

THE SPEC SHEET

SMCA
Quarterly



JUNE 2025 | VOLUME 6 ISSUE 4

THE SUMMER ISSUE

HONORING LEADERSHIP



Build Conference

CBA Negotiations

Annual Meeting

Community Notes

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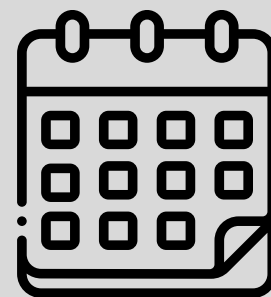
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Total Comfort Solutions, 215-671-8375, Philadelphia, PA
W. F. Smith, Inc., 215-624-1313, Philadelphia, PA
Wm. J. Donovan Co., Inc., 215-225-3677, Philadelphia, PA

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SCHEDULE OF **events**



June 20	SMCA BLOCK PARTY	SMCA Office
Oct 26-29	SMACNA ANNUAL CONVENTION	Maui, HI
Nov. 7	SMCA PRESENTS: THE ASSEMBLY (NEW EVENT)	Philadelphia, PA
Dec. 12	HOLIDAY PARTY @ FRANKLIN INSTITUTE (KIDS WELCOME)	Philadelphia, PA

FROM THE EXEC'S DESK



**“COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING IS ONE
OF SMCA’S MOST
IMPORTANT
RESPONSIBILITIES—
AND ONE WE TAKE
SERIOUSLY.”**

Every few years, the spring season becomes “negotiation season” for SMCA and Local 19 as the organizations meet to craft a new agreement that will guide the industry as it navigates the market and its customers’ needs. This was just such a year, and I am pleased that we have been able to reach an agreement with Local 19 for the Philadelphia and Delaware areas that will take us through 2028.

Collective Bargaining on behalf of its contractors is widely considered the most important duty SMCA performs, and it is a responsibility that we take seriously. The SMCA Negotiating Committee spent countless hours meeting with and listening to contractor concerns, building a working relationship with our labor counterparts, and gathering information from other areas about industry trends and issues to prepare for this negotiation season. On behalf of SMCA, I thank them for their hard work and dedication to the industry and congratulate them for crafting an agreement that has been ratified by both parties and will allow SMCA contractors and their Local 19 workforce to continue working on the many important projects in and coming to the area.

On another note, July marks a new year on the SMCA calendar for elected leaders and appointed committee members. SMCA thanks all who volunteered and served this past year for their willingness to be involved. We also congratulate and welcome those stepping up to serve this year – volunteerism is the heart of any successful association, and SMCA is incredibly appreciative of its Board of Directors and Committee members who lead the association in carrying out its mission.

Thank you everyone, and I wish you all a fun, safe, and relaxing summer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Jenkins". The script is fluid and cursive.

Executive Director

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



“YOUR ENGAGEMENT DRIVES OUR PROGRESS”

It is an honor to serve as your President during this transformative period for our industry. I'm grateful for the support of our Board and each of you as we navigate critical challenges and opportunities. Legislative advocacy remains a priority, as policies on workforce development and labor standards directly impact our competitiveness. Meanwhile, technologies like AI, Trimble, and advanced modeling are reshaping how we operate, and SMCA is committed to providing the insights you need to stay ahead.

Our partnerships with SMACNA and SMART at the national level strengthen our influence, ensuring our voice is heard from local projects to national policy discussions. Within SMCA, our committees are the core of member engagement—whether your focus is safety, education, or innovation, your participation shapes our future. We're also focused on recruiting more independent contractors to bolster our collective strength and identifying future leaders to guide SMCA forward. I encourage you to get involved—reach out or join a committee to share your perspective.

We've successfully reached a new Collective Bargaining Agreement that supports our contractors and advances our industry, fostering a constructive relationship with the union. The JATC is also making strides, with a new pre-apprentice classification and an upgraded Testing & Balancing lab to train the next generation. This is a time of change, and your engagement drives our progress. Thank you for your trust and commitment as we build a stronger future together.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Schutte". The signature is fluid and cursive.

