

SECOND EDITION | 2017

# THE METAL PRESS



**PLUS**  
**PHOTOS FROM**  
**THE GREENBRIER**  
Page **13**

**SUCCESSION PLANNING TIPS**

Page **3**

**HOMELESS VETS GIFTED \$5,000**

Page **9**

**MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE**

Page **11**

**SMACNA**  
**GREATER CHICAGO**



WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT | Ken Wiesbrook

# WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT



May was a busy month for our association. It was great to see those of you who attended the Annual Conference at The Greenbrier. It's such a beautiful venue and provided a wonderful opportunity to network with our industry friends.

It was also nice to see such a fantastic turnout at our May member meeting at Harry Caray's. We all learned a little more about succession planning thanks to our speakers Tom Doyle and Brett Stetson with Plante Moran. You can read more about what our speakers had to say, as well as the experiences two of your fellow members had with succession planning, on pages 3 & 4.

June is National Safety month, and as business owners, it's up to us to ensure we instill a culture of safety for our employees. Safety isn't just about preventing lost-time injuries or avoiding Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fines. It's about ensuring that all of our workers get home safe to their families every single night.

Consider this: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, the latest year available, 4,281 people died doing their jobs in 2014 — more than one dozen per day. I know that sometimes it's easy to feel like we're "too busy" to break for a safety meeting or simply think we will do it later, but the truth is that the busier we are, the more important it is. About 10 years ago, one of our members had a worker fall off a bucket lift. He wasn't wearing his safety harness and, sadly, he didn't make it. To this day, the workers at that company never need reminding about the importance of wearing their safety harnesses — they have them on. It shouldn't take a tragedy to get everyone on board.

Sometimes, tragedy can happen even when all precautions are taken. As you may have heard, one of our local unions recently lost a worker due to a chainsaw accident. All the correct safety procedures were followed and the machine was in good working order, yet an accident occurred that resulted in the worker losing his life. This loss of life is tragic for everyone involved — his family, his friends and his coworkers. The fact is that most accidents can be avoided, and there is a lot we can do to remind our employees why we all should be focused on safety 100 percent of the time.

I didn't provide these examples for the shock value, but as a reminder that the consequences of not following safety procedures are real. I would never want to see any of these tragic things happen at one of your companies, remember to stay safe as you gear up for summer!

I hope to see all of you at the Annual Golf Outing on Aug. 7. You can find more details on page 8.

Ken Wiesbrook, President  
SMACNA Greater Chicago



ANNIVERSARY MILESTONE |  
Porter Pipe & Supply

## PORTER PIPE & SUPPLY TURNS 40

SMACNA Greater Chicago congratulates associate member Porter Pipe & Supply Co. in Addison on its 40th anniversary. Last November, the company held a special employee holiday party to celebrate the important milestone and created a commemorative 40th anniversary video, which you can find on their YouTube page, Porter Pipe & Supply Co.



VIEW THE VIDEO AT:  
[BIT.LY/2PTJBXZ](http://BIT.LY/2PTJBXZ)

INDUCTED | John Comforte

## JOHN COMFORTE INDUCTED



SMACNA's College of Fellows recently announced that John W. Comforte, president of Climated Inc., in Broadview, Ill., will be inducted into the prestigious College in October. He will receive his signature College medallion at SMACNA's 74th Annual Convention, in Maui, Hawaii.

An active SMACNA chapter leader for more than 15 years, Comforte has a proven track record of service to the local industry and fellow contractors. As a current Board member of the SMACNA Greater Chicago chapter, he continues to work diligently to protect the future and prosperity of the chapter and its members. Previously, he served on the Board of Directors and in the officer chairs for SMACNA Chicago.

Currently, Comforte is dedicated to developing a succession plan for the future leaders of the chapter. He is highly skilled in leadership transition strategies and training thanks to his industry experience. Over the years, he has served as a mentor for many, taking great pride in helping his fellow contractors, whether business or personal. He is known as the "go-to" resource for difficult issues and problems.

