

# THE CONSTRUCTION USER

A Publication of The Association of Union Constructors | [www.tauc.org](http://www.tauc.org) | Spring 2015

2015 TAUC LEADERSHIP  
CONFERENCE PRESENTS  
**A GATHERING  
OF LEADERS**

1 EVENT.  
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MAY 13, 2015  
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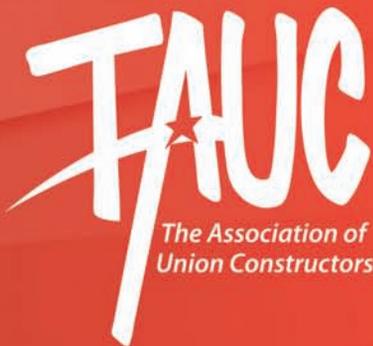
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**MAY 4-15, 2015**



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Learn more about how we're helping veterans build a strong future at [www.UAVIP.org](http://www.UAVIP.org).

# NMAPC Introduces New Logo

by DAVID ACORD

**T**AUC'S SISTER ORGANIZATION, the National Maintenance Agreements Policy Committee, Inc. (NMAPC) – administer of the National Maintenance Agreement, one of the most widely used project labor agreements in the U.S. union construction and maintenance industry – is pleased to introduce its new logo. This marks the first time in over three decades that the organization has changed its logo.

The new design reflects, in graphic form, the NMAPC's foundational principles: tripartite cooperation and partnership. Each of the three segments or "links" represents one of the three participants in the tripartite model: contractors, owner-clients and labor representatives. Together, these links interlock to form an unbreakable bond.

"Our previous logo served us well, but times change, and the union construction and maintenance industry has changed along with them," said Steve Lindauer, Impartial Secretary and CEO of the NMAPC and CEO of TAUC. "Upgrading our visual brand will assist us in our ongoing efforts to reach out to a new generation of potential



owner-clients. Our new logo reflects the core principles of the NMAPC in a contemporary, 21st-century manner."

As part of the NMAPC's visual rebranding, the website ([www.nmapc.org](http://www.nmapc.org)) has been redesigned to incorporate the new logo and color scheme. Several enhancements have also been implemented to make the site even more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

Lindauer said he realizes it will take much more than a new logo to garner valuable market share in an increasingly competitive business environment. "Actions speak louder than words – or in this case, a picture. While our logo will play an important part in marketing the NMAPC Program, success will only occur when we adhere to the tripartite values of cooperation and mutual respect that have served us so well over the last four-plus decades." 

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The Association of Union Constructors  
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 202  
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703.524.3336  
703.524.3364 - fax  
www.tauc.org

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
**David Acord**  
703.628.5545  
dacord@tauc.org

**ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES**  
(Contact for rates and details)

**Janice Jenkins**  
Brun Media  
724-929-3550  
jjenkins@brunmedia.com

**Amy Rogers**  
Brun Media  
678-714-6775  
arogers@brunmedia.com

**Thomas Brun**  
Brun Media  
724-539-2404  
tbrun@brunmedia.com

**ART DIRECTION & DESIGN**  
**Scott McLallen**  
Pixels & Ink, Incorporated  
www.pixelsandink.com

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
For information about subscriptions, reprints, or purchasing bulk copies, contact Executive Editor David Acord at 703-628-5545 x124 or dacord@tauc.org.

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# How Do You Hit A Moving Target?



by **THOMAS S. FELTON**  
TAUC PRESIDENT  
PRESIDENT, MC INDUSTRIAL

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***How do our contractors and labor partners manage their most precious resource – people – in an industry that has such peaks and valleys?***

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**T**HERE IS NOTHING that highlights the challenges of our industry more clearly than what is currently happening in the oil and gas markets. For the last year and a half or longer, we have been hearing and preparing for massive labor shortages due to all of the billions of dollars soon to be invested in new oil and gas projects in the U.S. Where was all of the required labor to build these projects going to come from? How were we going to attract and train enough new workers in time? Many of the experienced workers either left the industry during the last downturn or have since retired.

Our contractor members began making investments in resources, equipment and support staff, opening new offices in the areas that were forecasting the greatest growth so they could better serve those clients. In some cases, once they had “secured” enough work, they passed on potential future opportunities for fear that they would not have enough resources to manage additional projects.

Our labor partners responded to the increasing manpower demands by dramatically ramping up recruiting efforts. Many of the crafts invested in new training facilities, tools and instructors to train new apprentices. Various trades came together to create new labor agreements and streamline existing agreements – in the latter case, removing some stipulations that led to inefficiency and had caused heartburn for owners and contractors alike for years. We even saw alliances formed between several different crafts to respond to the manpower shortages and gain work in traditionally non-union areas such as the Gulf Coast.

Owners, fearing potential impacts of labor shortages and escalating labor costs, began to engage with contractors earlier in the process. They worked to develop creative contracting methods that fostered a more collaborative approach to addressing this potential risk to their projects. They demanded that contractors name their specific key employees and supervisors that would be assigned to their project. In some cases, they created financial penalties for contractors if they don’t deliver those key employees.

But now, as I write this, it’s mid-February, and oil prices have plunged almost 50% over the last two months. Owners are questioning some of their announced investments and, in some cases, are delaying or outright canceling billion-dollar projects. Contractors who started 2015 with comfortable backlogs are no longer so comfortable. Workers are being laid off from drilling sites and companies that service the oil fields by the hundreds and even thousands. Contractors and engineering firms that invested in new offices in cities like Houston and added staffing to be better prepared for the upcoming work are now hitting the pause button.

While the situation is by no means dire at this point, it does highlight the challenges we all face in our industry. How do our contractors and labor partners manage their most precious resource – people – in an industry that has such peaks and valleys? Contractors need to maintain competitive margins and workers need steady incomes to support their families. But these two necessities make it very difficult to put everything on hold and maintain a substantial bench

of workers who can be deployed (and employed!) on demand. To make matters worse, our owner-clients are facing some of the most volatile economic times in history. Events that happen around the world can have an immediate impact on their operations here in the United States, which in turn affect their investment decisions.

I don't have the magic answer to all of these challenges, but I do know that the only way we will eventually solve them (or at the very least mitigate their impact) is by working together, utilizing the tripartite arrangement and encouraging frequent and open communication between all parties. While this current situation has

certainly created some enormous challenges, it has also shown what can be accomplished when the pressure is on and we continue to work together. The actions I previously discussed – streamlining agreements, creating new alliances between crafts, stepping up recruiting and training – are great examples of the saying, “Never waste a crisis.”

If you look back in history at almost any industry or organization, you can usually point to some event that sparked a series of changes necessary for that industry to not only survive, but to grow and thrive under a new set of market conditions. Those who failed to react and adjust

to the new reality aren't around anymore. We must continue to build on the discussions that have been started and the collaboration that has already taken place. Why? Not only to help solve the current challenges, but to build a progressive industry that anticipates, adapts and *responds* to the ever-changing world that we live in rather than just *reacts*.

One thing is for certain: the pace of change is not slowing down, and we aren't going back to the “good ol' days” anytime soon. But by working together, we certainly have the capability to create our own new version of the “good ol' days.” 

