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ABOUT TAUC

THE ASSOCIATION OF Union Constructors (TAUC) is the premier national trade association representing the 21st Century union construction industry. TAUC consists of more than 2,500 union contractors, local union contractor associations and vendors in the industrial maintenance and construction field. We demonstrate union construction is the best option because it is safer and more productive, and it provides a higher-quality and cost-competitive product.

OUR MISSION

OUR MISSION IS to act as an advocate for union contractors, advancing the cause through an educated and action-driven membership. We aim to enhance labor-management cooperation, workplace safety & health and collaboration among construction users with the greater goal of making union contractors more competitive in the marketplace.

ADAPTATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

THE ASSOCIATION OF Union Constructors evolved from the National Erectors Association, which was founded in 1969 by the leading union steel erectors in the construction industry. Over the years, membership grew to include all types of union contractors, and, consequently, the name and structure of the association was changed to The Association of Union Constructors in 2007. The new association reflects the changing face of the construction industry and more accurately reflects the growing diversity of TAUC members.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT
Who Are the Millennials ... And Why Should You Care?
by ROBERT SANTILLO

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WE HEAR A lot of talk today about sustainable development and the importance of using our natural resources wisely. Environmental stewardship is a responsibility that we should take seriously. However, there is another equally important type of sustainability that we don’t talk about nearly enough—attracting the next generation of young Americans to our industry and making sure they understand exactly who we are and what we’re all about. If they don’t view industrial construction as a worthwhile, rewarding career, then the legacy we’ve spent our lives building may be in jeopardy.

At TAUC’s annual Leadership Conference earlier this year, I spoke about the pressing need to reach out to this new wave of young employees born between 1980 and 2000, often referred to as millennials. In this country alone, there are more than 80 million millennials who have almost nothing in common with earlier generations of American youth. Their ability to access and share digital information is ingrained in them, in much the same way that people who lived through the Great Depression scrutinize their expenses. Some predict the millennials will be the most informed generation ever.

Who are the millennials? The Pew Research Center recently described them as “confident, connected, and open to change.” Millennials are educated, motivated, resourceful and technologically savvy. They have grown up in one of the most fast-paced periods of history, have learned how to quickly latch on to new concepts, and are optimistic about the future.

Why should we care about the millennials? Every day, workers with decades of construction experience retire. We don’t have enough young people working with—and learning from—these veterans. Invaluable institutional knowledge will soon leave the jobsite with these retirees...lost forever. Our challenge is to attract this next generation of workers to a career in union construction, an industry all too often considered old-fashioned and focused more on brawn than brains.

Of course, I realize that it’s tough to think about such long-term problems during these difficult economic times. But we have a responsibility to the future and the generations to come. In particular, we need to address these issues:

• What are the major misconceptions about union construction, and what can we do at the local, individual company level to combat and eliminate those stereotypes?
• How can we emphasize the challenging high-tech aspects of union construction and maintenance?

The Industrial Revolution led to an improved standard of living through advances in farming, manufacturing, transportation and technology. Society has reaped the benefits from this era and it is hard to imagine life any other way. Regardless of the advances of technology, there will always be a need for open-minded and creative individuals to lead us into the future. And who better to lead us through the Informational Revolution than the youth who are so skilled in technology that it is invisible to them?

To stay competitive, our top priority as union constructors should be to spread the word that our companies are great places to work. Experts continue to predict a workforce shortage when boomers retire. If we are not actively planning recruitment strategies for the future of our industry, we are going to find ourselves hung out to dry when the economy improves. I recommend that you read TAUC Labor Committee Chairman Gary Bohn’s article on Page 24 for a few more ideas along these lines.

In addition to planning for retirements, we should also be focused on recruiting for potential growth and new developments that are unknown to us today. “Be prepared” is the famous Boy Scout motto. Have you done your best to ensure the viability of union construction?
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AS A CONTRACTOR, paperwork is one of your biggest headaches. Every morning a new mountain of invoices, contracts and memos appears on your desk. But chances are one piece of paper – the familiar I-9 form that all new workers must fill out to verify their employment eligibility – rarely crosses your mind. After all, it’s just a simple one-page form, right? How could you possibly mess it up?

Unfortunately, it’s not that difficult. In fact, your staff may have unwittingly been making mistakes with I-9s for years. Small mistakes, to be sure – but in today’s political climate, even the tiniest slip-up could cost your company tens of thousands of dollars in federal fines. That’s because over the past couple of years, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) has become much more aggressive in sending agents to check small firms’ I-9 records and crack down on infractions.

“Most employers will tell me, ‘We know about I-9s, we do our I-9s,’ but they haven’t completed them correctly and appropriately,” said Camille Griffin, president of I-9 Okay LLC (www.i-9okay.com), a Colorado firm that specializes in helping companies comply with I-9 requirements. “I see this happening over and over again. We’ve worked very hard to educate employers on their responsibilities, but it’s been an uphill battle. The last few cases we’ve worked, the average fine has been about $885 per form, per employee. So if you have 100 employees, you can obviously do the math."