Comforte played an important role in the consolidation of SMACNA Chicago and SMACNA of Northeastern Illinois to form the SMACNA Greater

Chicago chapter in 2014. In 2013, he represented SMACNA Chicago on SMACNA National's Council of Chapter Representatives, and in 2014, he served on behalf of the new Greater Chicago chapter.

Faced with some of the toughest economic conditions in recent history, Comforte negotiated labor agreements that kept contractors and their skilled workforce competitive in an extremely difficult and demanding marketplace. He served in a leadership role on the chapter's Joint Arbitration Board and Negotiating Committee from 2002 until 2014.

SMACNA Greater Chicago sponsors two Marty & Vic Comforte Endowed Scholarships that are administered by the SMACNA College of Fellows. These scholarships were established as an educational aid for students affiliated with SMACNA Greater Chicago and in recognition of the dedication and services rendered by the Comforte family to the sheet metal industry. The scholarship is funded through the generous support of SMACNA Greater Chicago.

Membership in SMACNA's College of Fellows is reserved for top industry professionals who have made significant contributions to advance the sheet metal industry, capping years of committed service and dedication.



ORTIZ CONTRACTING GROUP JOINS  
SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER

We're pleased to add another member to our growing association! Not only does SMACNA Greater Chicago gain strength in numbers, we also gain more knowledge and expertise within the sheet metal industry. We proudly welcome the following new member to our organization:



NEW MEMBER

## ORTIZ CONTRACTING GROUP

9308 Gulfstream Rd.  
Frankfort, IL 60423  
Phone: (708) 382-1496  
[dortiz@dekayocorp.com](mailto:dortiz@dekayocorp.com)  
[portiz@dekayocorp.com](mailto:portiz@dekayocorp.com)







SUCCESSION PLANNING | Exploring the roadmap to your retirement

# SUCCESSION PLANNING: TWO SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO MEMBERS SHARE EXPERIENCES

Whether you plan to spend your retirement sipping frozen margaritas on a white sandy beach or napping in your backyard hammock, if you're a business owner, succession planning is the roadmap that will get you there.

Even if retirement seems far off, now is the time to start developing your succession plan. Succession planning can

benefit you today by helping uncover strengths and weaknesses within your company, providing peace of mind and retaining critical employees by helping them understand future opportunities.

Depending on your unique situation, you'll have to select the best strategy for your business. Two SMACNA Greater Chicago members share their experience on both sides of the issue.

## A PATH TO OWNERSHIP

In his mid-30s, Tim Russell, president of GHC Mechanical, decided he wanted to be principal of a mechanical contracting business.

"Businesses are commonly for sale, but you have to know key people in the industry. People I knew — through SMACNA Greater Chicago and other associations that surround our industry — helped me find the right people to talk to," Tim said. "I ended up talking with five smaller companies, and of those companies I felt GHC Mechanical presented the best opportunity for me."

Tim then sat down with the founder and his nephew, John O'Brien Jr.,

who is now Tim's partner. Together, they developed a plan for the two new partners — virtual strangers at the time — to buy into the company.

"You really have to take the hands off the clock because of the time element. Transitioning a business doesn't happen overnight," he said. "When John O.B. and I came in, we had to demonstrate that we could handle the day-to-day functions. It's a big learning curve, and you learn as you go. Every single aspect of the business needs to be addressed. You have to listen a lot, pay close attention and offer suggestions — but at the end of the day, you really learn the value of the gray-haired guy who has been there and done that. It's something you don't really appreciate when you're young, but

really start to see over time."

Tim said the succession process must be handled step-by-step, and that he feels his prior experience at three established companies has been instrumental in his success.

"I think the previous owner did a great job of transitioning the business. The initial transition really took about 10 years," he said. "Broad experience is a real key when you're taking over a business, as is knowledge of the industry and patience. You also need to act like an owner before you are an owner. That's important. It means taking responsibility, being accountable and figuring out how to approach things from a global perspective."

## A CAREFULLY CRAFTED SUCCESSION

Al Youna, president of YMI Group, said one of the best things he did early in his career was seek out a peer group through the Chicago Family Business Council. It was through this group of well-rounded entrepreneurs that he gained invaluable insight into several aspects of his business and finances, including succession planning.