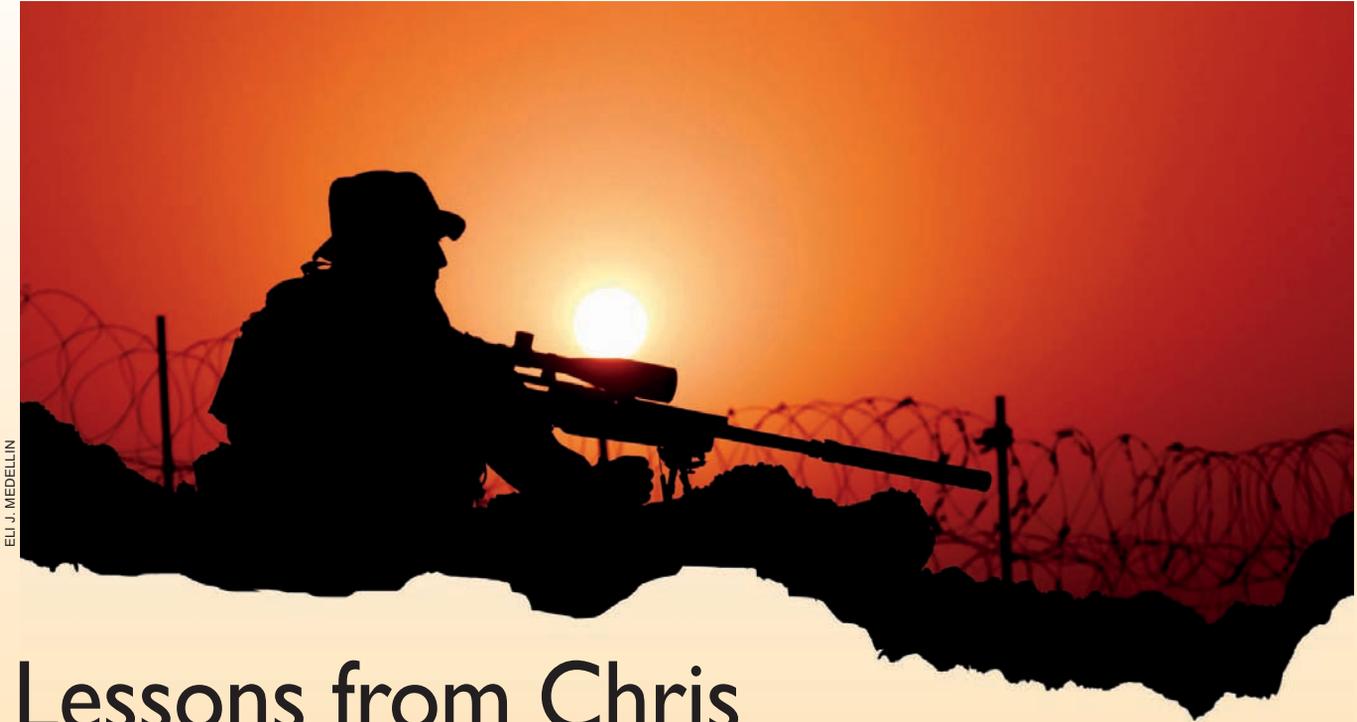


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ELI J. MEDELLIN

# Lessons from Chris

by STEVE LINDAUER

**L**IKE MANY OF you, I recently saw the Academy Award-nominated movie *American Sniper*. Based on the book of the same name, it tells the true story of U.S. Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, who became known as “the most lethal sniper in U.S. history” for racking up an astonishing 160 confirmed kills throughout four tours of duty in the Iraq War, shattering previous records. Tragically, Chris was shot and killed in Texas in 2013, but his story – and legacy – lives on. His book is a runaway bestseller, and the movie adaptation has grossed almost \$500 million worldwide (and still counting).

*American Sniper* is one of those movies that stays with you long after you leave the theater. I found myself thinking about it days, even weeks later. Some of the reasons were obvious: Chris’ story is filled with heroism, adventure and, ultimately, terrible loss. But there was something else, some other reason why I continued to dwell on it...I just had a hard time putting it into words. In fact, I didn’t figure it out until I gave a brief speech at the annual North American Iron Workers/IMPACT Labor-Management Conference in Las Vegas in February.

Our industry has always had a very close bond with the military. Many of our finest craft workers and contractors are veterans. Over the years, the rigorous and often dangerous nature of our work — coupled with the importance we place on teamwork, discipline and safety— have prompted general comparisons to military service. At the same time, we understand that no one sacrifices more than the men and women who choose to enlist. That’s one reason why TAUC

is a major supporter of Helmets to Hardhats, an organization dedicated to helping veterans launch new careers in our industry after their military service has ended.

Once I reflected on this close bond with the military, everything “clicked.” Although it may sound like a stretch to compare a sniper to a craft worker, I believe there are significant parallels between Chris Kyle’s story and the stories of the union construction and maintenance professionals who make our industry hum.

## What’s Your Motivation?

You may remember that shortly after the movie came out, a controversy erupted. Certain writers and Hollywood types trashed the movie. They claimed it glorified violence. They argued that Chris was filled with hate and actually enjoyed killing. Some even went so far as to call him a psychopath.

My initial reaction to these folks isn’t suitable for reprinting. Needless to say, I strongly disagree with them. But their comments proved that at least some people – maybe a lot – were confused about Chris’ motivations for enlisting in the military and becoming a Navy SEAL sniper.

I doubt most of the knuckleheads spouting off on the Internet saw the movie or read the book. But as both make clear over and over again, Chris Kyle wasn’t motivated by anger or bloodlust. He didn’t join an elite special operations force because he was looking for an excuse to kill people. His motivation was the exact opposite: he became a sniper

to protect his fellow Americans serving in the military and ensure that they returned home safely to their families. As Chris himself wrote, “I risked my life for my buddies, to protect my friends and fellow countrymen.” And he closed his book by adding, “My regrets are about the people I couldn’t save – Marines, soldiers, my buddies. I still feel their loss. I still ache for my failure to protect them.”

Later, as I stood on stage at the Iron Worker/IMPACT conference and looked out across a sea of close to a thousand faces, it hit me. I finally understood why the movie had affected me so deeply. Like Chris had done, the men and women in the crowd – as well as tens of thousands of union craft workers all across the country – show up for work every day with the same goal in mind: to protect their fellow workers. How? By making sure safety is the number one priority. It’s the fundamental element that sets us apart from the competition.

Are they also dedicated to performing their jobs flawlessly and making sure the project comes in on time and under budget? Yes! But at a foundational level, before anything else, they are always looking out for one another, making sure everyone stays safe. The only difference is that instead of totting sniper rifles, they carry power drills and hammers.

This kind of dedication ***crosses all boundaries***. Think about Chris Kyle. He was a Navy SEAL, and yet he risked his life primarily protecting U.S. Army soldiers and

Marines from all walks of life and all corners of the country. He didn’t care which branch of the military paid their salaries or where they came from. To him, those were just superficial differences. They shared a much stronger bond: they were all Americans in hostile territory, tasked with completing a very dangerous job, and he sure as hell wasn’t going to let them down.

Chris’ brand of dedication also ***transcends individuals***. Unlike the soldiers and Marines he protected, Chris was an elite sniper with years of high-level training and exotic, next-level weaponry at his disposal that no one else in the group possessed. While the troops often traveled in convoys or patrolled the streets of Iraq in close formation, Chris was rarely with them. Usually he was stationed on a rooftop hundreds of yards away, tracking their progress through his rifle scope.

In other words, Chris was special. But did he act that way? Did he think he was better than the men and women on the ground? Of course not. He saw himself as a member of the team, no better or worse than anyone else. Everyone played a different but equally important role in the mission. When he was off-duty, Chris would often skirt the rules and accompany Marines on dangerous missions so that he could teach them what he had learned and pass along

*Continued on Page 30*



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trained to direct people at a task level. This takes away from their ability to develop others and free themselves from a firefighting mindset. They are very concerned that any effort to breed independent thinking could be a threat to their status, power or employment. These are key themes to discuss with them to help them claw back some of their time and focus daily.

If you have the discipline to do this, and can let go of some of the needs that stand in the way, you will create more empowered and independent employees, greater team productivity and an hour a week for you personally. If you can send this message down the chain of command in your organization, you will create a culture of responsibility and accountability. No doubt, over time, it will show up on the bottom line in and in the growth of the organization. And that's just a start. 



*Mark Breslin is a strategist and author of several books, including most recently, The Five Minute Foreman: Mastering the People Side of Construction. Visit his website at [www.breslin.biz](http://www.breslin.biz) or contact him at (925) 705-7662.*

### New Job? New Title? Let Us Know!

If you or someone within your organization recently experienced a job change, please send **TAUC the information**. It will be distributed via TAUC's website; our monthly e-newsletter, *TAUC About Construction*; and our quarterly print magazine, *The Construction User*. Here is the type of information we are looking for:

- New hires
- Job title changes, promotions & relocations
- Enhanced responsibilities
- Appointments to boards, associations, etc. (all types, not just industry-specific)
- Awards & recognition (all types, not just industry-specific)

Please email the information to **TAUC Director of Communications David Acord** at [dacord@tauc.org](mailto:dacord@tauc.org). In addition, please distribute this information request to your co-workers and others with whom you do business.

Sharing this information helps everyone stay in touch - and it's also a great way to promote your business or organization!

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# Navigating the New Reality on Capitol Hill

by JIM KOLB

**T**ODAY, IT IS cliché to say that “Washington is broken.”

As a policy professional with over 25 years of substantive Federal policymaking experience, it’s hard to disagree with the fact that the political and legislative environment has become increasingly more challenging and difficult to navigate. Ideological conflicts between and within the political parties and significant power struggles over the appropriate authority of the executive and legislative branches have led to disagreements and partisan discord on just about every issue under consideration.

Yet this does not mean that critical decisions are not being made. Every day, policies that could impact TAUC members’ businesses are being considered on Capitol Hill and in Federal agencies. From multiemployer pension reform and new proposed regulations from the EPA to immigration and tax reform, legislation and regulations affecting union contractors are being brought forward and considered by Congress and regulators.

