This issue of DCA News is being published at a surreal point in time in our nation’s history. Who would have thought that given today’s cutting-edge science and healthcare, we would be crippled by an unseen virus to an extent not seen in over 100 years? But here we are, during the COVID-19 pandemic, whose outcome has yet to be determined. We, at DCA, understand the toll it is taking on you, your loved ones, colleagues, employees, and friends. We have already lost loved ones due to the virus and pray for the health of everyone in the DCA family.

We were extremely fortunate to have completed our convention in Boca Raton when we did. This issue is a recap of the event, and a thank you to all who participated, donated, purchased and sponsored. Due to the generosity of all of you through the years, DCA is in a very healthy position financially. Membership is strong and steady, our budget is intact, and our investments, while severely dented, will bounce back. Unlike many associations who survive on the revenue from the annual meeting, DCA’s events are built to sustain themselves. So, I can’t say this enough, but THANK YOU all for your continued support of DCA through good times and times like these.

Obviously, this has affected all events since the convention. The Board of Directors will be meeting by conference call in early May to make some decisions about the upcoming Mid Year Meeting in Asheville, NC and the Fall Meeting in Seattle. The effect of the virus on the airline and hotel industry has been catastrophic, and that is bleeding over into decisions DCA and other groups are making regarding future events. The fallout of the recession is also a factor in our decision making. We ask for your patience as we navigate through these uncharted waters and check the DCA website (www.dca-web.org) for updates.

Finally, I want to remind you of the Lyons’ Grant, which was established to help those in urgent need. We have used this fund in the past to help families and individuals drastically affected by events like Hurricanes Sandy and Harvey. Just reach out to us at DCA and the grant committee will review the requests. In the meantime, please stay safe and healthy and we hope to see you at the next DCA event, whenever that may be. DCA truly is a family who are all here for each other, and will come out of this stronger and more resilient.

All the best,

Rob Darden
DCA EVP
CONTENTS

04  2020 Convention

09  DCA-Arthur T. Everham Safety Award

10  Committee News

13  Scholarship Recipients

14  Convention Photos

22  Insights

25  Mid Year Meeting

26  Member News
2020 Annual Convention in Boca Raton

With winter fading and the successful but rainy Fall Meeting in New York City in the rear-view mirror, DCA members were looking forward to the famous Florida weather at the 2020 DCA Convention, and they were not disappointed. An hour north of Miami, the grand, Spanish-style Boca Raton Resort and Club hosted this year’s convention February 24-29 with Cuban flair and abundant sunshine on the tropical Atlantic coast.

Tuesday, Feb. 25
Business opened Tuesday morning with the meeting of the Membership Committee. Woody Ferrell stood in for Dustin Mykyte of Pe Ben USA and Scott Cooper of Caterpillar presided. After covering 2019 attendance and auction statistics, the discussion turned to how to get more qualified applicants for DCA scholarship programs. Suggestions included targeting relevant degrees such as engineering and construction management. The committee noted that there were more than 100 first-time attendees at the 2020 convention, and concluded by having new members introduce themselves around the room.

The Business Session followed next, beginning with opening remarks from DCA Executive Vice President Rob Darden and outgoing President Mike Hickey of The Hallett Construction Co. The featured speaker for the morning was writer, businessman, and previous DCA speaker CPA Gene Marks. His presentation focused on what successful businesses who survive long term have in common. The short answer: they are all looking ahead, one, two, three or more years into the future. He highlighted four important trends that businesses should pay attention to and prepare for in order to thrive down the road:

1. Healthcare – The Affordable Care Act (ACA, “Obamacare”) is still the law, but changes from the Trump administration include “skinny” plans, association health plans, and healthcare reimbursement accounts. If Senators Warren and Sanders get their way, government healthcare could mean less insurance headaches for business owners. Executive orders can be easily overturned by the next administration. Business owners should maximize pre-tax healthcare plans and benefits, consider level benefit or hybrid plans, offer association plans as an option, and embrace technology such as telemedicine, wearables, and rewards programs.

2. Employment – Marks was speaking prior to the unforeseen COVID-19 shutdown when he noted three factors driving up compensation: the tight labor market, increasing state minimum wages, and new sick leave laws. Marks advised companies to leverage the SECURE Act and work opportunity and FMLA credits, get creative with paid time off (a high priority for millennials), and adopt more HR technologies and services to streamline operations.
3. **Recession** – A recession will happen sooner or later, so be prepared. Marks discussed a range of metrics he follows to keep tabs on the state of the economy, ranging from the NAHB Housing Market Index to Alan Greenspan’s men’s underwear index. He recommended following metrics that make sense to you and doing a monthly cash check to see if your business has six months of operating expenses on hand, and following historical photos on Shorpy.com to remember it could always be worse.

4. **Technology** – Keep an eye on how artificial intelligence is being used to enhance business capabilities, as well as trends in bots, ransomware, and security technology.

Marks kept the audience awake and alert with pop quizzes featuring offbeat questions and unusual trivia. His sage advice could not have been timelier, and it will be interesting to see how he looks back on current events the next time he visits the DCA.

Eben Wyman of Wyman Associates began the Government Relations Committee meeting with an update on the Pipeline Safety Reauthorization bill in Congress. Not much is likely to happen soon in the post-impeachment political environment (and the current health crisis), but three major issues the committee had with the bill have been somewhat mitigated so far. Holding up the bill are efforts by Democrats to address environmental issues regarding methane to what was intended as a safety bill, along with ongoing debate about criminal protest provisions and huge increases in civil penalties. The DCA is concerned that utilities will only pass along such fines to contractors, who will have no chance to defend themselves. Contract language may offer some defense, and one audience member who was a former state regulator pointed out that the state can also act as a mediator in such disputes.