"Through this group, I was able to listen to nine other CEOs talk about how they plan to fund their retirements and transfer their businesses to the next generation, whether they were selling to partners, the public or handing it down to their children," Al said. "Like many business owners, I hadn't put a lot of thought into my plan at the time. But

listening to their experiences made me realize I do not want to rely on the sale of my company for a big cash day to fund my retirement."

According to business broker statistics, less than 25 percent of all businesses that go on the market sell, and one-third of businesses that close are successful at their termination.

Statistics like these are one of the primary reasons that Al decided to build a succession plan that wouldn't put a financial anchor around any of his children or other potential owners.

"A few years ago, I decided I didn't want my retirement to be contingent on the sale of my company. Instead, I worked with a financial planner to develop a 20-year plan. Once I reach that time I could basically decide to walk away from the business, and I'd be able to live the same lifestyle," Al said.

## SUCCESSION PLANNING

Al said that regardless of how close you are to retirement, the best thing you can do for yourself and your business is to start planning now.

"A lot of business owners think they'll just sell when the time comes, but you never know what the next 10 years are going to bring — and whether they will be profitable or not. And as a business owner, you need to find ways to minimize the disruption and cost of your departure. Plan a 10, 15 or 20-year transition period so that the process is seamless and doesn't jeopardize the finances of the entire company," Al said. "I strongly urge all business owners to sit down with a financial planner. First, decide when you want to call it a day, and work backwards from that date to where you are now. It's one of the single most important things you can do for yourself, and for your business."

## CONSIDER YOUR APPROACH

Depending on your unique situation, you'll need to select the best type of succession plan or exit strategy for your business. Common approaches include:



### DESIGNATED REPLACEMENT

Selecting someone qualified, trained and ready



### TARGET DATE REPLACEMENT

Selecting multiple employees and narrowing the list over time



### SITUATIONAL REPLACEMENT

Creating a pool of applicants with varying qualifications



### OWNERSHIP TRANSACTION

Transferring ownership through a management or employee buyout

## BY THE NUMB3RS

70

The percentage of your pre-retirement salary you'll need to live comfortably.

55

The percentage of Americans with less than \$10K saved for retirement.

18

Average number of years spent in retirement.

63

Average retirement age in the United States.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, GOBankingRates and CNN Money.

SMACNA  
GREATER CHICAGO





SMACNA ANNUAL CONVENTION | Join us in beautiful Maui, Hawaii!

# MAUI 2017... NETWORK. EDUCATE. ENJOY!

**SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO IS OFFERING A \$4,500 EXPENSE ALLOWANCE FOR ALL MEMBERS WHO ATTEND!**

This year's annual convention will feature educational sessions on business development and new technology, as well as contractors' forums on labor, HVAC, residential, architectural and industrial contracting. Attendees also can take advantage of a wealth of networking opportunities, attend the Products Show, participate in the College of Fellow's Golf Outing and much more.

## WHAT:

SMACNA's 74th Annual Convention

## WHEN:

Oct. 22-25, 2017

## WHERE:

Grand Wailea Resort in Maui, HI

## REGISTER AT SMACNA.ORG.

Don't delay — the early registration deadline for discount pricing is July 15, 2017.

## CONVENTION OPENER:

Comedian Kathleen Madigan will perform at this year's Recognition Lunch on Monday, Oct. 23. Throughout her 25-year career, Madigan has performed on nearly every late night show ever aired — Leno, Letterman, Conan and Ferguson, as well as The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore and Ron White's Salute to the Troops on CMT. She's also won the American Comedy Award for "Best Female Comedian" and the Phyllis Diller Award for "Best Female Comedian." **Learn more about Madigan at [Kathleenmadigan.com](http://Kathleenmadigan.com).**

## ABOUT THE RESORT:

The Grand Wailea, situated on 40 acres fronting the incredible Wailea Beach, is considered one of the top resorts in the world. The resort features luxurious accommodations, award-winning cuisine, the Wailea Golf Club and the unparalleled Spa Grande. An array of recreational facilities and outdoor activities are offered to guests, such as scuba lessons and guided kayak tours. **Learn more about the resort at [Grandwailea.com](http://Grandwailea.com).**

## NEW EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

# WELCOME, LAURIE!



SMACNA Greater Chicago is excited to welcome Laurie Leonard as executive assistant. Laurie, who previously served as director of education for the Mechanical Contractors Association of Chicago, brings more than 29 years of industry experience to the association.