To ensure your businesses are not harmed by these policy decisions, it is critical that the voices of union contractors be heard. Unfortunately, while policy making in Washington may not necessarily be broken, the “normal” decision-making process most certainly is. Legislation rarely – if ever – follows the path outlined in the classic “School House Rock” cartoon many of us watched as kids on Saturday mornings. Increasingly, legislation is packaged in big must-pass bills, with little or no opportunity for committee or rank-and-file member input. This has made the

entire process much less predictable and very difficult to track, let alone influence, making advocacy and lobbying efforts critical.

At a time when the need for effective Federal advocacy has never been more important, I am honored that TAUC has engaged my firm — Summit Strategies Government Affairs LLC — to provide guidance and insight on the major policy and regulatory issues impacting contractors in the union construction and maintenance industry.

Over the years, TAUC has played a major role in numerous policy debates impacting its members, including the successful effort last Congress to secure multiemployer pension reform. Our partnership will allow TAUC to build on this past success to ensure that union contractors continue to play a vital role on Capitol Hill and in Federal agencies. With the numerous critical policy decisions that will be made over the next couple of years — decisions impacting your companies — it is important that the voices of union contractors be heard throughout these legislative and regulatory debates.

With both political parties seeking paths forward on policies to strengthen the middle class, improve long-term retirement security, address concerns with health care delivery, and fix the immigration system and the tax code, policy makers need to hear from firms directly impacted by these decisions. TAUC and its members cannot afford to sit out these upcoming policy debates. You confront these challenges and play a major role in delivering solutions to these problems in the real world every day. The last thing you need

is Federal bureaucrats and politicians developing laws and regulations that harm your business and undercut your companies’ competitiveness.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to utilize my background to help TAUC and its members manage the rapid pace of change in Washington, D.C., and achieve its policy goals and priorities. Having served in senior policy positions in both the public and private sectors, as well as with organizations representing both labor and management, I bring over 25 years of advocacy, policy development and implementation experience to TAUC’s government affairs efforts. Being able to draw on this diverse background positions me to assist your organization in navigating the challenging and unpredictable legislative, regulatory, and political environments.

Policymaking is not an academic exercise. In fact, it is increasingly a full contact sport, requiring effective strategies, aggressive direct advocacy and grassroots campaigns, and strong political programs. Our partnership positions TAUC to successfully execute strategies and advocacy efforts to secure policies that advance high-quality contracting and strengthen the union construction industry. I look forward to working with TAUC and its members in these efforts. 



*Jim Kolb is a partner with Summit Strategies Government Affairs LLC.*

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perceived fear of withdrawal liability from both the employers who currently participate in the plans and any new union contractors who are thinking of joining them.

What does that mean in layman's terms? TAUC spent more than a year and a half as a participant in the Retirement Security Review Commission, the group spearheaded by the National Coordinating Committee for Multiemployer Plans (NCCMP) that crafted the bipartisan Solutions Not Bailouts plan. Throughout this long process, the Commission attained consensus on two "flexible" alternative plan designs: variable annuity plans and composite plans (initially referred to as target plans in the Commission report). Variable annuity plans are permissible, but rarely used, under current law, and composite plans are what we want Congress to enact. So what are they, and how do they work? Let's tackle them one at a time.

### Alternative Design #1: Variable Annuity Plans

The basic premise of this design could be described as a hybrid of defined benefit (DB) and defined contribution (DC) plans. The trustees would set a "floor benefit" using a conservative rate of return for the DB portion of the plan – say, 3% to 5%. Once that has been achieved, the DC piece (or "variable benefit") would kick in so that participants could take advantage of the plan's performance in periods of high returns. Also, any returns above the floor benefit level could potentially be used in years of poor returns when that floor level isn't met.

One of the reasons withdrawal liability is so high in many cases is that the "conservative assumed rates of return" by the actuaries aren't all that conservative. Even a 7% return estimate may unfortunately be too high in some cases, based on the volatile market conditions we have experienced in the last couple of decades

(the "Dot.com" bubble bursting and the housing market crash, to name two). The variable annuity plan would effectively help reduce withdrawal liability moving forward by reducing the guaranteed return to the floor (i.e. 3% to 5%), while allowing plan participants to benefit from higher market returns using the DC or variable piece of the plan design.

Other aspects of a variable annuity plan: benefits are not adjustable after retirement; the plans must meet the "definitely determinable benefit" requirement of a DB plan; and participants' risk would be mitigated by a combination of reduced investment volatility and the purchase of annuities or asset immunization at retirement. While not completely eliminating withdrawal liability, the risk to contributing employers would be greatly reduced.

*Continued on Page 24*

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2015 TAUC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PRESENTS

# A GATHERING OF LEADERS

MAY 13, 2015

SCHEDULED TO APPEAR:



**James Boland**  
Intl. Pres., Bricklayers



**Patrick Finley**  
Gen. Pres., Operative Plasterers  
& Cement Masons



**James Grogan**  
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Insulators



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**Newton Jones**  
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**Joe Nigro**  
Gen. Pres., Sheet Metal Workers



**Kinsey Robinson**  
Intl. Pres., Roofers



**Ken Rigmaiden**  
Gen. Pres., Painters



**Walter Wise**  
Gen. Pres., Iron Workers

The 2015 TAUC Leadership Conference is shaping up to be the best one yet, with an outstanding venue – the Belmond Charleston Place in Charleston, South Carolina – and phenomenal keynote presentations (see facing page).

But we are especially excited to have North America's Building Trades Unions' Governing Board of Presidents participating in a special panel presentation on Wednesday morning, May 13!

"A Gathering of Leaders" marks a historic "first" for TAUC – ten Building Trades presidents on the same stage, answering YOUR questions about the union construction industry! This special in-depth, 90-minute event will be moderated by TAUC CEO Steve Lindauer.

TAUC prides itself on having an outstanding working relationship with our partners in organized labor, and this panel presentation will be a testament to that fact.

We encourage all of our union contractor members to attend this year's conference so that they may have an opportunity to network with and hear firsthand from the leaders of the building trades' International Unions.

**Go to [WWW.TLC2015.ORG](http://WWW.TLC2015.ORG) and register today – the deadline is April 20!**

**Register online at [www.TLC2015.org](http://www.TLC2015.org). Hurry – Deadline is April 20!**

# 2015 TAUC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

MAY 12-15, 2015

BELMOND CHARLESTON PLACE  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



## ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

The TAUC Leadership Conference is the union construction and maintenance industry's premiere annual event -- a chance for contractors, labor representatives and owner-clients to meet, exchange ideas and hear from a wide variety of industry and business experts, all in a relaxed, laid-back atmosphere. In addition to two informative morning conference sessions with dynamic, motivational keynote speakers, other highlights of the TAUC Leadership Conference include:

- The popular TAUC Union-Made Golf Tournament

- Thomas J. Reynolds Awards Luncheon
- James J. Willis Craftperson of the Year Award Presentation
- Gala Dinner & Dance

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## Keynote Speakers



Joe Ehrmann

Joe Ehrmann has been an educator, author, activist, pastor and coach for more than 25 years. An All-American football player at Syracuse University, he lettered in lacrosse and was selected to the Syracuse All-Century Football Team. Joe went on to play professional football for 13 years. He was named the Colts "Man of the Year" and was the NFL's first Ed Block Courage Award winner. *Parade Magazine* featured him on its cover, naming him "The Most Important Coach in America" because of his work to transform the culture of sports. In addition, he was selected as one of the "Most Influential Sport Educators in America" by the Institute for International Sport. Joe will share his revolutionary concepts of transformational leadership, coaching, team-building, and mentoring.



Dr. Rita Murray

Dr. Murray is a nationally known certified speaking professional (CSP), educational psychologist, executive coach and author on the subject of leadership development and "generations in the workplace." Helping leaders navigate the challenging social settings of diverse and inclusive workplaces, Rita offers a fast-paced, content-rich presentation combining education, entertainment and emotional intelligence to deliver practical results and actionable strategies that can be put to work immediately. Born and raised in Boston, MA, Rita's career has taken her coast to coast and includes most recently, 11 years as CEO of a national energy services company and board member of multiple energy companies; technical leader for GE Aerospace and Lockheed in Washington, D.C. where she held top secret clearances; and as a leader for Entre Computer Centers Worldwide Headquarters in Northern Virginia. Also, as a private pilot and avid golfer, she brings unique passion, high energy, uncommon commitment and a multigenerational lens to support the objectives of all her clientele.

Register online at [www.TLC2015.org](http://www.TLC2015.org). Hurry — Deadline is April 20!



