



“A verbal contract isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.”

Samuel Goldwyn

MANAGER’S COMMENTS

GREATER CLEVELAND

You may notice this issue of the Review is a little late. That’s because it’s been difficult choosing a topic for my comment. I considered writing about the Building Information Modeling class the Chapter hosted so I could let everyone that didn’t attend, know what they missed. And that their fellow Chapter members who did attend probably have a leg up on them. I also thought about LED lighting and how that technology is rapidly evolving. By the way, if you think since you have been installing LED lighting, you’re good to go, I would recommend reading the April edition of NECA’s Electrical Contractor magazine. You’ll see what I mean.

Now, if you look at the quote of the month, you may think I’ve chosen to talk about the round of collective bargaining negotiations that recently took place in all three of our Divisions but you’d be wrong.

Some people who know me may think I’m about to commit career ending suicide by expressing my view on a topic they know I have strong opinions about. Opinions that they think are contrary to what the union electrical industry is promoting. No doubt someone just thought to themselves, “Finally.”

Maybe now would be a good time to issue a disclaimer and say the opinions you are about to read are those of the editor and only the editor...that is, unless you may be crazy enough to agree.

Hopefully all of you are aware that in every NECA/IBEW Inside Collective Bargaining Agreement there is an Article XII. It’s what’s known as Category One language, meaning it’s mandatory that it be in every agreement. The title of the article is “CODE

OF EXCELLENCE.” I’ll save you from having to dig out your copy of the agreement. It states “The parties to this Agreement recognize that to meet the needs of our customers, both the employer and employee must meet the highest level of performance, professionalism and productivity. The Code of Excellence has proven to be a vital element in meeting the customer’s expectations. Therefore, each IBEW local union and NECA chapter shall implement a Code of Excellence Program. The Program shall include minimum standards as designed by the IBEW and NECA.”

I know, I know. You’re thinking how could he or anyone have an opinion contrary to that. Well, aside from maybe nit picking the assertion that the COE is a vital element in meeting the customer’s expectations (You see, I’m sure we meet the customer’s expectations without mentioning the COE now and I know damn well we did prior to the inclusion of the COE into the Agreement.) I don’t disagree with the words. And I don’t necessarily disagree that it needs to be in the Agreement.

Here’s what is very disconcerting to me.. the fact that we NEED it at all. I know I’m old and the workplace today is very different from the workplace I entered into forty years ago. And it would seem, hopefully, that the customers are very different. I say “hopefully” because telling a customer forty years ago that I had to sign a document that said I was going to do what he expected would have not been received well. It was an era when your word was enough. Obviously and sadly we’ve moved on.

(Continued on Page Two.)



MANAGER'S COMMENTS CONTINUED

Whoa, now don't be confused and think I'm not the same guy who espouses forward thinking in many of these articles and that I'm just a grumpy old man who's out of touch. Planning for the future, keeping up with technology and "skating to where the puck is going to be" are core beliefs that are very much who I am. However, this Code of Excellence causes me a certain degree of embarrassment. In the July 2012 edition of this "Review," while talking about the future, I said "but maybe part of thinking ahead and strategizing should be recognizing that some of our past experiences could once again be part of our future." Maybe the day will once again come where a person's word is enough.

So OK, the COE causes me some embarrassment and when I bemoan the fact that it's in the Agreement at all, I see people cringe. That being said and whined about, let's look at this "thing" from a business

perspective. First of all, it's here. So now let's accept that there ARE customers, who upon seeing we have a document that says we really are going to do what they expect, decide that's enough to choose us over non-union competition. Then it would be crazy not to use it, right? Fine, but the key is knowing when and where to use it. It has to be the right customer. You all know there are still many customers out there, who like me, yearn for the day when our word and reputation was and still should be enough. Promoting the COE to them, I believe, would be counter productive.

While the push to use the COE is on, I want to caution everyone involved. To think this is more than a marketing tool would be a mistake. I maintain that you must think first about the customer and use it surgically. We've got to be smart about using the Code of Excellence to maximize its value.

DIVISION MEETINGS

All three Divisions held meetings in early April.

The Lake Erie Division held their meeting at the Saw Mill Creek Resort in Huron, Ohio. A floor plan of the new JATC training center was examined. The next step in the process will be the JATC's approval of the complete set of construction documents then their submittal to the local authorities. The members also discussed the recent Inside CBA settlement. It was noted that during negotiations the Labor Management Committee agreed to set dates to meet throughout the year just for the purpose of talking about whatever anyone thinks is important. The first of these meetings took place in March where the topics ranged from the IBEW contractor course that is being taught by Fred Sargent, from Sargent Electric to the Code of Excellence and many local issues as well.

Our Northeast Ohio Division met at the Red Hawk Grille in Painesville, Ohio. The meeting discussion centered on the upcoming Inside CBA negotiations; which, have since produced a settlement that will be presented to the IBEW Membership for ratification this week.

The Cleveland Division members met at Cibreo's Italian Restaurant in the Theater District downtown. The restaurant's private dining room was actually a small theater in the Hanna Building. No one volunteered to perform, so the bulk of the evening was spent discussing the Inside CBA negotiations and the tentative settlement that had been reached. In addition, there was an explanation of the procedure the JATC has adopted for the rotation of teledata apprentices.

MANHOURS

Cleveland Division thru March :	615,567
Lake Erie Division thru March:	100,613
Northeast Ohio Division thru March:	<u>69,210</u>
Chapter Total:	785,390

ECONOMIC NEWS OF THE DAY

- 9) 1.) Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the first quarter of 2014 rose by 0.1%. For the economy to actually grow that number should be at least 3.0%.
- 2.) They Keystone Pipeline has been mentioned six times in this newsletter over the last three years. At last check, the Administration still hasn't allowed it to be built. This is no longer and hasn't been, economic news of the day....it's Political News.
- 3.) The President's often repeated the line "I'm laser focused on jobs" isn't about the economy either. I think we know what it really is.
- 4.) The employment participation rate is 62.8%. That's the lowest it's been since the late 70's..
- 5.) The U-3 unemployment rate fell to 6.3%. The U-6 rate fell to 12.3%.
- 6.) Construction spending in March oozed up 0.2%.
- 7.) New home sales are down but there's good news for the first quarter of 2014....residential construction spending was up 16%.
- 8.) U.S. factory orders were up 1.1% in the first quarter.
- 9.) Talk about raising the Federal gasoline tax continues as the Highway Fund is going broke. Where did the \$785 billion economic stimulus go? Another infamous quote "shovel ready jobs."
- 10.) Cooper prices dip slightly to the \$3.00 range.

ECPAC

With NECA's Legislative Conference coming up this first week of May it's a good time to start thinking about making a contribution to ECPAC. As you know, NECA's Government Affairs Department staff, Marco Giamberardino, Kristen Gowin and Jessica Cardenas work tirelessly throughout the year for you. If you are motivated to contribute, please feel free to contact the Chapter staff for assistance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 1.) NECA Legislative Conference-May 6-8, 2014-The Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Washington, D.C.
- 2.) Chapter Annual Golf Outing-June 23, 2014-Chagrin Valley Country Club.
- 3.) Lake Erie Division Meeting-July 8, 2014-6:00 P.M. Location TBD.
- 4.) Northeast Ohio Division Meeting-July 9, 2014-Noon at Red Hawk Grille.
- 5.) Cleveland Division Meeting-July 10, 2014-6:00 P.M. -Location TBD.
- 6.) NECA Convention and Trade Show-September 27-30, 2014 in Chicago, Illinois.

LOOK FOR THE NEXT REVIEW IN JUNE 2014!