As executive assistant, Laurie's responsibilities will include meeting and event planning, as well as kicking off a new "Young Executives" program and social media updates.

"I'm happy to be here. I look forward to getting to know all of our members, supporting them and finding new ways to engage them in all aspects of the association," Laurie said. "I'm excited to get to work planning valuable events that will bring SMACNA national's world-class education and training to Chicago."

Laurie, who lives in Woodridge with her daughter, is originally from Phoenix but describes herself as a "true Chicagoan at heart." When she's not working, she enjoys traveling with her daughter, chasing squirrels with her dog and binge-watching Netflix.



MEMBER RECOGNIZED | Boys & Girls Club of Joliet paid tribute to the legacy of Mike Adler

# BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF JOLIET TO NAME NEW AUDITORIUM AFTER THE LATE MIKE ADLER

During a special March 18 gala held in his honor, the Boys & Girls Club of Joliet paid tribute to the legacy of Mike Adler by unveiling the name to the organization's new auditorium — the Michael W. Adler Auditorium.

Mike, who was vice president of SMACNA Greater Chicago member company, J.L. Adler Roofing Company of Joliet, passed away on May 31, 2016, from complications of metastatic melanoma.

He also served as president of the Boys & Girls Club of Joliet until January 2013, when he had to step down because of his illness.

"My father-in-law, Joseph Adler, was president of the board before Mike became involved, so it's something that has been important to our family for a long time," said Joanne Adler, Mike's wife.

Many of Mike's relatives and friends attended the gala, including Joanne and

their four children, Kelly, Erin, Michael and Collin, and his father, Joe. Joanne said they were all touched to learn that the new auditorium will be named after Mike.

"We knew they had commissioned a painting of Mike that was similar to one they already had of one of the Clubs' founders, and the plan was that it would be unveiled at the gala for a new 'Hall of Honor,'" Joanne said. "But they also unveiled a rendering of a new auditorium that they're going to name after Mike. That was a complete surprise to our family. My daughter, Kelly, and I had been going to the meetings to help them plan the gala and that was something they kept as a secret. It was awfully nice."

According to the gala program, Mike "provided key guidance to the organization during a time of economic hardship," and his "unparalleled leadership qualities were instrumental in alleviating the Club from distress, therefore setting a foundation that

secured strength and success for the future of the Club."

Joanne said that she and Kelly plan to continue Mike's important work with the Boys & Girls Club of Joliet.

**SEPT 2017**  
Sunday  
**24**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**SECOND ANNUAL MIKE ADLER GOLF OUTING**  
Inwood Park Golf Course in Joliet

*All proceeds will benefit the Boys & Girls Club of Joliet*



**f** DON'T MISS OUT! JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT:  
**FACEBOOK.COM/SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO**





SMACNA'S TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY | March program in Oak Brook focused on duct construction

# SMACNA'S TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY SELLS OUT

SMACNA Greater Chicago hosted SMACNA's Technical University March 21-22. The program drew nearly 50 members to the conference center in Oak Brook to learn about duct construction.

"It's a day-and-a-half program, and is geared primarily for mainstream HVAC duct fabricators because we focus on the technical and code-related standards surrounding duct construction," said Mark Terzigni, SMACNA director of engineering and technical resources, who led the program with SMACNA project managers Shawn O'Hara and Delaine Deer.

Topics included duct construction standards; air duct leakage; fire, smoke and radiation damper installation guide; rectangular industrial duct construction

standards; and round industrial duct construction standards.

