



“CONSTRUCTING A WAY FOR A BETTER FUTURE”

ECA Newsletter

John's 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.



Partnering and Value Engineering to be a Bigger Part of Local Projects

Last week, several of our ECA contractors met with several public works Directors in the FANCY new County Infrastructure Offices (old American Ag Credit Building) at 400 Aviation Blvd. We had a special presentation by Justin Kunnert from Caltrans about the benefits and philosophy of “partnering” and stayed on the theme of “how can we make public works bidding and projects get built efficiently and without claims or delays”.

A few of the “takeaways” from the meeting last week:

1. Most, if not all, of the public works department heads, said their biggest concern was funding, not the bids or prosecution of the work by the contractors.
2. Several of the public works officials indicated they have substantial public works projects coming out to bid now or in the very near term-Healdsburg, Santa Rosa, Windsor all indicated they have a lot of projects coming to the street very soon. Windsor was the most surprising to me as they have in excess of \$150,000,000 mostly in treatment plant improvements upcoming.
3. Nobody had a better idea of how to deal with the lack of “veterans” on city public work staffs so 3rd party CMs will continue.
4. Partnering for small city projects may not need or warrant a “full blown” partnering facilitation but there is no reason owners cannot pick and choose some of the partnering philosophies and apply them to smaller projects in a positive and constructive manner.
5. Everyone liked the concept of “value engineering” and sharing the savings with the owner. All admitted a 3rd party design engineer can be a “downer” to value engineering concepts.

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**2025
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6. Another idea that seemed to get everyone nodding their heads in approval was to do Standard Plan reviews and specification change considerations on a regional basis rather than the “one off” way we have always done reviews and advice in the past. Some spec changes are common amongst all the cities and counties, and some are initiated by the owner themselves. All agreed it would be beneficial and efficient to schedule a workshop in the winter months to go over proposed spec changes and proposed standard plan changes for all the public works departments.
7. The biggest and best idea was to utilize our Annual General Membership Meeting to host the public works staffers to present upcoming projects in design or contemplated/needed in the next 10 years. We can get a 10-year look ahead for upcoming projects all in one presentation!

Throughout the meeting, ideas were shared freely and respectfully, and we even discussed Project Labor Agreements and how a well-intentioned policy can create lots of staff time and less bidders if a PLA is not done correctly. All the public works directors agreed with us that careful flexibility must be built into the PLA to cover niche work items that may not have a broad local union representation.

I want to thank Mike Ghilotti for getting Caltrans’ Justin to participate with us, also Dan Hennessey from Santa Rosa for helping put this meeting together, as well as Dale Smith of RCX, Matt Storm of Granite, Dale Mahoney of Ghilotti Construction Company and Dan Giordani of Argonaut for showing up and participating. We had Sonoma County, city of Sonoma, city of Santa Rosa, Windsor Town, City of Healdsburg and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority all represented as well.

Let’s keep lines of communication open and watch the bid numbers come down when our relationships flourish!

That’s All Folks!

John



COMMITTEE NEWS

- A. ECA Executive Committee** Recurring Meeting (Dan Giordani President, Kimber Lenning Carpenter Vice-President, Matt Storm Treasurer, Casey Wood Secretary, Mike Gulley Past President)-Every 4th Tuesday of the month from 11:00am-12:00pm from January through October, Place NCBE small conference room 1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa, CA - next meeting Tuesday July 22, 2025 from 11:00am to 12:00pm
- B. ECA Board of Directors** Recurring Meeting – Every 4th Tuesday of the month from 12:00pm -1:30pm from January through October, Place – NCBE Main Board Room 1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa, CA – next meeting Tuesday July 22, 2025, from 12:00pm to 1:30pm.
- C. ECA Government Affairs Committee** Recurring Meeting-Every 4th Tuesday of the month from 1:30pm – 3:00pm from January through October, Place -NCBE small conference room 1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa, CA – next Meeting Tuesday July 22, 2025 from **1:45pm to 3:00pm**- (Chair John Bly, Members Ross Liscum, Keith Woods, Joanne Webster, Dale Mahoney, Mark Soiland, Mike Wolff, John Reid, and Aimi Dutra)-invited guests TBD soon
- D. ECA Specification Meeting** Recurring Meeting Every 4th Wednesday of the month from February through October from 3:00pm to 4:30pm, Place-NCBE Main Board Room, 1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa, CA – next meeting Wednesday July 23, 2025 from 3:00pm to 4:30pm (Chairs Dale Smith/Casey Wood, Antonio Mencarini, John Reid, Geoff Coleman, Jason Nutt, (and invited guests linked to topics). We will try to get the Windsor Public Works and/or Petaluma Public Works and CIP project director to participate. Announcement next week!

