Capitol Hill Update

Many important SMACNA issues await 2017

Pension reform

While the odds appeared favorable for including the Composite Plan Design proposal as part of the Continuing Resolution (CR) process after the election, the U.S. Congress did not act before adjourning in 2016. This occurred despite that language was ready to go and had significant congressional member and staff support. In addition, Congress did not increase PBGC (Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation) premiums for multiemployer pension plans to help fund Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation deficits. The Continuing Resolution was considered the best bet to get Composite Plans authorized but, at the end, a few obstacles derailed that strategy. The Leadership wanted a “clean” CR to make final passage easier and Senate Democrats wanted to use Composite Plan Design as leverage to get the Mine Workers Pension problem fixed. In the end, the House leadership would not agree to addressing either policy issue.

Looking ahead to 2017, SMACNA and our construction employers’ coalition will work closely with the House Ways and Means Committee to generate

Contractors in the News

ENR recognizes work of SMACNA Boston contractors

Engineering-News Record magazine’s New England edition featuring the Best Project Awards recently recognized the work of three SMACNA contractors on some of New England’s most innovative buildings. The work of SMACNA contractor McCusker-Gill Inc., Hingham, Mass., on the Building for Transformative Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston was recognized in the Health Care Best Project category. SMACNA contractors Walsh Mechanical Contractors, Abington, Mass., and Charles P. Blouin Inc., Seabrook, N.H., worked on the Novartis Cambridge Campus Expansion in Cambridge, Mass., which earned the Higher Education Best Project. All three contractors are members of the SMACNA Boston chapter.

Reminder: New OSHA electronic reporting begins 2017

This coming year, submitting OSHA records has a new sense of urgency. Each year, members must post OSHA injury and illness records from the prior year for employee review between Jan. 1 through March. However, new reporting requirements for electronically reporting illness and injury data changes the process significantly. Most companies will need to electronically submit their OSHA data by July 1, 2017.

Starting in 2017, certain employers must send their OSHA injury and illness data, which are already required to record, through a secure website for posting on the agency website. Prior to this new rule, little or no data about worker injury...
Mentoring is a win-win opportunity for everyone

Over the years, I’ve had quite a few mentors—my dad, a former employer, a SMACNA chapter executive, and former SMACNA President Phil Meyers. They all played invaluable roles in my life and career. Now is my opportunity to focus on the importance of mentoring and encourage the growth of this life-changing support system.

January is National Mentoring Month and I hope you will think about how businesses and individuals can work together to increase the number of mentors and ensure positive outcomes for our young people and fellow employees.

Last month I wrote about how in Indiana, our chapter executive started a program called Contractor School. We invited all local apprentices in for two days of life-skill classes, plus practical advice from SMACNA contractors. If your chapter would like to do something similar, the International Training Institute offers an Apprentice Mentoring Program Handbook to provide some structure to these meetings.

The book covers history, purpose, critical needs, benefits, and stresses industry demographics, retirement, and skill shortages: aka opportunities. Twenty locals already use this handy booklet as a guide. I encourage you to contact your JATC and get something started today.

I have discovered there are several ways to be a mentor: one-on-one in an informal setting, or formally through a corporate program, such as the one Angela Simon, president of Western Allied Mechanical in Menlo Park, Calif., conducts. Angie, SMACNA National’s 2017 vice president, has created an exceptional mentoring program where the interns are actively involved in a project from start to finish. I can think of no greater way to attract and recruit quality people than having a corporate mentoring program.

Another formal mentoring venue can be found through local colleges and tech schools. Our company, Poynter Sheet Metal, speaks twice yearly to the Building Construction Management Department at Purdue University, in West Lafayette, Ind. Our first presentation is an industry overview in a show-and-tell format. We bring in lots of our products that generate some fun discussions. We give an overview of the sheet metal industry and explain everything from ductwork, equipment, devices, and terminology.

Our second speaking opportunity is when we address a high-level budget and estimating class. We show them how to read mechanical prints and how our on-screen takeoff system works. This turns out to be a very practical and hands-on session.