President

INDUSTRY & MARKET PULSE



What We Learned at Build: The State of Construction in Philadelphia and the Road Ahead

At this year's Build Conference, labor leaders, developers, and policymakers gathered to discuss the future of construction in Pennsylvania. Despite shared concerns around market uncertainty, interest rates, and the impact of federal tariffs, one message came through clearly: Philadelphia's union-built future is still full of promise.

The Mood: Cautious, But Determined

Ben Connors, President of the General Building Contractors Association, opened with a sobering data point: 65% of union contractors surveyed in early 2025 say they are experiencing slowdowns—and expect them to worsen. But he emphasized this isn't about pessimism; it's realism. Interest rate hikes, tariffs, and a massive drop in building permits since 2019 have all converged to chill private investment. And new federal tariffs threaten to raise material costs further.

But there's a counterweight to the unease: opportunity. Connors pointed to the Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and large-scale housing initiatives as powerful, untapped resources—if union contractors can position themselves to access them.

Public Investment as the Path Forward

That positioning is already underway. CHOP's Donald Moore emphasized the regional scope of his organization's \$1.7 million square feet of current construction projects—and its intention to continue investing locally despite national uncertainty. “We are a regional economic force,” Moore said, underscoring the deep link between healthcare infrastructure and union labor.

A Bellwether District: 1,300 Acres of Possibility

For Andrew Chused of Hilco Redevelopment Partners, opportunity takes the form of land. Chused detailed the transformation of the former PES refinery into the Bellwether District—a 1,300-acre industrial innovation corridor with over 2 million cubic yards of remediation already completed and over 1 million square feet of new construction underway. His message? Philadelphia has the potential to be a hub for advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and green industry—if we continue to reinvest with purpose.



A New Housing Vision: HOME

Representing the Mayor's office, Concerti Harris outlined Philadelphia's most ambitious housing plan in decades: a \$2 billion initiative to build, restore, or preserve 30,000 housing units, branded HOME (Housing Opportunities Made Easy). With \$1 billion in public financing and another \$1 billion from city-owned land assets, the plan depends on deep collaboration with the building trades. “This is the largest investment in housing in our city's history,” said Harris. “And union labor is at the table.”

WHAT IT ALL MEANS FOR SMCA

- **Major Projects in Play:** Continued work at CHOP, new phases of the Bellwether District, and HOME housing developments represent billions in future work across public and private sectors.
- **Union Advantage:** As Connors noted, union construction continues to outperform nonunion builds on quality and safety. This track record positions union contractors to lead on large-scale projects.
- **Advocacy Matters:** The industry must push for reduced business taxes, streamlined permitting, and more robust enforcement of project labor agreements (PLAs) to stay competitive.
- **Long-Term Strategy:** Smart contractors will be preparing now to access federal infrastructure dollars expected to hit the region in force between 2027–2029.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY UPDATE: WHAT CONTRACTORS NEED TO KNOW

By Stan Kolbe & John Wanner

From Harrisburg to Capitol Hill, policy shifts are reshaping the construction landscape. Here are the most pressing updates SMCA members need to be aware of—and what they mean for your business.

WASHINGTON WATCH: TAX INCENTIVES, TARIFFS & REGULATORY REFORM

Contributor: Stan Kolbe, SMACNA Executive Director of Government & Political Affairs

SMACNA's federal advocacy work continues to secure wins for contractors, particularly in the areas of tax relief, clean energy investment, and regulatory clarity. Below is a snapshot of what's currently moving in D.C. and how it could impact your business.

1 SMACNA Endorses H.R. 1 Business Tax Package

SMACNA supports the passage of H.R. 1, which includes key tax provisions originally passed in the Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA) and now crucial to contractor stability and capital investment. Key highlights:

- 179D Commercial Energy-Efficiency Deductions
- 174 R&D Expensing
- 100% Bonus Depreciation for Equipment Investments
- 45Q Carbon Capture Credit
- Pass-Through Deduction & Flat Corporate Rate

2 Protecting Energy Tax Credits

SMACNA is urging Congress to extend critical energy tax credits supporting:

- Residential HVAC retrofits (25C, 45L)
- High-performance new homes

3 Canadian Tariff Repeal: A Win for the Supply Chain

Passage of S.J. Res. 37 removed tariffs on Canadian construction materials, helping to stabilize pricing across HVAC and sheet metal supply chains.

