



New Year, New Normal?

SINCE 1919

SMCA

Magazine



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SMCA Members Rise to Challenge, Find Opportunity
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From the Exec's Desk

Happy New Year Everyone!

Mercifully, we have left 2020 behind and look forward to a healthier, happier, 2021 with hope for a return to our pre-COVID lives. 2020 was obviously a year unlike any other – a pandemic, a contentious presidential election, hotly debated social issues – and somewhere amidst all that, people trying to go about their day at work and run their businesses!

At the start of a new year, I like to reflect on what can be learned from the prior one. Something I was pleased to learn is just how resilient our industry is. Aside from a brief shutdown period early in the pandemic, SMCA's contractors and their employees have worked steadily and safely this entire year while other industries have struggled mightily. Our members have adopted new safety protocols on job sites and in their shops, taken meetings from in-person to virtual, and provided all necessary PPE to keep their employees healthy as they perform their important work. Despite the upheaval of the pandemic, SMCA members have continued to serve their customers without missing a beat. This is a credit to their ingenuity as business owners, their passion for what they do, and the care they show for their employees.

We enter 2021 hopeful that an end to the pandemic is in sight and that normality returns. SMCA is optimistic that the new year will bring both of these, and is preparing to resume our traditional schedule in the event gathering size restrictions and social distancing requirements are lifted and it is deemed safe to learn, socialize, and celebrate together again. We will also continue providing in-person and virtual options for upcoming educational programs, so stay tuned for email and Twitter announcements!



SMACNA Meetings Continue in The Cloud During COVID-19

With the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic still present throughout the country, the December 2020 meeting of the Council of Chapter Representatives was changed from an in-person event to a virtual meeting. SMACNA national



staff and representatives of chapters throughout the country, including SMCA, took to Zoom to discuss and examine a variety of industry issues.

The meeting began with the rescheduled Annual Business Meeting, which was to take place at the SMACNA Annual Convention (also cancelled due to the pandemic). During this meeting, delegates from SMACNA chapters vote for Directors and Committee members tasked with leading SMACNA National in the coming year. While changes were made to accommodate the virtual format, this year's slate of Directors and Nominating Committee members was elected smoothly.

SMACNA's Chapter Executive and Contractor of the Year awards are also normally presented during the Annual Convention, but this year were made part of the December Zoom meeting. Congratulations to 2020 Chapter Executive of the Year Ginger Slaick of Georgia and North Carolina SMACNA and to 2020 Contractor of the Year Guy Gast of the Waldinger Corporation's Iowa Division!

The December Council meeting included presentations on cybersecurity for JATCs, how contractors are finding strategic growth opportunities during COVID, and the New Horizon Foundation's research into how contractors throughout the country are adopting new technology in the workplace.

Finally, the Council welcomed Aaron Hilger, Chapter Executive from Rochester, NY, as newly elected Vice Chair. Congratulations Aaron!

In this issue —

We look at what economists predict for 2021, examine how SMCA balancers are serving their customers and community, and recap a wild 2020 election season.



President's Column

As I write the year's first column, I find myself reflecting on 2020 – what a year it was! Never could I have imagined the possibility of life in a pandemic. All I can do is shrug and acknowledge that Hollywood nailed it. So many of those movies that portrayed something like this happening (2011's "Contagion" comes to mind) now feel more like documentaries than "roll your eyes" science fiction. COVID

has changed the world for a long, long time. I believe that going forward, we will look at travel and social events much differently than any of us remember. Yet I remain hopeful that we will put this behind us and embrace the new year. With that in mind, permit me to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year as we welcome 2021!

Absent some unexpected change in the voting results, this month will see President-Elect Joe Biden sworn in as the 46th President of the United States. While this was certainly a tough election year, I have always believed that you respect the office of the President. In politics and much more, this country is extremely divided, and it is up to each of us to do our part to mend the cracks between us. With the election behind us and the votes counted, let us do what we can to support our leaders and be civil with our fellow Americans.

