

July 2024

SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO

METAL PRESS

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



**MEMBER FEATURE:
QUALITY
MECHANICAL**

P. 7



**NEGOTIATIONS
UPDATE**

P. 17






SMACNA
GREATER CHICAGO

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You'll find QR codes throughout the newsletter that take you to additional content online, including relevant links or event and class registration.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT & RENEWED PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL 265

As I write this, we're fresh off the 2024 Annual Conference, which included a four-night stay in Canada's iconic "Castle in the Rockies," the Fairmont Banff Springs. This event was almost immediately sold out, and we were thrilled to see many new faces on the trip this year! Our group enjoyed plenty of camaraderie and amazing local experiences, along with an informational business session designed to strengthen our commitment to our industry and continue looking for ways to reach our collective goals.

As an association, it's important to us to continue bringing new content to our membership meetings and lineup of course offerings. Have a topic you'd like to learn more about? Let the SMACNA Greater Chicago team know! Engagement drives innovation and pushes us all to be better; not just in our own businesses, but as an industry-leading association. We remain committed to making sure our local contractors and labor partners have the tools they need to succeed.

To that end, it's no secret that last year saw a spike in the number of labor union strikes throughout the country, leading up to a challenging negotiation cycle for many in the construction industry. The SMACNA Greater Chicago Negotiating Committee and our counterparts at Local 265 worked together to come up with a new four-year agreement, which is effective from June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2028. See page 17 for a detailed update.

With November approaching, we're anxious to see how the election will impact our industry. To plan for whatever the future holds, be sure to stay informed of political developments and on top of key trends. We're all navigating this together!

Jeff Lukitsh
President, SMACNA Greater Chicago


FROM BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS: NAVIGATING COMMUNICATION ACROSS GENERATIONS

Gen Xers, Millennials and Zoomers all bring unique skills and challenges to the office and the jobsite. Here are some tips on how to get the best out of each generation.

BIG THINGS

FROM BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS: NAVIGATING COMMUNICATION ACROSS GENERATIONS

A multigenerational workforce brings unique characteristics, opportunities and challenges to the office and jobsite. Although Boomers continue to make their mark on the industry, companies today are comprised of a mix of Generation X, Millennials and Zoomers. By learning to understand and navigate the communication differences across multiple generations, SMACNA Greater Chicago members can help create more successful teams and project outcomes.

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GENERATION X

Born in the mid-1960s to early 1980s, Gen Xers are part of the “latchkey” generation, contributing to their independent nature. They’re motivated, work well under pressure and value work-life balance. Because people in this generation lived through recessions, the fall of the Berlin wall, an energy crisis and more economic uncertainty, they’ll find a solution for any challenge.

Like the Boomers before them, Gen Xers appreciate face-to-face communication, but the rise of personal computers and accessibility of cable TV through their adolescence helped them adapt to the continued progress of digital technology. They respond well to visual cues and feel technology should support their professional development, so any apps and management solutions in the workplace should prioritize user-friendliness and be easily accessible across all devices.



MILLENNIALS

Also known as Generation Y, Millennials were born between 1980 and the mid-1990s. Events like 9/11, Columbine and the recession of 2008 shaped their worldview, so this group is often distrustful of authority and prefers open, honest communication with clearly outlined goals and directives, along with positive reinforcement. Millennials make up the largest group in the workforce today and are the first generation to fully embrace a hybrid work environment.

Because Millennials grew up during a technological revolution, they thrive on instant communication, like texting and emailing. Count on them to value collaboration and teamwork, and to support cloud-based technology solutions in the workplace.



GEN Z

“Zoomers,” or Gen Z, are increasingly entering the workforce. Born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, this generation saw the election of the first black president, legal recognition of same-sex marriage and the political struggle surrounding global climate change, giving them heightened awareness of social issues. They’re also the most diverse of all the generations, have high expectations of their employer’s approach to DEI and want to engage in meaningful work.