# NMAPC

NATIONAL MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS POLICY COMMITTEE, INC.

## NMAPC Introduces New Tripartite Principles of Conduct

The National Maintenance Agreements Policy Committee, Inc. (NMAPC) is pleased to introduce three new Tripartite Principles of Conduct for all users of the National Maintenance Agreements (NMA).

Since its inception in 1971, the NMAPC Program has been administered under a system of tripartite governance and cooperation, with Owners, Contractors and building trades Craft Workers sharing equally in the responsibilities and rewards. It is under this philosophy of tripartite cooperation and mutually beneficial relationships that the NMAPC developed the Tripartite Principles of Conduct, to ensure that the Program's stated goal of "Building a Partnership of Safety, Productivity, Quality and Strength" is adhered to in all phases of work.

The Tripartite Principles of Conduct were created with the input of the NMAPC Owner Advisory Committee and the NMAPC Labor-Management Committee, and were formally approved by the NMAPC Board of Directors in the fall of 2014. The Principles have also been included in the official print and online versions of the National Maintenance Agreement.

With this decision, the NMA becomes the only project labor agreement in the country to have adopted codes of conduct for all three tripartite branches.

Following are the complete NMAPC Tripartite Principles of Conduct.

Contractors and  
Subcontractors

Unions

Owners

**NMAPC Contractors and Subcontractors shall:**

1. Maintain a Zero Injury, drug-free and productive work place;
2. Be signatory to each Participating Union's National Maintenance Agreement (NMA) that you will be employing for the work in question;
3. Have filed and received approval of Site Extension Requests (SERs) of the NMAs at any and all affected facilities/locations prior to commencing with work;
4. Ensure that all subcontractors

under your company's direction are performing work under the terms and conditions of the NMAs as outlined in 1) & 2);

5. Conduct mandatory Pre-job Conferences, as well as initiate addressing any potential concerns at such time as outlined in Article I of the NMA;
6. Adhere to and enforce the respective International Unions' Codes/Standards of Excellence;
7. Report your work hours performed under the NMAs on a quarterly basis via [www.nmapc.org](http://www.nmapc.org);
8. Maintain channels of com-

munication with your Union(s), the local building trades council, and the Owner/Client, as well as participate in local tripartite meetings as necessary;

9. Familiarize and utilize existing resolution processes for addressing any disputes that may arise while working under the NMA Program;
10. Consistently adhere to, and enforce ALL of the terms and conditions of the NMAs, recognizing that it is every Signatory Contractor's and Subcontractor's responsibility to manage all aspects of their work performed under the Agreements.

**NMAPC Participating International & Local Unions shall:**

1. Maintain a Zero Injury, drug-free and productive work place;
2. Take appropriate and timely action regarding requests to become signatory to the National Maintenance Agreement (NMA), and Site Extension Requests (SERs);
3. Participate in all mandatory Pre-job Conferences and initiate addressing any potential concerns at such time as outlined in Article I of the NMA;
4. Ensure there are NO disruptions

of any and all work performed under the NMAPC Program;

5. Adhere to and enforce the respective International Unions' Codes/Standards of Excellence;
6. Fulfill the promise of providing a highly skilled, trained, and professional workforce;
7. Maintain channels of communication with your NMAPC Contractors, the local building trades council, and the Owner/Client, as well as participate in local tripartite meetings as necessary;
8. Familiarize and utilize existing resolution processes for addressing

any disputes that may arise while working under the NMA Program;

9. Always respect the Owner/Client's and the Contractor's property, equipment and tools;
10. Consistently adhere to ALL of the terms and conditions of the NMAs;
11. Remember that the work you perform and the way you perform it each day on the job could ultimately impact the opportunity for your fellow union members and your Contractors to work for this Owner/Client in the future.

**Owner/Clients shall:**

1. Embrace and promote the Zero Injury philosophy on all projects performed under the NMAPC Program;
2. Provide work opportunities to NMAPC Contractors and NMAPC Participating Unions;
3. Establish local tripartite committee(s) in order to maintain channels of communication with NMAPC Contractors, Participating Unions, the local building trades councils, and the NMAPC

Administrative Office as well as participate in pre-job conferences;

4. Ensure Contractors are in possession of approved Site Extension Requests (SERs) at your facility(s) prior to commencing with work by utilizing the Owner/Client portal on [www.nmapc.org](http://www.nmapc.org);
5. Ensure Contractors are reporting work hours performed under the National Maintenance Agreements (NMAs) at your facility(s) on a quarterly basis via [www.nmapc.org](http://www.nmapc.org);
6. Make all Owner/Client rules and regulations known in advance to all parties;

7. Consider designating your projects or sites under the NMAPC "Yellow Card" in order to achieve the maximum benefits of the spirit and intent of the NMAPC Program;

8. Provide reasonable access to Union representatives to NMA jobs operated within your plant location(s).

# National Fall Prevention Stand-Down: May 4-15, 2015

by WAYNE CREASAP

**I**F YOU'VE BEEN in this industry any length of time, you may have suffered a fall or know of someone who has. If you are reading this, you were probably fortunate enough to recover and resume your construction career. However, thousands of others have suffered fall injuries that jeopardized their construction careers — or worse, tragically and needlessly ended their lives. Each year, falls are the leading cause of death in construction. In 2012, of the 806 fatalities recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 279 were falls from elevation. And consider too that *eight* of the top ten serious violations of the most frequently cited OSHA standards in 2014 were related to falls.

As a result, industry stakeholders — including TAUC, through its affiliation with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH); the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Construction Sector Council; OSHA; and the Center for Construction Research and Training — are encouraging the construction industry to take some time during the National Fall Prevention Stand Down (May 4-15) to highlight fall hazards and take steps to eliminate them.

Normally, companies conduct a Safety Stand-Down by stopping work and providing a focused toolbox talk on a safety topic such as ladder safety, fall protection equipment, or scaffolds. The meeting provides information to workers about hazards, protective methods, and the company's safety policies, goals and expectations. To avoid confusion with work stoppages, work with your tripartite

to determine a mutually-agreed upon time and location to conduct your stand down.

The campaign emphasizes three steps in preventing falls: Plan. Provide. Train.

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***Each year, falls are the leading cause of death in construction. In 2012, of the 806 fatalities recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 279 were falls from elevation.***

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## Plan

**Plan** ahead to get the job done safely. Lack of proper pre-planning is often the root cause for a number of fall-related incidents. Encourage proper communication and planning on the front end of the job to ensure employees are not put into compromising situations on the job. Productivity also benefits from proper planning.

Even with the most thorough plans, unexpected falls can still occur. Therefore, planning should also include a rescue plan. If someone is saved from a fall, "How do we get them down?" should not be the question you're asking while someone is hanging up there.

Further, unless you've pre-arranged and coordinated it as part of your rescue plan, you cannot count on your local fire department to be

equipped or always available to perform a high-angle rescue. Therefore, you need to have something in place before telling employees to "tie off."

## Provide

**Provide** the right equipment. Just as with any craft, the proper tools help get the job done easier, with better quality and precision, and often with fewer injuries (from forcing or improvising a work-around). Providing the right equipment often improves productivity, quality and safety. Just a few examples of the right equipment can be anything from proper tools, ladders, scaffolds, stair towers, lifts and personal fall arrest systems.

The key with any of these items is that they fit the job, and when personal protective equipment is necessary, it properly fits the worker. Again, planning to make sure that you provide the right size of harness for workers helps prevent serious injury should they be saved in a fall.

While personal fall arrest equipment is provided, we also need to make sure it is being used properly. Too often the term "eye candy" is used by safety people when evaluating fall arrest systems. This means that it looks good, but isn't really effective should the employee need it. What good does it do if the employee is wearing a harness, but is not connected to anything while working at height? Or what if an employee is working at height, but the lanyard is too long to adequately stop the fall? We can do better. Providing equipment means we also have to ensure its proper use.

## Train

**Train** everyone to use the equipment safely. Often overlooked, we need to make sure employees are trained to use the equipment the way it was intended. Too often we learn of fatal mistakes that result from connecting at bad angles, over edges or improper anchorages. Take the time to explain how the equipment works, as well as the limitations if used improperly.