On to the important question for any new year in our industry: how do we think work will look in 2021? In my opinion, it will pick up this month and enter the second quarter with a lot of momentum. COVID-19 remains with us though, and it could slow work down if infections continue to rise in the area. Local 19 has been working with SMCA on responding to COVID and other day-to-day operations. A bright spot in the pandemic has been a strengthened relationship between Local 19 and SMCA, and we intend to keep that going in 2021. I am sure you are as tired of hearing it as I am; but wear a mask and maintain your social distance because mitigation is crucial to keeping work moving!

Next to safety concerns, the Paycheck Protection Program might be the biggest bugaboo for contractors during the pandemic. As I write this, loans are still being processed by banks, but this could easily change with a new Congress coming into session and government agencies undecided on what exactly they will and will not forgive tax-wise. Rest assured that SMCA is monitoring these developments and we will keep you posted with any legislative or regulatory updates.

Finally, most of you have heard my father Dominic Bonitatis, Jr recently passed. He was a proud, 2nd generation Local 19 member in addition to serving as a U.S. Marine and exemplifying the modern-day cowboy. I will miss my chats with my dad. Thank you to everyone for the kind words and prayers. Stay strong and be safe.

Respectfully,
Dominic Bonitatis III
SMCA President

Construction Outlook 2021 What Does the Market Have in Store?

Data collected during the fall showed that construction's essential status helped the industry keep its momentum even during the most restrictive government-ordered shutdowns of 2020. This enabled it to bounce back faster than most other industries, with a backlog rebounding as high as 8 months in August 2020 according to Associated Builders and Contractors. But with backlog drying up, analysts have begun looking ahead to 2021 and beyond.

In November, Dodge Data & Analytics released its 2021 Construction Outlook. That report predicts a 4% increase in total U.S. construction starts in 2021, to the tune of \$771 billion. Richard Branch, Chief Economist for Dodge, noted that "while the recovery [from COVID-19] is underway, the road to full recovery will be long and fraught with potential potholes. After losing an estimated 14% in 2020 to \$738 billion, total construction starts will regain just 4% in 2021." Economists project that business and consumer confidence will improve early in 2021 on hopes of additional economic stimulus bills being passed by the federal government and one or more COVID-19 vaccines being approved and distributed for use. However, most agree that construction will take time to fully recover. Dodge's Outlook breaks down market segments for a more specific look at 2021:

- Both the dollar value (+7%) and number of units (+6%) in single-family housing are predicted to increase, attributable to low mortgage rates and a desire for more spacious living during the pandemic.

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A Building Boom During COVID?

By: Bill Burke

Total Comfort Solutions Heating & Air Conditioning

Over the last few months developers have been scrambling to get their housing proposals submitted to the city. The apparent increase in residential construction projects can in part be tied to the expiration of the city's tax abatement program on Dec. 31. Another factor affecting the increased volume is back in 2018, City Council passed the mixed-income housing bonus. This allows developers to request more housing units than the zoning would typically allow in exchange for paying into the "housing trust fund", which helps build low to middle income housing units. The proposals that were submitted in August of this year, if approved, would produce over 3600 new market rate apartments.

The city has been particularly hard hit during the pandemic with massive numbers of people unemployed and businesses closing. The surge in applications would seem to indicate that there is plenty of confidence in people who believe the city is still an attractive and affordable place to live and work. As investors find it harder to profit in expensive markets, like New York & Boston, they are looking to build multi-family properties here in Philadelphia. People remain bullish as talk of people leaving the city for the suburbs to escape the pandemic continues.

Development is planned in areas such as Northern Liberties, Center City, Brewerytown, and along the Delaware River waterfront. Callahan Ward is proposing 160 units at 26th & Girard. Bart Blatstein is proposing a 14 Story apartment building at Broad & Washington. Post Brothers are looking to produce 1100 apartments on Germantown Avenue at Piazza Terminal. Other companies like PMC and Southern Land are moving ahead with plans as well.