Recently Griffin was hired by a large construction firm with over 200 employees and a sophisticated human resources department. Nevertheless, “We audited 225 of their forms, and only 38 were correct. It wasn’t for lack of trying; they just didn’t get them right.” Part of the problem is that the form looks fairly simple. But Griffin likes to point out that even though the I-9 is just one page in length, the government handbook that goes along with it is 57 pages long. That’s a lot of instructions.

Employers are also seeing a shift in the way the federal government enforces immigration laws. In the past, ICE would often raid large companies and arrest undocumented workers, but such operations were time-consuming and expensive. Now, the emphasis has moved to more general paperwork compliance – sifting through a company’s files with a fine-toothed comb to make sure it has correctly verified the identity and eligibility of every single person hired over a period of several years, regardless of nationality or citizenship status.

“I see them really going after small- and medium-sized businesses now,” Griffin said. “ICE knows that most of these companies don’t have a lot of fighting power or a corporate counsel on staff, so most of them are just going to pay the fines.”

So what problems should you be on the lookout for? Some of the most common mistakes on I-9 forms include:

1. **Failing to complete the form within three business days of hire.** This violation will garner the maximum fine – usually no less than $850 per form, and sometimes as much as $1,100 per form.

2. **Failing to accurately complete the document list in Section 2.** This is the section where information from the employee’s form of I.D. is supposed to be logged in. Oftentimes employers will leave this section blank, reasoning that since a photocopy of the I.D. will be stapled to the form anyway, there’s no need to fill in the information. Wrong!

3. **Failing to put the date of hire in the certification area in Section 2.** At the bottom of the section is a certification statement in bold print. Within that statement is a tiny blank line where the employer must fill in the date the worker was hired. Many employers miss this.

Griffin urges employers to rethink their approach to I-9 forms. “This is as big a liability, and in some cases even bigger, than a company’s tax liability,” she said. “Give it the attention it deserves.”
Invitation to Collude: The FTC Gets Aggressive

by STEVEN JOHN FELLMAN, GKG LAW, P.C.

RECENTLY, THE FEDERAL Trade Commission (FTC) entered into a consent order with U-Haul International, Inc., the nation’s largest truck rental company. The FTC alleged that U-Haul had invited Budget/ Avis, its largest competitor, and others to enter into an agreement to increase one-way truck rental charges.

According to the FTC, U-Haul decided there was a need to raise prices. It therefore set up a program to have its area managers meet with their counterparts at Budget/ Avis and other competitors and explain that U-Haul was going to raise prices and the others could follow. If the others chose not to raise prices and attempted to compete on the basis of a lower price, U-Haul managers were instructed to inform them that U-Haul would reduce its area prices below those charged by competitors.

In other words, either U-Haul’s competitors would raise their prices or there would be a price war. Since U-Haul was the largest and strongest of the competitors, the FTC argued, it believed that it would win any such war. U-Haul also believed that its competitors would not want a price war and would follow its price increase once they learned of the plan.

In the typical antitrust case brought under Section 1 of the Sherman Act, the government has to prove there was an agreement among competitors to raise prices, that the agreement had an anti-competitive affect, and that the parties to the agreement had market power – that is, the power to affect prices by their actions. However, the FTC brought this case under Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act. Section 5 outlaws any unfair or deceptive acts or practices or unfair methods of competition in or affecting commerce. Under Section 5, the FTC claims that it does not have to prove there was an agreement among competitors or that the action involved actually caused economic injury. According to the FTC, Section 5 outlaws one party’s attempts to get another to reach an agreement regarding prices even though such an agreement was never reached – that is, it outlaws an “invitation to collude.”

For contractors, this is an important case. For many years, a contractor’s biggest antitrust exposure related to bid rigging. Bid rigging cases are filed under Section 1 of the Sherman Act and the government is required to prove the existence of an agreement to fix a bid. The agreement can be in the form of actually deciding who will be the low bidder or just agreeing that one party will bid low and the other will submit a higher “friendly” bid. However, in the typical case, the government has to prove the existence of an agreement between two or more parties.

In the U-Haul case, the government found that the existence of an invitation to collude was sufficient to violate Section 5 of the FTC Act without requiring proof of an actual agreement. A statement such as, “I know that we are both bidding on jobs A and B and that Job A is more within your area of expertise and Job B is more within my area of expertise – I hope that we don’t go to war on these bids” would probably be enough for the government to contend that there was an invitation to collude in violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act.

Contractors should make sure they understand how the antitrust laws apply to their business operations. Have an antitrust compliance program and update it periodically. Contractors that compete internationally should also understand that the EU and every major nation throughout the world all have their own antitrust requirements as well.