True digital natives, they’re the first generation to have never lived without internet, nor do they remember life before smartphones. As such, mobile-first, real-time collaboration is their norm. Gen Z also values authenticity and are fact-checkers by nature. Honesty is essential, and feedback goes a long way.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Recently, the Department of Labor has brought Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to the forefront by leading efforts to modernize apprenticeship standards and alleviate the shortage of highly skilled workers. Although the draft proposal needs some work, SMACNA National has given their stamp of approval on this collaborative effort, and believes the revamped standards could bring about many improvements.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SMACNA SUPPORTS MODERNIZATION OF NATIONAL REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS

SMACNA Greater Chicago is proud to be one of the premier sheet metal associations in the country, and our contractor members continue to set the standard in safety, quality and productivity. But the future of our workforce relies on the apprenticeship training programs offered by our labor union counterparts at Local 73 and Local 265.

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Recently, the Department of Labor has brought Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to the forefront by leading efforts to modernize apprenticeship standards and alleviate the shortage of highly skilled workers. Although the draft proposal needs some work, SMACNA National has given their stamp of approval on this collaborative effort, and believes the revamped standards could bring about the following improvements:

- Strengthening of labor standards, quality and worker protections by making occupational skills and training more portable, enhancing alignment with postsecondary education and providing better performance data.
- Defining clearer roles for State Apprenticeship Agencies and other stakeholders within the National Apprenticeship System.
- Codifying the Office of Apprenticeship's role for national leadership, promotion and standards.
- Promoting apprenticeship pathways, including pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship readiness programs, by expanding performance and data requirements to improve accountability, transparency and program outcomes.
- Creating a student-centric model of Registered Apprenticeship, called Registered Career and Technical Education Apprenticeship, designed to make it more seamless for full-time high school and community college students to enroll in a Registered Apprenticeship.

"Collectively, the changes would ensure that apprentices receive broad-based, quality training that would provide them with marketable skills for their entire careers and further the DOL's goals of 'rebuilding the middle class' and 'connecting a diverse workforce to family-sustaining jobs,'" said Stan Kolbe, SMACNA's Executive Director of Government and Political Affairs.



FOR MORE DETAILS

For more details, and further improvements to the proposed rule offered by SMACNA leaders, visit bit.ly/45aONTz

**NEW
MEMBER**
WELCOME



**CRAFT
MECHANICAL**

773-661-7039

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Chicago, IL 60639

MIKE NEUBAUER
mneubauer@craftmbe.com



CRAFTMBE.COM



MEMBER FEATURE: QUALITY MECHANICAL

Established in 2003 as a small HVAC service company, Quality Mechanical, Inc. expanded into spec construction, maintenance, and sheet metal construction over the years. QMI's diverse skillset and experience with leading edge technology makes them a positive force in an area recovering from economic hardship.

QUALITY MECHANICAL, INC.: DIVERSE SKILLS, SPECIALTY WORK & QUALITY OPPORTUNITIES

Quality Mechanical, Inc. (QMI) started in 2003 as a small HVAC service company. The company's current president, Doug Hoekstra, remembers those early days because he came on just a few years later, in 2008, when he was a fresh high school grad with an interest in welding and pipefitting.

"Quality Mechanical was moving to a new location, so they originally hired me to help move boxes from one place to another, and they never fired me," Hoekstra said with a laugh.

There was more to it than that, of course. A few years into the history of the company, QMI added planned spec construction and maintenance to their repertoire. Meanwhile, Hoekstra went through a pipefitting apprenticeship program, working with QMI the whole time. He worked as a service tech for about a dozen years, then took over the company in 2020.

"WE HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF THINGS THAT WE CAN DO WELL IN THE HVAC ARENA, AND THAT'S THANKS TO OUR SKILLED EMPLOYEES, WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE IN ALL KINDS OF DIFFERENT SPECIALTY DUCTWORK."

Doug Hoekstra | *President, Quality Mechanical*

QMI has always been a service and install company, with sheet metal construction as a part of the business, but they didn't start to emphasize

that aspect until recently. They've been a SMACNA Greater Chicago member since 2022. The company employs roughly 35 workers.

"We've had a lot of organic growth, a lot of word of mouth," Hoekstra said. "We built a quality team with a diverse skillset over time, and those team members brought in more people with more skills, and we just kind of pursued work as it came."

To Hoekstra, it's QMI's diversity of skills that sets it apart from competitors.

and installing ventilation systems for indoor pools, which is more specialized than most may think. The constant moisture in these environments makes corrosion a huge issue, so you're looking at stainless steel ventilation systems and components or, even more specialized, fabric-based "Ductsox" systems.