"The first thing we cover is HVAC duct construction, and we break that into three programs: 101, 102 and 103. The 101 class covers rectangular ducts and

**"THE WORKSHOP WAS HIGHLY INFORMATIVE. THE PRESENTERS WERE FANTASTIC AND GAVE US THEIR PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION IN CASE WE HAVE QUESTIONS IN THE FUTURE,"**

**JIM CARMODY, MCCAULEY MECHANICAL**

external reinforcement. The 102 class covers rectangular ducts and internal reinforcement, and the 103 class covers round duct, oval duct and duct supports," Mark said. "To round that day out, we do a presentation on fire damper installation and associated issues around that

and duct leakage testing. It's a pretty intense day. Then, on day two, we go into industrial standards, specifically rectangular industrial duct and round industrial duct."

Mark explained that SMACNA holds these Technical University programs throughout the country at the request of chapters, and that no two are the same because they continually work to integrate feedback from each session into the next ones.

"People always say they learned something — even if they've been working in the industry for 20 to 30 years," he said. "Our goal is to help our members as much as possible. It's a lot of material to absorb in a short time, so we also like to remind everyone that we are always available as a resource for them. They can give us a call or reach out anytime



## HAVE A QUESTION ON SMACNA STANDARDS?

Simply visit [Smacna.org](http://Smacna.org), click on the "Technical Resources" drop-down menu at the top of the page, select "Make a Technical Inquiry" and complete the form. The team will respond by the next business day. Can't wait? Call 703-803-2980 and ask for the Tech Department.

## HAVE YOU DOWNLOADED SMACNA'S APPS?

SMACNA offers the following web-based apps just for members. All apps are available in both the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store.



### HVAC DUCT CONSTRUCTION APP

This app provides SMACNA-compliant options for rectangular duct with dimensions from 1 inch to 120 inches for applications from negative to positive 10-inch water gage.



### AIR DUCT LEAKAGE APP

This app will help you easily and accurately estimate the leakage of air from ductwork, and will help you determine the pass/fail mark for properly specified Duct Air Leakage Tests.



### ROUND INDUSTRIAL DUCT CONSTRUCTION APP

This app can help you find solutions and allows you to select spiral or welded duct, as well as the duct material, hanger spacing, live loads such as snow, dead loads such as insulation, and more.



SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO

# GOLF OUTING '17

MIDLOTHIAN COUNTRY CLUB | August 8, 2017

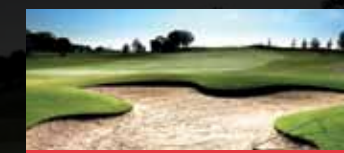
## TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

This year's outing features a morning and afternoon session. Golfers can choose which tee time they prefer. Both sessions are on a first come, first served basis. Email [laurie@smacnagreaterchicago.org](mailto:laurie@smacnagreaterchicago.org) with any questions you have regarding this event.



**TUESDAY, AUG. 8, 2017**

Midlothian Country Club  
5000 147th St.  
Midlothian, IL 60445



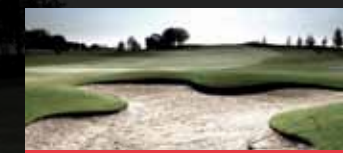
## MORNING SESSION

**7:00 AM - 8:00 AM**  
Buffet breakfast/warm up on range

**8:15 AM**  
Shotgun start

**12:30 PM - 1:00 PM**  
Cocktails

**1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**  
Steak and lobster lunch



## AFTERNOON SESSION

**11:00 AM - NOON**  
Lunch

**NOON - 1:00 PM**  
Warm up

**1:15 PM**  
Shotgun start

**5:30 PM - 6:00 PM**  
Cocktails

**6:00 PM - 7:30 PM**  
Steak and lobster dinner

If you have not received your registration form in the mail, please contact Laurie Leonard at 708-544-7007. REGISTRATION DUE JULY 26.

### SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO

Attn: Laurie Leonard  
1415 W. 22nd St., Ste. 1200  
Oak Brook, IL 60523



DON'T MISS OUT! JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT:  
[FACEBOOK.COM/SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO](https://www.facebook.com/SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO)





ASSOCIATION PHILANTHROPY | SMACNA Greater Chicago donates to a worthy cause

# SMACNA DONATES \$5,000 TO HELP HOMELESS VETERANS

Homelessness can happen to anyone, anywhere, depending on a variety of circumstances and risk factors. But veterans, who often find the transition back to civilian life difficult, seem particularly susceptible. According to the 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, 39,471 veterans experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2016, representing just over nine percent of homeless adults. Three percent of those veterans included families with children.

