



"CONSTRUCTING A WAY FOR A BETTER FUTURE"

January 12, 2026

ECA Newsletter

John's Soapbox



Remember my disclaimer -this Soapbox is my own opinion and does not necessarily reflect any official ECA position, nor any opinion of any ECA member firm. This is my stuff only and is intended to be thought-provoking as well as educational.

Update on the ECA

Here we are starting another year. I figured it might be time for an update on what the ECA is doing for all of you.

Staff:

*As of January 1, 2026, Mary Kennedy Cabrera (Member Services Director) has retired. McKenzie Wexler has taken over Mary's job responsibilities. Contact McKenzie at (707)484-7803 or mw@nceca.org for all things "Mary"

*As of January 1, 2026, Cheryl Long (Bookkeeper) has retired. Susan Maners has taken over for Cheryl. Contact Susan at (707)486-1209 or accounting@nceca.org for all things "Cheryl"

Leadership:

**As of January 1, 2026, President Dan Giordani (Argonaut Constructors) has moved on to Past President and Kimber Lenning Carpenter (Kadon Trucking) is the new ECA President for 2026.

**As of January 1, 2026, the ECA Board of Directors is comprised of the following:

Officers-

President: Kimber Carpenter Lenning of Kadon Trucking

Vice President: Matt Storm of Granite Construction

Treasurer: Casey Wood of Ghilotti Brothers Inc.

Secretary: Antonio Mencarini of Ghilotti Construction Company

Past President: Dan Giordani of Argonaut Constructors, Inc.

2026 Directors:

CONTRACTORS

Lucas Doherty, [Gordan N. Ball Co.](#)

Kevin Ghilotti, [Team Ghilotti](#)

Mike Gulley, [Northwest General Engineering](#)

Kristi Pruett, [RCX Inc.](#)

Mike Wolff, [Wolff Contracting](#)

AFFILIATES

Ramsay Brown, [Exchange Bank](#)

Jake Behrens, [Action Rents](#)

Jeremiah Cook, [Cresco Equipment Rentals](#)

AFFILIATES CONTINUED...

Aimi Dutra, [Dutra Materials](#)

Corinna Fernandez, [PACE Supply](#)

Guy Levinson, [Ritchie Bros](#)

Ryan McKnight, [Risk Strategies](#)

Kevin Noonan, [Toby's Trucking](#)

Omar Coronel, [Stevenson Supply](#)

John Reid, [CRH](#)

Glenn Smith, [Smith Dollar PC](#)

Brendan Snyder, [George Petersen Insurance](#)

Brett Wilmes, [Soiland Company](#)

Walt Turner, [Northbay Petroleum](#)

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One of my favorite events is coming up on January 31, 2026 -

THE 48TH ANNUAL ECA INSTALLATION AND AWARDS DINNER. We just completed doing the video interviews for all of the award winners and this event is going to be very nice. The interviews are being edited as we speak by Alejandro Torres of Sound Ideas and the Award Winners to be honored are:

Contractor of the Year - Western Water Constructors (Josh McGarva)

Affiliate of the Year - Toby's Trucking (Toby Giacomini)

Hermsmeyer Hall of Fame Inductee - Louie Gobbi of G & G Heavy Hauling

Hermsmeyer Hall of Fame Inductee (Posthumous) is Frank Palagi of Ghilotti Brothers, Inc.

Volunteer of the Year - Kristi Pruett

This event is very likely to sell out! We have room for 200 guests and reservations are coming in fast and furious. Please do not wait, reserve a table now (below is the link to reserve your seats/tables or sponsorship) and figure out who to invite later! Otherwise, you will have to go on to a waiting list, and we don't want that to happen!!

To register click [HERE](#)

To sponsor click [HERE](#)

Sponsorships that we have so far:

[Soiland Co.](#)—Hermsmeyer Award Sponsor

[Stevenson Supply](#)—Hermsmeyer Award Sponsor

[Engelke Construction](#)—Bar Sponsor

[Ghilotti Bros. Inc.](#) - Champagne Sponsor

[Ghilotti Construction](#) - Hermsmeyer Hall of Fame Sponsor

[Ritchie Bros](#) - President's Reception

[Western Water](#) - Video Co-Sponsor

Sound Ideas and myself concluded the video interview recordings last week and let me tell you the stories of our award winners will honor them in a very nice way, and inspire you as you learn about Western Water and Josh McGarva, Toby's and Toby Giacomini, Louie Gobbi, and Frank Palagi. Think about the history of these companies and men-a collective 241 years of experience and projects built in Northern California. The names you will hear and the projects these deserved award winners have built are incredible. It is a history of General Engineering projects that you will surely have heard about and will hear more about them on January 31. From Warm Springs Dam to Lakewood Village Estates, from Pt Reyes Dairy and Ag industry to large projects in San Francisco-they are all a part of the history these men and their companies worked on.

