

FIRST EDITION | 2019

# THE METAL PRESS

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**GREATER CHICAGO**



## WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

# WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I begin my term as president of SMACNA Greater Chicago, I am reflecting on the initiatives of past presidents, as well as thinking of the best ways to advance our strategic plan. I consider the four most important initiatives of our association to be labor relations, education, growing the association, and advancing our young executives group (YES).

In June 2019, our contract with Sheet Metal Workers' Local 73 is expiring and we look forward to working with our partners in labor to work through that process in a mutually beneficial way. We have made significant progress with our labor partners in terms of our apprenticeship program. The JATC hired a fourth full-time instructor and is in the process of building out an architectural sheet metal training center to help meet the needs of the industry, as well as our member contractors.

Both regular and associate membership in SMACNA Greater Chicago remains strong, and we have been successful in adding new members to the association. Our educational programs have also been quite a success. From the leadership workshop program; the Lunch & Learns; to the enhanced tech offering classes; our members have provided positive feedback. We're proud to offer a variety of teaching formats to meet the needs of our membership. Lastly, be on the lookout for information on our upcoming YES events! Our YES group is growing and we are planning events to include some interesting topics and venues to network with other professionals in our industry.

I am grateful for the opportunity to lead SMACNA Greater Chicago and I look forward to working with our officers, board members and association members to continue making SMACNA Greater Chicago a premier local chapter of SMACNA. I hope to see you all at our summer outings and events.

## **JOSEPH PASSANNANTE**

President, SMACNA Greater Chicago





MEMBERSHIP PERK | One-hour tech session

# FREE ONE-HOUR TECH SESSIONS WITH GINNIE FLORADAY

Need help troubleshooting inefficient documents? Want to gain knowledge about technology, and become more efficient in the tech world? Ginnie Floraday's one-hour session on Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel and One Note), Microsoft Access and Bluebeam will give you the knowledge and confidence you need using the latest office software.

SMACNA Greater Chicago offers **FREE** one hour sessions with Ginnie to become more efficient at your job. It's just one more perk of membership! Call Ginnie for an appointment.

**"BEING ABLE TO FULLY DIVE INTO THE FEATURES OF EXCEL WAS AMAZING. THE ONE-ON-ONE OPPORTUNITY HELPED ME TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PROGRAM AND TAUGHT ME TO BE MORE EFFICIENT IN MY DAY-TO-DAY WORK. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND A TECH SESSION WITH GINNIE!"**

Haley, Atomic Mechanical Services, Inc.

**"I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE ONE-HOUR TECH SESSION WITH GINNIE, IT WAS AMAZING! I WAS SHOCKED HOW MUCH INFORMATION I COULD APPLY TO MY CURRENT POSITION."**

Courtney Bertucci, CT Mechanical

**SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!**

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT | RAM Mechanical

# THE 30+ YEARS OF EVOLUTION THAT MADE RAM MECHANICAL

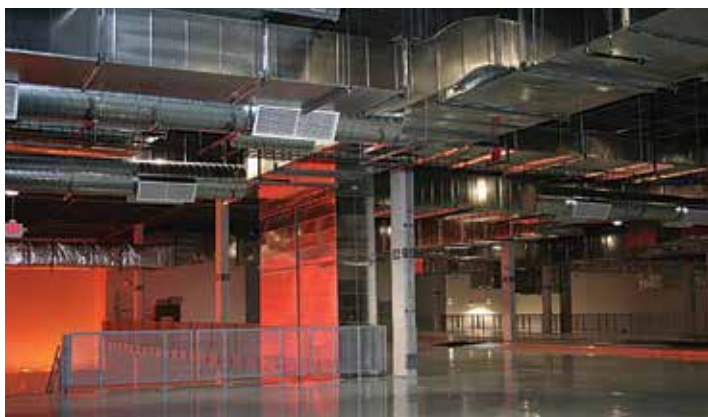
By: George Webster

RAM Mechanical Services, Inc. was incorporated in 1987.

Our beginnings were primarily as a sheet metal fabricator and installer of environmental HVAC systems. We started off with three good customers and a few good men. Through hard work, dedication and perseverance, RAM has blossomed from a \$500,000/year company to a \$24 million company today. Our humble beginnings started with an office in the basement of the owner and an off-site 1,000-square-foot fabrication facility. Our current location consists of a 21,000-square foot-facility that was completely renovated to our needs in 2009. This has allowed us to streamline our office organization and develop efficient fabrication and prefabrication areas for our sheet metal and piping divisions.

