

MAGAZINE

DIG AWARD OCTOBER 26

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INSIDE

The Status of California Construction Jobs

New Members Propel Association

New Taxes on Drinking Water

Workers' Comp Rates Going Up

ECA EVENT

ECA Royal Golf Nov. 16 DIG Award Recipient

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Industry Advancement Advocate- Bill Davis

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President's Message

Where Are All The Construction Workers?



By Brandon Pensick, ECA President Email: bpensick@ferreiraconstruction.com

ast month we wrote about how the California economy is heating up. One of the measures of that growth we didn't mention was the 6.1 percent increase in construction employment over the past year, bringing the total number of work-

ers to 825,000, not including the tens of thousands still hiding out in the underground economy.

The numbers are from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics which issues a monthly report they call by the acronym "JOLTS"—the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey that produces data on job openings, hires, and separations-and the latest data shows the job market in construction is threatening to overheat.

Across some parts of the country, builders and contractors reported difficulty finding new workers. This situation is likely to be aggravated by increased demand caused by the recent spate of hurricanes in the Gulf Coast states, which will soak up construction workers like the black hole at the center of our galaxy soaks up stars.

The West Is Best

The JOLTS report as of July of this year said the national unemployment rate for construction stood at 5.3 percent, a full point above the general unemployment rate. On a regional basis things are much tighter in the West with a 3.3 percent, two full points below the national industry rate, which economists tell us is "full employment" as far as construction is concerned.

While worker shortages haven't been a serious problem for union contractors in southern California yet, it may become one soon, particularly if the housing market picks up following the adoption of a half-dozen or so "affordable housing" bills recently passed by the Legislature.

This has been a topic of discussion at the Laborers' Training Trust meetings, where I have the honor of representing the Engineering Contractors' Association interests. The Laborers' Train School recently graduated 400 new apprentices to the rank of journeyman and has some 1,400 student/apprentices and journeymen enrolled in their broad curriculum.

Other trades, while not as large as the Laborer' program, are also adding apprentices to their ranks as well. There are still people in the union hiring halls looking for work here as recent projects are completed. Non-union contractors are having to scramble to find crews, forcing up wages, which normally run 20 percent or more below union scale.

This is likely to continue to be the case if the JOLTS report trend lines from earlier this year continue. We'll find out soon enough—the next JOLTS report is due out October 11th. Δ



Honoring Leadership

Thursday, October 26, 2017, the Engineering Contractors' Association will continue its tradition honoring individuals who have laid the foundations upon which this industry is built. As we have done since 1988, we will again recognize the dedicated work of those who have advanced the professionalism of the construction industry.

Please join us in this celebration!

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Butier Engineering

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Bill Davies

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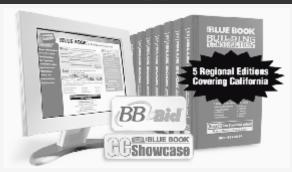
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Executive Direction

ECA's 'Economy' Growing In Strength Too



By Wes May ECA Executive Director Email: wes.may@ecasocal.org

s President Brandon Pensick has been discussing in his column in the magazine, the California economy is growing again and so is the Engineering Contractors' Association "economy," as measured by increased membership.

So far this year we have added 20+ new members to our roster-six companies signatory to one or more trade union agreements, four non-signatory contractors and ten affiliate members—and the year is certainly not over yet. Here's the list:

Signatory Contractors

AMPCO North, Inc., Jimmy Saldivar; Guzman Grading & Paving Corp., Jesse Guzman; Kordich Construction, Inc., Todd Kordich; Performance Pipeline Technologies, Gene Glassburner; Smith Emery Company, James Partridge; Stater Bros. Development, Inc., Scott Limbacher

Non-signatory Contractors

CJW Construction Inc., Tammy Harvey; KEC Engineering, Steve Stanage; Nor-Cal Pipeline Services, David Jeager; PG Cutting Services, Juan Garcia