A copy of the U-Haul consent order can be found on the FTC website at www.ftc.gov.

Steve Fellman is president of GKG Law in Washington, D.C. He is also general counsel to The Association of Union Constructors.
WE ARE PLEASED to announce that TAUC Regular Member Piping & Equipment Company of Wichita, Kansas, is the winner of the 2010 Construction User Photo Contest!

The winning photo, shot by Bill Pearce, shows P&E crew members erecting a huge naphtha-splitter unit at the NCRA refinery in McPherson, Kansas. The splitter, manufactured in nearby Emporia, Kansas, is 186 feet tall, 12 feet in diameter and weighs 480,000 pounds. It will be used to extract benzene from the refined product and create cleaner fuel. The overall project was started in January 2010 and is expected to be wrapped up in September. Lifting the splitter into place was completed in one day, but it took three days of planning and setup prior to the lift.

The job is being worked under the NMA with the help of IUE Local 441, Boilermakers Local 83, Operators Local 101 and Carpenters Local 201.

“We’ve had excellent cooperation with all of the different trades and the owner of the facility, NCRA,” said P&E President John Wadsworth.

P&E began in 1946, and has been building refineries, power plants and pipeline pump stations throughout the Midwest ever since.

“We have an excellent reputation for providing quality, safety and value to our customers, and that's what union construction is all about,” Wadsworth said. “Also, I think the NMA is beneficial to the workers as well as the owner. It’s a great tool for providing value to everyone involved.”

The 2010 Construction User Photo Contest was announced to all TAUC members in late spring, and the entry deadline was June 30. The field of entries was narrowed down to 10 finalists, based on editorial content and how well they would suit a (vertical) cover. Author and source information was stripped from each photo, so judging was strictly anonymous.

The TAUC Editorial Committee convened in early July to judge the photos against a number of criteria:

- **Visual interest** - Is it interesting to look at? Will it draw readers into the magazine?
- **Editorial content** - Does it tell a story about industrial maintenance and construction?
- **Advancement of union constructors** - Does this photo enhance the public perception of union construction?
- **Evolution of TAUC** - Does this photo reflect the ever-changing “face” of our association?

Our special thanks to all who took the time to participate. On the following two pages you’ll find a selection of other impressive entries.
Selected 2010 Construction User Photo Contest Entries

MC Industrial - TAUC Governing Member

PHOTO BY: BILL PEARCE

Nooter Construction - TAUC Regular Member

PHOTO BY: LYNDAL TURNER

Construction & Turnaround Services - TAUC Governing Member

PHOTO BY: BILL PEARCE

Midwest Steel - TAUC Governing Member

PHOTO BY: MIDWEST STEEL

Chellino Crane - TAUC Regular Member

PHOTO BY: CHELLINO CRANE

Aker Construction - TAUC Governing Member

PHOTO BY: TERRY ALDERSON
Retrofitting for the Future
What the Waste Energy Recovery Trend Means for Contractors

by DAVID ACORD

“THINK GREEN” HAS become an industry buzz-phrase during the past few years as companies place more and more emphasis on sustainability and environmentally friendly practices. But is there really a place for green technology in the field of heavy industrial construction and maintenance?

The answer appears to be a strong ‘yes,’ as a growing number of large manufacturers are turning to technologies like combined heat and power (CHP) and recycled waste heat to increase their energy efficiency and save an awful lot of money on their power bills. Retrofitting these facilities with waste energy recovery systems represents a potentially lucrative new market for many TAUC members. However, while the benefits can be enormous, there are still plenty of regulatory and financial hurdles to overcome before the technology becomes the rule rather than the exception at plants across the country.

Under a CHP scheme, also known as cogeneration, a manufacturer builds a special power station onsite to generate electricity for its exclusive use, rather than rely solely on electricity delivered over transmission lines from a conventional power plant that may be located many miles away. This means that the manufacturer is not only generating electricity more efficiently, but because the power plant is right next door (literally), it can also capture a large percentage of the thermal waste heat made during the generation process and convert that waste back into usable energy as well.

A recycled waste heat system is very similar to CHP. The only major difference is that no energy is created onsite; instead, the focus is on capturing the heat created as a by-product of a large plant’s everyday industrial activities—for instance, heat generated during the production of paper, glass or metal. The waste heat is captured before it’s emitted into the atmosphere, then redirected to a heat recovery system and converted into steam. That steam then powers a turbine, which creates additional electricity.