One of my responsibilities as SMACNA President also is to share what I’ve learned over the years at SMACNA’s Business Management University this coming February. I look forward to meeting this year’s class and having yet another opportunity to be a mentor. I hope you will consider sending someone to this dynamic course of business and leadership lessons.

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New Congress means new opportunities

Attend National Issues Conference, May 2-4

There is never a better time to come to Washington, D.C., than the beginning of a new session. Now, your input has added importance. Our work on the issues is not over. There will be new challenges and opportunities in the 115th Congress, plus new members of Congress to meet.

We will begin with our opening session and reception at the Washington Marriott Georgetown, and the main policy session will be at the office of Hogan Lovells in downtown D.C. Lunch will be held in a room with a balcony to enjoy the spring air along with a magnificent view!

So, plan to attend the 2017 QCA National Issues Conference, May 2-4, in Washington, D.C. You’ll learn the status of vital issues and how you can help communicate SMACNA’s positions to the new Congress.

Key legislators and Washington opinion-makers will speak at the conference and, later, you can engage in one-on-one sessions with your Congressional leaders on Capitol Hill.

Mark your calendar now and make it a family affair. Washington is a great place to bring the family in the spring!

And you can take action right now to support the industry’s issues. Read about the issues, then contact your members of Congress through SMACNA’s Advocacy webpage, www.smacna.org/advocacy/take-action.

Watch for 2017 National Issues Conference registration coming soon on the SMACNA website.

Holiday observed

The SMACNA National offices will be closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, Jan. 16.
Still time! Sign up for 2017 Collective Bargaining Orientation

Packed with the latest information, SMACNA’s 2017 Collective Bargaining Orientation will give you the solid foundation you need to negotiate effectively during bargaining season.

Designed for new negotiators as well as experienced bargainers, this one-day course, Feb. 23, in Dallas, will take you from bargaining basics to the legal framework for bargaining and more.

You will study how to prepare for bargaining, the legal fundamentals, and, importantly, how to preserve the multiemployer unit prior to bargaining and at impasse.

In addition, this workshop will address current issues, the latest changes in the Standard Form of Union Agreement, and the latest employment share data.

This dynamic program was developed for SMACNA’s young contractors, new negotiating committee members, chapter executives, and experienced bargaining committee members.

Time is running out to register, so sign up online on SMACNA’s Labor Relations webpage today. Registration deadline is Jan. 20, 2017. For more information, contact Heather Frank at SMACNA National (hfrank@smacna.org/ (703) 995-4045).

Don’t miss the valuable information and ideas that will give you the negotiating skills you need.

Welcome new SMACNA members

SMACNA National is proud to welcome the following new members:

- **Synergy Mechanical**, Hillside, Ill. – SMACNA Greater Chicago
- **JEC Service Company Inc.**, Waltham, Mass. – SMACNA Boston Inc.
- **Mountain Air Balancing**, Tunkhannock, Pa. – SMACNA of Northeastern Pennsylvania
- **Campano Mechanical LLC**, Camden, N.J. – Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Philadelphia and Vicinity
- **DC Duct and Sheet Metal LLC**, Washington, D.C. – SMACNA Mid-Atlantic

Capitol Hill Update

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more enthusiasm, urgency, and a more pro-active posture for Composite Plan Design.

Major tax reforms

Leaders in the House and Senate have outlined an ambitious tax reform agenda for the first nine months of the 115th Congress and it appears to require two separate reform packages. House Ways and Means Committee Chair Kevin Brady (R-Texas) indicated he expects to handle a modest collection of reforms and expiring tax provisions in January and February, as well as repeal of the Affordable Care Act tax provisions.

It is hoped that the energy and related tax incentives will be part of this package, including 179D, waste-heat-to-power, thermal energy, and combined heat and power tax incentives that expired on Jan. 1.