Affiliates

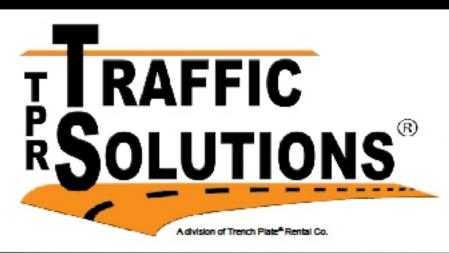
Certified Safe Driver, LLC, Patrick Washington; Cushman & Wakefield, Chris Bosley; CWE Corporation, William Young; ERM Insurance Brokers, Joseph Jones; Ferguson Water Works, Jorge Herrera; Marcum LLP, Warren Hennagin; PDQ Rentals, Todd Turner; Snell & Wilmer LLP, Mark Johnson; Stemar Equipment & Supply Co, Inc., Steve Markonich; Turner Surety and Insurance Brokerage, Inc., Andrew Waterbury

This is one of the best years in terms of increased membership in ECA's 41-year history. But, it's not all roses...we lost three contractors (for a widely different set of reasons in each case). Our board of directors has charged staff with reaching out to all members to make sure we are responsive to their current needs and to get a handle on what areas we can improve member benefits.

One of the key measures of membership retention is participation in activities and events. We always tell our new affiliate members that signing the application is not the end of the process, but the beginning. If they want to gain new customers they must put in the additional work of showing up for membership meetings, events and other association activities such as committee assignments.

In truth, this applies equally to contractor members. If a new subcontractor wants to develop a relationship with an ECA general contractor member attending these functions is a proven way of making sure people know who you are and what you do. It works for generals on the flipside as they need additional subs in our growing California economy.

Associations aren't businesses in the traditional meaning of the word—they are nests of opportunity—providing opportunity for members to work together on industry issues and the prosperity of their businesses. Δ



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Government Affairs

Just When You Think You're Safe



By Dave Sorem, P.E. ECA Government Affairs Chairman email: dave@bubalo.com

The legislature has adjourned, so now we can all take a deep breath and relax, right, for as newspaper editor Gideon John Tucker wrote in 1866: "No man's life, liberty or property are safe while the Legis-

lature is in session.'

The Governor has until October 15th to sign hundreds of new bills into law or veto them, so we won't know the final score for a while, but, at least they're not in session again until January.

That's the rub. In California the legislature meets in a twoyear session, coinciding with the elected terms of the State Assembly members. This means that many of the bills that failed to achieve passage in the first half of the session can be carried over to the second.

One of those bills, Senate Bill 623, introduced by Senator Bill Monning (D-San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Santa Cruz), would impose the first-ever consumer tax on drinking water.

New Taxes on Drinking Water, Milk & Fertilizer

The bill would levy a 95-cent-per-month "fee" (the legislative word for tax used to avoid the two-thirds majority required for passage) on water meters up to one inch or customers without water meters, increasing, depending on the size of the water meter, to \$10-per-month for customers with meters greater than four inches—mostly farmers and industrial customers.

There are additional taxes buried in the bill including "fees" on the sale of fertilizer (7-mills per dollar) and two-cents per hundred-weight on milk, all under the heading of "safe drinking water fees."

The meter, milk and fertilizer taxes, estimated at \$140M per year, will be channeled to a Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, managed by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), to clean up the 300 state water systems that don't meet federal standards, mostly in the Central Valley and mostly subject to excess nitrate exposure.

According to a recent U.S. Geological Service report contamination from man-made sources occurred in high concentrations in only five percent of California's groundwater resources. Naturally occurring contaminants like arsenic or uranium were found in about 20 percent of the state's groundwater.

Normally ECA would support additional funding for projects devoted to improving water quality, but in this case the new taxes present the SWRCB with an embarrassment of riches. This agency has close to \$4.5 billion in unspent funds laying fallow from the state water bond that passed in 2014.