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Highway 37 secures \$73 million to fund project to help traffic flow-[Highway 37 project awarded \\$73 million state grant - The North Bay Business Journal](#)

SMART keeps moving north-Healdsburg is next-[SMART in line for \\$81 million in state funds to extend service to Healdsburg - The North Bay Business Journal](#)

Are you on the short list for Rohnert Park SOMO development? [Rohnert Park council OKs more than 200 houses in the next phase of SOMO Village - The North Bay Business Journal](#)

We would like you to utilize Mike Brown Electric (ECA Member) but if you need electrical sub other than MBE, here is the list of electrical contractors you might find useful-[Research: Electrical contractors in San Francisco North Bay - The North Bay Business Journal](#)

ICE raids could strain construction workforce, projects

*The construction industry faces significant workforce challenges as Immigration and Customs Enforcement intensifies deportation actions under the Trump administration. Recent raids, including one in New Orleans that led to the arrest of 15 workers, have created a climate of fear among both documented and undocumented workers, leading to absenteeism and jobsite disruptions. The Hispanic Construction Council highlights the vital role Hispanic workers play in the industry, comprising nearly 34% of the workforce. **Full Story:** [Engineering News-Record \(tiered subscription model\)](#)*

DHS: Use E-Verify to check status of noncitizen workers

*The Department of Homeland Security has advised employers to use E-Verify to check the employment authorization status of noncitizen workers, following the Trump administration's revocation of work authorization for more than 500,000 noncitizens from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Employers must generate status change reports on E-Verify and reverify employees using Form I-9, Supplement B. **Full Story:** [Construction Dive/HR Dive](#)*

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ARE YOU AWARE

THAT YOUR ACCESS TO WATER IS ABOUT TO CHANGE?



YOUR WATER YOUR FUTURE

ALL OUTCOMES WILL AFFECT YOUR WATER SUPPLY

JOIN US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF YOUR WATER

TUESDAY
JULY 1ST
5:30 PM
FINLEY COMMUNITY CENTER
SANTA ROSA, CA

PVP **THE POTTER VALLEY WATER PROJECT (PVP)**

A hydroelectric and water diversion project on the Eel River that transfers water to the Russian River and serves as a critical water provider to Mendocino, Sonoma, and Marin County Communities

PG&E **PG&E, THE OWNER OF THE PVP, IS LOOKING TO DECOMMISSION THE PVP**

PG&E's position is that PVP no longer generates energy in a cost-effective manner so they are seeking to release their liability. In doing so, part of the potential agreement is to remove the dams (Scott Dam and Cape Horn Dam) that serve the PVP and eliminate the diversion of water to the Russian River

PRESENTED BY:



RSVP HERE

ECA 32nd Annual Golf Tournament



Friday, July 11, 2025
Windsor Golf Club
1340 19th Hole, Windsor

SOLD OUT!!!!

We do have more Sponsor opportunities:

[Click HERE for Flyer](#)



Thank you to our Sponsors:

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ECA SAFETY & EDUCATION TRAINING



CPR / First Aid

July 16 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Training includes bleeding control, strokes, seizures, broken bones and other life-threatening emergencies. Adult/child/infant CPR & airway obstruction management covered. This course is designed as both a course for first-timers and as a refresher.

[Click HERE for Flyer](#)

Confined Space

July 17 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

This course covers proper procedures for making entry into Permit Required Confined Spaces. Participants are prepared to operate in the capacity of Entrant, Attendant or Entry Supervisor during confined space operations. Participants are familiarized with CFR 1910.146 and how to properly employ the permit program. This course is a combination of classroom instruction and practical application in actual permit spaces utilizing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, meters and ventilation. This course is required by OSHA before an employee can enter a Permit Required Confined Space. Certification of completion is provided.