SMACNA and its coalition partners worked all last year to extend these provisions with the assurances of early action in 2017 by Senate Finance Committee leader Orin Hatch (R-Utah), most tax committee members, and Senate Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). When Congress decided to quit early in December they left these provisions and a tall stack of bills on their desks with the votes to pass had votes then been taken.

Energy efficiency incentives

Comprehensive energy policy legislation, the product of years of negotiation and bipartisan support, was awaiting floor action when Congress adjourned in December. While the package had been significantly modified after the election to reach a bipartisan compromise version supported by House and Senate energy policy leaders, at the last moment the House leadership postponed promised floor action until the 115th Congress.

SMACNA has been one of the strongest supporters of the House’s version which focused more on energy efficiency in the commercial, industrial, and residential sectors as well as upgrades to energy related infrastructure. SMACNA’s Capitol Hill office has begun working with members returning for the 115th Congress on a similar bill that retains the energy efficiency goals and program incentives designed to promote an active contractor role to achieve improved energy efficiency across all market segments.

In other action: health-care policy, defense procurement reform

Congress passed two other initiatives for signature by the President.

- Health-Care Policy: Congress passed a provision that allows small businesses with fewer than 50 employees to offer Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs) to employees without penalties. These HRAs can be used by employees for the payment of premiums or qualified medical expenses associated with insurance coverage.
- Defense Procurement Reform: Passed the $618.7 billion National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), with many new military construction-related programs and Department of Defense (DoD) construction procurement provisions. The NDAA included a number of SMACNA-supported DoD reforms designed to boost DoD energy efficiency programs. These long-sought reforms will be important to construction contractors active in bidding combined heat and power/waste heat to power (CHP/WHP) projects, base retrofits, and performance contracts. In addition, the NDAA made a significant change to DoD’s Small Business reporting requirements and authorized a SMACNA-supported past performance pilot program for subcontractors working on DoD projects.

Help the industry and take action today

Let your members of Congress know you support these issues. Contact them through SMACNA’s Advocacy webpage and set up a meeting with them today.
**Still a few seats left!**

**Learn a lifetime of lessons at Business Management University**

Interested in learning about new ideas and best practices to run a successful sheet metal and HVAC company? During SMACNA’s Business Management University, Feb. 26 to March 2, 2017, Tempe, Ariz., you will discover the practical planning, management, and financial skills that will make the difference for your company. Only a few seats are left, so sign up today.

Participants note that they have gained a lifetime of leadership lessons which they have called on again and again, gained a better understanding of how to best run their company, and taken fresh new ideas back to their firm. Program participants say this is “the best thing they have ever done.”

Taught by top construction industry experts and professors, the program includes sessions on contractor survival skills, financial management, strategic planning, change orders, negotiation, time management, leadership, and productivity.

Enrollment is limited, guaranteeing individual participation with a close-knit group of talented, motivated peers.

Don’t wait. Register on SMACNA’s National Educational Programs webpage. Sign up by the early-bird deadline and save money. Additional attendees from the same company will also receive a discount.

For more information, contact Bridgette Bienacker, SMACNA’s director of business management and membership at bbienacker@smacna.org.

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**Call for College of Fellows candidates**

The SMACNA College of Fellows is now accepting nominations of candidates for the College of Fellows. The deadline to receive nominations is Feb. 24, 2017.

The College of Fellows recognizes candidates who have rendered exceptional and outstanding service, both nationally and locally, beyond the call of what is normally expected to the Association.

Application forms can be found on the College of Fellows section of the SMACNA website.

Please note that there are two types of nomination forms—one for chapter executives and one for contractor members—so be sure to use the proper nomination form.

For more information, see the Call for Candidates notice on the SMACNA website. If you have any questions, please contact Jason Watson at SMACNA National (jwatson@smacna.org / (703) 803-2981).

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**Mentoring is a win-win opportunity for everyone**

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So, start the New Year in the right direction, get involved in National Mentoring Month and help raise the awareness for mentoring and encourage the rapid growth of mentoring in either a formal program or informally. Mentoring gives you a chance to change gears from the day-to-day grind, plus, it is fun.

