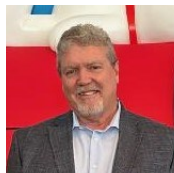




“CONSTRUCTING A WAY FOR A BETTER FUTURE”

# 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.

### High Cost of Road Construction Due to Owner’s Poor Staffing and Lower Competition Numbers Amongst Contractors



A recent in-depth study was conducted to find out why building roads in the United States was so damn expensive.

While the study was not specific to Northern California, there are lots of parallels. First-here is the article I am using as a backdrop for this Soapbox: [Why building US highways is so expensive | Construction Dive](#)

Two main issues affected the findings of their study: 1. Lack of quality personnel at the Department of Transportation, and 2. Lack of competition amongst the contractors drove up the costs of road construction.

There have been several recent articles regarding local municipalities having budget troubles. Part of the budget troubles underscore their difficulty in filling positions of planners, designers, and managers that help put the bid packages together, purchase the right of way, help design the projects, and ultimately, bid and inspect the projects to completion. This lack of staffing drives prices up in several ways:

1. Plans that do not provide sufficient detail that the contractor can bid on the work without guessing, interpreting, or doing his/her own design work. When we have incomplete or non-specific drawings paired with specifications that make EVERYTHING the contractor’s responsibility, the contractor cannot bid the work aggressively and must protect against the ambiguities, delays, and debates that are almost certain to ensue during construction. So the contractor should bid the work higher to cover the uncertainty the less “than good” plans and specs contain. Contractors do not like uncertainty. They are tying up limited resources on these projects that if delayed, will not be available for the next project. The costs of switching staff from planned work to “reactionary type work” is very expensive. Having poor drawings for a project is also inviting change orders to need be issued. Change orders drive up the cost of a project very quickly and many changes would be, could be, and should be avoided had municipalities put more money into the drafting of the plans and specs and had the design engineers had more qualified workers to produce better plans as well.

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Continued from page 1

2. The other reasons for high costs for road construction is due to a lack of competition. Cities like Santa Rosa play right into this issue by passing regulations that limit competitive bidders (Project Labor Agreements to be specific). Despite a lack of qualified contractors to bid on projects, adding bureaucracy that does not allow all potential bidders (subcontractors, suppliers, trucking firms) to bid is certain to drive costs up higher than if there was competitive bidding on all phases of the project. Some cities excuse the lack of competition on the short term if the project bid came in close to their engineering estimate-however, that excuse lacks the inevitable question "how low could the contractor, his suppliers, his subs, and his service contracts have gone had there been more bidding options available to the contractor"?

**How to fix things locally? Give us better drawings, work with us contractors rather than fight us on change orders, and for God's sake, get rid of Project Labor Agreements that limit competition.**

Remember-this is my own opinion, not that of the ECA or any of its members. Just John.

That's All Folks  
John



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## COMMITTEE NEWS

1. **Government Affairs Committee**- Chair Art Deicke and the Government Affairs will be meeting on 8-28-24 and 8-29-24 to interview candidates for the 9 cities in Sonoma County running for Council or Mayor. We invited 38 candidates to fill out questionnaires and interview and have heard back from 13 that want to be vetted by our collaborative group from ECA, NCBE, NORBAR, SCA, and NBLC. The ECA Government Affairs Committee will decide which candidates best represent our ECA Member's interests and will let you all know who they are when we are done. We will vet candidates for Cotati, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, Windsor, Healdsburg, and Cloverdale City and Town Councils. We will ask them about streamlining their bidding and award process, suggest partnering to speed up projects, and let them know how important it is for contractors and engineers to get paid quickly on their projects.
2. **Community Relations Committee**-no report
3. **Father's Day Show and Shine Car Show Committee**-no report
4. **Days of Wine and Dozers Auction Committee**-September 28, 2024, is the date, and Graton Event Center is the Place! We are getting a great response to companies wanting to sponsor and donate to this big event. Thank you all for that generous effort! Please do not wait until the last minute to set your tables as we need you to put some effort and thought into who you are inviting.
5. **ECA Specifications Committee**-chaired by Dale Smith and Casey Wood are following up on new water runoff rules, erosion protection rules, and waterway contamination. We have set up a meeting with the North Coast Regional Water Board and several other cities to discuss all of the SWPP issues that face our (public and private) project sites over the next few months. It will rain someday!! If you want to poke your head in the meeting, this is a good one to attend. **August 28, 4-5:30pm** at the NCBE Board Room. Thanks Dale and Casey!
6. **ECA Golf Tournament is scheduled for Friday, July 11, 2025, back at Windsor again!!**