SWRCB has only spent \$113 million so far on projects. Until they speed up the pace they don't need any more complications, or funding. Δ



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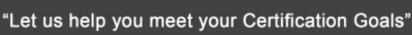
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ECA Member News



2017 ECA Event Calendar

- October 26
 ECA 30th Annual DIG Award, Millennium

 Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles
- November 16
 ECA 20th Annual Royal
 Golf Tournament, Pelican
 Hill, Newport Beach
- December 8 ECA PAC Shoot Out, Mike Raahauge's, Corona

- ECA Board Meetings 1st Wednesday each month, ECA offices
- ECA Safety Forum
 Meets every 1st Wed.,
 11:00 a.m. ECA office,
 lunch provided.

For information regarding ECA events call 714/937-5000 or by fax at 714/937-5030

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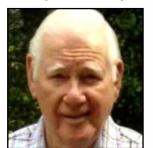
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30th DIG Honors Butier & Davies

n Thursday, October 26, 2017, the Engineering Contractors' Association will continue its tradition of honoring individuals who have laid the foundations upon which this industry is built. With the idea that was developed in 1987, we will again recognize the dedicated work of those who have advanced the professionalism of the construction industry.



This year's recipients are:



2017 Recipient Mark Butier Butier Engineering, Inc.

President of Butier Engineering founded in 1976, Mark Butier graduated from Santa Clara University in 1952 with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering. Butier Engineering, Inc. is a construction management firm that has been servicing public agencies, special districts, and the private sector in the delivery of heavy civil infrastructure since 1976. Located in

Orange County, California, Butier's expertise is in water and wastewater treatment facilities, large diameter pipelines, transportation, and commercial and industrial facility construction. This experience includes virtually every facet of water treatment, storage, and delivery to municipal, residential, commercial, and industrial end users.



2017 Posthumous Recipient **Bill Davies**A.W. Davies Inc.

As founder of his pipeline contracting business, Albert William Davies and Jerry Rogers (a brother-in-law) started as Pomona Valley Sewer Company in 1958. They changed their name to Rogers & Davies in 1966 and in 1977 they split and auctioned everything off. Davies went back into business as Albert W. Davies, Inc. in 1977 and he retired in 2009 after

51 years of contracting. He was an International Lions member for 54 years and supported the San Bernardino County and State Sheriff's Association's.

This award recognizes dignity, integrity and generosity – DIG – in individuals whose lifetime achievements in the industry and contributions to society have made a lasting difference for us all. Their dedication and commitment to profession and community represent the highest examples of leadership and devotion.

The event takes place Thursday, October 26, starting at 6:00 p.m. with a hosted reception, followed at 7:30 p.m. with the black tie dinner and ceremony at the Los Angeles Millennium Biltmore Hotel. The hotel is located at 506 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

Proceeds from the ECA DIG Award provide funding for the ECA Les Weed Memorial Scholarship. Since its inception in 1990 by the late ECA President, Les Weed, the ECA Scholarship Committee has awarded \$218,000 to 115 recipients to further academic careers in a variety of disciplines. Δ



ECA's 21st Annual Royal Golf Tournament

At Pelican Hill Golf Club

Thursday November 16, 2017

The ECA will tee off its 21st Annual Royal Golf Tournament at Pelican Hill Golf Club in Newport Coast. Don't miss this FANTASTIC opportunity to play at one of California's premier golf courses! Check-in begins at 6:30 AM with tournament tee off at 8:00 AM. Featuring Foursome Team Scramble play on this majestic course, you can win Game, Raffle & Hole-in-One Prizes.