“One of the biggest advantages to CHP and waste energy recovery is that they help reduce a company’s overall carbon footprint,” explained Jessica Bridges, executive director of the U.S. Clean Heat and Power Association. “A lot of organizations are looking to ‘green’ their production, and over the long term, [these

ArcelorMittal Indiana Harbor Facility
to approve it, but the U.S. Department of the boards of both companies still need the project is in the early design stages and maker’s Middletown, Ohio plant. The million waste energy project at the steel Chemicals Inc. are teaming up for a $300 Steel Corporation and Air Products and associated with recycled energy. AK take advantage of the cost savings

PUTTING PLANS INTO ACTION
U.S. manufacturers are eager to
take advantage of the cost savings associated with recycled energy. AK Steel Corporation and Air Products and Chemicals Inc. are teaming up for a $300 million waste energy project at the steel maker’s Middletown, Ohio plant. The project is in the early design stages and the boards of both companies still need to approve it, but the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) clearly likes the idea – it’s shipped in a grant of nearly $30 million to get the ball rolling. The plan is for Air Products to build, own and operate a 100-MW facility situated adjacent to AK Steel’s Middletown blast furnace.

“AK Steel supplies the fuel, which is blast furnace gas,” explained Joe Terrible, Air Products’ senior business development manager. “We convert that into steam and electric power. That power has a value to AK Steel, so they pay us for the process of doing the conversion.”
The technology Air Products plans to use on the project is actually part of a larger system the company has been working on with Danieli Corus, a Dutch manufacturer of blast furnaces. Dubbed BF Plus, it’s designed to enhance a blast furnace’s operation, thus increasing the calorific (or heat) value of the gas coming out of the furnace. The idea is to take that hotter gas and convert it into power in the most efficient manner possible.

“It helps us because it lowers the cost of electricity,” added Alan McCoy, VP of government and public relations for AK Steel. “And it helps the environment because it takes a waste gas stream and turns it into electricity that would typically be produced by burning coal; it displaces, if you will, that much coal-fired electricity.”

ArcelorMittal is also bullish on recycled energy. Late last year the company was awarded a matching grant of $31.6 million from DOE to fund a $63 million boiler project at its Indiana Harbor plant. Located on the southern shore of Lake Michigan, Indiana Harbor is the largest steel manufacturing facility in the U.S. and home to the No. 7 Blast Furnace, the largest one in North America. The plan is to capture waste gas from No. 7 that would otherwise be flared into the atmosphere and transfer it to a new high-efficiency boiler. Currently 22% of the blast furnace gas is flared; the new boiler system would cut it down to just 5% flared. The process is expected to generate a whopping 350,000 pounds of steam per hour that would then be used to produce electricity. ArcelorMittal says the project, which is expected to be up and running by July 2012, will result in a reduction of 340,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually – the equivalent of taking more than 60,000 cars off the road.

“The energy saved from the Blast Furnace Gas Flare Capture project at our Number 7 Blast Furnace will be the equivalent to the amount of electricity needed to power 40,000 households for a year,” said Michael Rippey, president and CEO of ArcelorMittal USA. “In addition, funding for this critical project will ensure the sustainability of steel-making in Northwest Indiana for years to come.”

SPEEDBUMPS ON THE GREEN HIGHWAY
However, getting projects like these up and running is no small feat. Currently there are around 3,600 CHP sites across the country, Bridges said, but that’s a relatively small number when you consider the vast number of industrial sites and commercial buildings that generate waste heat. For waste energy recovery to truly go mainstream, advocates say the federal government needs to help defray the substantial up-front costs of such projects and thus make CHP and recycled energy more attractive to investors.

Coalitions like The Alliance for Industrial Efficiency (of which TAUC is a member) are urging Congress to support new financial incentives for waste energy recovery projects. Bipartisan legislation now pending in the House and Senate would increase the size of investment tax credits available for such projects and make more facilities eligible to receive them.

The demand is certainly there. Bridges said that just over $150 million was set aside for CHP projects in last year’s stimulus funding, and the government received more than 300 applications for projects that totaled nearly $9 billion.

“The response was overwhelming,” she said. “People on Capitol Hill are beginning to recognize the potential that’s out there with CHP and waste recovery projects. Congress really needs to put some funding behind energy efficiency.”
A Commitment to Quality and Professionalism

What the Insulators Union is doing to keep its contractors competitive and rebuild the reputation of union construction

by JAMES A. GROGAN, General President, International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers

MEMBERS OF THE Association of Union Constructors often and understandably pose the question: What are labor unions doing to promote, expand and ensure the value of union construction in order to help their employing contractors compete more effectively in the marketplace?

It is an important question, one that goes to the very heart of what the future holds for union construction. The answer is of vital and equal importance to both labor and management.

The International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, in partnership with the contractor community, is committed to programs, policies and actions designed to promote and enhance the reputation of the unionized sector of our industry. I am especially proud of what has become known as our union’s Professional Craftsman Code of Conduct (PCCC) developed under the direction of our International Union’s General Executive Board.

This Code clearly establishes standards of conduct to be embraced both on and off the jobsite by every member of our union.

This Code clearly establishes standards of conduct to be embraced both on and off the jobsite by every member of our union — apprentice, journeyman and officer. These standards apply to safety practices, quality of work and dedication to professionalism. Every member of our union is required to attend one day of Code training and sign a pledge agreeing to the provisions and expectations spelled out, and acknowledging that failure to adhere to the Code carries stiff penalties, including suspension and, where warranted, expulsion from our ranks.