At the state government level, professional engineer (PE) requirements for pipeline project sites are currently pending in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has limited options to regulate or improve state enforcement of damage prevention rules, but they are considering adding a two-year review and increased reporting, which operators and contractors actually seem to agree on. However, they may be leaning toward mandatory reporting, which would put a higher burden on the contractor. Audience members commented that contractors need to get a seat at the table on state boards and organizations to influence legislation.

The Government Relations Committee briefly addressed the growing problem of missed locations. Based on contractor reporting, this is caused more by cost than lack of resources or manpower. Attendees agreed that the committee should proceed with gathering more data to inform future action. The meeting wrapped up with an update on the soon-to-be-released OQIP website and an invitation to join the next D.C. fly-in.

The Safety/Risk Management Committee meeting featured three speakers. The first was Steve Allen, executive director of pipeline safety for ENERGY worldnet, Inc., speaking on pipeline safety management systems (SMS). He reviewed the DCA Pipeline Construction SMS Template, which was written with contractors in mind rather than operators, and recommended that contractors voluntarily adopt SMS within three years before it becomes mandatory. He also discussed case studies and encouraged contractors to reach out to operators and discuss SMS proactively, familiarize themselves with the DCA template, and perform their own safety culture evaluations.

The next two speakers, Adam Carr and Jake Clark, represented the convention’s “Salute to Service” theme for the week. Carr served as a Green Beret in Afghanistan after 9/11, and he described the mental toll it took on him after coming home from combat. He lost several comrades to suicide. In 2016, after struggling with suicidal feelings, Carr was contacted by Jake Clark of the Save a Warrior (SAW) foundation. Clark, a member of SEAL Team 6 who was third in the door on the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, described the appalling statistics on veteran suicide and his efforts to start SAW out of the trunk of his car in 2012. The organization is currently raising money to open its National Center of Excellence in Ohio, which

(continued on pg. 6)
could increase its treatment capacity from 300 annually to over 700.

By Tuesday evening it was time for the Touch of Cuba Welcome Reception and Dinner. At the outdoor reception on the west lawn, a Cuban band played amid Caribbean décor, and mint tea awaited guests at tables that surrounded a 1950s vintage Mercury Phaeton. DCA staff passed out proper Cuban fedoras to all the guests, and many dressed up for the occasion. Members mingled around the mojito bar and hand-rolled cigar station amid cocktail tables made from bongo drums as hostesses invited them to a game of dominoes.

Wednesday, Feb. 26
At Wednesday morning's breakfast, Rob Darden kicked off the DCA Salute to Service with recognition of veterans in the audience, a military choir singing the national and service anthems, and the pledge of allegiance. Vince King led the morning prayer, followed by the recognition of special guests and a video review of Mike Hickey’s year as “The Most Interesting DCA President of 2019.” The keynote speaker for the morning was former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who spoke on “How Geopolitical Events Will Affect Your Company’s Future – And What Every Company Must Know.” He recalled the political and economic scene of the late 1970s – malaise, doubt, and dwindling influence – and how Ronald Reagan turned things around in the 80s. He elaborated on the similarities between the 70s and 2008 and compared Reagan’s and Trump’s efforts to spur recovery. Giuliani also talked about his own work as mayor to put more money in people’s pockets through removing the “mafia tax” and continuing Ed Koch’s capital improvements program. Giuliani explained that he learned a great appreciation for underground infrastructure during the attempt to restore the stock exchange after 9/11, and after answering a variety of political questions from the audience, he finished with a heartwarming story about President Bush’s first visit to Ground Zero.

After breakfast, the Town Hall covered the treasurer’s report and upcoming DCA events before launching a discussion on DCA membership dues, which have not been raised since 2003. The session concluded with the presentation of the annual DCA safety awards.

New Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) executive director Missy Henrikson spoke at the Workforce Development Committee meeting on her organization’s work with the DCA to increase the visibility of the distribution industry. From there, the meeting turned to the ongoing topic of developing skills competitions to expose students to the industry, along with an appeal for task force volunteers for the fall workforce summit.

After a busy afternoon of tours and activities, members began filling up the convention hall for the buffet and the DCA Annual Auction. Bidders cruised the silent auction tables and mingled at the bar as a live feed of the bidding played on TV screens nearby. Over $60,000 had already been bid on the silent auction before auctioneer Logan Thomas opened the live event.

Thursday, Feb. 27
At the next morning’s group breakfast, Rob Darden announced that the live and silent auctions had raised a combined total of over $1 million. Morning ceremonies began with the induction of Chris Brahler of T T Technologies as a DCA Honorary Member. Fellow honorary member Ollie Klinger queued up a photo montage highlighting Brahler’s finer qualities and accomplishments before introducing the man himself for a brief address. Next the DCA-Labor Management Cooperation Trust presented a $50,000 donation to Helmets to Hardhats, an organization dedicated to
helping veterans find work in the construction industry. America’s Got Talent finalists, Voices of Service, a singing group of active and former service members, took the stage next and wowed the crowd with their golden voices while telling their personal stories, even getting the audience to sing along with the Isley Brothers’ “Shout.”

DCA members were also treated to a sneak peek of Six Degrees, a new TV series being developed by Mike Rowe. Everyone was greatly surprised when Rowe himself appeared on stage to talk about the show. He described Six Degrees as “a history show for people who hate history.” Rowe wants to make a persuasive case for how Hollywood and the energy industry can do a better job of helping each other, noting that “we resent that which we come to rely upon” to explain Hollywood’s hostility toward the energy industry. He also hinted that his hit show Dirty Jobs might be making a comeback soon.