QMI also prides itself on staying on the cutting edge of industry tech. The company recently completed the design, build and install of the HVAC system for the Oak Park Recreation Center project, which uses a high-tech,

was a big enough project that Mitsubishi executives came over from Japan to tour the building once it was completed.

QMI is based in the South Chicago suburbs, in Harvey — a historically economically disadvantaged area, stemming in part from many working-class employers pulling



"I feel like a lot of companies are shoehorned because they've specialized — on purpose or not — in one thing or another," he said. "We have a wide variety of things that we can do well in the HVAC arena, and that's thanks to our skilled employees, who have experience in all kinds of different specialty ductwork."

Hoekstra gave medical ventilation, dust collection and fume extraction as examples. All of these require designing, manufacturing and installing precision equipment with skill and care. QMI also performs a lot of work designing, building

high-efficiency, electric VRF heat pump system for climate control.

"With a heat pump, the same unit heats and cools," Hoekstra said. "With VRF you have several of those units all linked together, and you can heat and cool at the same time from the same units in different areas of a building. So, if you want heat in your room and I want cooling in my room, it can pull heat from my room to put in yours."

The Oak Park Rec Center project utilized Mitsubishi VRF equipment, and it was one of the first large projects to do so. It

up stakes in the late '80s and moving manufacturers overseas. It's a story too familiar to many Americans who lived through that time, and it's a chapter in American labor history that every union member should know. QMI moved to Harvey in 2020, and the company prides itself on providing fantastic skilled labor career opportunities to the surrounding community. They work together with local apprenticeship programs to help promote these opportunities, and they donate to local churches and charitable organizations to give back to the community they call home.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:
BOOSTED POSTS VS.
META ADS – WHAT’S
BEST FOR YOU?

With advent of social media, marketing your business is easier than ever before. But if you don’t know what you’re doing you could be missing out on a lot of potential new business. This article will help you decide how to market your business on Facebook and Instagram with Meta’s built in marketing tools.

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SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:
BOOSTED POSTS VS. META ADS
– WHAT’S BEST FOR YOU?

It’s possible you’re already marketing your business on social media, but are you using the tools at your disposal as effectively as possible? In this article we’ll discuss Meta’s social advertising options and when to use what.

Should you market your business through Meta? Yes. Meta — Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, WhatsApp — has massive reach. Facebook alone has more than 3 billion monthly active users, and Instagram has some 2 billion. That’s a lot of potential eyes on your business!



FACEBOOK HAS MORE THAN
3 BILLION
ACTIVE MONTHLY USERS



INSTAGRAM HAS MORE THAN
2 BILLION
ACTIVE MONTHLY USERS

Boosting posts is a quick way to increase brand visibility, but tapping into the Meta Business Suite and Meta Ad Manager opens up a wealth of valuable tools and analytics designed to help target your ads more precisely, assess and adjust marketing efforts as necessary and ultimately maximize your ROI.

A BOOSTED POST





A boosted post is a regular social post on your Facebook timeline or Instagram page that’s backed by ad money to (hopefully) reach more people and increase engagement. You can boost any post, whether it’s already posted or you’re drafting a new one. Boosted posts look just like regular organic posts, save for the “sponsored” or “promoted” tag. They can include a call to action, like a link to visit your website or send your account a message. Once your content is ready, you can define your daily budget and target demographic. The options for the latter are limited to broad geographic location (cities/towns), gender and interests.



PROS

-  QUICK AND EASY
-  SIMPLE CALL TO ACTION OPTIONS
-  SIMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETING

CONS

-  LIMITED AD PLACEMENT OPTIONS
-  LIMITED DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETING
-  LIMITED ADVERTISING OBJECTIVE TARGETING
-  LIMITED ANALYTICS

Boosted posts have their place, but they shouldn’t be your primary social media marketing plan. If they are, you’re almost certainly wasting money that could be better spent on more precise social marketing efforts. Unsure where to start? Talk with our partners at Nehlsen Creative to take advantage of the free marketing hour they offer to all SMACNA Greater Chicago members!

Need more? The Meta Ad Manager information on the next page is worth considering.



MEMBERSHIP PERK
FREE MARKETING HOUR

Nehlsen Creative is an award-winning marketing agency specializing in the union construction industry. We’re proud to work with industry partners from coast to coast, including SMACNA Greater Chicago.

Email notify@ncpr.com to schedule your free hour!

