

CEA Salutes Its Union 'Partners'

By Kip Trexel



Representing most of the major unionized builders performing work throughout Northern California, the Construction

Employers' Association (CEA) continues to seek to protect the interests of unionized builders through effective collective bargaining and labor relations representation, management-labor "partnering" opportunities and legislative and governmental advocacy services at the state level.

Effective Collective Bargaining Representation Remains CEA's Primary Purpose

About a year ago, a year before the 1999-2004 Carpenters Master Agreement was due to expire, CEA took the lead for the industry in successfully negotiating a modified Master Agreement with the Northern California Carpenters that runs through June of 2008. Already unique in the nation, the format under which we negotiate our contracts with the Carpenters added a new element this time. Rank-and-file carpenters who do not hold a union office were at the bargaining table. Over the past nineteen years, CEA has negotiated six master agreements with the Carpenters Union—all of them early and without an industry work stoppage. Key elements of our success have been to address wages and other difficult issues informally with the goal of concluding formal negotiations on a new agreement well before the old one expires.

CEA members appreciate the strong

CEA: Building Industry Safety Forums Are Popular

Now in its seventh year, CEA's Safety Forum Program chaired by Gary Kalian of Lathrop Construction Associates Inc., with support from CEA staff member Frank Redle, continues to provide relevant training and networking resources for safety officers, executives and key job-site personnel. Our safety forums have been well-attended.

Recent safety forum topics have included: tower crane management, pre-employment drug testing, excavation competency, the actual cost of accidents and the new steel erection and crane operator certification standards.

working relationship we have built with our key craft—the Carpenters—under the leadership of Bob Alvarado. It hinges on trust and mutual problem-solving. The 2003 – 2008 CEA/Carpenters Master Agreement represents the latest product of a unique and valued labor-management partnership. We will continue to address the most difficult issues long before they become a threat to any construction project.

In addition to negotiating the Carpenters Master Agreement, CEA negotiates other collective bargaining agreements affecting building contractors performing work in Northern California, including the Laborers Master Builders Agreement and agreements with the Cement Masons and Operating Engineers on behalf of signatory members. CEA's collective bargaining success is due to the active participation of the principals of our member firms, guided by an experienced staff led by CEA Secretary Michael Walton. Enhancing

members' competitiveness, attracting and retaining skilled craft persons and maintaining industry stability are our primary goals in collective bargaining.

Facing the challenges of an aging workforce and the need for a more talented and skilled workforce, CEA and the Carpenters are currently working with the Carpenters Training Committee to establish a pre-apprenticeship program to improve the quality and graduation rate of apprentices.

A Preventative Approach to Labor Relations Representation

Along with collective bargaining representation, CEA continues to devote its utmost attention to providing quality labor relations representation for its member firms. Using a preventative approach, Rick Walton and other members of CEA's experienced staff assist members in mitigating labor disputes and liabilities ➤

CEA Represents Major Industry Players

CEA's membership roster includes virtually all of the major players as well as the majority of mid-sized builders in the Northern California unionized building industry (see our advertisement in

this edition). We estimate that our membership collectively performs over \$8 billion in construction volume annually, both in the public and private sectors. ■

by providing professional advice and representation at grievance/arbitration proceedings, although most labor issues are settled before grievances are filed and without the need for formal arbitration. In addition, CEA provides its members with up-to-date, labor-related information, including wage and fringe benefit rate changes and other pertinent union issues.

Management-Labor Cooperation: A Key Focus for Association

As the association representing the unionized building construction industry in Northern California, CEA focuses on activities and issues that enhance cooperation with the key crafts employed by our members along with leaders of other building

trades unions, while representing our members' interests. Besides working closely with the State Building Trades Council on key legislative and regulatory issues affecting the unionized sector of our industry, many CEA members have developed cooperative working relationships with business representatives representing the local building trades' councils where they perform work.