Philadelphia's skyline is ever changing as large multi-family projects continue to meet a strong demand for market rate housing.



Opportunities and Challenges for Balancing Contractors in the Pandemic

By: Richard E. Braendle, Dynamic Balancing Co.

The Pandemic has created both opportunities and challenges for balancing contractors. This is a discussion of how Dynamic Balancing Co. has been affected. The employees of Dynamic Balancing, Jeff Blatcher, Jim Rachkis, Erich Luizer, Larry Cain, Jerry Baker, Vince DiOrio and Ashley Buxton should all be recognized for their efforts during this period.

The Pandemic has on one hand created additional requirements due to building owner's need to have air flow, air changes per hour and area pressures checked.

We have been asked to certify air changes per hour and rooms pressures in isolation and operating rooms of four hospitals that were regular



customers. As added work, we were asked to measure supply and outside air flows and area pressures at two PGW buildings. We also have been doing air flow audits at some Philadelphia schools. The additional work has come at a time, when a number of other projects resulting from an increase in our backlog have become ready for balancing. As a result, we have been overwhelmed with work and have added two additional balancers. We actually had enough work to have hired one more additional balancer, but none were available. We have definitely been challenged getting projects completed to the satisfaction of our customers.

On the other hand, employees and/or their family members have health concerns that would not allow them to work on projects such as hospitals and health clinics. This has resulted in having to schedule individual employees on specific projects.

There has also been opportunities and challenges from a financial/cash flow standpoint. With the help of Annaliese Romain at TD Bank, Dynamic Balancing Co. was able to secure a PPP Grant. This was extremely helpful both from a cash flow and profit standpoint. On the other hand, due to most people working from home, payments for invoices have been extremely slow to be processed. This has caused a strain on cash flow, especially in light of the employees that have been added. Receiving the PPP Grant was very helpful in this situation. Fortunately, we have started to receive payment on quite a few old invoices.

In summary, looking at the overall picture, this will be a successful year for our company.

The COVID-19 Saga Continues

The virus that ravaged the country in March and April has reared its ugly head again as scientists anticipated. COVID-19 has come back to present the continuation of strict safety restrictions across the nation and our job sites. The CDC, OSHA, and state health officials continue to express the importance of wearing a mask indoors and outdoors (if social distancing is not an option) in order to mitigate the exposure to the virus.



The owners of SMCA firms and their safety coordinators understand the importance of following COVID protocols on all job sites and shop facilities. Over the past couple of months, firms have worked closely with lead Safety Coordinators on sites in preparation of the surge in cases across Pennsylvania and New Jersey that could affect job sites. SMCA firms' main focus is to ensure the safety of their employees and by doing so, firms have avoided one of OSHA's frequently cited standards for COVID-19, which is providing and/or checking the respirator or face covering being used by employees on the job site that will protect their health and safety. This citation is one of many that SMCA firms have avoided over the last 6-8 months by simply preparing and training their employees to comply with every COVID-19 protocol.

As cases rise in our region, SMCA firms will continue to make extensive efforts in keeping employees safe from the virus in the new year by complying with the recommendations set forth by the CDC, OSHA, and state health officials to wear face coverings and practicing social distancing in the work place.

Greg Wharton
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Construction Outlook

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- The dollar value (-1%) and number of units started (-2%) of multifamily construction are both expected to drop in conjunction with single-family gains.
- The dollar value (+5%) of commercial building starts will increase in 2021, thanks to the rise in warehouse construction and data centers being driven by the pandemic and e-commerce giants like Amazon investing in their logistics infrastructures. It is expected that retail and hotel construction will suffer in 2021 though.
- It is questionable whether public works construction will improve in early 2021 as federal funding for states and municipalities remains questionable despite changes in the makeup of national leadership. The consensus is that public works construction starts will be flat over the year.
- Energy utilities construction (+35%) is expected to gain in 2021, led by an increased number of wind farms and groundbreaking of several large LNG export facilities throughout the country.

