



# THE ASSOCIATION OF UNION CONSTRUCTORS



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**Enhancing cooperation among unions, contractors and owner/clients for successful project outcomes**

**By The Association of Union Constructors**



**STEVE  
LINDAUER**  
CEO, TAUC

**Located just across** the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.'s corridors of power, The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC) occupies a unique space in the nation's capital as the premier national trade association for the union construction industry. Membership is comprised of more than 2,500 contractors who utilize union labor for their projects, as well as local contractor associations and vendors in the industrial maintenance and construction field.

Founded in 1969 under the auspices of the National Erectors Association, the organization originally served as the voice for union steel erector companies. Over the years, however, the need became apparent for a single national organization to represent all industrial maintenance and construction companies that realize the value of the union workforce, and soon other non-steel erection contractors would join up as well. In recognition of this newfound

diversity, in 2007 the association changed its name to The Association of Union Constructors, or TAUC.

TAUC's mission is to act as an advocate for union contractors and to enhance cooperation between the three entities involved in the successful completion of construction projects: the union, the contractor and the owner/client, the company for which the work is being completed. By encouraging this "tripartite dialogue," many potential issues and delays are eliminated before work even begins. TAUC's longstanding relationships with 14 international construction unions also contributes to TAUC's ultimate goal: to demonstrate that union construction is the best option because it's safer, more productive and provides a higher quality, cost-competitive product.

"The tripartite relationships we strive to facilitate are a crucial part of moving the industry forward, especially in these challenging economic times,"



explains TAUC Chief Executive Officer Stephen Lindauer. “The popular perception is that unions and business owners are constantly at each other’s throats. But in fact, our members and the leaders of the labor unions realize that the only way we’re going to ultimately get the country’s economic engine running at full speed again is to communicate openly and honestly.”

### KEY RELATIONSHIP

Another thing that sets TAUC apart is its close relationship with the National Maintenance Agreements Policy Committee, Inc. (NMAPC). The 28-member committee is made up of an equal number of representatives from labor and management, and

together with the help of a dedicated staff, administers a set of standardized project labor agreements whose terms unions and contractors agree to follow on industrial maintenance and construction projects. These agreements set forth a framework and procedure for nearly every conceivable aspect of the job: safety requirements, crew size, payroll procedures and wages, to name just a few. By using the National Maintenance Agreements as a template, everyone – from the union workers to the contractors to the owners – saves time and is able to more efficiently move forward and focus on getting the job done.

“The NMAs are the gold standard within the union construction industry,”

McCarl’s Inc., PPL Corporation and the Central Pennsylvania Building Trades earned the Gold Star Award at the 2009 Zero Injury Safety Awards.



Safety in the workplace is a huge part of TAUC's agenda

Lindauer notes. "When you're working under an NMA, the roles of both labor and management are clearly defined. It eliminates a huge amount of guesswork and, most importantly, saves time. Without an NMA, a contractor may have to deal with a multitude of local collective bargaining agreements, but under the NMA, it's one set of rules for everyone – a level playing field."

Legally, TAUC and NMAPC are two separate entities. However, they share the same office space and employees divide their time between the two organizations. All signatories to the National Maintenance Agreements are regular members of TAUC. This ensures the association has its finger on the pulse of the union construction industry and can adapt quickly to the needs of its members. TAUC has a top-flight team of labor relations and safety experts who are always available to help answer questions for our members (large and small) and provide time-saving advice.

TAUC also places a high priority on publicly recognizing outstanding examples of labor-management cooperation and quality craftsmanship. The association's James J. Willis Craftperson of the Year Award, named in honor of the former NMAPC president and longtime industry labor leader, is an innovative program that allows union contractors to nominate an outstanding union employee for their work on a specific project. By creating an opportunity for management to



honor an individual member of labor – apprentices, journeymen, foremen and general foremen are all eligible – the James J. Willis award helps strengthen the bonds of trust and mutual respect between these two invaluable industry sectors.

## **SAFETY INITIATIVES**

Improving workplace safety and health are also important parts of TAUC's agenda. Fewer on-site injuries mean workers are able to enjoy productive, healthy lives and companies are able to keep healthcare costs down and stay on schedule – and, once again, stay competitive in the marketplace. That's why TAUC is proud to host the annual Thomas J. Reynolds Awards, which recognize member contractors



who achieve a Days Away, Restricted or Transferred (DART) Rate of 25 percent or more below the national industry average in a calendar year.

Because safety is so important, TAUC also takes a primary role in promoting the NMAPC's annual Zero Injury Safety Awards. The awards recognize what some believed was unachievable only a decade ago: zero injuries on large, complicated construction projects that sometimes involve hundreds (or thousands) of workers. It's the only award that is designed to recognize the tripartite structure of the construction industry: labor unions, contractors and owners are all given equal recognition for completing a job while maintaining a perfect safety record.

"There are many unpredictable elements in the construction industry," Lindauer concludes. "The economy goes up, the economy goes down. Worker shortages are followed by a surplus of skilled labor. We can't change that. But TAUC offers our members a much better way of dealing with these problems when they arise by focusing on cooperation and communication. That way, both our partners in labor and our contractors win, because the final product is safer, higher quality and more cost-competitive than the other options out there." ■

**TAUC takes a primary role in promoting NMAPC's annual Zero Injury Safety Awards**

**TAUC**  
T: 703.524.3336  
[www.tauc.org](http://www.tauc.org)



## Ready to Get to W.O.R.K.?

The National Maintenance Agreements Policy Committee (NMAPC) and The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC) have teamed up to offer members and signatory contractors a new way to find additional work under the NMA. This new tool also provides members of the owner community a way to locate qualified signatory contractors for their specific maintenance and construction work across the United States.

The “Work Opportunity Reference Key,” or W.O.R.K. tool, is a sophisticated, highly detailed database that will match qualified contractors with upcoming construction projects.

This upgrade to the TAUC and NMAPC websites will allow owners to search for NMA contractors through a detailed list of demographic factors such as: contractor type; type of work performed; women/minority status; certifications; union agreements signatory to; OSHA safety information and more.

Get started by logging on to the W.O.R.K. section on TAUC.org and fill out your profile today!

<http://www.tauc.org/work/>



**NATIONAL MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS POLICY COMMITTEE, INC.**

**Celebrating Over 2 Billion Work Hours**

## **NMAPC: The Tripartite Philosophy in Action**

The National Maintenance Agreements Policy Committee, Inc. (NMAPC) is TAUC's sister organization. NMAPC negotiates and impartially administers the National Maintenance Agreements, a series of collective bargaining agreements utilized by more than 2,500 industrial contractors who employ members of fourteen building trades international unions. Although there are fourteen separate agreements, they are 99% similar.

The NMAPC was the first national labor management organization in the construction industry to become incorporated, and is based on the philosophy of tripartite cooperation between the customer, contractor and union craft personnel. All three share equally in the responsibilities and rewards generated by the program. And because the NMAPC's viability is equal only to the sum of its parts, careful consideration has been given over the years to ensure proper balance is maintained among the three participants.

The NMAPC recognizes and addresses several common concerns of the partners in the program, including safety in all phases of work; no disruptions of the owner's work; performance on schedule; cost-effective and quality craftsmanship; productivity flexibility; a trained and available workforce; attainable work opportunities; and a resolution process for job site issues.

By recognizing, addressing and delivering on these concerns, the National Maintenance Agreements program reflects a true partnership dedicated to providing the most effective tool for the performance of work in industrial construction maintenance.

To learn more about the NMAPC, visit [www.nmapc.org](http://www.nmapc.org) today!