- FREE CONSULTATION
- FULL BRAND REVIEW
- ADVERTISING REVIEW
- WEBSITE REVIEW
- SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEW
- RECOMMENDATIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:
BOOSTED POSTS VS.
META ADS – WHAT’S
BEST FOR YOU?

With the advent of social media, marketing your business is easier than ever before. But if you don’t know what you’re doing you could be missing out on a lot of potential new business. This article will help you decide how to market your business on Facebook and Instagram with Meta’s built in marketing tools.



META ADS

Meta ads are managed through the Meta Business Suite and the Meta Ad Manager, which offer an impressive array of tools and analytics to help you better target your marketing efforts and fine-tune settings to ensure maximum ROI. Meta ads can be deployed on Facebook, Instagram and the greater Meta Audience Network, which includes Meta partner apps and websites. While boosted posts don’t give the option of choosing where/how your ad shows up, Meta Ad Manager gives you that power.

One of the biggest benefits of Meta Ad Manager is its ability to precisely define your target audience based on all kinds of demographics, interests, behaviors, locations and more.

When you put up a boosted post, it’s out there, that’s it. There’s no changing or customizing it after launch. Meta Ad Manager allows you to test ads and tweak them to maximize performance. And if you’re marketing your business with Meta Ad Manager, you can (and should) utilize the ads reporting function, which allows you to customize analytics reports based on the results that are most important to you. You can even breakdown data based on criteria like platform, location, age or gender. Not great with numbers? That’s OK, there are graphs to visually show performance!

PROS

- MORE DETAILED DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETING
- MORE AD PLACEMENT OPTIONS
- MORE CREATIVE CONTROL OF DESIGN, MESSAGING AND CALLS TO ACTION
- ABILITY TO TEST AND ALTER ADS
- POWERFUL ANALYTICS REPORTING

CONS

- TAKES MORE TIME AND EFFORT

KEY TAKEAWAY

At the end of the day, a boosted post is an effective, simple way to build brand awareness, grow your audience and increase audience engagement. But if you’re looking for more, or want enhanced ability to maximize your ROI, step up to Meta Ad Manager.

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THE APP

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NEW
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JESSICA MEDRANO
jessica@rjoneil.com



RJONEIL.COM

RISKY BUSINESS: DO YOU HAVE THESE DIGITAL SECURITY MEASURES IN PLACE?


Everything we do is logged online — business and personal. With the advent of AI, cyberattacks are increasingly sophisticated and effective. Are you doing enough to protect your business? Take a look at our checklist to find out!

RISKY BUSINESS: DO YOU HAVE THESE DIGITAL SECURITY MEASURES IN PLACE?

The construction industry is the No. 1 most-targeted sector for cyberattacks, according to a 2023 cyber report. Our industry relies on timely, cost-effective delivery, and the chaos instigated by a cyberattack could cause major delays and disruptions.

The construction industry saw a
**40% BOOST IN CYBER
THREATS & ATTACKS**
from 2022 to 2023.
— Cobalt

With AI on the rise and operations becoming increasingly digital, it's more important than ever to have basic cybersecurity measures in place. Not sure where to start? Run through our checklist to see if you're doing enough to cover your assets!

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NETWORK SECURITY AND SYSTEM MONITORING

Successful network security strategies include multiple solutions that help protect organizations and users against malicious cyberattacks. Protections include firewalls, virtual private networks (VPNs), antivirus software, restricted access to information and devices, and more. Reach out to your IT team to talk about details of each and how they can better protect your company.



TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (2FA)

An extra layer of protection beyond the typical username and password helps prevent the risk of unauthorized access to your system and accounts. 2FA is a great tool to prevent a fraudster from logging in, and it can be accomplished with verification through a simple phone app, or by a phone call or text message.



PASSWORD MANAGER

You think it's easier to use the same password across all your platforms and software? So does a hacker. That's why a password manager is critical to keeping your company's sensitive information on lockdown. One account and one unique master password is all it takes to secure the rest of your logins in a password "vault." Think of it like a physical safe, but for your digital valuables.



EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Most attacks happen when employees get tricked into clicking links or downloading files. Reduce your risk by training your office staff and field crew on how to spot scams. Some red flags include language like "you need to act now," misspellings and grammar issues and emails being sent from an unofficial address.