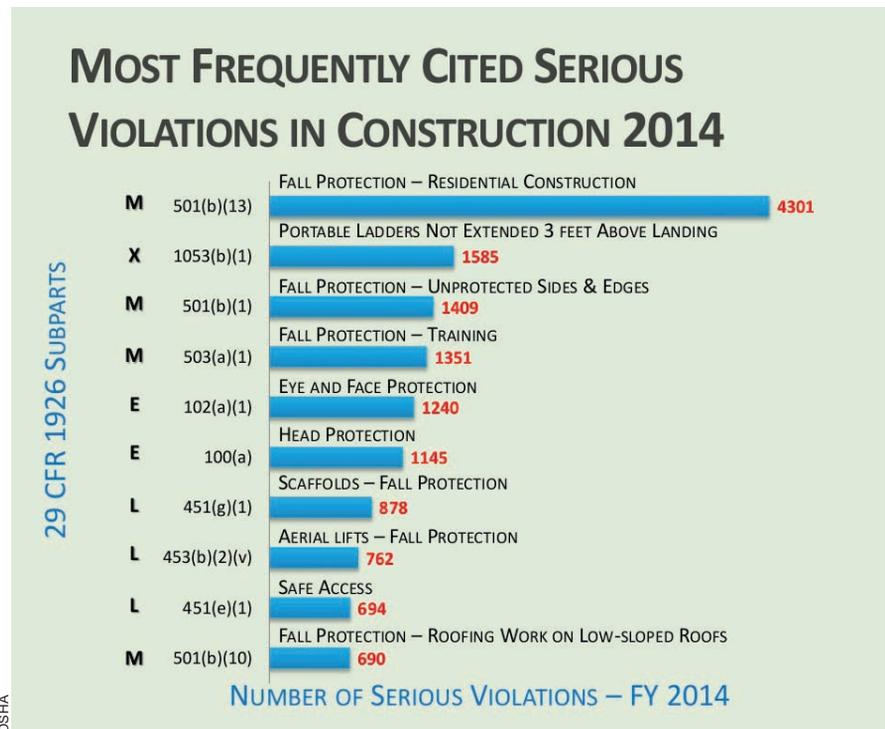
Additionally, understanding how to inspect equipment and when to take it out of service is important. Entire courses are built on equipment inspection and can help save money by working with vendors with replacement programs.

Additionally, manufacturers of fall arrest equipment are constantly improving their equipment, resulting in a wider range of products as well as products that service a specific market or meet a certain need. Work with your vendor to determine what is new to the market and if its application is right for your company.

And, if buying any of this equipment, be sure the vendor includes training as part of the purchase. Employees benefit from knowing how it's supposed to be used and the contractors save by not having to replace damaged equipment due to improper use.

## Resources and Additional Information

The National Fall Prevention Stand-Down will be taking place May 4 – 15, 2015. Participation is voluntary and can be achieved through a number of ways. Traditional approaches such as toolbox safety talks can provide information addressing specific issues such as scaffolds or ladders. Others may bring in vendors to showcase products and perform fall arrest demonstrations to



a larger audience. Be creative in your educational approach to emphasize the importance of fall prevention.

Resources including fact sheets, a training guide, posters, wallet cards, and instructions on how to conduct a “Stand-Down” have been developed and can be found on the Fall Prevention Safety Stand-Down webpage at <http://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown> and on the campaign web page at <http://www.osha.gov/stopfalls/index.html>. OSHA will also post events that are free and open to the public on the web page to help employers and workers find events in their area.

If a company or organization wants to post a free event that is open to the public (including any members of the press) on the web page, each OSHA region has a Stand-Down Coordinator they can contact to get additional information. This information and FAQs are available on the campaign web page as well.

TAUC contractors strive to provide the best safety planning,

equipment and education to their workforce. TAUC encourages its members who participate in a “Stand-Down” to demonstrate their commitment to reducing fall incidents by submitting photos and videos showcasing their event to TAUC so that we can publicize them on our website. You can email them directly to Director of Communications David Acord at [dacord@tauc.org](mailto:dacord@tauc.org). Please include name, contact number, email address, jobsite location; city/state and number of employees in the stand down – and include a brief statement giving TAUC permission to share the images and information with our members.

We have a long way to go, but let's help eliminate the destruction caused by falls in our industry.

*Wayne Creasap is TAUC's Senior Director of Environmental Health and Safety. He can be reached at [wcreasap@tauc.org](mailto:wcreasap@tauc.org).*

# Influence: The Ultimate Power Tool

by DR. ROBERT CIALDINI  
 Founder, INFLUENCE AT WORK

**I**N BUSINESS TODAY, effective influence is essential. Want your ideas implemented? You must influence others to act on them. Want more clients? You must influence people to buy from you. Want more advancement or responsibility? You must influence executives to see the value you offer. And to be an effective leader you must be able to influence others. In all respects, being able to influence others is the ultimate power tool.

So, what makes people say “yes” to your requests? Researchers have been studying influence for over 60 years. While it’s nice to think that we are all logical beings who study facts and information to guide our thinking and decision making process, scientific research shows otherwise. Following are the six proven universal principles of persuasion, that when used ethically, can influence others to change their behavior.

**1. Reciprocity.** There’s a powerful rule that says that we should try to repay what others have done for us. If someone gives us a gift, we feel compelled to give a gift in return. If someone extends us an invitation, we should extend one to them. And if someone does us a favor, we owe them a favor in return. By virtue of the Reciprocity Principle, people feel obligated to the future repayment of items, actions, favors and gifts.

You see Reciprocity initiated in business every day, even if you don’t immediately recognize it. From suppliers sending relevant industry specific information to clients, to managers providing personalized guidance, to co-workers helping each other meet a deadline, Reciprocity can be initiated in many ways. *The key to effectively using Reciprocity is to be the first to give, give unconditionally, and be sure that your “gift” is personalized and unexpected.*

**2. Scarcity.** Have you ever noticed that people seem to want more of those things they can have less of? That’s the Scarcity Principle at work. Marketers know the power of this principle, which is why their ads often contain such phrases as “Limited Time Only” or “Limited Quantities Available.”

When true, Scarcity affects the value of information too. In other words, information that is exclusive is more persuasive. So the next time you gain access to information that is not readily available and that supports an idea or initiative you would like the organization to adopt, gather the key

players and say, “I just got this information today. It won’t be distributed until next week, but I want to give you an early look at what it entails.” Your listeners will lean forward and listen intently. *The key to using Scarcity successfully, whether for a product, service, or information, is to not just honestly tell people the benefits they’ll gain, but also point out what’s unique and what they stand to lose if they don’t move in your direction.*

**3. Authority.** Research shows that people typically follow the lead of those they perceive as credible and knowledgeable experts. For example, physical therapists are able to persuade more of their patients to comply with programs if they display their medical diplomas on their office walls. That’s because people tend to defer to legitimate experts for information and guidance on what to do.

Surprisingly, people mistakenly assume that others recognize their experience. To ensure that they do, first determine what your relevant background, experience, and expertise are for the person you are trying to influence. If you don’t do this, you will be sabotaging the power of your own

message. For maximum impact, arrange to have a third party communicate this information. Another option is to direct the person you want to influence to something in writing that highlights your credentials (i.e. LinkedIn profile, your bio on your website, etc.) *The key to using Authority successfully is to signal to others what makes you credible and knowledgeable before you make your influence attempt.*

**4. Consistency.** People feel compelled to be consistent with their prior behaviors or statements they have made. When someone makes a commitment actively, either by writing it down or speaking it out loud, it’s even more likely that they’ll follow through with that commitment. You can

*You see Reciprocity initiated in business every day, even if you don’t immediately recognize it.*



Dr. Robert Cialdini

activate the Consistency Principle by looking for or asking for small initial commitments.

For example, suppose you want an employee to submit reports in a timelier manner. Once you believe you've won agreement, ask him to send you a summary of that decision in writing. By doing so, you'll have greatly increased the odds that he'll fulfill the commitment, because people tend to live up to what they've written down. *The key to using Consistency successfully is to look for voluntary, active, and public commitments ... and get them in writing.*

**5. Liking.** People prefer to say "yes" to those they know and like. But what makes someone like you? Science tells us there are three important factors that contribute to likeability: 1) we like people who like us (and tell us); 2) we like people who are similar to us; and 3) we like people who cooperate with us toward mutual goals.

*The key to using Liking successfully is to be honest in your praise, find genuine similarities, uncover opportunities to work together toward common goals, and get to know people more meaningfully before talking business.*

**6. Social Proof.** Humans are social creatures. And as such, we rely heavily on the people around us for cues on how to think, feel, and act. In other words, people look to the actions of others to determine their own. This is why using testimonials from happy and satisfied customers is so effective in marketing campaigns.