The HDD Committee meeting began with recognition of the DCA panelists who presented at the recent Underground Construction Technology (UCT) conference in Fort Worth. The panelists presented on industry regulations and new mud machines being developed, and reportedly had great discussion and interaction with fiber and other professionals at the conference. Cory Lee of Vermeer MV Solutions then took the podium to talk about XR2 hydrotrenching technology. As demand for “soft” excavation rises, Vermeer MV Solutions saw that existing large truck vacuum excavators were often too heavy to be road legal and there were fewer available disposal sites, so they developed XR2 to be more compact and enable on-site disposal by separating solids from liquids. Vermeer MV Solutions expected to launch XR2 commercially in early 2020.

Next, Blaine Easter of Ditch Witch and Randy Rupp of Subsite/Hammerhead presented an update on the state of the HDD industry. They noted that market share by category remained good, but growth has been relatively flat over the last four years. They reviewed difficult industry points, customer needs and offered guidance on labor force issues, training and productivity, utility strikes and cross bores, inadvertent returns, and data management. Finally, Dave Wisniewski of Vermeer Corp. requested volunteers for upcoming panels who have a good collaborative relationship with utilities for risk management. The rest of the day was reserved for the DCA Golf Tournament and activities ranging from museum tours to kayaking.

Friday, Feb. 28

On Friday morning, the golf tournament winners were announced, followed by the winners of 2020-21 DCA-Dale R. Michels and Curtis H. Allen Scholarships. The featured speaker for the day was Fox News contributor Chris Stirewalt, who sought to add some historical perspective to American politics. He pointed out that most millennials, who were born after 1980, have bad memories of American history during their lifetime—political division, culture wars, recession, terrorism, and disaster. In the 1800s, Alexis de Tocqueville saw something special in American culture that allowed our revolution to succeed where the French Revolution failed, but today Stirewalt says we suffer from “cultural Type 2 diabetes” – we’ve grown rich and lazy and failed to take care of our unique legacy. Referencing C.S. Lewis, he pointed out how Russia and China have order but no freedom, while Somalia has freedom but no order. The United States is the safest, best place to live in history, but he believes our politicians don’t say so because their only purpose is to keep us angry and afraid and make us take a side. Stirewalt described 2016 as the “Flight 93 election” because both sides acted as if it was better to crash than to let the other side win. He observed that Tocqueville believed Americans were free because we were fundamentally good – we take care of each other. Stirewalt urged the audience to demand more civics and history education, to “give young people the manual on how this country should work.” After answering some thoughtful and pointed questions from the audience, Stirewalt left them with his final and most
important takeaway: we are not enemies.

The final evening of the convention featured the President’s Reception and Dinner. This year’s theme was “USO Through the Decades,” and patriotism was on tap. Red, white, and blue décor accompanied a 40s-style big band playing Stars and Stripes Forever while guests congregated at the army canteen bar or took pictures in front of the WWII airfield backdrop featuring a giant B-17 Flying Fortress. Guests came dressed in military garb both vintage and modern from every branch, including Mike Hickey’s mother as a WWII air raid warden, but the real fun was “celebrity” spotting. The lively crowd sported garb mimicking such luminaries as Willie Nelson, Kid Rock, John Wayne, Phyllis Diller, Groucho and Harpo Marx, Johnny Bench, Captain America, Miss America, Rosie the Riveter, Uncle Sam, Rick Springfield and “Jessie’s Girl,” and, of course, Marilyn Monroe. “Bob Hope” took the stage with “Marilyn” to tell a few jokes and introduce Mike Hickey, who thanked everyone for his time as DCA President and offered a lesson from his parents: “Whatever you do, be happy.”

Incoming president and self-proclaimed “Jungle Cruise boat captain” for 2020 Ben Nelson of Michels Pacific Energy was up next to introduce his theme for the next year: “Who do you want to represent your company here in 20 years?” After a performance by the talented Swing Sisters, “Marilyn Monroe” sang a special happy birthday serenade to “Mr. President” Ben Nelson and actual birthday boy little Mikey Hickey. Dave Wisniewski then reflected on the impact of powerful words and the sacrifice of our service members as he read the Preamble to the Constitution.

While the Swing Sisters took the spotlight again, the band changed from WWII khakis to camo fatigues and from 40s swing to rock ‘n roll as dessert hit the tables and dancers hit the floor. The hits kept coming as DCA members partied the night away as if the war was over.

The DCA will meet next in Asheville, North Carolina, July 15-18, for the Mid Year Meeting at the Omni Grove Park Inn if conditions under the current health crisis allow.

2019 DCA Arthur T. Everham Safety Award

Safety excellence was recognized at the DCA Annual Convention, February 24-29, 2020 at the Boca Raton Resort & Club, Boca Raton, Florida, where companies were rewarded for the effectiveness of their safety programs. The DCA established the Arthur T. Everham Safety Award in 1986 to recognize contractors with exceptional safety programs. Judging criteria includes: the number of OSHA lost workday cases, number of OSHA restricted duty days, number of first-aid cases, number of fatalities, the presence of a documented safety program, the use of a drug-testing program, and the company’s Experience Modification Rate.

The award is highly coveted as recipients are recognized and honored by competitors. For 2019, the categories awarded are:

Under 199,000 Hour Category:
• First Place – NuLine Utility Services LLC, Belle Chasse, LA
• Second Place – (a tie)
  • The HDD Company Inc., El Dorado Hills, CA
  • Mid America Energy Services, Aurora, IL

200,000 hours to 599,000 hours:
• First Place – Hanging H Companies, Burlington, WA
• Second Place – United Piping Inc., Duluth, MN

600,000 Hours to 1.5 Million hours:
• First Place – Hypower Inc., Fort Lauderdale, FL
• Second Place – (a tie)
  • AGI Construction Inc., Smithfield, RI
  • Mersino Dewatering Inc., Davison, MI

Over 1.2 Million Hours:
• First Place – ARB Inc., Lake Forest, CA
• Second Place – Snelson Companies Inc., Sedro Woolley, WA