Over many years, union building tradesmen — especially those who came before us — worked diligently and with great pride and sacrifice to establish our reputation as the best and most productive source of craftsmanship, quality and value. Sadly, this reputation has experienced a degree of erosion in recent years. Within the Insulators Union, for example, a small minority of members — I call them the “ten percenters” or “rotten apples” — has tarnished our reputation and that of our good union employers.

A few lazy, self-centered, misinformed and misguided members engaged in shoddy work habits and inexcusable absenteeism. Other destructive actions included work slowdowns and unsanctioned walk-offs in response to small, insignificant and easily correctable grievances. For far too long, they got away with it, in part because some local union leaders were too timid and/or politically intimidated to put an end to the damaging activities. In 2002, our International Officers imposed mandatory fines in response to the most serious of transgressions: unsanctioned walk-offs. When a walk-off occurs, the members are automatically fined a minimum of $1,000.

However, it became apparent we needed to establish uniform standards of professional conduct to be applied to all members. The resulting PCCC leaves no doubt as to what is required of each member and what actions will simply not be tolerated.

The Code mandates enforcement procedures on the part of the local union leadership, beginning with the business manager and including the local union’s executive board. It allows for the establishment of the position of “Quality Control Craftsman” (QCC) on specified jobsites ensuring compliance with all Code provisions. The local union business manager is authorized to appoint an individual to the position and, in turn, the QCC directly reports to the business manager who is obligated to institute action against an offending member.
The Code also establishes a “three strikes and out” policy whereby an individual member—including any local union officer—has ample warning of his/her failure to adhere to the Code provisions. A first offense leads to a reprimand by the business manager and a first “strike.” A second offense results in local union charges and, if guilty, a second “strike.” The third offense is brought to the attention of the General President, who has the constitutional authority to impose the strictest of sanctions, including additional fines, suspension and, where warranted, expulsion from our ranks. To date, 10 individuals have been expelled from our ranks and their names have been published in our official Insulators Union Journal. Most unfortunately, I have found it necessary to go so far as to remove from office local union leadership that failed or refused to enforce Code provisions.

Implementation of the Code was a controversial matter and, in several instances, members challenged our resolve to enforce its implementation. However, it quickly became apparent to the entire membership that our General Executive Board was absolutely determined to uphold the Code. As a result, we have seen a reduction in those practices that are detrimental to our union and add to the negative perception of union construction in general.

Another key to moving union construction forward is a focus on safety. Our mutual clients, building owners and end users need to know they are receiving the best value for their money in the construction of facilities and the installation of systems that ensure operational efficiency over the longest possible life span. This can only be achieved through strict standards of safety on the job, as well as standards of quality workmanship and professionalism. These equally important components must be promoted and enhanced as the hallmark of union construction. They are the key ingredients when it comes to establishing and maintaining the reputation of union members and their employing contractors.

For our part, the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers will continue to work on increasing harmony on the worksite and improving the image of union construction as the best value in terms of cost, craftsmanship, productivity and quality.
Ironworkers: The Original Green Constructors

by JOE HUNT, General President, International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers

IRONWORKERS AND THEIR contractors were “green” long before anyone ever thought in those terms. We have worked with the most recycled material in the world for generations: steel. We now are carrying this trend even further.

We are proud to count many TAUC members in our own ranks. TAUC and the NMAPC stand for what is good about our sector of the construction industry and continue to raise the expectations and outcomes of the projects we work on together.

In response to the trend toward “green” construction, the Ironworkers, through its labor management organization, the Ironworker Management Progressive Action Cooperative Trust (IMPACT) and our National Training Fund, have developed a new Green Construction for Ironworkers training package. This training package consists of a reference manual and an instructor’s CD to help insure the Ironworkers meet or exceed our customers’ expectations.
This training gives our apprentice or journeyman Ironworker a broader understanding of what is meant by the term “green construction” and the implications for the ironworking industry. Completing this course is the first step that many Ironworkers will take in learning about green construction. The overview provided by these training materials will lead to a better qualified workforce and more work opportunities in this growing and important sector of the construction industry.

In July, the Ironworkers held their 26th Annual Instructor Training Program on the campus of Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor, Michigan. During this intensive program, Ironworker instructors from all over North America came to learn the latest updates in technology and training as well as to upgrade their communication and teaching skills. The Green Construction for Ironworkers was just one of several new courses offered and was filled to capacity.

In our training, an important distinction is made between green building and green energy. Our instructors learn about the benefits and downsides of different forms of alternative energy, one of those being renewable energy in the form of wind energy.