Economic conditions have been in constant flux since the COVID-19 pandemic began, and it is likely too early to predict when that volatility will stabilize. The potential for additional economic stimulus following the November elections, a strong housing market and international growth, the likelihood of one or more successful vaccines being distributed, and the expected need for retrofit projects in the post-COVID world stand out as positive factors. However, risk factors such as a resurgence of COVID-19 infections, new business models in the post-pandemic world, and domestic and international financial pressures loom as well.

Despite the many uncertainties entering 2021, most economic forecasters agree that any 2020-2021 construction downturn will be shorter, and result in less of a spending decline than that seen during the Great Recession. SMCA continues to keep a close eye on today's fluid economic conditions and will provide updates throughout the year.

Architectural Work at Gore

By: Ernie P. Menold, Ernest D. Menold, Inc.

We were contracted by the Bancroft Construction Company for miscellaneous metals at Gore's new Research & Development facility in Elkton, MD. The project was an addition to an existing structure that was going to be the headquarters for a few hundred employees. For us, the project required extensive upfront design and coordination with other trades for the architectural work, and we continually added to our scope by providing miscellaneous metals around the jobsite.

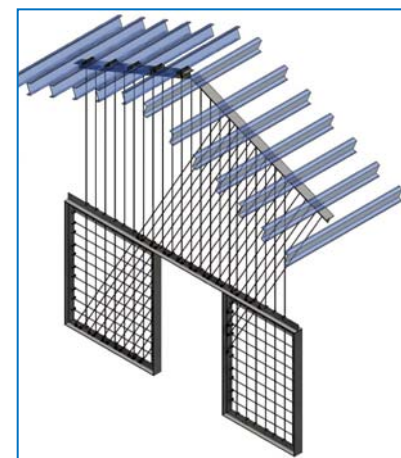
We were first introduced to this project by these 3D renderings, in which we added all the red entryway panels, rope walls, and guardrails around the mezzanine into our scope of work. The rope walls and guard rails were not spec'd out yet in detail, so we worked with the General Contractor to design our own solution to achieve the look, in which our Project Manager, Rich Davis, and Design Manager, Lou DiTomo, brought the prototype to the customer.

We worked with a structural engineer to finalize the design of how we would attach and tension the rope to the steel beams using pulleys. The design changed from drilling holes into i-beams to using T Angles. Our design team also 3D sketched:

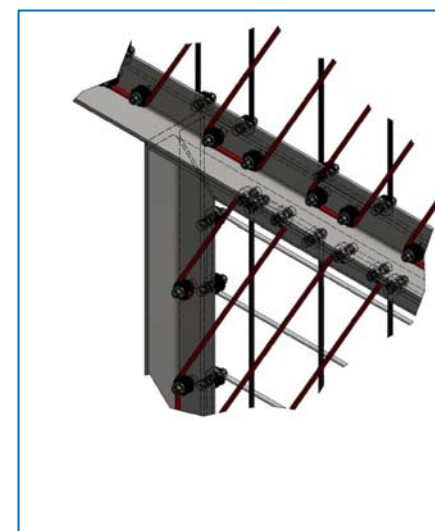
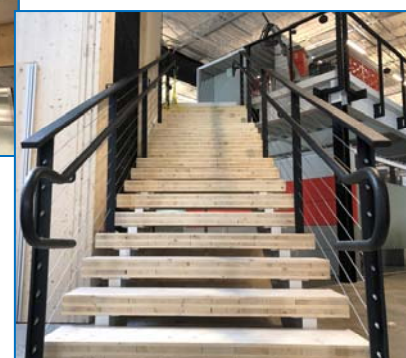
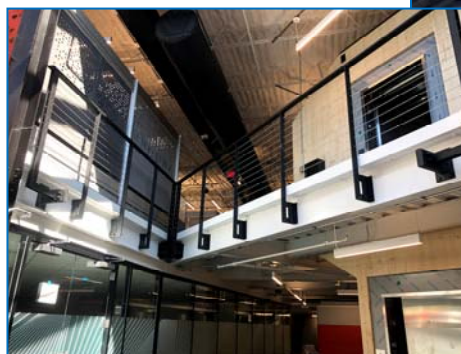
- Over 600' of guardrail around the mezzanine of the job site
- The front architectural entryway vestibule
- The entryway bench underlay
- The reception desk
- Locker dividers
- The security rope wall