Sincerely,

Joseph Lansdell
SMACNA President

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**Reminder: New OSHA electronic reporting begins 2017**

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...and illness information was made public. By making injury data publicly available, OSHA is encouraging employers to focus on safety.

Under the new rule, all establishments with 250 or more employees are required to electronically submit injury and illness information from OSHA Form 300 (OSHA log), Form 300A (log summary), and Form 301 (injury/illness incident report) by July 1, 2017.

Establishments with 20-249 employees need to electronically submit information from OSHA Form 300A only by July 1, 2017.

Per OSHA, the final rule promotes an employee’s right to report work-related injuries and illnesses without fear of retaliation. An employer must have a reasonable procedure for reporting work-related injuries and not discourage employees from reporting, such as posting the already-required OSHA workplace poster.

**Free webinar**

SMACNA has partnered with Intec Inc., which provides services addressing workplace safety and OSHA compliance, to provide a free webinar on the requirements of the new OSHA rule.

Find the Intec brochure and sign up for the webinar: “Briefing: OSHA Recordkeeping” by clicking on the webinar registration date that you want. The content of each webinar is the same, yet may be revised slightly as the rule advances though OSHA’s rulemaking process.

**Don’t over-report: Know what NOT to record**

SMACNA also encourages all members to pay closer attention to the injuries and illnesses you enter in your records.

With these new requirements, it is imperative that SMACNA members understand and properly record occupational injuries and illnesses. It is essential to know what NOT to record on your OSHA injury and illness logs. “Over-reporting” or recording injuries and illnesses unnecessarily, can lead to a falsely inflated OSHA incidence rate.

**SMACNA Safety Bulletins provide OSHA guidance**

SMACNA has prepared several Safety Bulletins that provide further detail on these issues, including a list of injuries and illnesses that do not need to be recorded on OSHA logs (such as first aid cases). For questions on OSHA recordkeeping, contact Mike McCullion, director of market sectors and safety (mmccullion@smacna.org / (703) 995-4027).
Meet the Board:
Brian Fluetsch of Lacey, Wash.

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• The business tool I can’t live without: My iPhone, mostly because it allows me to be away from the office but still stay connected. (Like the days that I want to play hooky and go skiing.)
• The new technology I’m most excited about: I really like our Trimble robotics station because it’s easy to see the amazing time savings it produces.
• My outside interests: I am passionate about snow skiing. I also love driving and working on my hot rods.
• My favorite quote: “He who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress.”
• The best business advice I ever received: The longer you can stand in the gap between stimulus and response the more appropriate your response typically is.
• There is nothing better than: Sixteen inches of new powder on an untracked ski run. Yee-haw.
• The sports teams I cheer: My Washington State Cougars, “Go Cougs” and the Seattle Seahawks.
• My first car: A 1938 Ford coupe, and I still have it 43 years later.

Mr. Fluetsch has served as a member of SMACNA’s National Residential Council Steering Committee and on the Director Nominating Committee.

Currently vice president of the SMACNA Western - Washington chapter, he also serves on the chapter’s executive board. His local involvement includes membership on the Joint Labor Management Relations Board, the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, and the Regional subcommittee.

Devoted to the industry, he has served on many contractor advisory boards for industry organizations, including Puget Power, Honeywell, Emerson/Copeland, and Carrier Corp. A leader in his community, he has served on the board of the Thurston County Economic Development Committee, the advisory board of St. Martin’s University’s School of Business, and on the boards of the Thurston County Roundtable, the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound, Capital Medical Center, and the Washington Center for the Performing Arts.

He graduated in 1981 from Washington State University with a bachelor’s degree in arts and science and entered the industry as a service manager that same year.

From its founding in 1976 in his mother and father’s garage, Sunset Air Inc. has grown into a large warehouse and showroom that offers a range of services including heating, electrical, water heaters, windows, solar services, and doors, and where they stress taking responsibility with resources like energy and water. The Sunset Air building was the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) gold-rated, privately owned and operated building in Washington state.