2020 DCA Board of Directors
President - Ben Nelson, Michels Energy Pacific Inc.; Vice President - Ray Swerdfeger, K. R. Swerdfeger Construction Inc.; Treasurer - Kevin Parker, Mears Group, Inc.; Immediate Past President - Mike Hickey, The Hallen Construction Co. Inc.; Executive Vice President - Rob Darden, Distribution Contractors Association; Past President Director - Shepard Poole, The Hallen Construction Co. Inc.; Director at Large - Doug Reeves, Q3 Contracting Inc.; Director - Mark Albert, AGI Construction Inc.; Director - Doug Anderson, Miller Pipeline; Director - Daniel Carson, Carson Corporation; Director - Steve Dockendorf, NPL Construction Co.; Director - Jeff Green, InfraSource LLC; Director - Jim Lagios, Atlas Trenchless LLC; Director - AM Director (Senior) - Woody Ferrell, Cross Country Infrastructure; AM Director (Junior) – Scott Cooper, Caterpillar Inc.
2019 Board of Directors
The 2019 DCA Board of Directors held their last meeting on Monday, Feb. 24, at the Boca Raton Resort & Club in Boca Raton, Florida. They:
- Reviewed the 2020 convention schedule, convention sponsorship, the auction and the safety award recipients.
- Approved the 2022 Mid Year Meeting to be held at July 18-21 at the Coeur d’Alene Resort in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.
- Reviewed the results of the 2019 Impact Purchasing survey that will be published in the 2019 DCA annual report, Benchmarks. The board noted that 51% of the DCA contractors completed the study, a slight drop from 2018.

Outgoing board members Jay Osborn, Primoris Services Corp, Little Canada, Minnesota; Dave Nelson, Michels Corp., Kirkland, Washington; and Vince King, McElroy Manufacturing, Tulsa, Oklahoma, were thanked for their time and contributions.

Leadership Council
The Leadership Council also met Monday, Feb. 24. The council reviewed actions of the DCA Board of Directors from their earlier meeting. Each DCA working committee chair gave a brief outline of the topics the committee would discuss in its individual meeting.

The Leadership Council is comprised of the elected chairs and vice chairs of each of the committees, the president and vice president of the board, and the executive vice president. The purpose of the Leadership Council is to coordinate the strategic direction of the DCA as directed by the Board of Directors.

Membership Committee
The Feb. 25 Membership Committee meeting focused on reviewing and discussing the 2019 accomplishments and 2020 goals as they relate to the membership committee charter. The committee reviewed the list of inactive contractors, which was shorter than at the July meeting. The committee also noted that several inactive members were attending the convention.

Attendees reviewed the membership report presented to the DCA Board of Directors. Since the October Board of Directors meeting, two new contractor members and
eight new associate members have joined DCA. Two contractor members and two associate members have dropped their memberships. Membership totals show 94 contractor members and 145 associate members. Members of the committee were encouraged to welcome the 100 first-time attendee members and other guests to the convention and the association.

The committee also reviewed the results of the 2019 DCA Impact Purchasing survey that will be published in the DCA annual report Benchmarks.

The charge of the Membership Committee is to actively solicit and evaluate potential DCA members and make recommendations on member programs and awards to help recruit and retain members in the association. Dustin Mykyte of Pe Ben USA, Houston, and Scott Cooper of Caterpillar, Sanford, North Carolina, serve as co-chairmen.

Safety/Risk Management Committee
At the Safety/Risk Management Committee meeting Feb. 25, attendees were treated to presentations by Steve Allen of ENERGY worldnet (EWN) and representatives from Save a Warrior™.

Allen, who is EWN Executive Director, Pipeline Safety, gave committee attendees an update on safety management systems (SMS). EWN, located in Decatur, Texas, strives to lead the industry in Operator Qualification (OQ), compliance management, and workforce development.

Adam Carr and Jake Clark, representing Save a Warrior, presented on psychological safety. Save A Warrior is committed to ending the staggering suicide rate plaguing veterans, active-duty military and first responders. The organization conceives, originates, and produces Integrated Intensive Retreat program experiences to transform the way military heroes live their lives.

Committee members discussed the revised category distribution for the Arthur T. Everham Safety Award. A record 52 contractors completed questionnaires for the 2019 award. See page 9 for the list of 2019 Everham Safety Award recipients.

The committee also reviewed plans for the 2020 DCA Safety Congress, which has been cancelled due to COVID-19 and rescheduled for March 29-31, 2021, in Austin, Texas. The 2020 event co-chairs, Ken Crook, ARB, and Caleb Scheve, Price Gregory will again chair the rescheduled Congress. The 2019 Safety Director and Person of the Year awards will be mailed to the winners' organizations and announced in the May/June edition of the DCA News.

The charge of the Safety/Risk Management Committee is to review all information concerning safety in the industry and safe job-site practices. The committee also has oversight for the Arthur T. Everham Safety Award and the Annual Safety Congress. Bill Colson of Pretec Directional Drilling, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and Dana Heieie of Southeast Directional Drilling, Casa Grande, Arizona, serve as committee co-chairmen.

Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Committee
Attendees of the Feb. 27 HDD meeting reviewed the committee’s 2019 achievements and 2020 goals and received updates on several discussion points from the October 2019 meeting.

Jon Heinen of Right Turn Supply gave an update on the UCT panel discussion held this past January in Ft. Worth. The panel gave a presentation on the new mud machines being developed and the different industry regulations. Participating on the panel were: Randy Bunch, Aaron Enterprises; Bill Colson, Pretec Directional Drilling; Jim Lagios, Atlas Trenchless; and John Tully, NPL Construction. Heinen served as moderator.