Meet Betty, a U.S. Army veteran and 34-year-old mother of three. Following three years of service, Betty was living with her children and increasingly verbally abusive boyfriend. Although she wanted to find safer housing for her kids, she had poor credit and felt she had no options. Things changed for the better when she learned about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program administered by the Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans (MSHV). Within a month, MSHV helped her find an apartment in her kids' school district and stable employment as a hairstylist.

In addition to providing permanent

housing for veterans, the MSHV also offers assistance such as career assessments, job placement, temporary housing, rental payments, counseling and more. Because 40 percent of the organization's annual fund is financed by private contributions, much of its success lies in the generous financial donations it receives — like the recent \$5,000 check from SMACNA Greater Chicago.

"I think it's important to give back to the community," said SMACNA Greater Chicago President Ken Wiesbrook. "SMART 265 (the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 265 in Carol Stream, Illinois) has done some work for the MSHV, as well as a number of our business agents and contractors, so it seemed like a natural fit for us."

"We are extremely grateful for their donation, which was a pretty substantial amount for us," said Yvonne MacDonald-Hames, director of development for the MSHV. "We definitely work hard at fundraising and establishing relationships with donors like Ken and SMACNA Greater Chicago, and are delighted to receive their donation."

Ken presented the association's

donation to MacDonald-Hames during the SMACNA Greater Chicago regular membership meeting in March. The funds will be used to serve nearly 400 veteran households with housing, employment, case management and support services throughout the year.

"Some of our programs are more government-funded than others. For example, with the Freedom Commissary, we receive no government grants — that's all private contributions," MacDonald-Hames said. "This money is going to go into our general operating fund and will go toward those programs where we don't receive the government money."

"Although there are countless worthy nonprofits we could have chosen, we wanted to support an organization that makes a profound difference in an individual's life," Ken said. "We're talking about our nation's heroes — it's hard not to get behind a cause that supports all they've done for our country and our freedom!"

Ken hopes that SMACNA Greater Chicago continues its partnership with the MSHV throughout his tenure on the executive leadership team.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT | Preparedness is key

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN



advance can help keep your employees safe, while maintaining credibility and returning to business as usual as quickly

and safely as possible. After all, a strong investment in your employees' safety is an investment in your bottom line.

## PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED! REVIEW THESE HELPFUL TIPS:



### ESTABLISH YOUR COMPANY'S CHAIN OF COMMAND AND CLEARLY DEFINE ALL ROLES.

*From the project foreman all the way up to the president/owner, identify each person on your crisis management team and make sure each person knows his or her role. Ensure contact information for each person is readily available.*



### COMMUNICATION IS KEY.

*In the age of smartphones and Facebook Live, damaging information can go public in an instant. So when a crisis strikes, it's important to keep all audiences informed and updated as information becomes available. From employees and family members, to customers, clients and the media, establish who gets notified first, and designate a qualified spokesperson to provide statements. Have generic statements already written that can quickly be personalized for distribution, should the situation call for it.*



### VISUALIZE VARIOUS "WHAT IF" SCENARIOS TO IDENTIFY WHAT CONSTITUTES A CRISIS.

*Because of the nature of the construction industry, it's important to identify any situations that could go wrong before they actually do. Big or small, every potential issue should have a documented plan. Some situations to consider include injury or death, equipment failure, fire, environmental emergencies, transportation accidents — even strikes. According to the SMACNA model program introduction and foreword, "Leadership, staff, and suppliers must all be prepared for, and actively involved in, the planning for and resumption of your business activities. The scale of a disruption may be local to your office or affect an entire region. You must be prepared for such crises, large and small."*



### PARTICIPATE IN MOCK DRILLS.

*By practicing crisis situations, you can see what procedures work and what needs improvement. Train all employees, not just the crisis management team, on proper safety protocol and what to do in a crisis situation.*