PROTECTED BACKUPS *(For all critical systems and databases)*

A database backup solution brings peace of mind in the event of a physical hardware failure, data corruption or any other unexpected circumstance. From off-site to cloud-based storage, there are solutions available to fit every need.



PHYSICAL SECURITY MEASURES

Not everything can be backed up — like your physical equipment on the jobsite — but setting up remote monitoring systems with real-time video feeds can help detect and deter potential thieves.

Having a few of these measures in place is a good start, but your company should seriously consider stepping up your cybersecurity game with a more robust and multi-layered approach to stay secure.



ASSOCIATE MEMBER FEATURE: SHEET METAL CONNECTORS

From its humble beginnings as a four-man local union shop in 1969, family-owned Sheet Metal Connectors has grown exponentially. Today, the company employs some 140 sheet metal workers, office employees and shippers across their three locations. Because they keep many specialty materials stocked at all times, they pride themselves on quick turnaround and rapid response to customers.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SHEET METAL CONNECTORS

1. Open your camera
2. Hover it over this



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SHEET METAL CONNECTORS : 55 YEARS OF INNOVATION

Sheet Metal Connectors was founded as a yellow label union shop in Minneapolis in 1969 by Jerry Myers. Back then, it was just him and three employees making slips and drive connectors out of a 3,000 square-foot shop. The grassroots operation saw Myers chasing sales on the road and rushing back to help manufacture product to fill those orders.

From these humble beginnings, a Midwest HVAC juggernaut emerged, defined by innovation, quality, efficiency and excellent service.

Things really took off in the '80s, when SMC made a name for itself as an innovator. Between 1984 and 1990, the company invented and patented the E-Z Rail — a specific process for dampers — quickly followed by the E-Z Rail 2. In 2006 the company released and trademarked its “PriceDuct” software, in 2007 they patented the E-Z Flange Jr., in 2008 they patented the “Super Heto” high-efficiency takeoff, and in 2021 they launched their new PriceDuct web-based estimating system.

All that innovation through the years led to immense growth. SMC built an additional manufacturing facility in Fridley, Minn. in '93, expanded that location a decade later, opened another manufacturing facility in Rockford, Ill. in '04 and added yet another facility for their sister company, Standard Metal Products. Today, the company employs some 140 sheet metal workers, office employees and shippers across their three locations.

SMC's National Sales Manager Ryan Barnes attributes this meteoric growth to SMC's relentless pursuit of efficiency.

“SMC is constantly working to make our products and processes better,” he said. “We are always looking to help our clients save time and money with more energy efficient products and even software to help them succeed.”

The web-based PriceDuct estimating system is a good example of what Barnes is talking about. It's a bidding software developed exclusively for SMC customers, and it can be used anywhere there's an internet connection.

“If you need to take off some negative 4” pressure 316 stainless steel duct at 3 a.m. on a Saturday, you can,” he said. “All of that data seamlessly flows into our ordering system and cutting systems, eliminating days from the fabrication process.”

“SMC is outstanding at all types of jobs from small client buildouts to stadiums. But where we really excel is specialty materials,” Barnes said. “We carry aluminum, stainless steel, paint grip, black iron, 1”-3” double wall, and the list goes on. Many of these materials and gauges are stocked at all times, and because of that we can turn specialty jobs in days instead of weeks.”

In addition to responding rapidly to customer requests, Barnes said the company prides itself in treating customers as partners.

“We are really not out to upsell materials or products that your job does not require,” Barnes said. “We often consult with our clients and engineers to find the most economical, high quality, energy efficient products that fit the application your project.”

Notably, SMC recently completed work on a 1.9 million square-foot expansion to the Ohio State Wexnar Medical Center, manufacturing and

delivering thousands of feet of spiral pipe and fittings to the installation contractor.

SMC wouldn't be where it is today without the support of the greater Minneapolis area, and donates to

several charities every year. But founder Jerry Myers' philanthropic passion is focused most heavily on “A Chance To Grow,” a Minnesota non-profit dedicated to supporting maximum development for children and adults with autism, learning disabilities and brain injuries. SMC supports their programs every year and has even donated a building to them in the past.

With four patented products that altered the landscape of the industry coupled with an obsessive pursuit of quality, efficiency and community, it's easy to see why SMC is such an influential player in the HVAC industry.

“WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO HELP OUR CLIENTS SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH MORE EFFICIENT PRODUCTS TO INSTALL, MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT PRODUCTS AND EVEN SOFTWARE TO HELP THEM SUCCEED.”

Ryan Barnes | *National Sales Manager,
Sheet Metal Connectors*



NEGOTIATION
UPDATES

SMACNA Greater Chicago and SMART Local 265 have ratified a four-year collective bargaining agreement effective June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2028. Read the article for details.

RECAP:
YES AT TOPGOLF

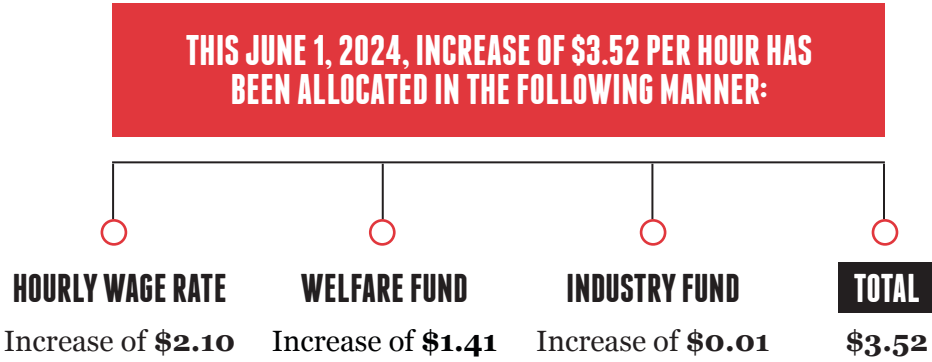
Our Young Executives of SMACNA Greater Chicago (YES) Group met at Topgolf Naperville to work on their drives, network and learn about generational communication via a presentation by leadership development consultant Sonya Shearer.

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SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO
AND SMART LOCAL 265 RATIFY
NEW FOUR-YEAR AGREEMENT

SMACNA Greater Chicago and SMART Local 265 have ratified a four-year collective bargaining agreement effective June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2028. The new Agreement calls for wage increases of \$4.52 (\$3.52 on June 1 and \$1 on December 1), \$4.21, \$3.98, and \$4.13 in each of the next four years.



An updated Wage and Fringe Benefit Schedule that reflects the new increases has been posted to SMACNAGreaterChicago.org.

Additional changes to this year’s agreement include: cleanup of language for Bonding, SASMI, Supplemental Retirement Savings Plan, Owner/Member, Layoff/Payoff and Stewards; a Memorandum of Understanding for the development of new Technology and Privacy language; and modifications to the Travel Pay per diem, Tool List, Service Agreement, Supervisory Pay, Make-up Day and Apprentice Ratios.

If you have any questions regarding the new Agreement, please call the SMACNA Greater Chicago office at (708) 544-7007 or email Tony@SMACNAGreaterChicago.org.



YES EVENT:
GENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION:
SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

On May 9, our YES group and guests gathered at Topgolf Naperville for a presentation on “Generational Communication: Speaking the Same Language,” delivered by leadership development consultant Sonya Shearer. Attendees learned more about the different generations that currently make up our workforce, including the world events that shaped each, what motivates them and their different approaches to communication.

Afterward, our group enjoyed networking, hitting golf balls and indulging in tasty food and drinks.

Watch for future YES events!

WANT TO
LEARN MORE?



Learn more about our YES group at SMACNAGreaterChicago.org/YES

YES is for young SMACNA Greater Chicago members who are passionate about shaping and transforming our industry.



RECAPS: MARCH & MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

We were thrilled to welcome Angie Simon of HMSE as our featured speaker during our March 12 meeting and saw record-breaking attendance for her presentation! Then, we welcomed Matt Doucet of the Wintrust Construction, Engineering and Architecture Group for our May membership meeting to give an update on current construction and economic trends.



RECAP: INDUSTRY RECRUITMENT, ECONOMIC TRENDS DISCUSSED THIS SPRING

SMACNA Greater Chicago is proud to help members prepare for success by offering a variety of meetings and educational programming through the year. Every other month, we gather at Gibsons Bar & Steakhouse for our regular membership meetings, where we invite industry leaders to speak on trends and topics affecting our businesses.



