



September 23, 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.

Why Is Suicide So Prevalent in Construction?



A few months ago, I wrote about mental health and the need for the industry to be more aware of our workers’ emotional and mental health.

Construction workers—men in particular—are committing suicide at a rate that's 75% higher than the general population, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). It's a number that keeps climbing.

According to the CDC, male construction workers have the highest rate of suicide—53 per 100,000—which is five times higher than any other industry. An estimated 6,000 died in 2022.

That is sobering. Higher than public safety? I am astounded by that number. I am no psychologist, but I do like to think about the stories behind the headlines so I want to write a bit about why the construction industry suicide rate might be so high.

“You know, men aren't always as willing to talk or share what's going on. So, they start to bottle up some of those emotions. There's like this toughness culture within construction,” said Angela Crawford, executive director of Construction Suicide Prevention Week.

Angela Crawford heads up Construction Suicide Prevention Week, an effort that started four years ago to bring awareness to the issue. She said a number of factors lead to mental health issues in construction, including injury, time away from family, and substance abuse.

I am human. I read these stories/articles, and I try to relate to my own experience in the industry. For me, several of the factors cited by Angela Crawford were prevalent in my career:

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Time away from home. I realize most of the ECA members do not have a work schedule like I did. 85% of my career was spent away from home. My company, Kirkwood Bly (now Western Water) had a business plan that focused on projects away from Santa Rosa. We would get a treatment plant project in Magalia, or in Fresno, or in Santa Cruz and our project manager had to be on site M-F, every week. This is not conducive to a good family life of course. Hmm-perhaps that has something to do with me being divorced? Of course it does. Most ECA men do not have that extreme of a commitment to be away from home, but certainly the demand of running a project necessitates long hours on site several hours away from home. Similar isolation from what I experienced and lots of work pressure to “get the job done” is also quite similar. Dealing with trying to “be there” for your family while trying to get the project completed for your company brings direct stress and lends itself to uncertainty in the homelife area as well.

I know we tried to accommodate the travel as best we could. From chartering airplanes for the Friday trip home, to the Sunday night trip from home to the project site, to providing a company vehicle and having a policy that basically was “you should not have to spend any more money to live and be housed out of town that you would if you were working from home”.

However, we did not deal with the family strife and the pressures of being isolated from your wife and children enough in my opinion.

How did some of us deal with the isolation?

That is **where substance abuse** comes in. Although I was never a regular user of drugs, I certainly got into a pattern of having a few drinks after work before or during dinner. That pattern led to other issues that were not particularly healthy. For some, I could see falling into an unhealthy lifestyle that could lead to hiding some things you were tempted to do from your family, friends and even coworkers. Any kind of isolation and “hiding” behavior has the possibility of becoming a disorder in the depression area.

I firmly believe the “macho” culture of construction workers combined with being away from family can lead to the problems that lead to suicide. If we have projects that are very stressful, very time-consuming which lead to extended hours away from family and friends and even other coworkers, these are the situations that need our attention in our industry. Maybe it is as simple as being aware and making the effort to foster discussion with those in our firms that have these highly intense projects that demand time. Maybe some situations need some professional consulting of some sort. I do know that the statistics of our industry being five times more likely to see a male suicide than ANY OTHER INDUSTRY, says something needs to change.

Make mental health and open communication about stress and isolation a part of your safety program. It just might make a difference!

That’s All Folks
John

COMMITTEE NEWS

Government Affairs Committee- Chair Art Deicke and the Government Affairs met on Friday 9-20-24 to go over our recommendations for City Council candidates in Sonoma County, Local Ballot Measures, and State Ballot Measures. We completed our vetting process and will take our recommendations to the Board of Directors on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, for a final decision on endorsements and dollar contributions. Here are the candidates and ballot measures we have vetted and will have recommendations to our Board of Directors:

City of Santa Rosa: Dianna MacDonald, Jeremy Newton

City of Rohnert Park: Gerard Giudice

City of Petaluma: Mike Healy, Alex DeCarli

City of Sonoma: none of the candidates responded.

City of Sebastopol: Neysa Hinton

City of Healdsburg: Ron Edwards, Heather Hannan Kramer, Linda Cade, David Hagele, Ariel Kelly

City of Cloverdale: Mark Laskey

Town of Windsor: JB Leep, John Leyba

City of Cotati: Susan Harvey

Local Ballot Measures:

Healdsburg Measure O on housing zoning

City of Santa Rosa City Business License tax and TOT fees

County of Sonoma Measure I Child Care tax

County of Sonoma Measure J Farming Measure against large operations and small

State of California Ballot Measures:

Prop 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36

All have been vetted by the Government Affairs Committee and recommendations will go to the full Board of Directors 9-24-24.

Community Relations Committee-Brand new news! The Children's Museum project is under way. Giving back to the community has become a core value of the ECA. This project adds to the estimated \$4 million of donated labor, equipment, and materials in the last decade to deserving charities.