Bridge your IT gap: SMACNA’s new “Guideline to Information Technology”

More than 40 percent of construction companies do not have a dedicated information technology (IT) department, according to J.B. Knowledge’s recently published “Construction Technology Report.” For small and medium-sized specialty contractors, like most SMACNA members, that percentage is significantly higher.

SMACNA’s new “Guideline to Information Technology” addresses this gap by providing members with a quick resource guide to navigating IT decision-making and management. The publication, for members only, delivers guidance on the proper combination of standardized hardware, software, and connectivity.

This easy-to-read, 39-page document also includes two critical appendices: A Sample Disaster Recovery Plan and a Sample Information Technology Policy and Procedures Manual.

So, if you’re looking for a roadmap to improve your IT decision-making, check out SMACNA’s “Guideline to Information Technology,” available on the Business Management section of the SMACNA website.

SMACNA’s “Guideline to Information Technology” is the first of four new updates to SMACNA’s “Contractor Operations Manual.” Look for additional new and updated manuals in the coming weeks.

Give your supervisors a big advantage this year

Invest in your promising supervisors at SMACNA’s Supervisor Training Academy, March 20-22, in St. Louis.

From mastering the core values of successful supervisors to leadership, communications, and project management, this stimulating program will put your supervisors—both new and seasoned pros—on the pathway to success.

In this highly interactive program, supervisors will master such leadership skills as mentoring and coaching, delegating and managing conflict. They will study time management, documentation, examine tactics for job planning, productivity, and profitability, as well as tune in on industry trends.

SMACNA’s Supervisor Training Academy is recommended for HVAC-sheet metal foremen, shop foremen, superintendents, and other critical managers. Seats are limited, so sign up early.

Register by the early-bird deadline Feb. 3 to receive a discount. Additional employees from the same company will also receive a reduced rate.

For more information, contact Bridgette Bienacker, SMACNA’s director of business management and membership, bbienacker@smacna.org.
“Aloha!” SMACNA’s 74th Annual Convention returns to Hawaii

Say “aloha” to paradise as SMACNA returns to the Grand Wailea and Wailea Beach Marriott Resorts in Maui for our 74th Annual Convention, Oct. 22-25, 2017.

Featuring warm ocean breezes and spectacular views, the Grand Wailea overlooks Maui’s sparkling Wailea Beach. You will experience volcanic island vistas, luxurious accommodations, award-winning cuisine, championship golf courses, and turquoise pools.

SMACNA’s annual Product Show will be held at the nearby Wailea Beach Marriott Resort and Spa.

For golfers, the Wailea Golf Club features three acclaimed championship golf courses with stunning natural beauty and panoramic views.

Watch the SMACNA website for convention registration and details, including first-class education sessions, the Product Show, fabulous entertainment, and fun, coming soon.

SMACNA’s 2017 Safety Survey now available for U.S. and Canada

For more than 20 years, SMACNA has conducted the annual Safety Excellence Awards Program (SSEAP) to recognize SMACNA contractors for their outstanding safety performance and collect meaningful safety and health data for our members.

Many SMACNA members have benefited from the program—they have won safety awards or used the content-rich data generated by the survey. Last year, SMACNA expanded the safety survey program to include our Canadian member firms. Now there are two dynamic safety programs in both countries to recognize contractors’ safety excellence.

The 2017 Safety Survey is now available online. Submit your safety information on the SMACNA Safety webpage. Once you enter your state or province in the online form, you will be directed to the appropriate survey for the U.S. or Canada.

Contractors in the News

Inspiring the next generation of manufacturers

SMACNA contractor Ductmate Industries of Charleroi, Pa., has been actively working with local schools and organizations to promote the manufacturing industry and the rewarding careers it provides.

Recently, on National Manufacturing Day, when hundreds of manufacturers opened their doors to thousands of students across America, they did just that.