Several weeks ago, CEA held its 17th annual "State-of-the-State" labor-management conference with the Carpenters Union leadership at Lake Tahoe. We also held our 11th annual labor-management conference with the Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties Building Trades Councils in March. We have found these conferences to be educational and beneficial to building relationships and improving understanding between building industry executives and union leaders. In addition, they provide a forum to constructively communicate and explore solutions about issues of mutual concern affecting the unionized building industry.

CEA and its members salute Robert Alvarado, Executive Officer of the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council and Jose Moreno, business manager of the Northern California District Council of Laborers, along with their respective business representatives. In addition, our association and its contractors appreciate the working relationships we have developed with the following Bay Area Building Trades Council executives and look forward to continuing to work together on issues of mutual concern: Stan Warren, San Francisco; Neil Struthers, Santa Clara and San Benito counties; Bill Nack, San Mateo County; Barry Luboviski, Alameda County; Greg Feere, Con-



EMPLOYERS' ADVOCATE, INC.

***A PRIVATE CONSULTING FIRM SPECIALIZING IN
LABOR RELATIONS, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING,
PREVAILING WAGE COMPLIANCE
AND PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS.***

Michael Walton, President

***500 Ygnacio Valley Road, Suite 290
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(925) 930-0014***

***3800 Watt Avenue, Suite 215
Sacramento, CA 95821
(916) 978-8506***

CEA Launched Safety Recognition Program

This past year, we initiated what will be an annual safety award program, recognizing 14 member firms for their outstanding commitments to safety. Acknowledgements for both performance and training were given to firms who submitted qualifying criteria. Firms with an incident rate 25% below the industry average were recognized for Excellence in Safety Performance and firms demonstrating active safety training programs were recognized for Excellence in Safety Training.

Firms receiving recognition for Excellence in Safety Performance included Lathrop Construction Associates Inc. Lem Construction Inc. and Swinerton