### REVIEW PLANS REGULARLY.

*As technology continues to advance, it's important to revisit your crisis management plans regularly and update as necessary. Treat it as a "living" document that changes as the organization changes. Make sure each team member in the chain of command is up-to-date, and train all team members on their responsibilities.*

**VIEW SMACNA'S MODEL PLAN AT:**  
[smacna.org/safety/browse/model-policies](http://smacna.org/safety/browse/model-policies)



DON'T MISS OUT! JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT:  
[FACEBOOK.COM/SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO](https://www.facebook.com/SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO)





**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS** | Suicide rates within our industry are astonishingly high. Know the signs.

# SMACNA JOINS INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Even as the number of workplace fatalities has declined over the years due to the construction industry's increased commitment to safety, workplace suicides are on the rise. According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 41,000 suicides occur each year — totaling more deaths from suicide than from motor vehicle crashes.

A July 2016 report by the CDC specifically examined suicide risk by profession in 17 states, noting 12,300 suicides. Of those, 1,324 people worked in construction and extraction and 1,049 worked in management. The study reported that construction ranked No. 2 for highest rates of suicide and No. 1 for highest numbers.

"A lot of people have knowledge of mental health issues and suicide — maybe even a close knowledge — but you start seeing the numbers associated with it, and that's when it really hits home," said Mike McCullion, SMACNA

director of market sectors and safety. In a traditionally male-dominated workforce, it's worth noting that men outpace women four-to-one in suicide deaths, with white working age men obtaining the highest suicide rates. Why?

- KNOWN RISK FACTORS**
- "TOUGH GUY" CULTURE**
- COMPETITIVE, HIGH-PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT**
- EXPOSURE TO PHYSICAL STRAIN OR PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA**
- CHRONIC PAIN RESULTING FROM YEARS OF PHYSICAL LABOR**
- PREVALENCE OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**
- ISOLATION AND SEPARATION FROM FAMILY WITH WORKPLACE TRAVEL**
- END-OF-SEASON LAYOFFS AND FURLOUGHS**

In response to the CDC's report last summer, the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA) established the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP), a group of key industry organizations who have recognized and are committed to promoting the safety and well-being of construction's most important asset — its people.

Earlier this spring, SMACNA joined the CIASP with a commitment to provide member companies with regular communications and resources that can help remove the stigma attached to mental health and suicide. By being proactive and promoting prevention-based strategies and services, the goal is to create a zero-suicide industry.

"We're in the initial stages of coming up with a plan of action that we'll follow through with in the coming months and years, but the big issue is creating awareness," Mike said. "SMACNA's primary focus initially will be to engage

the association's chapters in this important initiative."

The CFMA estimates that, at any given time, approximately 25 percent of the U.S. population experiences mental illness. And according to ManTherapy.org, 90 percent of people who die by suicide have a mental disorder, substance abuse problem or both. But because American society largely criminalizes addiction and the misuse of drugs and alcohol, users feel shamed or undeserving of help — until it could be too late. In fact, the Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs and Health states: "Only about 10 percent of people with a substance use disorder receive any type of specialty treatment. Further, over 40 percent of people with a substance use disorder also have a mental health condition, yet fewer than half (48.0 percent) receive treatment for either disorder."

Seeking treatment —especially in the "tough guy" culture of the construction industry — should never make a worker feel vulnerable, weak or less-than. Rather, they should feel empowered that they're investing in their own futures. According to the CFMA, "Investing in mental health and substance use disorders yields positive return on investment compared to the economic impact of absenteeism, presenteeism and loss of productivity resulting from untreated mental health conditions."

Resources are widely available online, via telephone hotlines and within community organizations. But normalizing the conversation about mental health and suicide is critical to bringing the topic — which has long been ignored — to the forefront.

"Individual wellness has been a big part of company safety programs — not only what a person does on the job, but also off the job," Mike said. "As companies create their 'cultures,' raising awareness can easily be tied into whatever they believe is important for their workers and their families."

Be on the lookout for CIASP initiatives throughout SMACNA National and SMACNA Greater Chicago as they become finalized and available to members.

