



“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.



### The Message Is Not Strictly Monetary

“Tis the season”

I remember wrestling with the decisions as to how much to dole out at Christmas time when I owned my own company. If we did not make much money (or any money in some cases), how much did I allocate to my employees at end of year? It was not a simple equation that said if we do “x” we send out “y” in bonuses. It was far more complicated than that.

One has to provide enough that all of one’s employees believe they can stay with the company and be treated fairly. It is not the fault of one person who worked his/her butt off if the company did not hit its numbers for the year. It could have been because of the market conditions, one bad job run by someone else, and/or any number of other factors. That is why I always tried to let the salary that was going to a key employee cover his/her compensation (for the most part) and the discretionary part of the profit sharing/bonus pool go to the lower salaried and paid employees. We had formulas that kind of set the profit-sharing pool (which was a strict percentage based upon paychecks-in other words, higher paid workers got more of the profit-sharing pool than lower paid workers). Then one had to set aside some bonus money that I always wanted my division managers to distribute based upon extraordinary contributions by one of their team members. For the most part, the division managers got to divide their portion of the bonus pool and distribute it. Then there was a 3<sup>rd</sup> “pot” that I decided to allocate based upon what I thought was a worker’s dedication, safety record, contribution to the psyche of the other employees and several other considerations that made that person’s work stand out from most of the other employees.

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**2025  
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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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**MEMBER SERVICES DIRECTOR**

MARY KENNEDY CABRERA

For the most part, our format worked unless and until employees felt management got too much credit (credit = bonus money). When that happened, it was really hard to turn that attitude around in a smaller firm. That is why one should be very careful how much to distribute to ownership and upper and presumably well-paid management. The lower paid employees need to trust management and ownership, and they need to feel their contribution mattered and was recognized and fair for their efforts. I get that there are some people that will always feel they are not appreciated as much as they feel they should be. Those few are problematic, but you cannot upset the entire company compensation policy just because of a few disgruntled folks that may always be disgruntled. You owners and managers need to distribute based on keeping the majority of the workers satisfied and looking forward to improving their and the company's performance in the upcoming year.

I hope you all had great a great year in 2025 so your choices can be generous and deserved. If not, your leadership skills will have to surge forward a bit to make sure you keep the workforce intact and motivated moving forward. If there is one trait I see over and over again in successful firms, it is an attitude of "family" and getting the majority of your employees working towards a common goal and success. Although money is important, a healthy company attitude is not strictly about money compensation.

I hope you all find the magic balance this season!

That's All Folks!

John



**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](mailto:mary@nceca.org) with your spotlight information and send in photos if you have them!



NBCC



# TOGETHER WE CAN!



Join Redwood Credit Union, A Simple Gesture and North Coast Builders Exchange as we collect food for families in need. Together, we can make a meaningful difference – right from your doorstep. Scan to QR Code to register and leave non-perishable food items on your doorstep on A Simple Gesture’s food pick-up dates.

For each donor who enrolls, the North Bay Construction Corps will receive a \$10 donation.

## PANTRY LIST:

- Natural Peanut Butter
- Canned Proteins like Tuna
- Pasta, Rice & Beans
- Healthy Cereal, Oatmeal & Breakfast Bars
- Shelf Stable Milk
- Canned Soup
- Canned Vegetables and Fruits
- Energy Bars, Nuts & Raisins
- Cooking Oil, Cornstarch & Sugar
- Ziplock & Garbage Bags

Use the above flyer. For every person who uses the QR Code on the flyer, RCU and A Simple Gesture will donate \$10 to the North Bay Construction Corps.

There is also a bin at NCBE, 1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa for food donations.