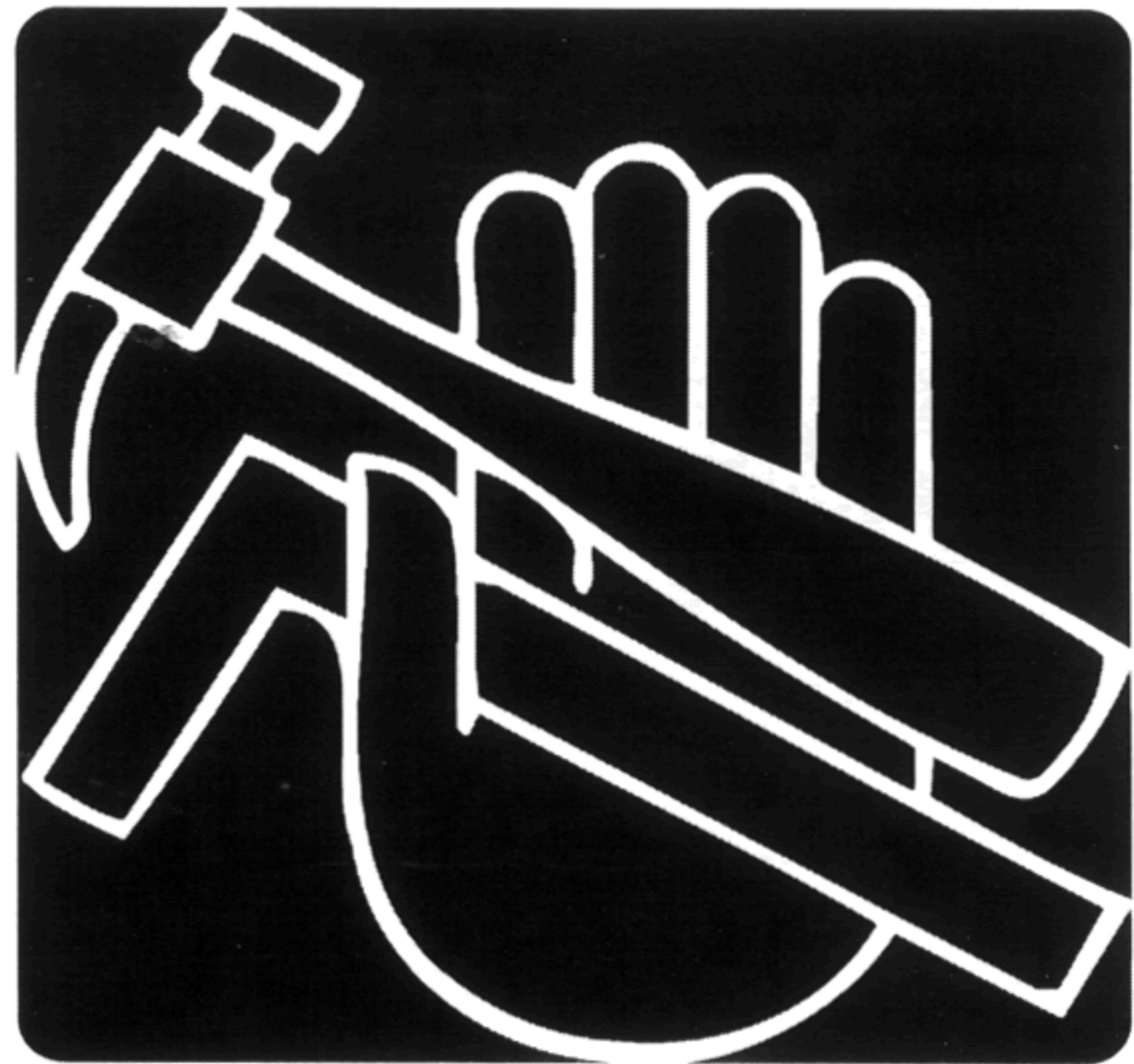
Builders. Firms recognized for Excellence in Safety Training included McClone Construction Co. and Walsh Pacific Construction. Nine CEA firms were recognized for both Excellence in Safety Performance and Excellence in Safety Training. They are: C. Overaa & Co., Clark Pacific, Dome Construction Corp., DPR Construction Inc., Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Co., Herrero Contractors Inc., James R. Griffin Inc., Rudolph and Sletten Inc. and S. J. Amoroso Construction Co., Inc.

CEA member firms receiving recognition were honored on Jan. 13 with an award at the CEA Annual General Membership Dinner Meeting. ■

tra Costa County; Lou Franchimon, Napa-Solano counties and Matt Kelly, Sacramento County.

Building Industry Legislative Program

Recognizing the importance of effective legislative representation and, in particular, the detrimental impact unfriendly legislation can have on our businesses, we initiated a Building Industry Legislative Program in 1996 for the benefit of the unionized building construction industry. At that time the public works prevailing wage system—one of the key stabilizing factors of the unionized construction industry—was under serious attack by lawmakers at both the state and federal levels. It was the Carpenters union that urged CEA to join the political fray. Over the past eight years, CEA has successfully sponsored and passed six bills for the betterment of the public and private unionized construction industry. Key among them was a bill aimed at protecting general con- ➤



CARPENTERS WORK PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

*WORKING TO PROTECT THE UNION CONTRACTOR'S
MARKET AND PRESERVE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR
THE UNION CARPENTER*

500 Ygnacio Valley Road, Suite 290
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(925) 930-0353

3800 Watt Avenue, Suite #215
Sacramento, CA 95821
(916) 978-8503

CEA'S Annual Confidential Building Industry Salary Survey Is a Valuable Tool

Earlier in the year, CEA conducted its seventh annual Northern California Building Industry Salary Survey. The survey collects salary and benefit data for members' non-bargaining unit employees, including top executives, superintendents, estimators, project managers and

administrative staff. The survey results are confidentially released to participating member firms in the first quarter of each year. Participating members have indicated that it continues to be a useful tool in salary administration to retain or attract talented management and administrative personnel. ■

tractors from being held liable and penalized when subcontractors commit prevailing wage violations.