Notes about the design, fabrication, and installation of our scope of work:

- All the architectural panels were fabricated out of 3/4" aluminum, then powder coated to Gore's branded color of red.
- The mezzanine guard rail was fastened to the structural steel of the mezzanine.
- The staircases have 1 1/4" steel tube running along the interior for easier guidance. The ends of the tube were bent using our pipe bender.
- The posts were 1/2" steel angle with 3/16" stainless steel cable 4" apart for the guard rails, with 3" x 1" x 1/8" tube steel on top. All material was powder coated black with a texture.
- The entryway bench was trapezoid shaped with wooden slats ranging from 22 1/8" to 52 1/16". We cut these slats in our shop and pre-fabricated the bench to the underlying powder coated aluminum using flat head screws.



- The long side of the reception desk was 10' l long, and the Gore logo was water jetted into the front side.
- We designed a section of the desk for Gore's employee's card readers for entry and exit with a "Hello" and "Goodbye" piece of 1/2" Lexan fastened into the desk.
- For the rope security wall, the top T Angles were clamped to the roof purlins. The rope was all spaced 7" apart, with machine backed pulleys tack welded to the T Angles. The rope was colored red, white, and black in various directions.



Legislative Updates Winter 2020-2021

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Cracks Down on Employee Misclassification

In October, HB 716 was signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf. The bill, originally introduced by State Rep. John Galloway (D-140, Bucks), establishes a task force charged with making recommendations on how to crack down on the illegal practice of misclassifying employees as independent contractors.



The bill was signed into law as Act 85 of 2020. It amends the Administrative Code of 1929 to establish a Joint Agency Task Force on the Misclassification of Employees. The Task Force will be chaired by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Labor & Industry and includes the state's Attorney General and Secretary of Revenue. Also joining the Task Force will be an additional four individuals representing industries affected by misclassification. The Task Force will examine Pennsylvania's current classification and enforcement system, make recommendations to strengthen enforcement practices, and educate the public about employee classification.



Rep. Galloway stated "I'm very glad this bill has been signed into law as it will help protect our workers from being exploited by unethical business practices. Some employers have taken advantage of loopholes to misclassify workers to deliberately cut labor costs, pay fewer tax dollars, and avoid paying people a fair day's wage for a fair day's work." Galloway added that intentionally misclassifying employee labor creates an uneven playing field by hurting law-abiding businesses.



New Jersey

Garden State Legalizes Recreational Marijuana – What does that mean for contractors?

In November, New Jersey voters approved a constitutional amendment legalizing the use of recreational marijuana for adults over the age of 21. Contractors need not worry about employees partaking yet however – New Jersey lawmakers

must first pass a bill governing the rules and regulations of the marijuana industry, and state leadership must name appointees to the newly-created Cannabis Regulatory Commission. The Commission will be tasked with enacting regulations to implement the ballot measure, and the implications for employers and employees remain to be seen.