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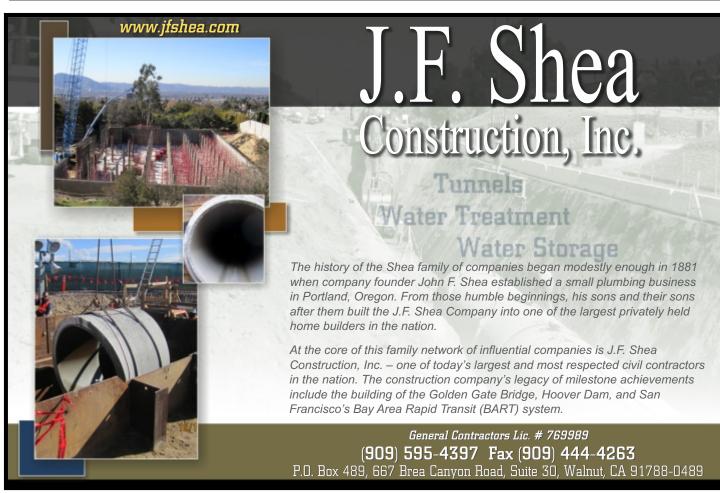
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Public Works Continues Decline Vs GDP

Public construction spending in the country hit a 24-year low in the second quarter of this year, reaching 1.42 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (the sum of all economic activity—GDP), according to a report from the Census Bureau.

This is the second quarter of decline in spending relative to GDP, but is part of a longer trend dating back to the second quarter of 2009, when spending reached its highest point of 2.22 percent of GDP (remember the "stimulus"?).

The reason the Census Bureau uses the relative to GDP relationship is that it shows the spending in terms of the total economy, not in terms of inflated dollars spent on construction. But, the Federal Reserve says there is no inflation, you

say. The U.S. Department of Transportation begs to differ, noting in a report issued earlier this summer that the cost of highway construction has gone up 67 percent...yes, two-thirds...since 2003.



Trends show that the

infrastructure spending has never recovered from the 2008 Great Recession and, in fact, has dropped well below most historical averages, demonstrating infrastructure has lost the political battle for its share of the federal, state and local budgets.

The Census Bureau's Value of Construction Put in Place (VIP) survey, shows the seasonally adjusted annual rate of U.S. public construction spending for Highways and Streets was \$82.44 billion for June this year, a 6.6 percent drop from May and an 8.1 percent decrease from the same month in 201

Water Board Appoints New Executive Director

Eileen Sobeck is the new executive director of State Water Resources Control Board, replacing Tom Howard, effective September 5th.

After reviewing a wealth of qualified applicants, the State Water Board selected Sobeck due to her substantial managerial and environmental experience. She has nearly 40 years of government service, and more than a decade of executive and management experience leading professional staff in complex organizations.

Sobeck will be new to state government, but has spent her 40-year career in federal agencies that touch on many of the same public resource challenges the State Water Board faces. Sobeck is a lawyer by training and spent 25 years at the U.S. Department of Justice, ultimately serving as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Environment and Natural Resources (1999-2009). Δ



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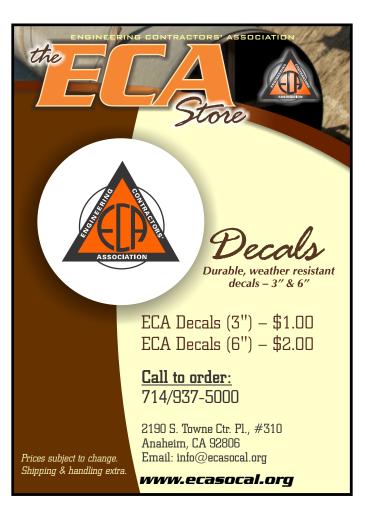
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\$4.5 Billion Water Bond Funds Highlight Membership Meeting

At our September Membership Meeting, experts in their field explored the challenges of getting infrastructure projects out to contract throughout the state and region.

Southern California water experts and leaders discussed the latest water infrastructure projects and water policy solutions for our region.

This conversation included an overview of desalination projects, updates on the Cadiz Valley Water Project and information on the Metropolitan Water District's latest infrastructure projects.

Additionally, Dave Sorem, ECA's Vice President of Infrastructure Development explained in one instance how normally ECA would support additional funding for projects devoted to improving water quality, but in this case the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has close to \$4.5 billion in unspent funds laying fallow from the state water bond that passed in 2014.