The attitude and ethics of these men and their companies will provide a blueprint for all of us to succeed. Their "secret sauce" is common amongst every one of them, and the traits and lessons will be shared with all of you. One of the recurring themes is there is no separation between work, family, and life. So whether you hear about their success in work, their ability to get their co-workers involved as family, or the way their companies support and enrich living for their co-workers, there are inspiring lessons everywhere for us.

Please consider inviting some of your young talent to this event so they can see what makes these exceptional award winners so deserving of being honored on January 31.

Please Join us,

John

ECA COMMITTEE NEWS

- ECA Executive Committee Meetings are recurring every month and are held every Last Tuesday from 11:00 am -12:00pm, in the NCBE small conference room. Committee Officers are Kimber Lenning Carpenter -President, Matt Storm – Vice President, Casey Wood - Treasurer, Antonio Mencarini - Secretary, Dan Giordani- Past President
- ECA Board of Directors meetings are recurring every month and are held every last Tuesday from 12:00-1:30pm, in the main conference board room at NCBE.
- ECA Government Affairs Committee (GAC) meetings are recurring every month and are held every last Tuesday from 2:00pm-3:30pm in the main conference boardroom at NCBE. The GAC committee is John Bly, Members Ross Liscum, Keith Woods, Joanne Webster, Dale Mahoney, Mark Soiland, Mike Wolff, John Reid, and Aimi Dutra.
- ECA Specifications Committee are recurring every month and are held every last Wednesday from 3:00-4:30pm in the main conference board room at NCBE. The Spec Committee is Dale Smith/Casey Wood, Antonio Mencarini, John Reid, Geoff Coleman, Tim Dillenburg and Jason Nutt.
- ECA Nominating Committee will meet on Tuesday, Feb 24, 2026, from 11:00 am to 11:30 am in the NCBE small conference room. Chair Dan Giordani, Kimber Lenning, Matt Storm, Casey Wood, Antonio Mencarini, Mark Soiland and are the committee members. We will be considering Bridge Award candidates as well as the Golden Hardhat candidates for the Public Officials Night.

ECA EVENTS

- January 31, 2026 - 48th Annual ECA Installation and Awards Dinner will be held at Santa Rosa Golf and Country Club at 333 Country Club Dr. in Santa Rosa from 5:30-9:30pm. Tickets and sponsorship information can be found [here](#):

To register click [HERE](#)

To sponsor click [HERE](#)

- April 30, 2026 - ECA Public Officials Night will be held at The Backdrop, 1455 Corporate Center Parkway in Santa Rosa, CA from 5:30pm – 9:00pm.
- June 21, 2026 - Father's Day ECA "Show and Shine" Car Show will be held at Julliard Park at 227 Santa Rosa, Ave. in Santa Rosa from 9:00am-4pm
- July 10, 2026 - The ECA Golf Tournament will be held at the Windsor Golf Course at 1340 19th Hole Drive in Windsor, CA from 11:00am-7:00pm



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1. Santa Rosa settles wrongful termination suit with former planning director

Clare Hartman struggled, especially in the last year of her job as planning director in Santa Rosa, to balance the demands of her high-pressure job and stress at home.

Things hit a tipping point in late August 2023 when Hartman suffered a mental health crisis that prompted her to seek medical care. A health official diagnosed her with depression and suggested she enroll in a three-week outpatient program.



Less than a month later [Hartman was out of a job](#), fired in a high-profile dismissal [she alleged discrimination against her based on age, gender and disability](#).

Now, Santa Rosa has agreed to pay Hartman \$205,000 to settle the case and avoid a trial, according to a copy of the agreement the city provided to The Press Democrat.

2. Community-Based Transportation Plans Released for Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park

Sonoma County Transportation and Climate Authorities (SCTCA) and staff from the City of Santa Rosa, the City of Rohnert Park, and Sonoma County collaborated over the last year to develop two Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs) for the South Santa Rosa Avenue and Central Rohnert Park areas. The project team worked with community members to identify transportation gaps, barriers, and issues in each area and developed a list of transportation projects and solutions to address them.

The CBTPs provide a list of solutions to support efforts by local agencies to pursue federal, state, regional, and local funds to implement the recommended projects and programs. To compete for funds, a project must be well-defined, included in local plans, and have community and public agency support. SCTCA will monitor and alert city and agency staff to new funding opportunities that could fund CBTP recommendations and will track progress on implementation.