Over the last 30+ years, we have added other self-perform divisions to establish ourselves as a single-source mechanical

contractor. Early on we were compelled to initiate a service division to "Service What We Sell." In 2000, we committed to create a full-fledged service department to service our customer base over the long term. In 2003, we expanded into the



piping side of HVAC.

These additions have allowed us to expand from basic HVAC installations into more complex critical environments, hospitals, and process markets.

RAM has evolved into a complete mechanical contractor, allowing our clients to have one point of contact for

their projects. On any given project, we are able to keep everyone involved appraised of the project's status, provide continuity, build trust and virtually eliminate miscommunication.

Over the years it has been our goal to constantly improve our means and methods for design and installation of the mechanical systems we are involved in. Our investments in equipment, tooling, software, communication and safety have become a critical requirement. In order to maintain our competitive advantage in this industry, it's a requirement we must adhere to.

Our plan for the future is to continue to grow following the same commitments that we had from the very beginning. Through hard work and dedication, while investing in our processes, employee retention and safety, RAM will continue to strive to be one of the contractors of choice in the Chicagoland area.



CLICKSAFETY | 10 and 30-hour OSHA courses

# TOOLS FOR A WORLD-CLASS SAFETY CULTURE

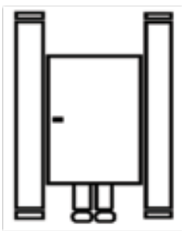
In partnership with ClickSafety, SMACNA Greater Chicago is offering all members online safety training – free! ClickSafety is a leader in online safety training solutions, and we are currently offering both 10 and 30-hour OSHA courses, Confined Spaces in Construction and an Introduction to Fall Protection in Construction.

This training is now live and we encourage all members to take advantage of these courses and keep safety a priority!

**REGISTER TODAY!**
[LAURIE@SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO.ORG](mailto:LAURIE@SMACNAGREATERCHICAGO.ORG)

NEW MEMBERS | Welcome, Commercial Specialties, Inc. and Nichols Crane Rental

## SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO'S MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW


**NEW CONTRACTOR MEMBER**
**COMMERCIAL  
SPECIALTIES, INC.**

2255 Lois Drive, #9  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008  
[commercial-specialties.com](http://commercial-specialties.com)


**NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER**
**NICHOLS  
CRANE RENTAL**

16519 Cherry Creek Ct.  
Joliet IL 60433  
[nicholscranerental.com](http://nicholscranerental.com)

Over the past few years our membership numbers have grown. 2019 is starting out the same. We welcome both a new member and a new associate member to SMACNA Greater Chicago.

With our increased educational offerings, strong bargaining efforts and well-attended social events, our association is the one that others in the sheet metal industry aspire to be. 2019 will be no exception as SMACNA Greater Chicago continues to grow.





# DATA BREACH

CYBER SAFETY | Avoiding costly cyber attacks

## IS YOUR HVAC SYSTEM SAFE FROM CONTAMINATION AND CYBERCRIME?

There are a variety of security leaks that can occur through your HVAC system design. It is important that today's HVAC design engineers be diligent and stay current with what is happening in cyberspace, especially in terms of the potential hazards that can occur within a building.

The Department of Homeland Security has deemed a number of construction-related sectors at risk for cyber-attacks. The construction industry, in an effort to stay in line with technology, and reap the benefits of (being more efficient,) while increasing its bottom line, has adopted many shared resource technologies like integrated project delivery and building information modeling (BIM). These "shared" resources with vendors and subcontractors increase the risk that a cyber incident involving one company opens the door to vulnerability for other companies working together on the project.

Hackers today have the capability to gain access to company information through the building control systems. The Target department store breach originated with an HVAC vendor that managed "smart" thermostats at Target facilities. Hackers were able to get inside the network and gain access to Target's information databases, including their

with the right level of security so risks from attacks are lower, keeping clients and buildings safe. Hackers are becoming more sophisticated and effective in their efforts to steal and sabotage.

Designers, engineers, facility owners and managers of building automation systems need to include building control systems security as a key part of their

**"DESIGNERS, ENGINEERS, FACILITY OWNERS AND MANAGERS OF BUILDING AUTOMATION SYSTEMS NEED TO INCLUDE BUILDING CONTROL SYSTEMS SECURITY AS A KEY PART OF THEIR INITIAL DESIGN."**

initial design. Start projects with a discussion of the cyber security plan. Build security into the budget, and recognize the need for personnel

financial information. It happens. With the advances in technology, developed to help users, we've unfortunately opened ourselves to those who are able to cause harm. The Target scenario is proof that attackers will find a way.