4 Legislative Priorities for 2025

- Change Order Reform – Push for fast, fair payment resolution on federal projects.
- 179D & R&D Incentive Permanence – Vital for business certainty.
- SALT Deduction & Health Insurance Tax Protections – Maintain deductions critical to contractors.
- SAFE Banking Act – Support responsible business banking in emerging sectors.
- Commercial-to-Residential Conversion Credits – Spur downtown revitalization.

"Tariff spikes will arrive now, while any potential tax relief for consumers, developers, and contractors remains months or years away. The pricing uncertainty is real—and it's already being felt."

—Stan Kolbe, SMACNA

STATE LEGAL LANDSCAPE

State Courts and Legislature Examining Statute of Repose

by John Wanner

Pennsylvania's Construction Statute of Repose has protected contractors, architects, and engineers from long-tail liability for nearly 50 years. But that protection may be shifting.

Under the current law, legal claims must be filed within 12 years of substantial project completion. Now, two cases pending before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court—and new proposed legislation—could fundamentally alter that rule.

Two Cases, Big Consequences:

- **Aloia v. Diamant Building Corp:**
 - Plaintiff argues that building code violations void the statute's protection under the "lawfully offered" clause.
 - Lower courts have rejected the claim, but it's now before the state's top court.
- **Clearfield County v. TranSystems Corp:**
 - County claims a missing beam in a 43-year-old project violates public interest protections.
 - If upheld, it could result in perpetual liability for contractors on public jobs.

Legislative Response: SB 399

To address the uncertainty, Senator Dan Laughlin (Erie County) introduced Senate Bill 399, which would:

- Define "lawfully" to mean licensed or authorized service providers
- Reduce repose period from 12 to 6 years

SMACNA of PA supports the bill and continues to advocate for contractor protections and clear legal standards.

Recommended Actions for Contractors:



- **Buy in Bulk:** When possible, lock in materials pricing early.
- **Explore Domestic Sources:** U.S. suppliers may offer more stable pricing.
- **Update Contracts:** Review escalation clauses, force majeure language, and change-of-law provisions.
- **Monitor Developments:** SMACNA and SMCA will continue to provide real-time updates on federal trade policies.

“If the courts or legislature weaken the statute of repose, contractors could face liability decades after a project is completed. That’s not just unfair—it’s unworkable.”

—John Wanner, Wanner Associates

Contributors:

Stan Kolbe is Executive Director of Government and Political Affairs at SMACNA.

John Wanner represents SMCA through Wanner Associates in Harrisburg, PA.

SPOTLIGHT: PROJECTS & PEOPLE

Luthe Sheet Metal – Tradition, Technology, and Trust in the Field



Founded in 1985, Luthe Sheet Metal, Inc. has earned a reputation for precision, reliability, and professionalism across the greater Philadelphia region. Under the leadership of Gary Luthe Sr., the company has grown steadily by embracing innovation while staying grounded in the values that built its foundation.

Now joined by his son Gary Luthe Jr., the company reflects a balance of generational experience and forward-thinking ambition. Together, they continue to invest in advanced technologies like BIM and automated fabrication—ensuring that Luthe Sheet Metal remains competitive on complex, fast-moving projects.

One of those projects is the ongoing transformation of 3535 Market Street, where entire floors are being gutted and rebuilt as modern medical office space.

Luthe is responsible for the full mechanical HVAC installation on each floor—an intensive, detail-driven effort requiring close coordination and precision execution.



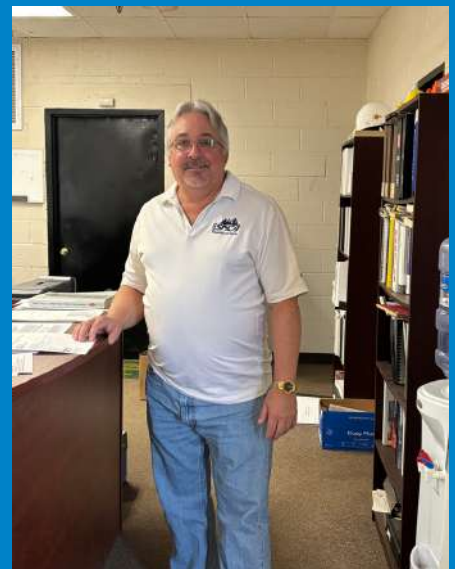


SMCA staff visited the site twice this spring, most recently during Safety Week in May, where the Luthe team led a mental health-focused Safety Huddle. Their commitment to safety—both physical and emotional—speaks volumes about the culture they’ve built.