SWRCB has only spent \$113 million so far on projects. Until they speed up the pace they don't need any more complications, or funding. Δ





Above: Speaker Rich Lambros of the Southern California Group presents an overview on the status of infrastructure work in the region.

Below: John Hakel of the Southern California Partnership for Jobs explores issues at the event including how transportation leaders are urging the state to develop new revenue streams to help fund needed highway infrastructure projects.

Above: Guest speaker

Dave Sorem, P.E. of Mike

Bubalo Construction, Inc.;

Jordan Brandman of the

Southern California Group;

guest speaker John Hakel

of the Southern California

Partnership for Jobs; Carol

Church of the Southern

California Partnership for

Jobs; guest speaker Rich

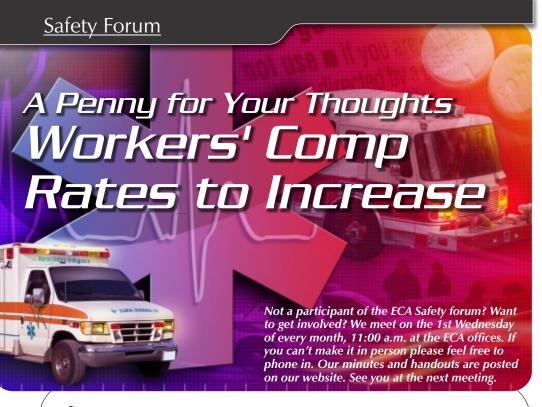
Lambros of the Southern

California Group at the

Summit House Restaurant

dinner meeting.





fter cutting "pure premium" rates for workers' compensation insurance in July of this year, last month the Workers' Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau (WCIRB) Governing Committee voted to increase rates one cent next January.

The filing will propose advisory pure premium rates that average \$2.01 per \$100 of payroll, which is 14.3 percent less than the industry average filed pure premium rate of \$2.34 as of July 1, 2017, and one cent more than the average approved July 1, 2017 advisory pure premium rate of \$2.00. This tiny proposed increase follows five consecutive advisory pure premium rate decreases since early 2015 that have totaled more than 27 percent.

It still leaves California with the highest cost for workers' comp insurance in the nation, 76 percent higher than the national average, according to the 2016 annual survey of costs by the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services.

The other piece of the equation is that "pure premium" rates are more of a guideline than a reality since every company's actual rate is based on a couple things—their experience with workers' comp claims called an X-Mod and the size of their employee base/payroll. These are the basis for companies that actually provide the insurance to make determinations about what they will charge for their services.

How We Got Here

In his presentation to the Governing

Committee, Dave Bellusci, WCIRB's executive vice president and chief actuary, noted that the indicated January 1, 2018 average advisory pure premium rate, "while slightly above" the average approved July 1, 2017 pure premium rate, is more than 7 percent below the average January 1, 2017 advisory pure premium rate.

Identifying the Problem

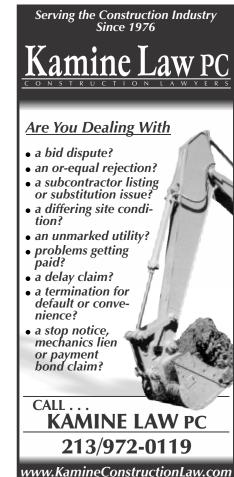
Bellusci identified some of the factors contributing to this reduction over the last year:

- Medical losses have continued to develop downward
- Claim settlement rates have continued to accelerate
- Increasing loss adjustment expense trends have moderated
- Increased wage growth is being forecast

Bellusci also noted that countering these favorable trends and contributing to this modest proposed increase from the average approved July 1, 2017 advisory pure premium rates are recently rising average claim severities and continued sharp growth in the volume of cumulative injuries.

Filings & Plans

The WCIRB will submitted new rate filing to the California Department of Insurance (CDI) August 18th. The CDI will schedule a public hearing to "consider" and render a decision to accept, reject or change. Then the WCIRB will post the information in their "Filings and Plans" https://www.wcirb.com/filings-and-plans section of the organization's website. Δ



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