---

## ECA NEW MEMBER

### Western Waters

Ken Kreischer  
707 Aviation Blvd.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Phone: 707-540-9640  
Email: [ken.kreischer@westernwater.com](mailto:ken.kreischer@westernwater.com)  
<https://www.westernwater.com/>



Western Water's forte is water and wastewater plant construction throughout California, but its roots are in Sonoma County. Given the grassroots political work the ECA does and our connection with John Bly going back to the Company's early days as Kirkwood-Bly we felt it was time to rejoin the ECA. Since 1959 the Company has been building water and wastewater projects, from \$100,000 jobs to \$85,000,000 all with the same goals: navigate complex issues; work collaboratively with clients and partners; be on time and on budget; provide good jobs for employees; and be safe, all to ensure successful a project.

# ECA 32nd Annual Wine & Dozers



## Auction & Dinner Saturday, September 28th Graton Resort & Casino



Enjoy an elegant and fun evening of generosity, delicious food, and signature drinks while coming together in support of ECA.

**Saturday, September 28th**

**Graton Resort & Casino**

**288 Golf Course Drive**

**Rohnert Park, CA**

**5:30 pm Reception & Silent Auction**

**7 pm Dinner**

**8 pm Live Auction**

**9 pm Port & Cigar Bar**

**To register for the event click [HERE!](#)**

To reserve a room at the nearby Oxford Suites guests can book online using the booking link: <http://bookings.ihotelier.com/bookings.jsp?groupID=4445279&hotelID=106575> OR by using the group code: NCECA when calling to make a reservation. 707-584-0333. Deadline for this offer is August 29

Help us support the ECA by considering being a sponsor of the ECA's, "Days of Wine & Dozers" Auction Fundraiser  
We are also looking for live auction items!

**For Sponsor opportunities Click [HERE!](#)**

**Thank you to our Sponsors:**

<p><a href="#">Argonaut Constructors</a>—Premier Sponsor <a href="#">Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers!</a> <a href="#">EBA Engineering</a>—Reception Sponsor <a href="#">Maggiora &amp; Ghilotti</a> - Platinum Sponsor <a href="#">Mike Brown Electric</a> - Platinum Sponsor <a href="#">Aaction Rents</a>— Champagne Sponsor <a href="#">ASP, Inc.</a> - Dinner Wine Sponsor <a href="#">Canyon Rock</a>—Dinner Wine Sponsor <a href="#">Cresco Equipment Rentals</a>—Bar Sponsor <a href="#">Engelke Construction</a> - Bar Sponsor <a href="#">Herc Rentals Trench Safety</a> - Table Wine Sponsor <a href="#">Peterson CAT</a> - Table Wine Sponsor <a href="#">Stevenson Supply</a>—Martini Sponsor</p>	<p><a href="#">W.A. Anderson Group</a> - Champagne Sponsor <a href="#">Adobe Associates</a> - Photo Booth Sponsor <a href="#">Brelje &amp; Race Consulting Engineers</a>—Port &amp; Cigar Sponsor <a href="#">Nunley Engineering</a> - Photo Booth Sponsor <a href="#">Daniel O. Davis</a>—Port &amp; Cigar Sponsor <a href="#">North Bay Petroleum</a>—Photo Booth Sponsor <a href="#">RCX, Inc</a>—Port &amp; Cigar Sponsor <a href="#">Don Ramatici Insurance</a>—Gold Sponsor <a href="#">Stripe 'N' Seal Inc.</a>—Gold Sponsor <a href="#">United Rentals</a>—Gold Sponsor <a href="#">Valdivia Trucking</a> - Port &amp; Cigar Sponsor <a href="#">American Asphalt</a> - Bronze Sponsor</p>
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**Live Auction Sponsors**

[Serres Corporation](#)—Wing & Barrel Clay Shoot & Hog Hunt  
[Ghilotti Bros. Inc.](#)—Warrior Tickets!  
[Ghilotti Construction](#)—49er Tickets!  
[Granite Construction](#)—Shark Tickets!  
[Mill Creek Safety](#)—CPR Class for 10