SMCA encourages contractors to review the applicable laws in jurisdictions where they conduct business, understand their rights, and consider the following practices:

- No state law is currently in place requiring that employers tolerate marijuana use at work or working under the influence of marijuana.
- Existing zero-tolerance drug policies can remain in place if drug testing is required by law (i.e. safety-sensitive positions).
- Exercise caution in enforcing zero-tolerance drug policies that include marijuana use, because metabolites can remain in one's blood even if the employee is not under the influence of marijuana at the time of testing.
- If/when state law requires accommodations for marijuana users, determine if you can reasonably provide an accommodation to employees. This will include determining whether marijuana use presents a threat to others on the job or in the shop.

SMCA continues to monitor this new legislation as it develops and will work with Local Union 19 to create, implement, and enforce appropriate policies as needed.



Presidential Election

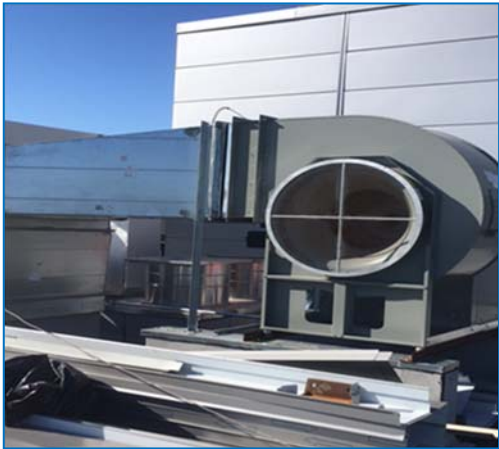
After a uniquely competitive campaign, former Vice President Joe Biden (D) unseated incumbent President Donald Trump (R) with an Electoral College total (as of this writing) of 306 votes. While Biden was vocal during the campaign about reversing some of President Trump's policies and programs, particularly foreign policy and environmental issues, it remains to be seen

Prime Sheet Metal looks forward to College West Housing Opening

Prime Sheet Metal, Inc. has been busy since July 2019, when they began working on the new College West Housing building on the corner of 40th and Walnut for the University of Pennsylvania. The new 13 story building, which is slated to be completed for the Fall 2021 semester, will house 450 beds for Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors. The residential building will also provide common areas for studying, living, seminar, and music practice rooms for the students. When Prime Sheet Metal, Inc. first began working on the project, they had up to 20 sheet metal workers hanging duct and installing hangers. Site Foreman, Tony Proseri, is pleased with the progress they have made over the last year and even more pleased with how they were able to stay consistent during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Ductwork in the new student dining room.



Tower stair, emergency air pressurization

Prime Sheet Metal, Inc. is contracted to the mechanical firm, A.T. Chadwick Company, while Intech Construction is the General Contractor for the project. Intech, like most General Contractors in Philadelphia have enforced strict protocol for COVID-19 to keep Prime Sheet Metal, Inc. and others safe.



Dryer duct bank of 17 units



Roof duct for eru1, supplying air to the tower for floors 3-13.



Outside view of the new College West Housing Building.

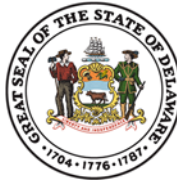
Election Recap

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whether a Biden administration will continue, reverse, or modify business-friendly regulations put in place by the Trump administration. Biden campaigned, in part, on creating “good union jobs” as part of a large-scale infrastructure plan so discussions on issues such as Project Labor Agreements, Worker Classification, and Labor Relations standards may intensify.

Delaware

Delaware did not see changes to its representation in Washington this election cycle, as both incumbent Democratic Senator Chris Coons and Democratic Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester won re-election by comfortable margins. Governor John Carney was also elected to a second term (and final) term of office by a wide margin.



The Delaware state legislature saw Democrats win 8 of 11 available seats in the State Senate. In a lightly contested race, Democrats also retained a majority in the state House of Representatives.

New Jersey

The results from New Jersey were largely uneventful, as Democratic Senator Cory Booker easily won re-election over Republican challenger Rikin Mehta. Neither party flipped a seat in the House of Representatives, with incumbents winning comfortably in all 12 districts.