A member of SMCA since 2003, Luthe Sheet Metal is also deeply engaged in industry advocacy and development. Gary Sr. currently serves as President of SMCA, helping guide the Association during a pivotal time for labor, technology, and market evolution.

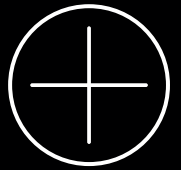
From legacy to leadership, and from fabrication floor to field, Luthe Sheet Metal stands as a model of craftsmanship rooted in care—for the work, the workforce, and the future of the trade.

Photo right: Greg Wharton of SMCA prepares to deliver a safety huddle to the Luthe crew at 3535 Market Street



Photos right to left: Gary on the jobsite and at his office building in Cherry Hill, NJ

COMMUNITY & CONNECTION



FROM ENGAGING WITH STATE LEGISLATORS AT PHILLIES SPRING TRAINING, TO THE NORTHEAST STATES CONFERENCE IN ARUBA, OUR CLAY SHOOTING OUTING AND ANNUAL MEETING, SPRING WAS A ROBUST TIME FOR THE SMCA COMMUNITY



SMCA CEO, PETE JENKINS JOINS MEMBERS, STAFFERS AND GUESTS FOR A MEAL DURING THE NORTHEAST STATES CONFERENCE IN ARUBA

NORTHEAST STATES



Gary Luthe, SMCA President and First Lady Lori Luthe of Luthe Sheet Metal



Kenneth Wurst and his wife, Karen



Nikki Hilger, Aaron Hilger (SMACNA CEO) with Annaliese Romain, and Dominic Bonitatis of Prime Sheet Metal



Trish Casey, Pete Jenkins, Shelby Kishel, and Greg Wharton of SMCA



Guests enjoying letting loose on the beach



Getting some work done

SMCA leadership joined federal lawmakers in Clearwater, FL, during Phillies Spring Training to discuss key industry priorities—from workforce and safety to tariffs and tax policy—while strengthening relationships that support union sheet metal contractors.



Congresswoman Debbie Dingell and SMCA President Gary Luthé of Luthe Sheet Metal



The group taking in a ball game



Jane Palmerick (wife of a contractor from New York), Annaliese Romain, and Pat Menold



Matt and Pam Sano of Fisher Balancing with Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon



SPORTING CLAY OUTING MAY 2, 2025

Thank You to our Lunch Sponsor



Thank You to our Station Sponsors



SMCA Board Member, Matt Sano of Fisher Balancing presents the finalist awards for top scores:



1st: Scott Harbison



2nd: John Epics



3rd: Brian Shire



4th: David Lemons



5th: Robert Atwell

SPORTING CLAYS OUTING



Rodger Menold, Ernie J. Menold, Elizabeth Schlax, Brian Shire, and Bob Atwell



John Espinos, Jim Cook, Jeff Schools, and Matt Sano



Glen Armstrong of Restaurant Ventilation Design



Ken Cappelli



Tim Curran, Earl Stalker, Ken C., and Pete Jenkins



The Restaurant Ventilation Design team

SMCA'S 106TH ANNUAL MEETING: HONORING THE PAST, LEADING THE FUTURE

SMCA members gathered at the Logan Inn in New Hope for the 106th Annual Meeting—an evening that celebrated leadership, service, and the future of our industry. Highlights included remarks from President Gary Luthe, the final presentation of the Mel Wind Awards, and the election of new officers and directors. The event brought together members, partners, and government officials, to reflect on recent achievements and reaffirm our collective commitment to excellence, innovation, and collaboration.