Cory Lee, Director of Marketing & Global Accounts for Vermeer MV Solutions, gave a presentation on vacuum excavator innovations. Blaine Easter, Global Account Manager, Ditch Witch, and Randy Rupp, General Manager, Subsite/HammerHead, provided a DCA HDD update that focused on customer needs, industry issues, HDD guidance, and other relevant topics.

The charge of the HDD committee is to support safety, training, technical developments, and voluntary operational guides that sustain professional practices and contractors in HDD. The co-chairmen of the committee are Jeff Green of InfraSource, Lenexa, Kansas, and Randy Peterson of Wy-Ben, Billings, Montana.

Government Relations Committee
The Government Relations Committee reviewed the status of several ongoing items, including:

• **Pending Pipeline Safety Reauthorization** – Pipeline safety legislation remains a priority this year, although some sensitive issues continue to obstruct passage, such as demands by some Democrats to include methane mitigation language in the pipeline safety bill, which is a non-starter for most Republicans. Significant increases in civil penalties for infractions is another high-profile issue that has been hard to resolve.

• **Status of One-Call Enforcement Issues** – The committee provided an update regarding inadequate enforcement of state damage prevention law in some high-profile cases that include: Consumers Energy for late responses and CenturyLink for infractions related to unanswered locate tickets.

• **Pipeline SMS Template** – The SMS template has been reviewed by several operator associations and other organizations and has received positive feedback. Recently the INGAA Foundation has expressed interest in the template. Kevin Parker is the Vice Chair of the INGAA Foundation’s H&S Committee and will get that

(continued on pg.12)
group’s feedback on the template. PLCA continues to review it but has not signed on yet. At some point we will roll out the template with a press release and provide it to PHMSA, NAPSR, and industry organizations. Once rolled out, the DCA Safety/Risk Management committee will work to assist contractors implement the SMS in their operations.

- **OQ Integrity Process (OQIP)** – The OQIP has launched a pilot project taking place in New Mexico with more planned for Michigan and Washington State later this year, pending current conditions.

- **2020 DCA & AGA Workshop** – The committee presented a preliminary schedule for the 2020 DCA & AGA Workshop, which was scheduled for April 22-24 at the Ritz Carlton in Chicago. The event has been rescheduled for April 5 – 7, 2021 due to the COVID-19.

For more in-depth information on these topics, please see the DCA Insights section of this newsletter beginning on page 22.

The charge of the Government Relations Committee is to target specific regulatory and legislative items and report their findings through the following publications: DCA Insights, DCA News, and the DCA website. The co-chairmen of the committee are Mark Albert of AGI Construction, Smithfield, Rhode Island, and John Lamerton of Wyo-Ben, Billings, Montana.

### Workforce Development Committee

The Workforce Development Committee met Wednesday, Feb. 26. Attendees reviewed the 2019 accomplishments and 2020 goals for the committee.

- **Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD)** – Executive Director Missy Henriksen discussed how CEWD is changing and growing in the efforts to get tools and resources to their membership in recruiting potential employees. To attract smaller contractor companies to join CEWD, the organization has restructured and lowered their dues in certain categories. She encouraged DCA companies to consider joining CEWD to take advantage of the workforce development tools being offered.

- **SkillsUSA Workforce Development Task Force** – The committee chairmen announced the formation of a Workforce Development Task Force to be headed by Pete Fojtik of Michels Corp. and Dave Wisniewski of Vermeer Corp. The purpose of the task force is to assist in creating SkillsUSA teams to compete at one to two events at state levels. The task force will also work to create an easy-to-understand DCA brand so that students know what underground construction is. This year’s SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference, scheduled for June has been cancelled.

- **Fall 2020 Workforce Summit** – The committee announced that another Workforce Summit is being planned in conjunction with the CEWD Annual Meeting in November 2020 in Arlington, VA. More details will be announced in a couple of months.

The charge of the Workforce Development Committee is to develop, coordinate, and implement a strategy that supports the growth of the resources needed through promotion of our industry as a career using the vast knowledge and leadership the DCA members have to offer. The committee is also responsible for coordination with other industry professionals and national organizations. Vivek Arora of Mears Group, Houston, and Randy Rupp of Subsite/HammerHead, Perry, Oklahoma, are the vice chairmen of the committee.

### 2020 Board of Directors

The 2020 DCA Board of Directors had their first meeting as a board Friday, Feb. 28. President Ben Nelson welcomed new board members Director at Large Doug Reeves, Q3 Contracting, Little Canada, Minnesota, and Junior Associate Member Director Scott Cooper of Caterpillar, Sanford, North Carolina.

Board members received updates on and discussed the 2020 DCA budget, the dues increase which will take effect in 2021, the 2020 calendar of events, improvements to the DCA convention and committee meeting structures, and how sub-committees can report to the board. The directors also discussed their 2020 goals and objectives of getting more under-40 year-old company employees involved with DCA.

The next Board of Directors, Leadership Council, and working committee meetings will be held in conjunction with the DCA Mid Year Meeting, July 15-18, at the Omni Grove Park Inn, Asheville, North Carolina, if conditions under the current health crisis allow. ▲

If you are interested in becoming an active member of any of the working committees, please contact the DCA office.
The committee is pleased to announce that nine college students have been selected as recipients of this year’s DCA-Dale R. Michels Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship was founded in 1998 in memory of DCA Honorary Member and Past President Dale R. Michels, and is funded by proceeds of the DCA Annual Auction.

Thanks to members’ generous support of the DCA auctions, $103,000 in scholarship funds has been awarded to this year’s recipients.

The recipients for the 2020-21 academic year are:
• Nikolas Giese, Michels Corporation - $10,000
• Allen Love, H.L. Chapman Pipeline Construction Inc. - $4,800
• Ilaya Martinez, ARB Inc. - $10,000
• Nathan Nickles, Miller Pipeline - $10,000

Three students were selected at the DCA Convention as recipients of the DCA-Curtis Allen Scholarship. The scholarship was founded in 2010 in honor of the late Curtis Allen, and it benefits students entering a vocational, trade, or technical school. The scholarship receives funding from the DCA auctions and Halliburton.

