walt Turner, North Bay Petroleum. First meeting will be held on Thursday, February 1 at 4pm in the small conference room at NCBE. Let us know if you would like to be a part of the committee.

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.

ECA Government Affairs Committee-chaired by Art Deicke of Environmental Pollution Solutions will meet on January 22, 2024, at 5:00pm to 6:00pm to meet with Chris Rogers who is running for the vacant Jim Woods seat in the California State Assembly. We will interview Chris and make a recommendation to our Board of Directors on possible endorsement and campaign contribution on Tuesday, January 23, 2024.



Save the Dates for 2024!!!

Public Officials Night— Wednesday, 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



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Premier Sponsor



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, Megan & 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](#)!

To make reservations for an overnight stay that evening click [HERE](#)

Thank you to:

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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](#)

Labor Law Posters 2024

Click [HERE!](#)



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From the Desk of Jim Persons

First Aid Preparedness

It is a very good idea that people in the workplace have some basic knowledge about first aid care. You never know when an injury or an emergency is going to happen, whether it be with a coworker or someone else.

Everyone should be able to assist until emergency personnel can get to the scene or administer minor assistance to minor injuries. .

Click [HERE](#) to read more.



Workplace Violence Program

Implementation "Target Date" – July 1, 2024

Senate Bill 553 requires employers to create, implement and maintain a Workplace Violence Program by July 1, 2024. Employers must also train their entire workforce.

The Workplace Violence Program must include a reporting mechanism (how is the employee going to report incidents), detailing who will be responsible for receiving complaints, and who will be responsible for identifying and mitigating workplace hazards.

Jim Persons has developed a Workplace Violence Program and Active Shooter Guidelines that meet the requirements of this new regulation. He can also provide training resources for your employees.

Contact Jim if you are interested in getting his help on a Workplace Violence Program, 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

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.

CPR / First Aid

Thursday, February 8
1-3 pm

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 the flyer.

On Demand Training service provides relevant and targeted training, certification, or education when you **NEED IT NOW!**

Classes can be organized quickly so you can quickly get your employees back to work. In addition, business demands require flexibility. This service provides greater flexibility and added value. Classes can be set up at your facility or at the training room in Santa Rosa

Part of this **on-demand service** is a viable alternative to **in-house training** because it is designed for situations where only **one, two, three or four** people that need training. Importantly, this training can be very cost effective. We can combine the classes with other companies that need the training or you can have your own company class.

Whether you're in search of workplace safety training to meet OSHA compliance requirements, Competent Person, Trench Safety, Confined Space, CPR/First Aid initial or update training or implementing a Safety Program ECA can help!

The best way to beat an OSHA citation is to never get one at all.

Email mary@nceca.org to set up a class today If you don't see a class you need listed please contact me.

CPR / First Aid: 3 hrs - \$95 per person

Confined Space: 3 hrs - \$150 per person

Competent Person / Trench Safety: 3 hrs - \$125 per person

Flagger Safety Training: 2 hrs - \$125 per person

Sexual Harassment—1 hr for Employees—\$25 per person ~ 2 hrs for Supervisors \$35 per person



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NEWS YOU CAN USE

1. City of Santa Rosa makes some “ch-ch-ch-Changes:
 - a. Gabe Osborn gets Head of Planning and Economic Development Permanent Post- [Longtime Santa Rosa planning staffer to lead Planning and Economic Development Department \(pressdemocrat.com\)](https://www.pressdemocrat.com/story/news/local/2021/05/11/santa-rosa-planning-staffer-to-lead-planning-and-economic-development-department/7511111002/)
 - b. Dan Hennessey Hired as Santa Rosa’s New Head of Transportation and Public Works-[News Flash • City of Santa Rosa Hires Dan Hennessey as its D \(srcity.org\)](https://www.srcity.org/news/flash/city-of-santa-rosa-hires-dan-hennessey-as-its-d/)
2. SMART restarts work on Windsor segment-[SMART restarts work on long-awaited Windsor rail extension \(northbaybusinessjournal.com\)](https://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/story/news/local/2021/05/11/smart-restarts-work-on-long-awaited-windsor-rail-extension/7511111002/)
3. Rohnert Park’s Vision for Downtown Development-[Here’s a glimpse at Rohnert Park’s proposed new downtown as project reaches milestone \(northbaybusinessjournal.com\)](https://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/story/news/local/2021/05/11/rohnert-park-vision-for-downtown-development/7511111002/)
4. I posted this before, but it is worth another look if you missed it. Pavement conditions around the Bay Area-[Bay Area Pavement Marked by Mediocrity as Pothole Problems Persist | Metropolitan Transportation Commission \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov/transportation-commission/)
5. Bay Area Toll Bridge Management-[BATA Committee Approves Toll Bridge Asset Management Policy | Metropolitan Transportation Commission \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov/transportation-commission/)

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!

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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email: mary@nceca.org

Cheryl Long, Bookkeeper
email: cheryl@nceca.org

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