Trends point to smart HVAC controls as the future of the HVAC industry. With that comes the increased vulnerability of commercial buildings to Internet-based attacks. It is important that building automation systems (BAS) are designed

training. The plan should not only include the steps for prevention, but also a plan for responding to a hack — who will respond and what will that message say. Better to be prepared now in the event of a worst-case scenario.

As an industry, we need to stay current with the latest technology advancements, and monitor and test the safety systems we put in place. Loss of revenue, mitigation costs, downtime, reputation — cyberattacks cost money.



**EDUCATION** | New education offerings

## NEW YEAR, NEW PROGRAMS

SMACNA Greater Chicago started off 2019 with new educational offerings. We kicked off January with a four-part "Leading Through Change" workshop, which focuses on improving communication and creating a higher work performance within your organization.

Darryl Harris, featured speaker for the series, discussed the strategic and practical skills necessary to empower, develop, train and energize teams, team leaders and managers.

"Very helpful information and advice about how to deal with change and all the different people involved. Very impressed with delivery of all the information discussed. Looking forward to next session!!" said Brad Feige, of Sherman Mechanical.

In February, Ginnie Floraday presented Bluebeam Level 1 to a SOLD OUT

class! Bluebeam Revu technology is a powerful desktop solution that provides PDF creation, markup, editing and collaboration for the construction industry. The program provides the ability to extensively edit documents and create layers for comparing CAD drawings as overlays. Attendees learned how to copy sections, save repetitive tasks, number pages and combine multiple documents into one.

"The workshop was a great place to start for Bluebeam beginners. Ginnie presented a lot of good information and explained and showed us a variety of functions," said one participant.

From workshops to lunch and learns, stay updated on all of SMACNA Greater Chicago's educational opportunities by visiting [SMACNAGreaterChicago.org](http://SMACNAGreaterChicago.org) and clicking on the Education tab.



COMMITTEE SERVICE AWARDS

## MEMBERS SHINE WITH SERVICE AWARDS

SMACNA Greater Chicago congratulates Ken Wiesbrook, Immediate Past President, for receiving this award for his service on ITI Building Enclosure Task Force, and Hank Artlip of Artlip & Sons, Inc. for his service with the National Residential Contractors Council Steering Committee. Plaques were presented during our January membership meeting.

Member commitment, as shown by these two association members, is just one reason SMACNA Greater Chicago is one of the leading sheet metal associations in the country.



MARKETING | What to do if your website is hacked

# 5 STEPS TO TAKE IF YOUR WEBSITE IS HACKED

According to [hostingfacts.com](http://hostingfacts.com), more than 90,000 websites are hacked every day. Here's what you should do if your business's website comes under attack.

## 1 TELL YOUR WEB OR HOSTING TEAM

If something looks out of place or incorrect on your website, tell someone ASAP. Start with your web development team, or reach out to your hosting provider if you manage your website internally. They will be able to resolve the issue, or temporarily take your website offline until the situation is resolved. If you have backups in place, you may be able to restore your site to a safe environment if you catch it soon enough.

## 2 HAVE YOUR PASSWORDS READY

To help speed things along, you will want to have all passwords associated with your website readily available. Make sure you have the following information somewhere safe, yet easily accessible:

- *domain login information*
- *hosting login information*
- *Content Management System (CMS) login information*
- *backup information*

## 3 CHANGE PASSWORDS

If your website has been compromised, the hackers likely have access to the passwords associated with your website. Make it harder on them by changing this information in the event of an attack.

## 4 FIND THE VULNERABILITY

There are many ways a hacker can gain access to your site, and you might be vulnerable from a variety of areas. Some of the most common ways hackers access sites are:

**WEAK PASSWORDS:** do not use common phrases like: "sheetmetal" or "mycompanyname-web"

**OUTDATED CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS):** Not all content management systems are created equal. Make sure your CMS is up-to-date and you are educated on a system that best fits your needs. Although very common and easy to use, 83% of hacked websites use WordPress.

**SHARED HOSTING ENVIRONMENT:** Using a shared hosting environment like GoDaddy can be risky for your website. If your website is hosted on a server with multiple sites, it increases the likelihood that one of the sites is vulnerable, especially if the sites weren't built by a professional.