Mike Neubauer
& Kenesha Rhea
CRAFT MECHANICAL

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MARCH
12

MARCH MEETING



Angie Simon has been a trailblazer and passionate advocate for women in the construction industry for more than 30 years. She is the past president and CEO of Western Allied Mechanical, the first female president of SMACNA National and has continued to change the industry through her leadership of the Heavy Metal Summer Experience (HMSE). We were thrilled to welcome her as our featured speaker during our March 12 meeting and saw record-breaking attendance for her presentation!

After lunch, Angie took to the podium to give an overview of her career, including her challenges and successes. She then turned her focus to HMSE, designed to introduce high school students and recent graduates to careers in the building trades. What began as a six-week pilot program in two locations has grown to 38 camps throughout the U.S. and Canada — including one this summer at SMACNA Greater Chicago member Sheet Metal Werks!

During the March meeting, we also welcomed two new members to our association: White Cap Construction and Supply and EMCOR Services.



SIGN UP FOR METAL PRESS NOW!

Regular membership meetings are on pause through the summer and will pick back up on September 10. Sign up for Metal Press Now e-newsletter for important news, reminders and save the dates! Email Laurie@SMACNAGreaterChicago.org to sign up.

MAY
14

MAY MEETING



Matt Doucet, president of the Wintrust Construction, Engineering and Architecture Group, joined us for our May membership meeting to give an update on current construction and economic trends, along with risks, opportunities and best practices. Some key takeaways from his presentation include:

In our current high interest rate environment, the Federal Funds rate increased by 5.25% over the past 15 months and the real estate capital structure has changed to require more equity of developers combined with increased construction costs.

Illinois is experiencing backlogs that are projected to continue for the next 12-15 months. Doucet recommended right-sizing operations to stay competitive, along with exploring diversification.

Locally, vertical construction activity is down as developers continue to experience unsettling taxes and higher construction costs. Education, data center and healthcare work continue to keep many busy, and population migration stemming from COVID remains a factor in construction demand.

FIRST CHICAGO-AREA STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HMSE

In June, Sheet Metal Werks hosted 16 students during the first Heavy Metal Summer Experience camp in the Chicagoland area. SMACNA Greater Chicago, along with the Local 73 and Local 265 LMCCs, was proud to sponsor the work boots for each participant!

BLACKHAWKS GAME RECAP

On March 10, SMACNA Greater Chicago members gathered at the United Center for our annual Chicago Blackhawks Night. We had a great time cheering them on to a 7-4 victory against the Arizona Coyotes.

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FIRST CHICAGO-AREA STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HEAVY METAL SUMMER EXPERIENCE

The nationally-recognized Heavy Metal Summer Experience (HMSE) came to the Chicagoland area this summer. The innovative program introduces high school students and recent grads to career opportunities in the skilled trades through hands-on experiences with industry pros. SMACNA Greater Chicago member Sheet Metal Werks hosted a two-week camp in June, where 16 local high school students gained practical industry knowledge.

As part of the program, every student received PPE and tools free of charge. SMACNA Greater Chicago was proud to sponsor the work boots for every participant in the Sheet Metal Werks camp this year, and the Local 73 and Local 265 LMCCs also made contributions to support the camp.

As our industry continues to face skills shortages and recruitment challenges, HMSE fills a real need. Now in its fourth year, HMSE is strategically designed to support and advance vocational skills training and fuel interest in trades-related careers.

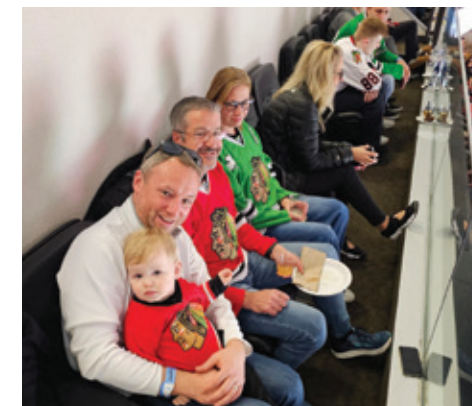


For more information, or to become a host location in the future, visit [HMSE.org](https://hmse.org) or email info@hmse.org.

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS MEMBER OUTING

On March 10, SMACNA Greater Chicago members gathered at the United Center for our annual Chicago Blackhawks Night. The Blackhawks came to the ice ready to play, and we had a great time cheering them on to a 7-4 victory against the Arizona Coyotes. Our group was even surprised with a pop-in visit by professional singer James Cornelison, best known for performing the National Anthem during Blackhawks home games. Thanks to all the members who attended this sold-out event!