[Click HERE for Flyer](#)

CPR / First Aid

August 7 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Training includes bleeding control, strokes, seizures, broken bones and other life-threatening emergencies. Adult/child/infant CPR & airway obstruction management covered. This course is designed as both a course for first-timers and as a refresher.

[Click HERE for Flyer](#)

Competent Person / Trenching & Excavation

August 28 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

The course will cover soil analysis, sloping, shoring and shielding, hazardous situations, excavation standards and more...

[Click HERE for Flyer](#)

From the Desk of Jim Persons

Heat Stroke Safety

Heat stress creates many hazards in the workplace for those employees who have to work in a hot environment.

Hot environments can create indirect safety hazards, such as causing employees to lose focus on their work tasks or causing fatigue. Heat stress also causes more direct illnesses, such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. According to the CDC, an average of 702 heat-related deaths occur in the United States annually. Additionally, there are 67,512 emergency department visits due to heat annually, on average.



To read more.

[Click HERE](#)

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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ECA NEW MEMBER

Sorren

Veronica King
3562 Round Barn Circle Suite 200
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone: 707-542-3343
Email: vking@sorren.com
<https://sorren.com/>



Pisenti & Brinker is now Sorren: A Stronger Firm for a Stronger North Bay Business Community [Santa Rosa, California] -- Pisenti & Brinker, a trusted name in Sonoma County since 1965, is proud to announce that it will officially become Sorren in May. Sorren is a brand new, Top 50 accounting & advisory firm that was created by leaders from respected, like-minded firms from across the country who saw the opportunity to build something better: a national firm rooted in local values, designed to better serve growing businesses and evolving industries. Click [HERE](#) to read more.

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!

News You Can Use:

Continued from page 3

7. **Court: DOT grants can't be linked to ICE cooperation**
A federal judge has blocked a Trump administration plan requiring 20 Democratic-led states to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to receive transportation grants. McConnell ruled that the Transportation Department overstepped its authority and violated the Constitution. The ruling came after a lawsuit by Democratic state attorneys general, who argued that the policy unlawfully coerced states to follow Trump's immigration agenda. **Full Story:** [NBC News/Reuters](#)
8. **Bid protests can challenge PLAs, but it's risky**
Bid protests offer a strategic workaround for the Trump administration to limit Biden-era project labor agreement mandates without directly opposing organized labor, appeasing both union supporters and contractor groups. However, this approach risks prolonged legal battles and leaves both sides dissatisfied, as it relies on uncertain judicial outcomes and fails to deliver clear policy direction. **Full Story:** [Engineering News-Record \(tiered subscription model\)](#)

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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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

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.

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!

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NORTH BAY CONSTRUCTION CORPS

Training The Next Generation of Construction Workers

The North Bay Construction Corps (NBCC) is an after-school, 3-month basic construction training program for seniors in their last semester of high school. Classes are taught by local contractors and construction managers. Participants are introduced to a variety of trades and earn certifications in Personal Protective Equipment and CPR/First Aid.

Each meeting is led by a contractor or tradesperson who presents information about his/her particular trade and then leads students through a hands-on skill-building activity. There is a strong focus on safety awareness at each meeting.

2025 NBCC Schedule: Click [HERE](#)

For additional information, contact: NBCC Sonoma: Mackenzie Smith
[\(707\) 542-9502](tel:7075429502) / mackenzie@ncbeonline.com

Save the Dates for 2025!

ECA Golf Tournament - Friday, July 11 at Windsor Golf Club
ECA Luncheon at Glenn Smith's Home - Friday, August 29
Wine & Dozers Auction - Saturday, November 1 at Graton Resort & Casino
ECA Annual General Membership Meeting - Date/Time/Place TBD



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Northern California Engineering Contractors Association

The ECA, and its Board of Directors, has been the voice of the engineering construction industry for almost 50 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.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

John Bly, Executive Director
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Mary Kennedy Cabrera, Member Services Director
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