



“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.

ECA-We Are the Community



For years I have been vocal about using local workforce, local materials, and local equipment to provide for our infrastructure work needs. The issue that brought me to this opinion many years ago was the 1980 Aggregate Resource Mining Plan (ARM) and the subsequent 1994 ARM.

In 1980, a long-standing source of aggregates were effectively phased out-that is taking gravels out of the river streambed boundaries to be used for aggregates needed for backfill, road base, concrete ready mix, and asphalt mixes. In 1994 the ARM was modified to put stricter rules on the hard rock quarries and the ultimate reclaiming of those sites back to a natural environment once the rock mining was concluded. You can read the County ARM here at this link - [Aggregate Resource Management Plan \(permitsonoma.org\)](https://www.permitsonoma.org).

In stream aggregate mining was severely restricted to what was needed to remove outside of the flowing streambed in order to maintain stream channel flows that had gotten altered from gravel being picked up and deposited in high streamflow events that endangered roads, land erosion, bridge abutments, etc. Effectively, stream mining was not to be relied upon to meet our aggregate needs of the future after 1994.

The other “new” item was a road mitigation program and fee, as well as a fee for terrace mining for impact and mitigation programs.

The folks that wanted us to get mining out of the Russian River and its tributaries, and wanted to make things a bit tougher and a lot more expensive on the hard rock quarries, seemingly ignored the fact that a lot of imported aggregates were being mined in British Columbia and barged down to the San Francisco Bay Area, offloaded, and then trucked up to fulfill the source needs of various projects. My point was let’s not outsource our aggregate supply requirements to a foreign country, let’s keep the sourcing local and therefore we control the environmental impacts from the aggregate mining we need for local uses.

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It should be noted that when rock is barged in from Canada (and sometimes Mexico), the road mitigation fee and the fee for impact and mitigation of the terrace and hard rock quarries is not imposed. Consider the same weight is being trucked across our local roads whether it comes off a barge or out of the local quarries, but the road repair cost only gets charged to the rock mined out of the local quarries. Therefore, Canada and Mexico get their products hauled on roads we have to maintain and we are subsidizing those foreign countries to repair our roads.

My opinion was spoken at many public hearings on the ARM policy, and I do not think the "powers that were in place" much cared that we were subsidizing Canada and Mexico. They simply wanted a "WIN" to show the "enviros" that they were caring for the river ecology and making the quarries pay for road repair. They just forgot to charge the Canadian and Mexican aggregate quarries.

The other part of my debate back then, was why would we express concern over greenhouse gas emissions from hard rock mining in our local quarries (which we did have control and oversight on) and ignore the greenhouse gas emissions that came from the mines in Canada and Mexico as well as the fuel burned to barge the rock thousands of miles to the San Francisco Bay Area. It makes no sense as so many things don't.

I only bring this up so you can get an historical perspective on why the public sentiment was so opposed to ECA contractors and suppliers back in the 1980's and 1990's. When I was a Board member and then President of the ECA in the early 2000's, I started touting our community relations projects and other contributions to the community and my mantra was "ECA-We Are The Community". It took a while, but today, I believe the public sentiment and the local government views us as an ally and a resource needed for maintaining and repairing our critical infrastructure and a resource for doing community relations projects that help strengthen our community.

Our latest community relations project carries on that theme of being good stewards of the community and environment.

We just had a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Children's Museum this morning with Supervisor James Gore complimenting the ECA on its "relentless, imperfect, progress" towards making our communities better.

I am very proud of **Adobe Associates, Canyon Rock, Ghilotti Construction Company, Dan Fowler of Stripe and Seal, Richard Owens of Siri, White Cap, Valdivia Trucking, Kadon Trucking, Toby's Trucking, Wolff Contracting**, and our superstars: **Team Ghilotti as well as Tom Swegel and RCX** for doing the good they did at the Children's Museum!

We continue to push back on the idea that the ECA and its members are not good stewards of the environment. We have been, we are, and we will continue to be stewards of the community of which the environment is one important part.

ECA-We Are The Community!

That's All Folks
John

COMMITTEE NEWS

1. **Government Affairs Committee:** Last Tuesday, Art Deicke brought the Board of Directors our recommendations for candidate and ballot measure endorsements and the Board approved them. Here is the link to the Board of Directors' Official 2024 Endorsed Candidates and Ballot Measures for Sonoma County and the State of California. Click [HERE](#)

2. **ECA Spec Committee**-Chair Dale Smith and Casey Wood organized a spec meeting last Wednesday and those in attendance got a lot of detail on what is acceptable, what is not acceptable and what regulations are needing reform on Stormwater runoff issues. We were able to see a lot of photos of what was right, and what was wrong with bioswale and low impact density design and construction and a few of the photos are included here:

Community Relations Committee-Chair Lacey Torkansen Smith led the ECA's latest Community Relations Project for the Children's Museum of Santa Rosa. Helping get this project done were **Adobe Associates, Canyon Rock, Ghilotti Construction Company, Dan Fowler of Stripe and Seal, Richard Owens of Siri, White Cap, Valdivia Trucking, Kadon Trucking, Toby's Trucking, Wolff Contracting,** and our superstars: **Team Ghilotti as well as Tom Swegel and RCX**

A very nice ribbon cutting ceremony was held this morning with Supervisor James Gore saying a few nice words as the importance of doing these kinds of projects to strengthen our community. The ECA is proud of another great Community Relations Project!