It is very well known that Ironworkers have been erecting wind turbines for decades, but as this sector of the market has grown exponentially in recent years, our contractors have seen an increased demand for third-party, industry-recognized worker certifications in two main areas: tower rescue and bolt torque and tension. The Ironworkers International makes training in these areas available to not only its local unions but also its contractors.

In order to provide just-in-time training, we have established an agreement with the Francis Tuttle Technology Center (FTTC) in Oklahoma City. FTTC is a non-profit training institution and a member of the Wind Energy Training Consortium (WETC). The WETC is a group of training institutions recognized by the American Wind Energy Association as promoting skills training recognized as essential for wind turbine technicians.

FTTC was willing to partner with us in the interest of advancing the wind turbine industry and providing the needed knowledge and skills training to the premier workforce performing the erection and maintenance of wind turbines.

Since this partnership was formed, Ironworkers and contractors from all regions of the country have attended these wind turbine courses and received training certificates from industry leaders who recognize the value of the Competent Tower Rescuer Certificate issued by Capital Safety (DBI/SALA) and torque/tension certificates issued by Snap-on Industrial and HYTORC.

The Ironworkers and our contractors strive daily to meet the demands of a changing market by embracing emerging technologies and customer requirements. We recognize the need for flexibility and quick adaptation as a key to our survival. Because we recognize this, we will continue to develop training materials to meet the expectations of the market like we’ve done with the Green Construction for Ironworkers course. We will continue to explore new methods and form new partnerships that will best benefit our members, our contractors and the industry. We welcome the challenge!
It’s Time to Tell the TRUTH
by MARK BRESLIN

THROUGHOUT MY ENTIRE career I have worked for the advancement of union construction. To do so has required a great degree of personal optimism in the face of cynicism, inertia, conflict and declining numbers. Now, even as an eternal optimist, I am worried about the future of the union business model and labor and management’s ability to safely navigate toward a better future. But I have the solution, at once simple and painful:

Tell the truth. Be brave. Implement change.

The truth is that the future for union construction is going to be very rough. Across the United States and Canada, my labor and management clients are facing the same critical challenges: declining market share, escalating benefit costs, increasing non-union competition and a sputtering economy. These factors have led to difficult bargaining, loss of trust, jurisdictional strife and general fear and anxiety about an uncertain future. At times like this, fear causes some leaders to “ball up” instead of reaching forward boldly. We must avoid this reaction at all costs.

The challenges of the economic environment we are in are unprecedented, but meeting them head-on is crucial. Contractors must remain competitive and unions must fulfill their role as employee advocates, but both must be done in a way that balances economics and market share. This requires change, and in order to change, you have to get everyone on board.

The most important thing that needs to be done is for both labor and management to tell the truth to every union worker in the United States and Canada. Ready? Here it is:

• The good old days are gone.
• There is no entitlement available – not now, not ever again.
• You are responsible for your own future.
• There is a limit to what construction owners will pay.
• When you exceed that limit and don’t provide value, they go to the competition.
• Your pension, health and welfare benefits and career are directly tied to market share.
• If market share declines, then every aspect of the industry has to be scrutinized and, in some instances, dramatically overhauled, or else we all go under.
• This is not the contractor’s fault or your business manager’s fault.
• Complaining won’t fix anything.
• Change is not only necessary; it is the only answer.

Labor and management need to educate our workers like never before. Union members need to fully understand the real truth about the challenges ahead and act in support of whatever change is needed. To empower union workers to meet these new competitive challenges, they need to be “all in.” To accept necessary changes as suggested by their leadership, they need to understand why. In order for them to step up professionally and boost productivity so that contractors can try to fill the labor cost gap, they need to understand those costs, as well as the nature of the competition. Our ultimate goal is for union members to become engaged and energized as owners of the situation rather than mere spectators.

The polarization of labor and management sank the union airline, steel and auto industries, to name just a few. The union construction industry has moved toward change faster than those industries…but is time running out? The broader view must be solution-based, not conflict-based. Combining truth-telling with sound change strategies is the way of the future.

It’s hard to keep one’s chin up when it keeps getting punched, but those of us who remain optimistic and committed to education and change will keep our collective future from sliding toward the edge of darkness. This is today’s leadership challenge and test. And that’s the damn truth.

Mark Breslin is a strategist and author who focuses on improving organizational performance, leadership and work ethic. Known for his blunt and uncompromising style, he has addressed more than 500 audiences and well over 200,000 leaders, managers and craft workers. He is the author of Survival of the Fittest, Million Dollar Blue Collar, and Alpha Dog: Leading, Managing & Motivating in the Construction Industry. Read more about him at www.breslin.biz.
Using Technology to Create Safer Jobsites

by DR. PETER KOCHEVAR, C.T.O.

THE UNIONIZED CONSTRUCTION industry continues to place high importance on a safe jobsite. Mandatory drug testing, safety training and job-specific orientations are evidence of this priority. Additionally, the high cost of insurance premiums and workers’ compensation claims provide greater motivation. The challenge is how to reliably, securely and cost-effectively keep track of worker qualifications so the information can quickly and easily be accessed whenever and wherever it is needed – particularly at the jobsite.