Rep. Tim Murphy (R-18th-Pa.) and the Hon. Laura Taylor-Kale, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s deputy assistant secretary for manufacturing, spoke to the Ductmate workforce and visiting students from three local high schools in their Monongahela, Pa., facility.

“The manufacturing industry offers the community good-paying jobs, paid training, positive work environment, job stability, and exciting career prospects,” said Ray Yeager, president and CEO, Ductmate Industries Inc.

More innovative fabrications from A. Zahner Company

SMACNA contractor A. Zahner Company, Kansas City, Mo., was recently featured on Arts Upload, a KCPT-TV program highlighting the arts in Kansas City.

The program follows the history of A. Zahner Company, which has been making their metallic mark on architecture around the world since 1897, from the National September 11 Museum and the Bartle Hall Sky Stations to the Art Gallery of Alberta.

SMACNA’s 2016 Safety Excellence Award winners were recognized at SMACNA’s 73rd Annual Convention in Phoenix in October.

Taking the safety survey is easy, doesn’t take long, and is confidential. Most information you need can be found in your company’s 2016 injury records. A third-party consultant prepares the final report for firms based in the U.S. and will provide a future report for the Canadian safety program.

Your input is critical to the success of the safety program—so fill out the online safety survey today.

All entries must be received by May 5, 2017.

To see the most recent safety report, Safety Statistics Profile 2016, visit SMACNA’s Safety webpage under the Surveys and Statistics section.

For more information, contact Mike McCullion, SMACNA’s director of market sectors and safety (mmccullion@smacna.org / (703) 995-4027).
Welcome new SMACNA 2017 Associate Members!

SMACNA welcomes these new and returning Associate Members for 2017. Join us in congratulating the following companies:

Platinum
- Federated Insurance Co., Owatonna, Minn. (Also a Premier Partner)
- Vicon Machinery LLC/Plasma Automation Inc., Bohemia, N.Y.

Gold
- Daikin Applied, Minneapolis (Also a Premier Partner)
- Milwaukee Tool, Brookfield, Wis. (Also a Premier Partner)
- Quote Software Inc., Eugene, Ore.

Silver
- Autodesk Inc., Waltham, Mass.
- Caddy-Mechanical, Solon, Ohio
- Carlisle HVAC Products, Carlisle, Pa.
- C.L. Ward and Family Inc., Canonsburg, Pa.
- Duro Dyne Corp., Bay Shore, N.Y.
- FastEST Inc., Wichita, Kan.
- Heating and Cooling Products, Mount Vernon, Ohio
- K-Flex USA LLC, Youngsville, N.C.
- Kingspan Insulation LLC, Atlanta, Ga.
- Ruskin Air and Sound Control, Grandview, Mo.
- Sheet Metal Connectors Inc., Minneapolis
- Technical Sales International, Rocklin, Calif.
- Trimble, Westminster, Colo.

Bronze
- ALAN Manufacturing Inc., Wooster, Ohio
- Alnor Ventilation Systems, Wola Mrokwiska, Poland.

SMACNA Associate Members develop valuable business partnerships and opportunities with SMACNA contractors. Learn how you can take advantage of 2017 SMACNA Associate Membership on SMACNA’s Associate Member website or contact Kristina Unger (kunger@smacna.org / (770) 632-0026).
SMACNA reminders

January 2017
- Chapter Executive Institute – Jan. 29-Feb. 1, Maui, Hawaii

February 2017
- Collective Bargaining Orientation – Feb. 23, Dallas

March 2017
- Supervisor Training Academy – March 20-22, St. Louis
- Association Leadership Meeting – March 30-31, Las Colinas, Texas

April 2017
- Project Managers Institute – April 23-26, Raleigh, N.C.

May 2017
- QCA National Issues Conference – May 2-4, Washington, D.C.
- Safety Surveys Due (US and Canada) – May 5

Future SMACNA Conventions
- 76th Annual Convention – Oct. 20-23, 2019, JW Marriott, Austin, Texas