## 5 MONITOR

Once you find, fix and clean the vulnerabilities on your site, protect your investment! Once your website is back online, check to make sure Google doesn't have you blacklisted, which can happen if your website has been hacked for a considerable amount of time. Being blacklisted means you are essentially invisible in any search results. So, if someone is searching for a "reliable HVAC maintenance company" through Google and you are not showing up, check to see if your website is blacklisted through free online tools like: [ismywebsitepenalized.com](http://ismywebsitepenalized.com).

In today's digital landscape, there is no such thing as a totally secure website. However, taking the necessary precautions will decrease your vulnerability and help you stay up and running.





ASSOCIATE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT | Nelson Insulation Company

# NELSON INSULATION'S MEETINGS BEGIN WITH ONE VITAL QUESTION

"Are we being the best partner we can be?"

Every staff meeting at Nelson Insulation begins with the question that helps employees evaluate their relationships with customers.

"We honestly do become a partner with every customer," says owner Paul Ottolino. "It's what makes us invaluable to our sheet metal contractors. We know their businesses, we understand their philosophies and we can react quickly."

Paul and his partner, Don Brusa, carried over the philosophy originated by Paul's grandfather and original owner, Alvin Nelson. When Alvin founded the company in the '50s, he knew it was important to fully understand what struggles their partners in the sheet metal industry were going through so they would know how best to respond. The philosophy lived on when Alvin sold the company to his son, Sam, who later sold to Paul and Don.

"Eventually something will go wrong with our clients, and we need to know exactly how we can help them. Knowledge of our clients' businesses helps us jump in and help without having to go through a learning curve," says Don.

Originally signatories to Heat and Frost Insulators Local 17 in Tinley Park, Nelson Insulation expanded into Wisconsin and Colorado, becoming signatory to Local 19 and Local 28 as well. Eventually, Nelson Insulation added a thermal and fire stopping division after seeing an increased need with customers.

While Nelson Insulation is the third largest insulating firm in the Chicago market, the larger firms are industrial, while Nelson is primarily commercial. With a team of 8-10 estimators the company feels strongly that they are able to provide more accurate estimates than their competitors.

Director of Operations and General Counsel, Steven Clark, feels that Nelson Insulation goes above and beyond in their efforts to be the best partners possible to their sheet metal customers.

"We actually ask our customers if they can give us any negative feedback about our service. That way we know what needs to be corrected," says Steven. "One of our SMACNA member customers said how surprised he was that anyone asked for negative comments. We also always ask, 'Are we being the best partner we can be?' That leads us to analyze what else we can do to be better."

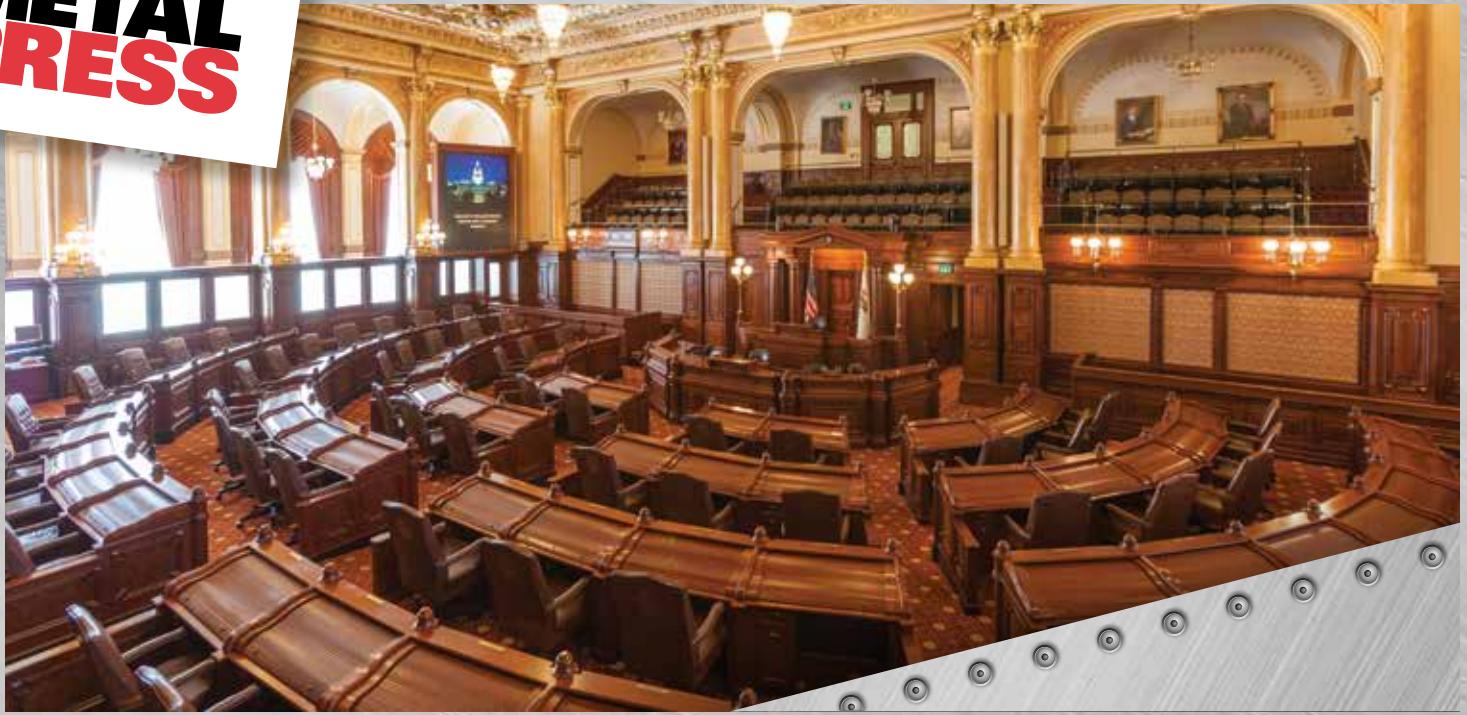
With very firm footing in the Chicago market, Nelson Insulation Company has set a goal of geographic expansion – a goal they are well on their way to fulfilling.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE | SB 1636 a top priority