You can use Social Proof when attempting to get your ideas implemented. Imagine that you're trying to streamline

your department's work processes, but a member of your group is resisting. Rather than try to convince this group member yourself, ask a couple of veteran employees who support the initiative to speak up for it at a team meeting. The veterans' testimony stands a much better chance of convincing the group member than yet another speech from the boss, as Social Proof is often better exerted horizontally rather than vertically. *The key to using Social Proof successfully is to have similar others share their positive story to your target.*

### Exert Your Influence Today

Influence is a very powerful tool. When you ethically implement these six scientifically validated principles of persuasion, you'll be making small, practical, and often costless changes that can lead to big differences in your ability to change others' behavior. In the end, you'll not only achieve your objectives, but you'll also guide the other party to the best decision for their needs. That's when true success transpires for everyone involved.

*INFLUENCE AT WORK (LAW®) was founded by Robert Cialdini, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing and author of the New York Times bestseller, Influence. Dr. Cialdini is a highly sought after keynote presenter on the ethical business applications of the Science of Influence. Additionally, LAW offers customized, in-house Principles of Persuasion (POP) Workshops conducted by Cialdini Method Certified Trainers. For availability please call 480-967-6070 or visit [www.INFLUENCEATWORK.com](http://www.INFLUENCEATWORK.com). Follow at @robertcialdini.*

## Join TAUC and NMAPC On Social Media!

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to stay connected to TAUC and NMAPC, get the latest union construction news and updates, learn about upcoming events and more!



[www.tauc.org/social](http://www.tauc.org/social)

[www.nmapc.org/social](http://www.nmapc.org/social)



# Modernizing Retirement Plans

Continued from Page 15

## Alternative Design #2: Composite Benefit Plans

During the Retirement Security Review Commission process, we heard from pension experts from across the globe, including Michael Mazzuca, a partner at the Toronto-based Koskie Minsky Law Firm. He gave a presentation on the Canadian multiemployer pension system, which due to its voluntary nature and general structure is very similar to the U.S. system. The key difference is that there is no withdrawal liability in Canada's multiemployer pension system.

Why is that? Because the plan structure in Canada allows for significant overfunding of the plans, and the plans cannot compel the employers to increase funding if a shortfall exists. However, trustees have the authority to adjust benefit levels, even for retired participants, to a level that the plan assets can support. Now, that last piece – allowing trustees to decrease benefits – was approved as part of MEPRA last year, *but only when plans fall into “critical and declining” status*. The other pieces of Mr. Mazzuca's presentation were the impetus for the alternate plan design known as composite benefit plans.

The basic premise for this plan design is that each plan can only be considered fully funded if the plan assets reach 120% of the plan liabilities. These plans are also set up so that benefits are paid as annuities in a structure that resembles a defined benefit plan. Assets are pooled rather than held in individual accounts, and are professionally managed by the board of trustees to ensure broad diversification across asset classes. But the best part about this plan design is that it completely eliminates withdrawal liability. The tradeoff is that either the plan must lower the benefit levels or contributing employers must increase funding to hit that 120% “target.”

This plan type also encourages disciplined funding and forces trustees to adopt benefit promises that are closely tied to the funded position of the plan. “Under-promise and over-deliver” is the guiding principle behind the composite benefit plan idea. Plan trustees also are given a much higher level of flexibility to adjust benefits both up and down based on actual plan assets at a level that is not currently permissible in defined benefit plans. This ability to adjust past benefits does not, however, extend to core accrued benefits for participants in payment status. Those participants have full anti-cutback protection, unless adjusting them is necessary to prevent an imminent insolvency after all other options have been fully utilized.

Last but not least, composite benefit plans are not insured by the PBGC, because they are self-adjusting and effectively self-insured. Therefore, plans taking advantage of this alternative design would save their contributing employers the cost of PBGC premiums, which were just raised by 100%.

In all fairness, the creators of Solutions Not Bailouts don't want to limit trustees from using other, heretofore unthought-of creative plan designs. But both of these plans have enough merit to offer significant advantages to the multiemployer pension system that they are worth fighting for. In the case of composite plans, this means convincing Congress to take additional action.

In conclusion, unlike other Solutions Not Bailouts provisions, alternative plan design is not an overly contentious issue. It is not something that organized labor fears, nor do other interested parties in the retirement security world. It simply gives multiemployer plan trustees more flexibility, participants a more realistic approach to retirement security, and contributing employers an opportunity to reduce or completely eliminate their biggest issue: withdrawal liability.

We hope you will help us push this last piece of the puzzle through Congress, and support us as we continue to fight for the long-term viability of the union construction and maintenance industry.

*Todd Mustard is Senior Director of Government Affairs and Member Services for TAUC. He can be reached at [tmustard@tauc.org](mailto:tmustard@tauc.org).*

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# “But It’s Not In The Budget!”

by KATHLEEN DOBSON

**O**NE OF THE most difficult problems facing safety professionals on a daily basis is money – or lack thereof, to be more accurate. When estimators create a budget for a project, it can be difficult for them to understand the need for all of the safety equipment we request. Oftentimes they fail to build in the cost of routine care and maintenance of this equipment, too.

I recently came off a job where the safety professionals frequently complained about this very subject. Every time they pointed out a safety problem that needed to be corrected – usually involving a repair or upgrade to existing PPE or safety structures – they were told, “It’s not in the budget.” As you can imagine, this can be extremely frustrating.

Imagine purchasing a brand new made-in-the-USA vehicle complete with top-of-the-line options and luxury equipment. After making such a big investment, would you decide never to take it to a car wash, or refuse to put gas in the tank or change the oil? Of course not! You would budget for such expenses, because they go hand-in-hand with owning a car. So why don’t we budget for safety expenses the same way?

There’s more to safety than just “buying new stuff.” Replacement and maintenance of equipment is also necessary – not to mention caring for it properly. For instance, one-time-use items like disposable respirators are an ongoing cost throughout the life of a project. Multi-use items such as harnesses are typically a one-time cost, but will need to be replaced if the webbing material becomes frayed or damaged by wear and tear.

Most safety items also need routine maintenance. With corresponding retractable lanyards, there are maintenance and calibration expenses



after they are in service for a certain length of time. It frustrates me that we don’t get arguments about calibrating a torque wrench, but we do get “budget” complaints when it’s PPE-related.

Maintenance of guard rails should also be a budgeted cost. Depending on the materials used for construction, they may require a great deal of time and energy to maintain. Cable may be more costly than 2 x 4’s, but can cost less in manpower and maintenance down the road (once the lumber is exposed to the elements, the wood begins to crack and nails begin to pop). So, safety items do not only involve the *initial* cost of constructing or erecting the item, but also the *hidden* costs of manpower and materials to routinely check and maintain them.

But we also need to educate workers to care for their safety equipment. Using the examples above, a respirator should be inspected before use and the worker should know to dispose of it at the end of the shift or when the cartridge reaches its end of life indicators. A harness should always be inspected before use, and

workers must be acutely aware of when to take a harness out of service – for instance, when grommets are loosened or when straps are frayed. If the harness is worn during welding and is inadvertently exposed to hot slag and becomes frayed, it should be replaced. The same is true for lanyards; workers must be diligent and check them every time they are used, even if it seems like a bother and takes too much time away from “productive” work.

Personnel should know to check the guard railings when they walk past them. Testing the deflection in cable and knowing that it should be tightened when it gives more than three inches up or down is a valuable tool that every worker should have in his or her toolbox. Looking for cracks and loose nails in lumber guard rails is another tip that all workers should be aware of.

Knowing what needs to be repaired and how to report damage is also important. Red-tagging and taking items out of service should

*Continued on Page 30*

# Is Your Labor Relations Strategy Holding You Back?

by JACOB SNYDER

**A** S I WRITE my first article as Chairman of the TAUC Labor Committee, I want to thank those who have come before me. The vision and guidance of past Chairmen have brought us a long way. I especially want to thank our immediate past Chairman, Bill Cornell, for his wisdom, time, and dedication to improving the union construction and maintenance industry.

I am looking forward to working on all of the initiatives and topics our labor committee will tackle in the coming months, including manpower delivery and availability, pre-placement wellness programs, skills training, recruiting, cost, portability, and others. However, I realize that if we are going to be successful in any of these areas, we will need to cooperate with our union partners.

Communication and trust will be crucial to achieving our collective goal of growing the unionized sector of the construction industry. So, for this first article, I thought I would let the unions and owners off the hook and focus on the importance of labor relations for contractors.

“Labor relations” is a term that many of us throw around without giving it much thought. I believe that

a lot of companies view labor relations as simply the function of administering collective bargaining agreements and adjudicating disputes — and in many cases, they see it as more of a necessary evil than a strategic investment. But when done right, it’s a lot more than that. Labor relations is about creating a collective partnership to prevent and resolve employee-related problems and challenges that affect work situations. For many contractors, providing and managing skilled manpower on our customer’s projects are the most vital services we provide. That puts us in the people business; so, logic would dictate that investing a little time in how we interact with and manage those people is one of the most important things we can do in our business.