# ECA 32nd Annual Wine & Dozers Auction & Dinner

Just a couple of the live auctions that we will have at the Wine & Dozers  
Event on September 28th!~



**Wing & Barrel Ranch**—Sporting Clay Instruction plus Shoot  
Lunch and Wine Pairing ant the Clubhouse for 6 people  
**Thanks to: Serres Corporation**

**Warriors Chase Center Courtside Club Seats for Two—2**  
Seat Location: Section 4, Row A3, Seats 17 & 18  
**Thanks to: Ghilotti Bros Inc**



## Fire Debris Cleanup Management Services

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# From the Desk of Jim Persons

## Hand Tool Safety

Without the use of hand tools, the completion of a construction project would be nearly impossible.

Yet, as vital as they are, they are often the cause of serious accidents.

All too frequently, hand tools are used improperly or when they are defective.

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](mailto:jimpersons@safetypride.com) or phone: 707-889-0881 or sign up for an upcoming class!

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

Email [mary@nceca.org](mailto:mary@nceca.org) with your spotlight information and send in photos if you have them!



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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

1. **Projects are moving forward expecting an interest rate cut**-Stress index posts sharp drop with rate cut expected. With lower interest rates in prospect, the number of construction project abandonments fell by 23.7% in July, according to the latest Project Stress Index from Cincinnati-based ConstructConnect. The overall index was down 14.2% for the month, including a 6.8% decline in delayed bid activity and a 10.6% drop in work put on hold, as "project owners are more convinced now than ever before that the Federal Reserve is destined to cut interest rates both sharply and in the immediate future," says Michael Guckes, ConstructConnect chief economist. Full Story: [Construction Dive](#)
2. **Concrete races to remake itself into something more sustainable**-[The concrete sector is under pressure to evolve. Here's how it's responding. - Construction Briefing](#)
3. **Another \$700 million project Casino?** Why not? Let the other tribes tell you why not-[2 tribes, local officials oppose \\$700 million Vallejo casino project - The North Bay Business Journal](#)
4. **Rate cut upcoming may change this but for now-by the way-look at the insert in this article about 95 hotels in planning!**-[Hotel sales, development sluggish in Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Marin, Lake, Mendocino - The North Bay Business Journal](#)

## SAFETY CORNER

**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](mailto: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—\$45 per person ~ 2 hrs for Supervisors \$60 per person

Active Violence Emergency Response Training— \$100 per person



## 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.  
[Flyer](#)



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](mailto: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](#)

## Save the DATE! Upcoming 2025 Events Dates

**Installation—Saturday, February 1**

**Public Officials Night—TBD**

**Father's Day Car Show—June 15**

**ECA Golf Tournament—July 11**





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### Northern California Engineering Contractors Association

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email: [john@nceca.org](mailto:john@nceca.org)

Mary Kennedy Cabrera, Member Services Director  
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Cheryl Long, Bookkeeper  
email: [cheryl@nceca.org](mailto:cheryl@nceca.org)

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## **Come connect, collaborate, learn, and communicate with us in Healdsburg this December!**

The Co-Permittees of the Russian River Watershed are excited to announce that registration for our free Annual Low Impact Development training is now open.

**Title:** 2024 Annual Low-Impact Development Training for the Russian River Watershed

**Date:** Thursday, December 5, 2024

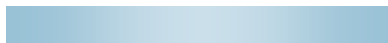
**Time:** 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. PST

**Register Here:** <https://stormwaterlidtraining2024.bpt.me/>

Intended for Private Design & Development Community and Public Agency Staff responsible for the design, compliance, or review of LID measures. This year’s training will include case studies, discussions, and presentations including private industry civil engineers, municipal staff, and representatives from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Topics will include:

- Stormwater Calculator: A Design Engineer’s Perspective
- Final SWLID Submittals
- FAQs
- Design/Installation Challenges
- Future of LID Manual and Calculator Updates

All participants are encouraged to attend in person; however, a virtual on-line option will be available (read instructions carefully). Space is limited and an RSVP is required.



### 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](mailto:mary@nceca.org) ~ We would love to have you!