



February 2, 2026

"CONSTRUCTING A WAY FOR A BETTER FUTURE"

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.

It's Construction

As in most construction projects, there are unexpected issues that come up and need to be dealt with in order to complete the project. Our Installation Dinner was, in that sense, like a construction project.

Despite having some technical issues and facility issues to deal with, I think we left our honorees with a great feeling Saturday Night. For those that were stuck in the back room, I will only say the facility coordinator promised to hear and seeing wouldn't be a problem for the 50 or so that were in the back ante room.

I feel awful that the facility coordinator misrepresented how bad the room would be for the attendees. We will not put on another event that compromises the attendees being in the main room with the best audio/visual we can provide.

I have other issues that I could apologize for and here goes:

1. Brett Wilmes, Soiland Materials-I am not sure how your name got left off the power point slide for 2026 Affiliate Board Members, but I am sorry it did. You are on the Board, and we appreciate it.
2. Some folks said the food was really good, and I heard other people were not as happy. I will discuss with the facility to let them know it was a "mixed bag" from attendees' perspective and let it go at that.
3. Our videos got corrupted in the final download that we got late Friday night and early Saturday morning. We had done a run through with previous downloaded version of the award video and there was no issue. We apologize for the corrupted download and poor audio playback that made things difficult to enjoy the video. The uncorrupted and corrected video is right here for you to download and distribute to those that were at your table. We hope this problem did not detract from your enjoyment of the evening's recognition.

Continued from page 1

4. McKenzie and I had to make a quick decision on the corrupted video and we went with an earlier video version that did not contain Glenda's (GCC) segment on "Louie the Legend" but Glenda came up to the podium and did a 10 minute speak with no notes about Louie and her unique approach to multi-tasking as weighmaster at the Healdsburg site as she weighed trucks and got a suntan in her bikini. I wish (and probably many of you do too) that I could have been there! Thank you Glenda!
5. We had nearly 20 people show up for dinner without having confirmed and reserved their seats. This is partly our fault for not following up, and we apologize for the "musical chairs" we were doing trying to accommodate everyone.

Now-for the good parts:

Toby, his family, co workers, and friends were so proud of him, and the company, that they will remember the night in a positive way forever. I loved the story of his dad coming to the dinner table and informing the family he had sold the family car and bought a flatbed truck to deliver milk to the co op in Petaluma. The beginnings of Toby's Trucking. Congrats Toby Giacomini!!

Josh McGarve getting his mom to his table, his youngest daughter Kylie, to introduce him, and hearing her say she "really didn't know her Dad as to his career, just as her father and coach, and she was looking forward to the video to learn more about what he did for his career". Loved it!

Karen and Don (Kadon Trucking) present to share Kimber's big moment as incoming President. Very special!

A rare public speak from Dan Giordani of Argonaut!! And he did a great job!

Mike Ghilotti's inspirational message about Frank Palagi was full of emotion, and respect. Don't you wish you could have been listening to some of those lunches at Joe's where history was being made? And the pinnacle of the night was "Louie the Legend" Gobbi being honored. He may not think he deserves it, but he certainly did and does. What a career and list of project accomplishments! All the speakers on all the videos were great, but Jim Gobbi was exceptional in recounting Louie's projects and companies he worked with. Remarkable. And who would not agree it was fantastic to see Louie get up to the Mic and tell us, "I built Sears Point"!!!!

Thanks to Mark Soiland, Kylie McGarva, Mike Ghilotti, Nate Ehni and Brian Ongaro, and all the speakers on the video for speaking from the heart about your respective honorees!

I loved seeing Rick and his table mates including John Barella there front and center as our Premier Sponsor.

Our other Premier Sponsor was Toby's, and it was so cool to see Toby Giacomini bring his family who so enjoyed his being honored.

Josh McGarva thank you for your speech and for bringing my Dad into your acceptance speech. You touched my heart!

We worked through some "hiccups" in production and seating, and McKenzie got her first event "under her belt". Special thanks to Corinna for being there to help McKenzie through what was obviously a stressful evening for her. We will quietly review our work and improve for the next event, and I hope you all accept our congratulations and thank you's for how supportive you were Saturday night.

Lessons Learned! Just know we will review our event and our job performance like you all do after a project. We will get better. Thanks for your patience and thanks for helping make the night memorable for Toby, Josh, Frank, and Louie. Their families appreciate the respect!!!

That's All Folks

John

PS for the uncorrupted download of the videos from Saturday Night, click on these link:

Contractor of the Year - Josh McGarva - Western Water <https://youtu.be/4d2MgQw2-MQ>

Hermsmeyer Hall of Fame - Posthumous - Frank Palagi <https://youtu.be/dl5KP3Eq564>

Affiliate of the Year - Toby's Trucking <https://youtu.be/zVwj7SAU-H4>

Hermsmeyer Hall of Fame - Living - Louie Gobbi <https://youtu.be/604qyTTSfZA>



ECA COMMITTEE NEWS

1. **ECA Executive Committee (Officers) Meetings** are recurring every month and are held every Last Tuesday from 11:00-12:00pm, in the small NCBE conference room.
2. **ECA Board of Directors meetings** are recurring every month and are held every last Tuesday from 12:00-1:30pm, in the main conference boardroom at NCBE.
3. **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.
4. **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

ECA EVENTS

1. **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.
2. **June 21, 2026** -ECA Show and Shine Car Show will be held at Julliard Park at 227 Santa Rosa, Ave. in Santa Rosa from 9:00am-3:30pm
3. **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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NEWS YOU CAN USE

1. SCTA came out with their 2025 Comprehensive Transportation Plan-here it is. My comment on it: It is a “fool’s errand” to state your mission/goal is carbon free transportation by 2050 - That is not going to happen.

Link: [SCTA-CTP21_v8.pdf](#)

2. \$6.2 billion reservoir progress-[Trump administration approves plan backed by Newsom to build largest California reservoir in 50 years | Modesto Bee](#)

Northern California Engineering Contractors Association

The ECA, and its Board of Directors, has been the voice of the engineering construction industry for 50 years. Since 1976, ECA is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year!

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.

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ECA & NCBE SAFETY & EDUCATION TRAINING

ECA MEMBERS PAY THE NCBE PRICE

February:

Thursday 2/5

[Exclusive Enphase Installer Training](#) 10 am - 1 pm

Thursday 2/12

[Trenching/Excavation "Competent Person"](#) - English 9 am - 11 am

[Workers' Comp Office Hours](#) 1 pm - 4 pm

Tuesday 2/17

[CPR + First Aid February - English and Spanish](#) 9 am - 11 am

Wednesday 2/18

[Scaffolding Training "Qualified Person" - English](#) 1 pm - 3 pm

Tuesday 2/24

[Fall Protection "Competent Person" - English & Spanish](#) 9 am - 11 am

From the Desk of Jim Persons

Diesel Exhaust Safety

On construction sites, mines, and other types of work sites, diesel engines are used frequently. Diesel engines power everything from water pumps to heavy equipment that allows for day-to-day activities to be completed efficiently.

To continue reading

[**Click HERE**](#)



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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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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