Led by Chairman Terry Street, president of Roebelen Contracting

Inc. and Vice-Chairman Dana McManus, president of S.J. Amoroso Construction Co. Inc. with professional assistance from CEA's legislative advocates Jerry Zanelli and Scott

Govenar of Governmental Advocates and CEA staff member Ginny Smith, CEA's Legislative Committee works hard to analyze, monitor and lobby the vast number of bills that are introduced each year that could have serious implications for our member firms and the California unionized building industry.

A key factor in the success of CEA's legislative program is our willingness to work with organized labor to help improve the unionized construction industry as a whole. While it is not always possible to reach consensus on every legislative proposal, we have been successful in working with labor to address items of interest to our respective organizations. Establishing this type of cooperative relationship between labor and management was especially crucial during the economic downturn we recently experienced. By working together with labor, CEA believes that we can effectively strengthen and solidify the unionized construction industry in California.

This year, CEA is actively participating in a Construction Caucus of various construction organizations focusing on legislative solutions to address residential defect litigation and the current subcontractor insurance crisis that exists in the residential multiple dwelling market as a result of excessive litigation costs. John Bowles, senior vice president of Webcor Builders and Charlie Kuffner, senior vice president of Swinerton Builders are leading these efforts on behalf of CEA.

Increased Demand for Public Works/Prevailing Wage Assistance

School construction continues to provide many work opportunities for CEA members. With the require-



Building Better with Union Labor

Our Mission:

Webcor is ***committed*** to building projects of ***superior quality and value*** by providing ***services with integrity*** using the innovation of ***skilled people*** to achieve ***client satisfaction***.



Webcor Builders
951 Mariners Island Blvd. 7th Floor
San Mateo, CA 94404
650.349.2727
Visit our Website ~ www.webcor.com

ment that school districts receiving bond monies implement labor compliance programs, there has been an increased demand by members for education and technical assistance with regard to prime contractors' and subcontractors' prevailing wage and payroll reporting responsibilities. CEA has developed procedures that emphasize a preventative approach to monitoring the payment of wages to all workers and strive to minimize the potential for penalties or liquidated damages. In addition, research, advice, and investigative services are available to members who encounter prevailing wage complaints on their projects. Mike Kurey and other experienced staff members are actively representing

CEA members in this regard with awarding agencies, the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) and the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR).

Through the legal, administrative and political efforts of CEA and others in the construction industry, two onerous coverage determinations issued last year by Chuck Cake, then-acting director of the DIR, concerning the application and scope of public works coverage for off-site fabrication of sheet metal and electrical components were recently withdrawn. The implications of these coverage determinations were so detrimental to the industry that CEA filed suit for the first time in its nearly 20-year history—suing the

state of California, Department of Industrial Relations. While the determinations would have likely been overturned eventually, we believe the impetus for the determinations being withdrawn was CEA's lawsuit and our intervention with current Acting DIR Director John Rea. ■

Trexel is president of the Construction Employers' Association and project executive/SPG operations manager at Howard S. Wright Construction Co. Inc.

CEA Awards Annual Grants to 5 Construction Management University Programs

Each year CEA awards grants to deserving universities as part of its Construction Management University Grant Program. This program, managed by CEA staff member John Zervas, supports and promotes quality construction management education and seeks to develop long-term relationships with the participating universities for CEA and its building contractor members.

For the 2003 program year, the CEA Construction Management University Grant Program Com-

mittee evaluated grant applications from five universities based on such factors as impact to the building construction industry and quality of the grant proposal. Each of the following universities that applied for grants received funding from CEA: University of California, Berkeley; California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; California State University, Chico; California State University, Sacramento and Stanford University.

CEA presented California Poly-

technic State University, San Luis Obispo, with the 2003 Donald L. Warmby Leadership Award in recognition of its first place grant award. Cal Poly requested funding to enhance their student internship program. They propose to place 40 to 50 student interns with construction companies for six month internship placements. ■