In many cases, each trade keeps track of worker qualifications in some way. Contractors must then either call the trade offices for qualification results or access a trade-sanctioned website. A worker who is an electrician must be checked in one database while an ironworker must be checked in another — a very time-consuming and costly task.

Furthermore, an electrician from Detroit might have his or her data in the local’s database, which is inaccessible to a contractor wanting to use the same worker on a job in Cleveland.

And what happens to this information if the trade decides to switch to a different drug test vendor, or there is a dispute and the vendor cuts off access to the database?

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What about those trades that do drug testing and require workers to take safety courses, too? Often, the drug test vendor maintains its own database of results while the safety test vendor maintains a separate database for its results. Again, contractors are forced to check multiple databases to determine if a worker is compliant with work rules.

Ultimately, for a safe and secure jobsite, contractors need to check worker qualifications on the spot. But compliance checks at jobsites are infrequent, and even when they are done, the process is complicated, time-consuming and ineffectual.

Rather than keep different pieces of information in “silos” – on servers and computers accessible to only a small group of people at one location – the unionized construction industry must take advantage of the sweeping changes taking place in Internet-based systems.

The simple solution to all of these problems is the prudent use of technology. The first step is for contractors and the trades to change the way they traditionally think about data. Rather than keep different pieces of information in “silos” – on servers and computers accessible to only a small group of people at one location – the unionized construction industry must take advantage of the sweeping changes taking place in Internet-based systems. Rather than having to log onto several different websites to check on a worker’s qualifications, the Internet can be used to link databases owned by trades around the country. This technology allows local organizations to share qualification information with one another and, by extension, with contractors.

Think of it as analogous to the banking industry’s ATM network. Each local organization maintains total control of its workers and their qualification information. Yet, a Cleveland contractor wanting to employ a worker from Detroit can quickly and easily check that worker’s qualifications, thus eliminating an extra drug test and saving time and money.

For checking worker compliance “on the spot” at jobsites, the Internet, coupled with cellular phone technology, again provides a solution. Developers have created systems, known as Rules-Based Jobsite Access Control™ (RBJAC), that allow a worker’s credentials to be automatically authenticated as soon as he or she scans an ID card to gain admittance to the site. RBJAC systems can have manned or unmanned access points that wirelessly communicate with databases to control access based on a set of rules such as a worker must have a valid drug test, pass certain safety courses, and view a jobsite orientation movie. If the worker has the proper qualifications, the turnstile or lift-arm gate is unlocked and he/she is allowed to enter. This type of technology also allows authorized administrators to view who is on a jobsite 24/7 via a Web browser. As an added benefit, data collected by the turnstiles or lift arm gates can be used for payroll validation, thus cutting down on payroll fraud.

By readjusting old attitudes about data and how it can be shared, the union construction industry can streamline the way contractors and unions do business and enjoy a new level of efficiency and cost savings.

Peter Kochevar is co-founder and chief technology officer of Copper Range (www.copperrange.com). Dr. Kochevar holds a doctorate in computer science from Cornell University and is a former visiting scientist at the San Diego Super Computer Center. He has been awarded three technology-related patents to-date. He can be reached at kochevar@copperrange.com.
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Have You Done Your Homework?
by TONY DOWNEY

IF YOU WERE like me, one of the things you disliked most about school was HOMEWORK! I always felt school work was for school and nothing should interfere with my home time. But as a safety professional, I have come to realize that homework was, and still is, extremely important.

All successful companies have safety programs at their various work locations that address the hazards faced in the workplace. Safety orientations, job safety analysis processes, safety walk-downs, audits and incident investigations are just a few of the tools we have developed to keep our employees safe from starting time through quitting time. If we achieve zero injuries on the shift, we feel that we have had a successful day; our employees performed their work safely and productively, and we can see them leave the jobsite in the same or better condition than when they arrived. Our job is done, right?

Wrong!

According to the National Safety Council’s Summary of Injury Facts 2010, Unintentional Injury Deaths were estimated to total 118,000 in 2008 and 121,000 in 2007. Unintentional Injury Deaths are defined as motor vehicle, work, home and public-related incidents that result in death. These numbers do not include medical conditions and illnesses such as heart attack, stroke, cancer or other personal medical conditions. An additional 45 million people suffered disabling injuries away from the workplace due to unintentional injury.

The latest data reveals that unintentional injuries continue to be the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, exceeded only by heart disease, cancer, stroke and chronic lower respiratory diseases. Nonfatal injuries also affect millions of Americans. In 2007, 34.3 million people – about one out of nine – sought medical attention for an injury. The economic impact of these fatal and nonfatal unintentional injuries amounted to $701.9 billion in 2008. This is equivalent to about $2,300 per person. These are costs that every individual household and employer pays, whether directly out-of-pocket or through higher prices for goods and services, higher taxes and increased insurance costs.