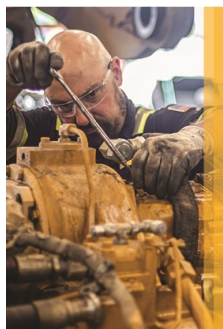
## COMMITTEE NEWS

- 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 Last Tuesday** (this is a change!!) 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 February 23, 2026 from 11:00am to 12:00pm
- B. **ECA Board of Directors** Recurring Meeting – **Every Last Tuesday** (this is a change!) 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 January 27, 2026, from 12:00pm to 1:30pm. This is our first meeting of the year, and we will do strategic planning for the year so Directors, please don't miss this meeting!
- C. **ECA Government Affairs Committee** recurring meetings will be every last Tuesday starting in January 2026, from 1:45 pm to 3:30 pm- (Chair John Bly, Members Ross Liscum, Keith Woods, Joanne Webster, Dale Mahoney, Mark Soiland, Mike Wolff, John Reid, and Aimi Dutra).
- D. **ECA Spec Meeting**-Recurring Meetings will be every last Wednesday of the month from January 2026 through October 2026 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm, Place-NCBE Main Board Room, 1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa, CA – Next meeting will be Wednesday, January 28, 2026, from 3-5:00pm.
- E. **ECA Nominating Committee** will meet after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year to nominate the Bridge Award and the Golden Hardhat Awards for 2026.
- F. **ECA 50 Year Anniversary Committee will meet as needed.**
- G. **ECA Community Relations Committee will meet as needed.**

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**Save the Date!**

## **48th Annual ECA Installation & Awards Dinner**

Saturday, January 31, 2026  
Santa Rosa Golf & Country Club

To Register click [HERE](#)

To Sponsor click [HERE](#)

We are honoring the following at the Awards Dinner

Volunteer of the Year—Kristi Pruett, RCX, Inc.

Contractor of the Year—Western Water Constructors Inc.

Affiliate of the Year— Toby’s Trucking

Hermesmeyer Hall of Fame – Louie Gobbi, Heavy Equipment Rentals

Hermesmeyer Hall of Fame, Posthumous – Frank Palagi, Ghilotti Bros Inc.

Thank you Sponsors:

[Ghilotti Construction](#)—Hermesmeyer Award Sponsor

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[Ritchie Bros. Inc.](#)—President’s Reception Sponsor

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2024 Contractor of the Year  
Northwest General Engineering



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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

1. **Fed rate cut aids existing construction, but new builds lag**  
Contractors are optimistic about the construction market following the Federal Reserve's third interest rate cut of 2025, which reduced the benchmark rate by 25 basis points. While the cut boosts confidence for ongoing projects, industry leaders like Granger Hassmann of Adolfson & Peterson and Scott Lyons of DPR Construction note it's insufficient to spur new nonresidential construction. Financing remains tight, and long-term rates will be crucial for a significant rebound. Despite this, sectors such as data centers and healthcare remain active, and contractors are preparing for a stronger 2026 amid a persistent labor shortage. **Full Story:** [Construction Dive](#)
2. **What happened in construction this year?**  
The construction industry in 2025 has been marked by significant challenges and rapid changes. Tariffs introduced by President Donald Trump created volatility for fixed-price builders, affecting insurance and procurement. Project labor agreements saw a tumultuous year with federal mandates and legal challenges, while state and local jurisdictions adapted independently. AI transitioned from experimental to practical use, enhancing project management and safety. Data center construction surged to support AI but faced labor shortages and supply chain issues. Immigration enforcement by the Trump administration intensified, impacting the labor pool. Meanwhile, deregulation efforts reduced compliance costs but increased environmental uncertainties.
3. **Permitting reform will be big priority for House T&I**  
The House Transportation and Infrastructure committee will continue looking at ways to streamline project review as part of its efforts next year to craft a surface transportation reauthorization bill, writes chair Sam Graves, R-Mo. The Promoting Efficient Review for Modern Infrastructure Today (PERMIT) Act, under consideration in the House, is presented as a targeted solution to streamline Clean Water Act permitting processes. The bill aims to clarify and expedite permits, reduce unnecessary litigation and provide more regulatory certainty for builders and businesses. Graves argues that the PERMIT Act will cut red tape and minimize project delays while still upholding clean water protections, representing a balanced approach to reform. **Full Story:** [The Washington Times](#) (12/10)
4. **Contractors' AI skepticism is slowly changing**  
An openness to AI was apparent at the Associated General Contractors of America's annual convention, even though AI still struggles with certain tasks, such as registering 2D floor plan elements. A project at the San Francisco International Airport was highlighted at the event to demonstrate how Hensel Phelps used Track3D's AI to track progress and identify errors. Pete Malmberg from C&C Drywall told conference attendees that the best approach to AI is to "start small, then you can fail small."  
**Full Story:** [SmartBrief/Infrastructure](#)
5. [Napa school district kicks off new phase of construction funded by \\$230 million bond](#)
6. [Vallejo casino controversy: Transparency, legal questions rise as site work begins– The Press Democrat](#)
7. [Revived plans for development surrounding Santa Rosa's historic Carrillo Adobe to get first public look](#)
8. [Construction begins on new Vallejo Highway 37/Fairgrounds interchange– The Press Democrat](#)