Aaron Hilger, SMACNA CEO and Dominic Bonitatis of Prime Sheet Metal



Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon



Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick



Jennifer Lohr of Fisher Balancing, Casey Mitchell and Pam Sano

SMCA ANNUAL MEETING: MEL WIND AWARDS



SMCA marked a historic moment at the 106th Annual Meeting with the final presentation of the Mel Wind Awards—our Association's highest honor for service and leadership. Established in 1981 to recognize the legacy of past president Melvin J. Wind, the award has celebrated decades of outstanding contributions to the union sheet metal industry. SMCA President Gary Luthe presented this year's honorees as we honored the past and prepared to introduce a new chapter of recognition aligned with the Association's evolving mission.



Recipients Robert Johnston, SSM Industries, Dominic Bonitatis, Prime Sheet Metal, and Kenneth Wurst, Air Concepts



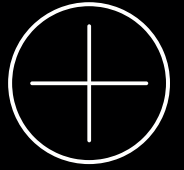
Recipient Kenneth Wurst celebrates with his wife, Karen



Recipient Dominic Bonitatis of Prime Sheet Metal celebrates with from left to right: Sean Lally, Rachel and Annaliese Romain, Gina Bonitatis, and Adam.

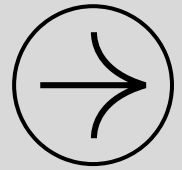


Recipient Bob Johnston celebrates with Lauren



EDGE OF THE TRADE: EDUCATION, WORKFORCE & SAFETY

education & OUTREACH



Turning Conversations into Contracts: Sales Strategy with Bob Langdon

SMCA welcomed nationally recognized sales strategist Bob Langdon to our Warminster headquarters on Tuesday, April 29, for a session titled "From Hello to Sold in Seven Steps." Known for his popular presentations at SMACNA events across the country, Langdon delivered a fast-paced, practical look at how contractors can sharpen their sales conversations.

He encouraged attendees to think critically about when to take a defensive or offensive approach to marketing and how to clearly define what sets them apart from the competition. "Price is always part of the decision," Langdon said, "but when a customer wants something, emotion pushes price down the ladder."

The session offered straightforward tools to connect with clients more effectively, build trust quickly, and close with confidence. SMCA is proud to support programming that helps members strengthen not only their craft—but their business.



Investing in the Next Generation: SMCA Awards 2025 Book Grants

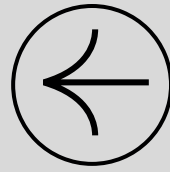
Each year, SMCA proudly supports the region's emerging talent through our \$1,000 book grants, awarded to students pursuing careers in engineering, construction, and related fields. This year's recipients reflect the promise and professionalism we're proud to encourage.

Joseph John Rizzuto, (pictured above with Greg Wharton) a recent graduate of Temple University, was recognized at the ASHRAE Philadelphia Student Awards Night on May 15. Joseph contributed to Temple's team entry in the 2025 ASHRAE Design Competition and has already launched his career at a construction firm in Scranton, PA.

Jeffrey Arra, our second recipient, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Engineering with a concentration in Mechanical Engineering at Widener University, where he's part of the Engineering Honors Program. A member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Jeffrey spent last summer interning with Atkins Réalis, where he assisted in the design of HVAC systems for corporate clients.

Congratulations to both of these deserving students.!

SMCA SAFETY & TRAINING UPDATES



Safety & Education: Mental Health Matters

By Greg Wharton, SMCA Safety & Education Director

Safety Week was a great opportunity for contractors to spotlight safety—whether in the shop or out on the jobsite. At several locations, we held stand-downs to focus not just on physical safety topics like heat illness and PPE, but also on mental health, especially since May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

Talking about mental health isn't easy—but it's necessary. The weight of the topic was felt, but what stood out was how engaged everyone was. Looking around the safety huddles, it was clear that the message resonated: mental health is just as critical as any other safety issue we face.

I closed each talk by reminding crews to show empathy toward their brothers and sisters on the job. You never know what someone else might be carrying. And while May gives us a reason to start the conversation, these discussions should continue all year long. From company presidents to first-year apprentices, everyone needs to know—it's okay to not be okay.

Photo: Greg Wharton (SMCA) leads a safety huddle with the Prime Sheet Metal crew at the Mark buildout in Univeristy City





Sheet Metal Contractors Association
955 Louis Drive
Warminster, PA



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SUMMER 2025 ISSUE