Final CBTPs can be accessed here:

[Santa Rosa \(PDF Link\)](#)

[Rohnert Park \(PDF Link\)](#)

3. New Survey Finds Construction Firms Expect Demand To Shift In 2026, With Data Centers And Power Leading, But Report Greater Economic And Policy Uncertainty

Construction contractors have "dampened" expectations for 2026, aside from surging demand for data centers and power facilities, amid broader worries about the direction of the economy, according to [Dampened Expectations: The 2026 Construction Hiring and Business Outlook](#) which the Associated General Contractors of America and Sage released today. In addition to lower expectations, contractors report they have been impacted by tariffs, enhanced immigration enforcement, and challenges finding qualified workers.

4. Caterpillar, Nvidia expand AI collaboration for equipment

Caterpillar and Nvidia are expanding their collaboration to develop AI-enhanced products and manufacturing systems. The partnership will use the Nvidia Jetson Thor platform for real-time AI inference on construction, mining and power equipment, enabling AI-driven recommendations and a "digital nervous system" for jobsites.

Full Story: [Construction Briefing](#)

From the Desk of Jim Persons

Hydration: The Importance of Water

Water is one of the most important substances on Earth. All plants, animals, and people need water to survive. Water serves particularly important purposes for our bodies and our bodily functions- some of which you may not even be aware of.

To continue reading

Click HERE



ECA & NCBE SAFETY & EDUCATION TRAINING

ECA MEMBERS PAY THE NCBE PRICE

January:

Tuesday 1/13

CPR + First Aid - English & Spanish 9 am - 4 pm

Wednesday 1/14

Confined Space “Competent Person” - English & Spanish 1 pm - 3 pm

Thursday 1/15

2026 Labor & Employment Law Updates 9 am - 11 am

SB 61 Retention Caps and New Home Improvement Contract Requirements in 2026

11 am - 1 pm

Thursday 1/22

Confined Space “Competent Person” - English & Spanish - Ukiah 8 am - 11 am

Prevailing Wage Seminar 9 am - 4 pm

Heat Illness Prevention Training - English & Spanish - Ukiah 10 am - 12 pm

Monday 1/26

Fall Protection “Competent Person” English & Spanish 9 am - 11 am



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.

USEFUL LINKS TO SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS

- A. Resilient 37 Policy Committee Meetings (open to the public) – Next meeting March 6, 9:30-11:30 am-link [State Route 37 Policy Committee - Sonoma County Transportation Authority](#)
- B. Metropolitan Transportation Commission website-link [Meetings & Events | Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#)
- C. Sonoma County Transportation Authority-link [Sonoma County Transportation Authority | SCTA](#)
- D. Transportation Authority of Marin Website-link [Transportation Authority of Marin](#)
- E. Marin Builders Exchange website-link [Home - Marin Builders Association, CA](#)
- F. North Coast Builders Exchange website-link [North Coast Builders Exchange – NCBE Online](#)



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info@eddclarkandassociates.com

EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANUAL ~ 2025—2026

In the event of an emergency, we have put together the Emergency Response Manual to help our community receive quick service from our members. The manual is sent to city and county agencies in case of an emergency so they will know who to call for services, equipment and materials.

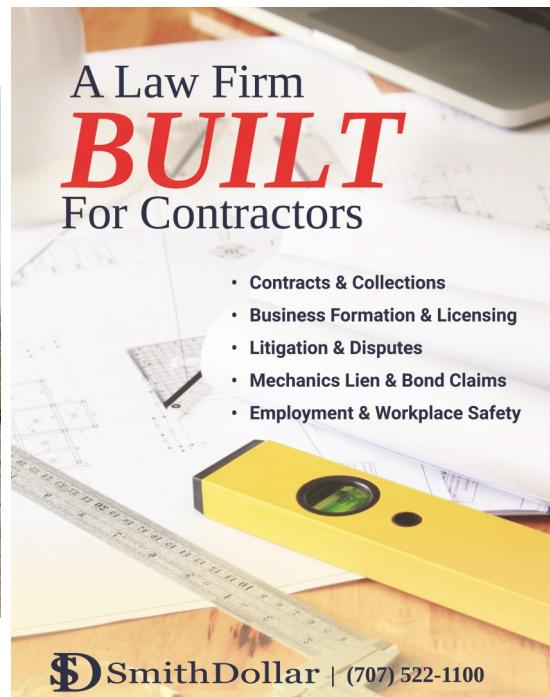
Click [HERE](#) for the 2025-2026 manual.



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Lorne Chase | Construction Superintendent (Sonoma/Napa) | Cell: (707) 272-1294 | Lorne.Chase@gcinc.com

Gary Huddle | Construction Superintendent (Lake/Mendocino) | Cell: (707) 272-0136 | Gary.Huddle@gcinc.com

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