# IMSCA IDENTIFIES 127 BILLS THAT MAY IMPACT THE ILLINOIS CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

IMSCA has reviewed nearly 6,000 bills that were introduced this year and identified 127 bills that may impact the Illinois construction industry. Most notably — and the top legislative priority this year — is SB 1636, sponsored by Sen. John Mulroe and HB 2916, sponsored by Rep. Luis Arroyo.

The withholding of retainage creates an imbalance of power between owners/developers and contractors. SB 1636/HB 2916 seeks to correct this imbalance and create a more level playing field between all parties in a construction contract. Our legislation amends the Contractor Prompt Payment Act and allows retainage to be withheld at a rate of 10% for the first half of a construction project, but must reduce that to 5% once the project is

50% completed. Some contractors wait for more than a year after completing work until payment is finally received. This bill will only apply to private, commercial and construction projects.

IMSCA staff needs your help! Support and vote yes on SB 1636/HB 2916. Reach out to your legislators by letter or phone call, meet with them in their district offices, or attend an event. Explain to them the importance of adopting retainage reform and how your personal experiences have hurt you and/or your business's bottom line. Reach out to your union business agents or other trade and professional organizations and ask them to support our efforts.

Passage of this legislation will ease contractors' cash flow burdens, free

up capital, and permit contractors — especially smaller subcontractors — to perform more work, rather than wait for payment. Illinois needs to adopt SB 1636/HB 2916 to help create new development in Illinois.

IMSCA staff looks forward to representing the Illinois subcontracting industry in Springfield this session. We are confident that by working alongside our members, IMSCA will have another legislatively successful year.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**JESSICA NEWBOLD** | 217.891.3675  
JNEWBOLD@BOLDNEWSTRAT.COM



## SANDUSKY VISIT

# SANDUSKY VISITS SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO



SMACNA Greater Chicago was honored to have Vince Sandusky, Chief Executive Officer of SMACNA, to speak at our January 8 membership meeting.

Vince spoke about several topics that the national will be focusing on for 2019, some of which included labor relations, collective bargaining and pension reform — specifically, withdrawal liability, with a brief mention of high-efficiency air systems.

Tony Adolfs commented that having someone from national visit gives our members the opportunity to personally express what's happening in the sheet metal industry at the local level. That kind of dialogue is healthy, and we were glad Vince attended.



'19 BLACKHAWKS NIGHT RECAP | Members gathered on February 16

## BLACKHAWKS LOSE, MEMBERS WIN IN FUN OUTING

The Columbus Blue Jackets came out strong in the first period, scoring three of their five goals. The Hawks couldn't rally and suffered a 5-2 loss at the SMACNA Greater Chicago Blackhawks Night outing on February 16.

In spite of the loss, members had a great time. The camaraderie shared at these events helps maintain the value we have for our association, and these social events are a great way to have fun with fellow members while leaving the stress of work behind. Thank you to all who attended!







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