I would like to offer four suggestions that any contractor can use to improve their labor relations.

1. **Conduct a pre-job conference for projects — even though people in your organization may have reservations.** The pre-job conference is the start to your relationship with labor for a given project. It is your chance



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to open the lines of communication and start the collaborative process. This meeting allows a contractor to set the expectations for the project and provide information that will allow the unions to support your needs. It is unreasonable for contractors to expect unions not to have issues with jurisdiction on a job site if they are surprised or caught off-guard, and it's unreasonable to expect a union to provide skilled manpower if they don't know what will be needed until you call (often on short notice).

The pre-job conference is a way to put all of the issues on the table before the job starts and allow the unions a chance to plan to support the job. This process not only prevents many potential problems, but also helps to resolve disputes when they arise later on. Often, these on-the-job disputes can be solved immediately if a contractor can demonstrate that the rules and expectations were outlined at the pre-job.

Sure, there may be a concern or two raised at the pre-job conference — likely even a jurisdictional discussion — but better in a meeting prior to hitting the job site than in the middle of an outage. Doing it this way helps with morale and productivity on the job and keeps our dirty laundry away from the customers, who don't care which craft does the work so long as it is done safely and correctly.

There are resources available to assist with the pre-job conference if you are new to the process. The NMAPC provides an outline for the meeting on its website ([www.nmapc.org](http://www.nmapc.org)) and TAUC produced a webinar that runs through a mock pre-job, available through its online store ([www.tauc.org](http://www.tauc.org)).

2. **Give honest answers.** The foundations to a good partnership are trust and communication. By providing honest answers and feedback, you are accomplishing both. We are likely to have some disagreements with our union partners, but if they know they can trust what you say, it will go a long way in developing positive relationships that can be leveraged to improve your business.
3. **Treat craft employees like you want to be treated.** Every person that comes to your project knows they are working in a challenging and often dirty environment. However, making people feel like you care goes a long way in how the relationship with labor will progress. Some of the easy things to do are: provide nice restroom facilities when possible, as well as a climate-controlled break area; think about your schedule and how it affects employees (i.e., have you been working 7x10s for an extended period, or are you working 5x8s and think your employees would enjoy 4x10s because there are a lot of travelers?); and, last but not least, ask employees for their feedback. This approach is not only a good way to improve employee morale and productivity; it is also a way to differentiate your company from others when it comes to attracting

manpower. With the shortages in skilled manpower many areas of the country are experiencing, your ability to attract manpower is vital to your success. Improving facilities and conditions and engaging employees are ways to build a reputation as a company craftspeople want to work for.

4. **Train your management team on positive labor relations.** Many of our employees come from the crafts and have never had any management or labor relations training. Also, many site managers don't have knowledge of the labor agreement they are working under, don't know how to deal with conflict other than to yell and get upset, and don't know how to be proactive. Informing your managers about the labor agreements you use, how to conduct a weekly steward meeting, or how to resolve conflict in an effective way will pay off in the form of improved morale on the jobsite as well as better relationships with your union partners.

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***It's easy for a contractor to sit back and call the union for manpower, then blame them when they can't produce — even though the contractor may have never made an effort to engage the union in the process of planning.***

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In conclusion, *relationships take effort*. It's easy for a contractor to sit back and call the union for manpower, then blame them when they can't produce — even though the contractor may have never made an effort to engage the union in the process of planning. All of the suggestions above will help in developing a positive relationship with labor. Most union leaders want you as a contractor to succeed because it means more opportunities for their members. It is easier for them to help you if they know who you are, know what you need, and can trust what you say.

We have never had better cooperation with our union partners than right now. It is time for us to engage them and develop proactive relationships that will make us more competitive and marketable against our non-union competition. 



*Jacob Snyder is the TAUC Labor Committee Chairman and Director of Safety and Labor Relations for Enerfab Corporation.*

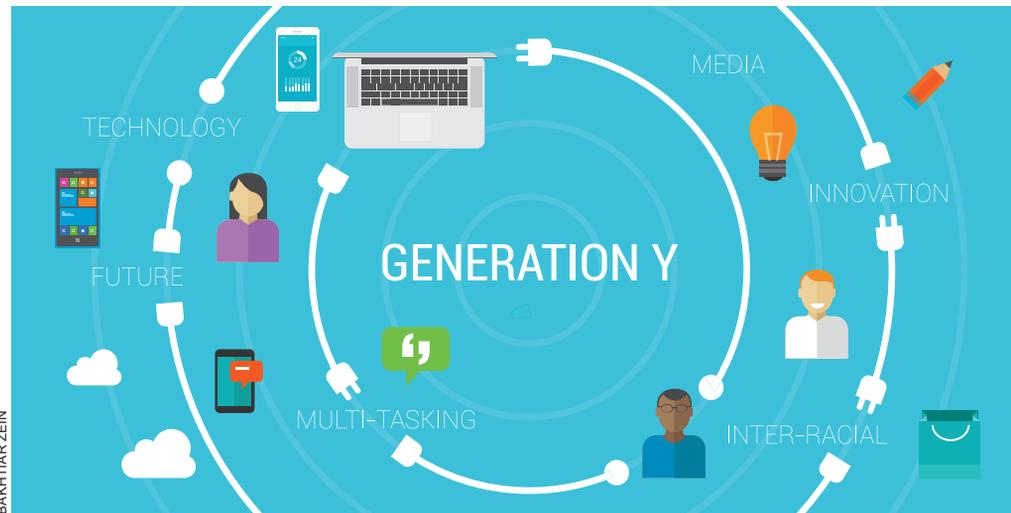
# Preparing For Growth

by **BILL KROEGER**

**A**FTER YEARS OF dealing with the recession, many sectors of the construction industry are now poised for growth. For instance, a recent FMI report projected that in 2015 we will see a 12% increase in lodging construction, 7% for office and anywhere from 6-8% growth in the power sector. Those are encouraging and welcome numbers.

But FMI also found that the skilled labor shortage continues to be a major problem. In the Southeast, it found that a staggering 86% of contractors were having trouble finding qualified job candidates; employers in the Midwest and West were having almost as hard a time, with 84% and 82%, respectively, reporting serious problems finding skilled craft workers. In the Northwest, things were only slightly better, with 67% of contractors reporting problems finding good workers.

So what are Local Employer Organizations (LEOs) doing to help their union contractors recruit and retain a skilled and diverse workforce? In January, my association (AGC of Missouri) sponsored a North St. Louis County Opportunity Expo. Many of our local construction trade unions and contractors were represented, as well as several companies like Ameren and Boeing. Almost 400 people came to the Expo to learn about the trades and other work opportunities. Other participating organizations included the Missouri Office of Community Engagement, the St. Louis Area Training Education office (SLATE) and the St. Louis County Division of Workforce Development. All were on hand to help the attendees navigate the application process. The Expo was such a huge success that



another is being planned for later this spring.

Still, it's clear that construction jobs aren't perceived as the most attractive employment options for some jobseekers – especially tech-savvy young people. Construction workers have many issues to deal with, including less than ideal weather and job conditions and continuous pressure to increase productivity. However, with all that said, a construction career can still be very rewarding and worthwhile, with good pay, healthcare and a pension.

One way to reach this new high-tech generation and educate them about our industry is through the Internet. There are many websites out there geared toward recruiting the best and the brightest, and help them navigate the maze of different trades and skills requirements. I urge you to check out the new We Build USA site, sponsored by TAUC, at [www.webuildusa.org](http://www.webuildusa.org). Other great sites include We Build Northwest Indiana ([www.webuildnwi.com](http://www.webuildnwi.com)) sponsored by the Northwest Indiana Contractors Association and The Builders Guild's home page ([www.buildersguild.org](http://www.buildersguild.org)).

But that's not all – many organizations are finally waking up to the power of social media, and are beginning to use tools like Facebook and Twitter to connect to young jobseekers. “Tried-and-true” activities like our recent expo will always be a great way to meet future construction workers and talk to them face-to-face. But new online recruiting methods can help “break the ice” and reach a much wider audience.

Would you tell a new apprentice that he or she was only allowed to use one tool on the jobsite, regardless of the task? Of course not! You wouldn't think of limiting their ability to do a great job. LEOs – and the union construction and maintenance industry as a whole – need to take the same approach when it comes to recruiting. There isn't a single solution to the manpower shortage, but many. The real answer is “all of the above.”