## From the Desk of Jim Persons

### Common Fire Extinguisher Issues

Fire extinguishers are designed to extinguish incipient stage fires. They also may serve as a life-saving device to escape to safety when a fire occurs. These life-saving devices can only do their job if they are functioning properly.

To continue reading

[Click HERE](#)



#### Equipment for Sale:

**Pacific Coast Cutters** is closing and everything must go...

we have 4 Dodges 2012 to 2019; many small tools including 4" & 7" hand grinders, roto hammers, safety supplies, rain barrels, electric cords, twist lock heavy duty electric cords, resettable gas monitor, diamond bits and blades. We are selling 30 years of accumulation some new some used. Call or come by soon things are going fast. 450 Lakeview Street, Suite B, Petaluma, CA 94952 707-765-0661 pcc@pacificcoastcutters.com

Go to their Facebook page for photos. [\(1\) Facebook](#) [\(1\) Facebook](#)

#### 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.

## ECA & NCBE SAFETY & EDUCATION TRAINING

ECA MEMBERS PAY THE NCBE PRICE

### December:

12/16/25

Scaffolding Training "Qualified Person" - English & Spanish

<https://members.ncbeonline.com/events/Scaffolding-Training-Qualified-Person-English-Spanish-2259/details>

### January:

1/8 & 9/26

OSHA 10 hour for Construction—English & Spanish

[OSHA 10-Hour for Construction -](#)

1/13/26

CPR / First Aid—English & Spanish

[CPR + First Aid January- English and Spanish](#)

1/14/26

Confined Space “Competent Person” - English & Spanish

[Confined Space “Competent Person” - English & Spanish](#)

1/26/26

Fall Protection "Competent Person" - English & Spanish

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



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## 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

## **Cabrera & Associates**

Anthony A. Cabrera, P.E., P.L.S.  
Project Consultant

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# Give the gift of a JOY-FILLED HOLIDAY



## Support a local family this holiday season!

For 19 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marín's Annual Gift Drive has helped bring joy and comfort to families who need it most. With nearly 300 local families seeking support this year, your generosity makes all the difference.



## WAYS TO GIVE:



### Adopt a Club Family

When you adopt a family, you ensure no one goes without. We have letters from families that share their specific needs and wishes.



### Make a Direct Donation

Donate directly to Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marín to help support the nearly 300 local families in need this holiday season.



### Donate Gift Cards

Gift cards provide caregivers with the joy and pride that comes from choosing a specific gift for their child and support their needs for basic essentials this holiday season including food and clothing.



For information about Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marín Holiday Gift Drive scan the QR code or visit: [bgcsonoma-marin.org/holidays](http://bgcsonoma-marin.org/holidays)

*Thank You*

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

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