So why am I writing about unintentional injury deaths if most of them (including 39,000 motor vehicle-related injuries and 54,000 home-related injuries) occur outside of the workplace? Simple. If you believe, as I do, that our most valuable asset is our employees, and that we will never be successful in our business efforts without a healthy and skilled pool of workers to attract to our jobs, then it is time to start doing our homework.

In other words, we have to let employees know that a crucial step in developing a safe workplace is for them to practice the same safe habits learned on the job when they’re at home with their families. In fact, the statistics show that it is even more important to work, play and live safely away from the job.

In 2008, 4,303 people died as the result of work-related injury. That is a tragedy, and we should never rest in our efforts to prevent each and every work-related injury. However, an additional 114,000 people died of unintentional injury away from the workplace and that is a tragedy of epidemic proportions.

I urge you all to do your homework. Include home safety messages as part of your weekly safety meetings. Urge your employees to take safety home with them. Talk to employees about their value, both to their families and to the company. We only get one chance at this life, and we need to make it as safe, productive and enjoyable as we can.

Tony Downey is the director of safety for Day & Zimmermann NPS, Inc. and chairman of the TAUC Safety and Health Committee. Day & Zimmermann is a TAUC Governing Member.
A Workforce for the 21st Century

by GARY BOHN

ONE OF THE most frequent topics of conversation in our TAUC Labor Committee meetings over the past several years has been the pressing need for more trained craftsmen in our industry – workers who are fit for duty and possess the necessary skills and experience to safely and productively perform at the highest level.

Everyone in our industry – union leaders, contractors and owners – is acutely aware of the depletion in the ranks of our workforce. Each year the problem grows worse. The retirement of the “baby boomer” generation is creating an exodus of skilled workers in all the construction trades while, at the same time, draining the ranks of the skilled technical employees who operate facilities for our owners. And let’s not forget the supervisors, estimators and management folks that staff our TAUC member companies!

The replacement pool of individuals in the United States with a serious interest in careers in either construction, plant operations or technical trades, and who possess the requisite skills (education, attitude, a willingness to serve an apprenticeship for three to five years), just isn’t big enough. The competition for the small number of individuals who meet the above criteria is fierce.

Perception is a big part of the problem. I believe most of you have looked at the statistics where high-school age and older people are asked to rate by order of preference the type of work or job they would consider for a career. The last one of these I looked at had “construction worker” rated at or near the bottom of over 200 choices for a career. That tells me that there is a huge misconception about our industry that we all need to be concerned about.

In the summer issue of our magazine, Mark Breslin tackled this issue of perception with his article “Good Enough for Your Daughter? Good Enough for the Jobsite.” If you haven’t read the article, I urge you to get a copy and do so (just e-mail the editor, David Acord, at dacord@tauc.org and he will send you a free copy). Breslin’s article makes a lot of sense, and he lays out some concrete ideas to start the rebranding of our unionized construction industry. If we want to recruit the best candidates, we need to up our game and find new ways to let people know how...
As TAUC members, I urge you to get involved in the apprenticeship programs that exist in the local unions that service your companies. Apprentices are the lifeblood of our business.

Increasing our market share, even in a down market, should always be the goal. Our ability to provide a productive and technically competent workforce, trained in safe work habits, with the skills to do quality work in a professional manner, will only help to set us apart from the crowd as we head into the 21st century.

Gary Bohn is the TAUC Labor Committee Chairman. A 45-year veteran of the heavy industrial construction field, he currently serves as senior advisor to Kiewit Power Constructors.
COMING EVENTS

October 28, 2010
10th Annual Zero Injury Safety Awards
Washington, D.C.

December 6, 2010
Joint TAUC Executive Committee and NMAPC Board of Directors Meeting
Washington, D.C.

December 7, 2010
TAUC-NMAPC Holiday Open House
Washington, D.C.

December 8, 2010
State of the Union Construction Industry 2010
Washington, D.C.

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THE CONSTRUCTION USER earned a Gold Award in the 2009 MarCom Awards (www.marcomawards.com). The international awards competition recognizes outstanding creative achievement by marketing and communication professionals.

There were almost 5,000 entries from throughout the United States and several foreign countries in the 2009 competition.

MarCom Awards is administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals. The international association oversees awards and recognition programs, provides judges and sets standards for excellence.

Judges are industry professionals who look for companies and individuals whose talent exceeds a high standard of excellence and whose work serves as a benchmark for the industry.

Winners were selected from more than 200 categories in seven forms of media and communication efforts — marketing, publications, marketing/promotion, public service/pro bono, creativity and electronic/interactive.

This is the first MarCom Award The Construction User has ever received. The Construction User celebrated its fifth anniversary of publication in summer 2009.

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