*Thanks to everyone who was able to attend this year's event!
We hope to see you all again next year.*



RECAP: SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Eighty-four members and their families joined us for this year's Annual Conference in June, which took place at the majestic Fairmont Banff Springs in Alberta, Canada. The trip included unmatched hospitality, fantastic food, incredible scenic views and the chance to reconnect, unite and innovate together.

RECAP: SMACNA GREATER CHICAGO'S 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2024 Annual Conference took place from June 12-16 at Fairmont Banff Springs in Alberta, Canada. Eighty-four members and their families traveled to the majestic "Castle in the Rockies" to for unmatched hospitality, fantastic food, incredible scenic views and a selection of exciting excursions.

"The scenery was our favorite part, and it was great connecting with some of the other members," said James McEvoy of Kirby Sheet Metal Works.

Members had the opportunity to meet with Carol Duncan, SMACNA President, who was on hand during our business session to give an update on the current initiatives and goals at the national level.

"Although the Annual Conference offers an exciting chance for members to get away from their day-to-day, it's more than that," said Tony Adolfs, Executive Vice President. "It gives us the opportunity to grow together and focus on our goals as a collective group. We're proud of all we've accomplished this year, and look forward to continuing to find new ways to innovate and move our industry forward."

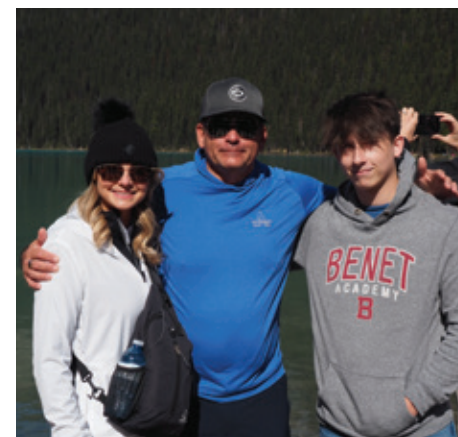
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CONFERENCE
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Save these dates for some of the most anticipated chapter and industry events through the summer and into the fall.

SAVE THE DATES:
ASSOCIATION HAPPENINGS

AUG 5



ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
SOLD OUT

Stonebridge Country Club
2705 Stonebridge Blvd.
Aurora, IL 60502

Don't miss this year's SMACNA Greater Chicago Golf Outing. Join us at Stonebridge Country Club, where you'll be treated to lunch before tee-off, followed by dinner and cocktails. Plus, golfers can have fun challenging each other to various hole contests throughout the course!

Want to see your company represented throughout the course? Become a hole or event sponsor! Email Laurie@smacnagreaterchicago.org before July 10 for details.

MORE DETAILS



View all the details online at:
SMACNAGreaterChicago.org/Golf-Outing

SEP 10



REGULAR MEMBERSHIP
MEETING

Gibsons Bar and Steakhouse
2105 Spring Rd.
Oak Brook, IL 60523

September's membership meeting includes the return of WGN-TV Political Analyst Paul M. Lisnek, J.D., Ph.D as our featured speaker. Check online for registration information later this summer.

SEP 19



INDUSTRY NIGHT 2024
FREE

Joe's Live
5441 Park Pl.
Rosemont, IL 60018

The SMACNA Greater Chicago "band" was formed back in 2014, and we've been playing the hits for 10 years. Join us for a special anniversary edition of our SMACNAPALOOZA Industry Night, where we'll top the charts yet again with a new lineup of associate member exhibitors — and giveaways!

Watch for details and registration information coming soon!

OCT 27-30



SMACNA ANNUAL CONVENTION
PRICING VARIES

JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa
74-855 Country Club Dr.
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Join your fellow SMACNA members, chapter executives and associate members for an unforgettable event featuring educational sessions, networking and a variety of local activities at the ultimate desert retreat. In addition to the popular product show, which assembles some of the industry's most prominent suppliers, manufacturers and service providers, attendees can enjoy a new addition this year — a pickleball tournament!

REGISTER NOW



Regular registration runs through July 15 at:
bit.ly/4bRBsBW

FULL CALENDAR
OF EVENTS

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