Pennsylvania

Despite a hotly contested Presidential race, the Pennsylvania Congressional election was uneventful. In all 18 districts, the incumbent won re-election by a comfortable margin, ensuring that Pennsylvania’s mixed delegation to the House of Representatives will remain unchanged this year. Neither of Pennsylvania’s seats in the Senate were up for election this year, although it should be noted that Republican Senator Pat Toomey has announced that he will not seek re-election in 2022.

At the state level, Attorney General Josh Shapiro (D) was re-elected over Republican challenger Heather Heidelbaugh. Republican Timothy DeFoor was elected Pennsylvania Auditor General, defeating Democrat Nina Ahmad, Libertarian Jennifer Moore, and Green Party candidate Olivia Faison.

JATC Update

The Philadelphia Apprenticeship Training Center continues to stay busy during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that signatory contractors have the well-trained workforce they need to serve their customers and community. While the summer months saw case numbers level off enough to permit a return to in-person learning with social distancing and other safety measures in place, a fall surge of the virus necessitated a return to virtual learning for the apprentices. With the knowledge gained from early in the pandemic, the Training Center was able to quickly switch from the classroom to the cloud in order to balance the educational needs of apprentices with the need to keep apprentices and instructors healthy. This hybrid approach enables apprentices to mix work with their employer and Zoom classes together for a full day of on-the-job production and top-notch instruction. While we look forward to a return to the classroom full-time, the JATC continues to produce the very best sheet metal workers in the industry using the latest and greatest technology.



The JATC’s emphasis on technology in these unprecedented times is not limited to Zoom. In October, the Trustees approved the purchase of a Desktop Boom Truck Simulator for the Training Center. This includes state-of-the-art virtual reality technology and a simulator pod, allowing Philadelphia area apprentices and journeypersons the opportunity to train for and obtain crane certifications needed to operate the equipment used in skyscrapers, sign-making, and other high-profile projects in the area. Once trained and certified, Local 19 members will be able to operate machinery such as tower cranes, crawler cranes, and boom trucks on job sites. Good luck to all!

Have a story idea or a project you are proud of?
Contact SMCA at
610-828-4055 or email it to info@smca.org.



Spotlight:



Bush Sales Associates

As part of our ongoing mission to serve and inform the union sheet metal industry, SMCA stays in close contact with vendors and distributors who supply our contractors. These relationships led to the formation of the Supplier Liaison Council, which connects these industry representatives with contractors and fosters professional relationships. Each issue, we will take a closer look at one of these Supplier Council representatives.

What do you want SMCA Contractors, the engineering community and many other contacts to know about your company?

Bush services many facets of our industry. We are a stocking mechanical rep organization with a plan & spec division featuring two distribution warehouses. One is located in Philadelphia, PA and the other just outside of Harrisburg, PA. Our wholesale distribution centers provide convenient access to commercial HVAC products for the entire region with the option of next day delivery to your jobsite or shop.

What is your company's latest resource now available or available soon?

Bush is a hometown source for Local Union #19 and other Union Made products. We have always, and continue to stock Local 19 Yellow Labeled Spiral Pipe made locally in the City of Philadelphia. Bush also has a large stock of Local 19 Wage Equalized Gasketed Fittings for Spiral in both of our warehouses.

Is your company involved in supplying goods for an interesting project?

Yes! Bush is involved in many projects around the area. One of our larger projects is currently underway in State College, PA. The Penn State Animal, Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences Building is a 105,00 Square Foot state of the art teaching and research facility at the University Park Campus. It will take up to 20 tractor trailer deliveries to complete the Union Made spiral duct portion of this job! In addition, Bush is providing over 730 Tuttle & Bailey brand grilles, registers, and diffusers for this major project.

Who are the main contacts that you would want listed if you are selected for this feature?

Leigh Abraham, Director of Business Development—Labraham@Bushdistributors.com

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