The recipients for the 2020-21 academic year are:
• Sebastion Jeffers, Otis Eastern Service LLC - $10,000
• Matthew Timm, Gabe’s Construction Inc. - $11,000
• Kyle Tipsword, KS Energy Services LLC - $11,000

Members of the 2020 DCA-Dale R. Michels Scholarship committee included: DCA President Mike Hickey, The Hallen Construction Co. Inc.; DCA Treasurer Ray Sوردfege, K.R. Sوردfege Construction Inc.; Past President Director Dave Nelson, Michels Corp.; Associate Member Director Vince King, McElroy Manufacturing Inc.; Todd Barton, Southeast Directional Drilling; Andrew Christopher, John Deere Construction & Forestry Division; Kerry Karvas, Price Gregory; Sarah Mahlik, T T Technologies Inc.; and Rob Tumbleson, ECI Contracting. Kevin Michels and Ruth Michels of Michels Corporation sit permanently on the committee.

Members of the 2020 DCA-Curtis Allen included: DCA Vice President Ben Nelson, Michels Energy Pacific Inc.; DCA Director at Large Mark Albert, AGI Construction; DCA Associate Member Director Woody Ferrell, Cross Country Infrastructure; and Mike Mullins of InfraSource LLC. Halliburton Representatives Chris Bower of Bentonite Performance Minerals and Clint Pitman of Drilling Mud Direct sit permanently on the committee. ▲
DCA Ensures Gas Distribution Construction is Essential
As the coronavirus pandemic continues, a wide range of industries are making their case to demonstrate that their work is essential, and DCA is doing its part to keep their members on the job. The federal response to the coronavirus is ongoing, things are moving very fast, and to say things are ‘fluid’ would be a big understatement. The following information is as of April 23rd, when a fourth stimulus bill to provide resources to hospitals, small businesses, and necessary tools for COVID-19 testing had just been approved by both the Senate and House of Representatives.

On March 19th, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released an initial list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers,” intended to help State and local officials decide which industry sectors should continue normal operations during this crisis. Sixteen industry sectors, including energy and specifically, natural gas workers and those engaged in “critical manufacturing.”

CISA provided the below graphic and invited public comment on the initial list of essential workers.

On March 21st, DCA sent a letter to CISA encouraging them to include the gas distribution construction industry on this list. DCA informed CISA that association members provide the manpower, equipment, and expertise to build and repair natural gas distribution and transmission pipelines, underground storage facilities, horizontal directional drilling operations, and other critical construction services.

DCA collaborated with contractor associations in other excavation markets, signing on another letter to CISA on March 23rd, where four groups described essential services in the natural gas, crude oil, broadband and electric power and water and sewer construction industries. The letter concluded with saying the “vast majority of this construction is contracted out, and ensuring the viability of the builders of this infrastructure must be considered “essential” as America responds to this pandemic.”

On March 28th, CISA issued “Version 2” of the guidance document, which included the following job functions that CISA considers essential.
• Workers who support onshore and offshore drilling operations, platform and drilling construction and maintenance; transportation (including helicopter operations); maritime transportation, supply, and dredging operations; maritime navigation; natural gas and natural gas liquid production, processing, extraction, storage and transportation; well intervention, monitoring, automation and control; waste disposal, and maintenance, construction, and operations.
• Transmission and distribution pipeline workers, including compressor stations and any other required, operations maintenance, construction, and support for natural gas, natural gas liquid, propane, and other liquid fuels.
• Natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, and other liquid fuel processing plants, including construction, maintenance, and support operations.
• Supporting new and existing construction projects, including, but not limited to, pipeline construction.
• Workers necessary for the… supply chains associated with transportation, energy, communications, information technology (and) workers needed to maintain the continuity of these manufacturing functions and associated supply chains, and workers necessary to maintain a manufacturing operation in warm standby;
• Workers supporting the energy sector, regardless of the energy source (including but not limited to nuclear, fossil, hydroelectric, or renewable), segment of the system, or infrastructure the worker is involved in, or who are needed to monitor, operate, engineer, and maintain the reliability, safety, environmental health, and physical and cyber security of the energy system;
• Providing services related to energy sector fuels (including, but not limited to, petroleum, natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, other liquid fuels, nuclear, and coal), supporting the mining, processing, manufacturing, construction, logistics, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance, security, waste disposal and storage, and monitoring of support for resources; and
• Manufacturing and distribution of equipment, supplies, and parts necessary to maintain production, maintenance, restoration, and service at energy sector facilities (across all energy sector segments).

On April 17th, CISA released Version 3.0 of the Guidance, which clarified and expanded critical infrastructure workers in several categories and provided additional information for consideration of both government and business. In a major improvement throughout the Guidance, CISA stated that in all worker categories, references to “employees” or “contractors” were changed to “workers.” This is important because now essential workers are essential regardless of whether they are “in-house” or contract personnel.

While state regulations regarding essential services vary, DCA has pushed all government entities to recognize that gas distribution construction is essential to the American public as we face this pandemic, and we’ll continue to do so.

Stimulus Bills Offer Opportunities and Challenges
To its credit, Congress has passed three stimulus bills to address the national emergency and mitigate the damage so far. Recognizing that it was premature to move into economic recovery, Congress is looking to continue to mitigate current challenges by providing more resources to small businesses across the country.

The following is a description of measures taken place so far and where we might go in the coming weeks and months.

Funding for Medical Supplies, Telehealth and Small Business
In early March, Congress passed the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, which authorized some $8.3 in funding to stockpile medical supplies and purchase tests, vaccines and therapies. The Act also unlocked $7 billion in low-interest loans to small businesses affected by COVID-19, administered through the Small Business Administration.