Special thank you to:

- ⇒ **Kevin Ghilotti and Team G** for sourcing the off-haul materials!!
- ⇒ **Tom Swegel and RCX** for mass excavation and load out of spoils!!
- ⇒ **Dan Fowler and Richard Owens** for Project Management
- ⇒ **Tim Schramm and Adobe** for survey and staking!
- ⇒ **Jeff Rodes and Canyon Rock** for base rock sourcing
- ⇒ **Valdivia, Kadon and Toby's** for trucking services
- ⇒ **Dale Mahoney and Jessee from Ghilotti Construction Company** for digitizing the Plans and for fabric and coordination.
- ⇒ **Mike Wolff of Wolff Construction** for hauling and providing a skip loader and smooth drum roller
- ⇒ **Andy White and White Cap for fabric supply**
- ⇒ **Lacey Torkalson Smith** for leading our Community Relations Committee and staying on this project for the past six or so months!

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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!](#)

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:

Argonaut Constructors —Premier Sponsor	W.A. Anderson Group - Champagne Sponsor
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Live Auction Sponsors

[Serres Corporation](#)—Wing & Barrel Clay Shoot & Hog Hunt

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[Ghilotti Bros. Inc.](#)—Warrior Tickets!

[Ghilotti Construction](#)—49er Tickets!

[Granite Construction](#)—Giants Tickets

[Mill Creek Safety](#)—CPR Class for 10

PACE Supply—Shark Tickets

Jim Persons—Safety Pride—Safety Class for 10

Sonoma Media Group—Two VIP tickets to Country Summer

Russian River Vineyard—overnight stay

Cuver Brewery—Tasting & Tour for 10 Guests

ECA 32nd Annual Wine & Dozers Auction & Dinner



Just a few 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 and 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



The Ultimate Experience for Four 49er Fans!
VIP parking, early admission to the stadium, pregame at the United Club, luxury seat, full-service bar. seats on the 40-yard line in the exclusive Club Level Section 139, Row 20! (mutually agreed upon game). Expires at the end of the 2024-2025 season and is not valid for Playoffs. **Thanks to: Ghilotti Construction**

Giants Hospitality Suite
12 Suite Tickets to a TBD game date!
Includes one parking pass.
Thanks to Granite Construction



VIP Tasting & Brewery tour for 10
Enjoy a VIP Tasting & Brewery tour for 10 guests at Cuver Brewery in Windsor while you enjoy PizzaLeah's Pizza!.
Thanks to Cuver Brewery, Don Mills & PizzaLeah

Overnight Stay in the Wild
Spend the night in a luxury safari tent at Safari West. Dinner at the Savannah Café. And a tour adventure
Thanks to RCX, Inc.



From the Desk of Jim Persons

Asbestos Dangers Asbestos

is a material that was widely used in many building materials which are still found around us today. While it is still in use in a few different materials today, much of its use was stopped in the late 1980s after research revealed the negative health effects associated with its fibers. Many people have heard that asbestos is bad for human health, but do not understand how or why this is the case.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.



Workplace Violence Program

Implemented – 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 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 with your spotlight information and send in photos if you have them!



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The advertisement features a background image of architectural blueprints, a yellow level, and a ruler on a wooden desk. The text is overlaid on this image.

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ECA Nominating Committee-Chair Antonio Mencarini has held two meetings to determine the following:

2024 Contractor of the Year

2024 Affiliate of the Year

2024 Hermsmeyer Hall of Fame

2024 Hermsmeyer Posthumous Hall of Fame

2024 Golden Hardhat

2024 Ambassador of the Year

2025 Officers

2025 Board of Directors

Thanks Tony and your Nominating Committee of Mike Gulley, Dan Giordani, Kimber Carpenter, and Matt Storm with special assistance from Mark Soiland.

Days of Wine and Dozers Auction Committee-See you at the Days of Wine and Dozers on 9-28-24 – the evening begins at 5:30 pm at Graton!

ECA Specifications Committee-chaired by Dale Smith and Casey Wood organized a great spec meeting that had 14 attendees on 8-28-24. Our next meeting is scheduled for 9-25-24 beginning at the new time of 3:00pm to discuss compliance of SWPP rules as well as bioswale design and implementation.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Uh oh-Mare Island hand in the cookie jar? - [Misconduct in Vallejo redevelopment deal not investigated, whistleblowers claim - The North Bay Business Journal](#)

Build it Quick- [California doesn't want flammable fences within 5 feet of homes - The North Bay Business Journal](#)

Mill Valley City Council op-ed- [Editorial: IJ recommends Carmel, Jones, Joachim in Mill Valley City Council race – Marin Independent Journal \(marinij.com\)](#)

Assembly Race Opinion by Spotswood-Huffman vs Coulombe- [Dick Spotswood: North Bay candidates for Assembly, House deserve closer look – Marin Independent Journal \(marinij.com\)](#)

Road Delays Sonoma County- [Serious traffic backup expected while crews repair bridge over Mark West Creek - The Press Democrat](#)



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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.

[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. 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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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

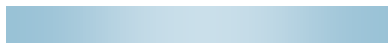
Time: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. PST

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 ~ We would love to have you!