32nd Annual Days of Wine and Dozers Fundraiser and Auction Event-Mary Kennedy Cabrera and her group of "crack volunteers" did a great job and in thanking the volunteers Saturday night, I missed a few important volunteers:

Ash Aguirre from Pace Supplies, Irene Long, [Irene Cecilia Photography](#) and Chris Felciano/Matheson Gas, Joe Personeni, and Casey Wood from Ghilotti Brothers. Thank you all and sorry I missed you when I thanked the others that included Kristi Pruitt/RCX, Leslie Ibarra/RCX, Cheryl Long/ECA, Susan Morris and JT/Wolff Contracting, Ava Warren, Robin Weller from Weller Drafting, Hiromi Young/Allen Group, Jeannine Clary, Cindy Gulley, and Tony Cabrera.

The Auction event went well, I think most everyone enjoyed themselves, and I thought the Graton staff was great and the facilities are obviously top notch. I want to include the Program as a link here, and I want to call your attention to the donors that put up the live auction items – to see who donated what, look at the live auction items please!

Thanks to all the buyers of tables and seats, those that sponsored, and our Sustaining Members also!!

Photos will be available shortly!!!



ECA 32nd Annual Wine & Dozers Auction & Dinner



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Sonoma Media Group—Two VIP tickets to Country Summer
Russian River Vineyard—overnight stay
Cuver Brewery—Tasting & Tour for 10 Guests
[Wolff Contracting Inc.](#) Bourbon Tasting

NEWS YOU CAN USE

1. [\\$220.6M in federal funds go to 2 Calif. projects](#)

Federal funds totaling \$220.6 million are on the way for California's planned Interstate 680 improvements and the Central Valley High-Speed Rail project, Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., announced. Of the total, \$166 million is designated to fill an I-680 express lane gap and convert another lane to express while \$54 million will help fund a high-speed rail station for the Merced-Bakersfield California High-Speed Rail Interim Service. **Full Story:** [Railway Track & Structures](#)
[2025 construction seen for Southwest high-speed rail](#)

2. With a new \$3 billion US grant in hand, major construction will begin next year on Brightline West's high-speed rail project linking Southern California and Las Vegas, the company says. The grant from the Federal Railroad Administration comes in addition to a previously approved \$3.5 billion in private activity bonding authority for the \$12 billion project, which so far has seen crews drilling geotechnical borings. **Full Story:** [Las Vegas Review-Journal \(tiered subscription model\)](#)

3. From an ECA perspective, here is a link of important issues and a non-partisan view of how Harris or Trump positions might effect those issues: Click [HERE](#) to read more.

ECA NEW MEMBER

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Because You're Different

Heffernan Insurance Brokers ranks in at #26th of the largest independent insurance agencies in the country and a top 100 agency overall. With over 1000 construction clients we offer a unique perspective to traditional insurance offering loss sensitive programs, captives and risk management consulting to medium to large commercial clients. With over 21 offices in the United States and London, two of our main offices in the Northbay are located in Petaluma and Napa serving our clients needs in insurance, health benefits, financial services, claims and loss control services. We are excited to be part of the ECA and hope we get a chance to get to your company and see why so many have chosen to do business with our Heffernan family!

Skin Cancer Due to Sun Exposure

The sun is essential to all life on Earth; however, too much exposure to the sun can be harmful to us. Excessive exposure to ultraviolet light, also called UV rays, emitted from the sun can cause many skin conditions as well as skin cancer.

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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A background image for the law firm advertisement showing a construction site with a yellow level, blueprints, and a ruler.

The SmithDollar logo, featuring a stylized 'S' and 'D' inside a circle.

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RIBBON CUTTING FOR THE EXTENDED PARKING LOT AT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM SONOMA COUNTY



Collette Michaud, CEO



Supervisor James Gore



Lacey Torkelson Smith & James Gore cutting the ribbon.

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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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John Bly, Executive Vice President
email: john@nceca.org

Mary Kennedy Cabrera, Member Services Director
email: mary@nceca.org

Cheryl Long, Bookkeeper
email: cheryl@nceca.org

Postal Address: P.O. Box 8249 Santa Rosa, CA 95407 ~Phone: 707.546.5500

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!