"No community is immune to the effects of mental health. That's why education is so important," said Ken Wiesbrook, SMACNA Greater Chicago president. "If we can help make even a small difference by talking about it and getting people connected with the right resources, we're happy to be part of the CIASP as a local chapter."

**24-HOUR SUICIDE HOTLINE**  
**800-273-8255**

## WORKPLACE SUICIDES BY AGE GROUP

\*As recorded through 2011-2013

Source: bls.gov

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 18-19 YEARS OLD | SKULL X 5   |
| 20-24 YEARS OLD | SKULL X 54  |
| 25-34 YEARS OLD | SKULL X 119 |
| 35-44 YEARS OLD | SKULL X 161 |
| 45-54 YEARS OLD | SKULL X 238 |
| 55-64 YEARS OLD | SKULL X 152 |
| 64 YEARS OLD +  | SKULL X 52  |

Source: bls.gov

## HOW TO ACT

### A KNOWLEDGE

If you recognize warning signs in someone you care about, take it seriously. Most people who die by suicide gave some indication of their intention to those close to them. Calmly listen and be emotionally available.

### C ARE

Voice your concerns. Ask what's troubling your friend or loved one, and continue to show interest, support and be available for them. Offer to assist in getting them help. AVOID telling the person to cheer up or snap out of it, assuming the situation will take care of itself and try not to leave the person alone.

### T REATMENT

Seek professional help immediately! Contact a mental health professional, your local hospital emergency room or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. Even if someone seems angry at you for trying to help, in time, they will be grateful for your care and concern.







ANNUAL CONFERENCE | 2017 SMACNA Greater Chicago Annual Conference was held at The Greenbrier May 18-21

# 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Greenbrier, a world-renowned resort and National Historic Landmark in West Virginia, hosted the SMACNA Greater Chicago 2017 Annual Conference last month. This year's event featured Vince Sandusky, SMACNA National's executive vice president, who spoke

about the association's recent activities and addressed topics affecting our member contractor's businesses.

During the three-night stay, members were able to golf on world-class courses, sample a variety of delicious wines during a tasting, enjoy a culinary demonstration

and tour a top-secret bunker that was built during the height of the Cold War.

Thank you to those who were able to attend. We enjoyed seeing you, and look forward to your participation at the 2018 SMACNA Greater Chicago Annual Conference!



**SMACNA**  
GREATER CHICAGO





1415 22ND STREET, SUITE 1200  
OAK BROOK, IL 60523-8433  
CALL 708.544.7007 | FAX 708.544.7098

SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO.ORG  
Facebook.com/SMACNAGreaterChicago

## 2017 OFFICERS

**KEN WIESBROOK**

**PRESIDENT**

*Wiesbrook Sheet Metal*

**JOSEPH PASSANNANTE**

**VICE PRESIDENT**

*Cleats Manufacturing Co., Inc.*

**MICHAEL OBROCHTA**

**SECRETARY-TREASURER**

*OB Industries, Inc.*

**JAMES S. BILLARD**

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

*Hill Mechanical Group*

## 2017 BOARD

**HENRY J. ARTLIP**

*Artlip & Sons, Inc.*

**JAMES A. CESAK**

*Tal-Mar Custom Metal*

**JOHN COMFORTE**

*Climatemp Service Group, LLC*

**WILLIAM COMFORTE**

*Climatemp Service Group, LLC*

**JOHN D'ANGELO**

*State Mechanical Services*

**RIC DAHLMAN**

*Dahlman Sheet Metal*

**JACK GENGLER**

*Gengler-Lowney Laser Works, Inc.*

**JOHN P. HARMON**

*Builders Heating, Inc.*

**JON P. HUDGENS**

*Elgin Sheet Metal Co.*

**MICHAEL KIVLAND**

*Sherman Mechanical, Inc.*

**PATRICK L. LUDVIGSEN**

*Admiral Heating & Ventilating, Inc.*

**MICHAEL MCCOMBIE**

*F.E. Moran, Inc.*

**TIM RUSSELL**

*GHC Mechanical, Inc.*

**JOHN SHAW**

*Westside Mechanical, Inc.*