*Bill Kroeger is the TAUC LEO Committee Chair and Vice President of Labor Relations for the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Missouri.*

# Would You Take This Job?

by **STEVE FELLMAN**  
TAUC GENERAL COUNSEL

**I** HAVE A JOB that I want you to consider. It pays \$174,000 a year plus health-care benefits and a good pension. It is a job of some prestige in the community. However, there are some down sides.

The job is located about 1,000 miles from your current home, so you'll either have to move or maintain two homes. Housing at the new job location is very expensive. You will have to spend at least three or four days a week at your new job location, and extensive travel is required. Once you take the job, you will be guaranteed two years' employment, but a significant number of people in similar jobs are not offered employment once that period ends.

You will be expected to work long hours on complicated matters. Since you will have high public visibility, your activities and the activities of your family will be constantly scrutinized by the media. No matter what you do, you can expect constant criticism. Finally, if you have any hope of continuing your job for more than two years, you will have to convince the people who hired you in the first place to voluntarily give you more than \$1,000,000 per year to spend to convince others to keep you in your job.

So I ask you: would you take this job? Most people wouldn't even consider disrupting their family, living in a media fishbowl and having to engage in constant fundraising – not even for \$174,000 per year.

Unfortunately, this is not a hypothetical situation. The job I just described is being a member of the U.S. Congress. Your Congressperson earns \$174,000 a year and has to spend time in both their home district and Washington, D.C. New members

quickly learn that if they expect any Federal funds to help build roads or fund education and other services in their district, they have to vote exactly how their party leaders tell them to vote. Although most new members of Congress campaign on the basis that they will exercise their best judgment in the interest of their constituents, they quickly learn that if they don't play ball with the party leaders, they will lose Federal funding in their district. Even worse, when the time comes for reelection, the leadership won't support them; they will get no campaign contributions from the national party and party leaders will not come to their districts and talk on their behalf.

The result is partisan politics at its worst. Congressional leadership is most often based on seniority. The members of the House and Senate who have served the longest have the most power. These members usually come from districts or states where the voters support either very conservative or very liberal ideologies. In districts where the average voter is neither on the far right or far left, the voters will be more likely to switch from one party to the other with the result being that whenever a new Congressman or Senator is elected, that person goes to the bottom of the seniority list.

The Congressional leadership disproportionately represents the extremes, and the moderate positions — which probably represent the positions of most Americans — are lost in the shuffle. The Republican leadership in the House and Senate are philosophically so far apart from the Democratic leadership that it is difficult to pass any legislation. Even when both houses of Congress are controlled by the same party, if the

President is from the minority party, he will do everything possible to block the majority of the legislation passed by the Congress.

The bottom line is that our system of government needs to be modernized. Unfortunately, in our current environment, change will only occur if the proponents of change have sufficient funds to convince voters and members of Congress that they have the full support of middle America needed to make the change. However, middle America does not actively participate in or contribute to political activities. By contrast, the far right and the far left have well-oiled fundraising machines. That is our dilemma.

What can be done? When TAUC was created several decades ago (then called the National Erectors Association), it adopted the concept of the three-legged stool. Our association leaders recognized that the success of union construction is based on cooperation from labor, contractors, and owners *all working together*. In a similar manner, as a country, we must support leaders who recognize that the current climate — where businesses support Republicans and unions support Democrats — is simply prolonging the agony. Congressional reform will not happen until we create a new broad-based coalition representing the majority of American voters. Could such a coalition work? We won't know until we try. 



*Steve Fellman is a shareholder with GKG Law in Washington, D.C. He is also general counsel to The Association of Union Constructors.*

# Lessons from Chris

Continued from Page 9

valuable advice to keep them alive one more day. It's a vision rooted in teamwork, in the idea that a group of people working together toward a common goal is almost like a family. Likewise, the only way we can ensure the survival of our industry is to see ourselves as a single unit working together, regardless of craft affiliation, experience level or whether someone is a contractor or a journeyman. Once we start focusing on our differences rather than our similarities, we're doomed.

Think back to the best craft workers you have ever worked with – perhaps the ones you looked up to when you were starting out, the true professionals who took you under their wing and guided you along the apprenticeship path. What did they have in common? Chances are they were a lot like Chris Kyle: they didn't pull rank; they chose to focus on people's similarities rather than their differences; they worked alongside (and were friends with) members of all the different building trades, not just their own; they believed in sharing their knowledge and helping others grow. Is it a coincidence these were the guys everyone respected, from the owner on down? I don't think so.

## The Road Never Ends

Finally, one more parallel I see between Chris Kyle and our craft workers is a shared sense of dedication that **extends beyond the job** and beyond safety in particular. Chris' efforts to protect his fellow Americans didn't end when he left the Navy and returned to civilian life; they simply took on a new form. While receiving treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at a VA hospital, his psychiatrist took him to meet other veterans who had lost limbs (or worse) in the war. Chris quickly decided that he needed to help them. But this time he wouldn't do it by pulling a trigger on a distant rooftop; instead he would dedicate his time and effort to providing them with the assistance, both physical and psychological,

that they needed to live productive lives. Sadly, Chris and a friend were doing just that – reaching out to a fellow veteran with PTSD – when they were both gunned down in 2013.

Like Chris, union craft workers' and contractors' commitment to one another – and the industry as a whole – doesn't end when they take off their safety harnesses and lock up their tools for the day. I've already mentioned Helmets to Hardhats as an example of this type of dedication, but that's just the beginning.

Long after he hung up his uniform, Chris did his best to honor the military he served. He knew that even though he was no longer drawing a government paycheck, he still represented the SEALs. Likewise, we need to remember that we are always representing the union construction and maintenance industry, whether we're on or off the clock. Like it or not, we are walking billboards for the building trades and their affiliated contractors. Potential clients – and potential apprentices – form their opinion based on how we conduct ourselves in our neighborhoods and communities, and on Twitter and Facebook, not just on the jobsite.

We can never determine the impact a single person will have on a union, an industry, or even an entire country. The small stuff, the big stuff, and everything in between – it all counts. If you don't believe me, just ask Chris Kyle's family – and the family of every soldier and Marine he protected in Iraq. 



*Steve Lindauer is the CEO of The Association of Union Constructors and also serves as Impartial Secretary and CEO of the National Maintenance Agreements Policy Committee, Inc. (NMAPC).*

# “But It's Not In The Budget!”

Continued from Page 25

be everyone's responsibility, not just that of the supervisor or safety representative.

Adequately educating and training our workforce will help keep our projects safe and functioning well. Budgeting for safety will help to do the same thing.

Speaking of budgets – I'm almost out of my allotted space for this issue's article. But before I wrap up, I'd like to make a personal comment. This spring, my tenure as Chairperson

of the TAUC Safety Committee will come to an end, so this will be my last column. My responsibilities will be transferred into the very capable hands of Joe Lasky, Director of Corporate Safety, Health & Environment for Scheck Industries. I know he will do an exceptional job as the next chair of this fine committee. I want to take this opportunity to thank TAUC members, staff, the Board of Directors and especially TAUC Senior Director of

Environmental Health and Safety Wayne Creasap for their years of support, friendship and mentoring.

As always...keep safe. 



*Kathleen Dobson is the TAUC Safety Committee Chairperson and Safety Director for Alberici Constructors.*



# ARE YOU TAUC GM MATERIAL?

The weather is getting warm and that means one thing: baseball is back! Around the league, general managers are busy putting together what they hope will be winning teams.

Here at The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC), we have our own GMs – Governing Members, those who choose to step up and take a larger leadership role within the organization.

TAUC is very proud of our Governing Members – and we want you to consider joining this special team-within-a-team. A Governing Membership shows that you're committed – not just to TAUC, but to the union construction and maintenance industry as a whole.

## Governing Members give their time and energy – and in return receive the following benefits:

- Eligible to serve on TAUC Board of Directors
- Eligible to chair TAUC Committees & Task Forces
- Have full voting privileges at TAUC meetings
- Receive special discounted rate for TAUC Leadership Conference
- Participate in all TAUC educational webinars free of charge
- Obtain labor relations assistance from TAUC staff
- Have opportunity to be considered to serve as NMAPC management representative
- Signatories to 10 or more NMAPC agreements receive a discount of up to \$3,200 per year on administrative fees

**Don't delay – become a TAUC Governing Member Today!**

**Contact: Todd Mustard**

Senior Director of Government Affairs and Member Services

(703) 524-3336 x112

[tmustard@tauc.org](mailto:tmustard@tauc.org)

THE ASSOCIATION OF UNION CONSTRUCTORS PRESENTS

*THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE...  
A TRIPARTITE ADVENTURE  
LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN!*



# **PATH FORWARD**

*TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE  
GREATNESS!*



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BELMOND CHARLESTON PLACE, CHARLESTON, SC, MAY 12-15  
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