“Families First” Bill Requires Paid Family and Sick Leave
Just under two weeks after the first stimulus bill was enacted, Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which required private sector employers with fewer than 500 workers and all government entities will have to provide as many as 12 weeks of job-protected leave for employees who are unable to work or telework because they have to care for a child younger than 18 whose school or daycare has are unable to work or telework with immediate paid sick time off to:
• Comply with quarantine or isolation order;
• Self-quarantine per doctor’s orders or advice from other health-care providers;

(continued on pg. 24)
• Get tested for COVID-19; or
• Care for an somebody in quarantine or for a child whose school or day care has closed due to the coronavirus.

Employers cannot require a worker to use other available paid leave before using sick time or find a replacement to cover their work during sick leave. These provisions are in place but will not be enforced until April 18th.

CARES Act Expands Unemployment and Provides Loans to Small Business

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act provided $350 billion in loans to small business, expanded unemployment benefits, and scheduled direct payments to American taxpayers /assistance to companies and state and local governments. CARES also created a temporary “pandemic unemployment assistance” program for independent contractors, freelance and other “gig economy” workers and others who are not normally eligible for unemployment. This is really considered a lifeline for independent/freelance workers who we’re seeing more and more of.

Importantly, the CARES Act offers just about $350 billion in low-interest small business loans that could be partially or even fully forgiven if idled workers on the payroll for the duration of this pandemic, and as long as they:
• were shut down or partially suspended because of order from a government authority, or:
• can show a 50% loss compared to the same quarter in the previous year; and
• Tax refund for half of what is spent on wages, up to $5,000/employee.

There was a reluctance to dive into a “Phase 4” stimulus package, as some lawmakers believed that unemployment checks were not getting out the door quickly enough, and that unemployment checks in some cases were providing more money than salaries.

That reluctance lasted about a week. It wasn’t long before virtually all of the PPP loan dollars ran dry, and a fourth stimulus package was in the works. Despite the fact that large corporations were able to secure stimulus dollars provided in the CARES Act, Congress moved quickly to throw another $320 billion into the PPP, and $60 billion for separate disaster loans to small businesses. While some modifications were made to support loans issued by smaller lenders, Congress did not change the eligibility rules for businesses to receive PPP loans.

The $484 billion measure, which also included $75 billion in emergency aid to hospitals and $25 billion for COVID-19 testing, was approved by the Senate on April 21st. Two days later, the House passed the bill without amendment on a 388-5 vote.

As Congress evaluates alternatives moving forward, the focus has changed from a broad infrastructure package to additional direct payments to Americans, extended unemployment insurance, and more funding for the PPP. There is already talk about “doing more.” Be assured, DCA will continue to push to ensure that government entities recognize the essential nature of the gas distribution construction industry. ▲
The DCA will meet next in Asheville, North Carolina, July 15-18, for the Mid Year Meeting at the Omni Grove Park Inn if conditions under the current health crisis allow.
New Safety Product Launch from Right Turn Supply
Right Turn Supply was approached by a few customers asking if they could help with today’s safety challenge for essential workers. Their response is Atomic Wash for pre/post service cleaning, pre equipment delivery cleaning, rig shift changes, rental returns and retail sales to customers.
Atomic Wash is a liquid blend of disinfectants, detergents, and degreasers for an effective and complete cleaning on all surfaces; metal, plastic, even cloth. Developed to deodorize and sanitize to combat a broad spectrum of germs and viruses. This all-in-one formula kills 99.9% of germs when used as directed. Atomic Wash is safe to use on all indoor and outdoor surfaces to eliminate highly infectious human and non-human pathogens. Currently two equivalent components in Atomic Wash are listed by the EPA as disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease COVID-19.

The active ingredients in Atomic Wash are the same active ingredients as the quaternary ammonium compounds found in products listed on the EPA “List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.”
https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

John Deere Team Produces Face Shields For Healthcare Workers.
A team of production workers at John Deere, including UAW members like Jerry Miller Jr., sees their current work assembling protective face shields for medical professionals as potentially the difference between life and death.
“To me, it’s my patriotic duty to help out our country, especially those on the front lines,” said Miller, a 22-year veteran of John Deere. “I don’t want someone to lose a spouse, a partner, a child or a parent… I’ll do anything in my power to make sure that doesn’t happen.”
Production employees at the Moline Seeding Group factory initially aimed to produce 25,000 face shields to meet the immediate needs of health care workers in several of Deere’s U.S. manufacturing communities. That initial goal has grown significantly. Materials and supplies are on order to produce an additional 200,000 face shields.

Inside the factory, which produces planting equipment, an area dedicated to face shield assembly is buzzing with activity. A series of tables is set up across the factory floor, each a workstation for an individual employee to assemble face shields. The wide distance between the workstations reflects Deere’s robust safety measures to help protect employees across the company from the spread of COVID-19.
Greg Kaiser, a UAW assembler who typically works in the factory’s row unit assembly department but now assembles face shields, said an acquaintance is now hos-
hospitalized with COVID-19, which has made Kaiser’s work all the more meaningful.

“It makes you feel like we’re banding together to help the frontline people to stay protected and fight this for our communities,” he said.

The power of collaboration

Moline Seeding Group factory manager Brad Russmann credits a massive collaborative effort — from procuring supplies to setting up a production process — with getting the face shield project quickly off the ground.

“We’ve had people both inside the factory as well as outside the factory,” he said. “We were able to engage both our UAW and IAM workforce to come up with creative, innovative solutions to how we were going to put these together.

Russmann said the team received ideas and input from multiple experts across the company, but credits Seeding Moline’s team for getting the project up and running. “The factory floor collaboration between production and salaried employees has helped us ensure the best possible product,” Russmann added.

Deere is collaborating with the UAW, International Association of Machinists, Iowa Department of Homeland Security, and the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association on the face shield project, joining a number of other organizations to produce protective equipment in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Managers at 17 U.S. Deere factories in eight states will oversee face shield distribution. The initial run will help meet the immediate needs of health-care workers in those communities.

Dubuque, Iowa, is one community that will receive the face shields. When Mark Dickson, factory manager at John Deere Dubuque Works, told a local hospital director Deere would donate 1,000 protective face shields, something became very clear: The desperate need to protect medical professional on the front lines has hit the heartland.

“There’s a huge need,” said Afzal Erik Abdullah, a vascular surgeon who helped Deere test prototypes of the face shield. “We’re all at risk, and some specialties are more at risk. So all of us are looking for extra PPE [Personal Protective Equipment]. If a [PPE item] runs out or breaks down, we have it readily available.”

The blueprint for the Deere-produced face shield came from an open source design created by the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Abdullah asked a colleague, an anesthesiologist, to test Deere’s prototype.

“I gave her the prototype — her face shield was falling apart,” Abdullah said. “As she used the prototype, she found it more comfortable and durable. She was very satisfied with it.”

For UAW veteran Miller, who normally runs a hydraulic machine to build planters, assembling face shields takes on added significance.

“This is kind of like our Rosie the Riveter moment,” Miller noted. “To be able to say I helped contribute to helping protect people from getting sick, that’s personal pride for me.”

(continued on pg. 28)
Westphal Leaves a Lasting Impact on Michels, Industry

It is with profound sadness that Michels announces the passing of industry icon Robert H. Westphal on Tuesday, March 31. Bob devoted 55 years of his life to Michels, tirelessly pushing the company’s performance, and the pipeline and trenchless construction industries’ potential to higher levels. Hired by Dale Michels in April 1965 as a pipeline laborer, Bob quickly established himself as a great leader, generous mentor and valued friend to those he worked with, including the Michels family.

“It is our belief that the strength of his successors defines a leader’s true success,” said Pat Michels, President and CEO, Michels Corporation. “In that regard, Bob was the best. He was selflessly devoted to improving the abilities and skills of those who worked with him.”

“Throughout the decades, I have had the privilege of calling Bob my boss, my mentor, my colleague and my friend,” Michels said. “He had a major impact on me in each of those roles.”

In his career, Bob filled many roles, including laborer, operator, foreman, superintendent, general superintendent, vice president, senior vice president and, at the time of his death, senior construction advisor. He helped guide Michels’ development and execution of strategic business initiatives domestically and internationally.

A statesman in the construction industry, Bob was a valued member of many organizations. In 2019, he was inducted into the North American Society for Trenchless Technology (NASTT) Hall of Fame and was named NASTT’s Trenchless Technology Person of the Year in 2011. Bob was also an active member of the Pipe Line Contractors Association (PLCA), where he served on the Board of Directors for 13 years and as president in 2005. In 2018, he was named an Honorary Member.

Bob’s legacy will leave a significant impact on Michels and the industry he loved. We extend our thoughts and condolences to his wife, Jone; his sons Scott, Jeff, Matt and Chad; his many other family members; and his large extended family at Michels.
Volvo Awarded Grant to Test Electric Heavy Equipment in California
Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE) was awarded a $2 million grant for a commercial pilot of the company’s electric, zero emission excavator and electric wheel loader in California.

The grant, administered by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD), is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Targeted Air Shed Grant Program, which helps agencies develop plans and conduct projects to reduce air pollution in areas with the highest level of smog and soot in the United States.

South Coast AQMD is responsible for attaining state and federal standards by improving air quality in the South Coast Air Basin of California.

Volvo CE will invest another $1.5 million on top of the awarded amount, which will raise the total project amount to $3.5 million.

The grant aims to accelerate the deployment of zero emission technologies for off-road mobile equipment, which is one of the major contributors to nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions in the South Coast Air Basin. The South Coast AQMD region includes Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, including the Coachella Valley.

Volvo CE’s electric compact ECR25 excavator and L25 wheel loader are currently being developed and tested in Europe. Volvo CE will adapt some configurations previously developed for the European program and demonstrate the machines in real-life applications for a minimum of six months in California.

Tests will start during the second half of this year – September for the excavator and December for the wheel loader. Three customers in the South Coast Air Basin area will be selected to test the machines. The results of these demonstrations, together with customer feedback, will be reported to South Coast AQMD.

“We are honored to be awarded this grant. It is a recognition of Volvo CE’s commitment to building a more sustainable future,” said Stephen Roy, senior vice president for the Americas, Volvo CE.

Before arriving on test sites, the two electric prototypes were displayed in March at the CONEXPO 2020 tradeshow in Las Vegas.

Caterpillar Foundation Commits $8.5 Million to Global COVID-19 Response Efforts
As the events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continue to evolve rapidly, the Caterpillar Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Caterpillar Inc. (NYSE: CAT), announced it is committing $8.5 million to support global communities, including underserved populations, who are affected by the virus.

The Foundation’s investment will support nonprofit organizations who are working to help prevent, detect and respond to the pandemic; providing resources to hospitals, medical staff and patients; addressing food insecurity; and enabling online STEM and coding education for youth impacted by school closures.

“These investments are an important expression of our company’s values,” said Jim Umpleby, Caterpillar Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. “As we all work together to fight the pandemic, the Foundation’s resources will provide essential support in communities around the world.”

“The Caterpillar Foundation is focused on building more sustainable and resilient communities, helping them emerge stronger together during this unprecedented time,” said Asha Varghese, Caterpillar Foundation president. “Our employees and retirees give so generously, and we are proud to amplify their gifts and support our many nonprofit partners working tirelessly to keep our communities safe and prosperous.”

March/April 2020
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