



MONDAY MORNING NEWS

Puget Sound Chapter • National Electrical Contractors Association



**MARCH 16, 2020
MEETINGS**

5/21/2020 – NECA MEMBERSHIP MTG

NOTE TO OUR READER

This newsletter takes pride, every week, in providing you with the most current and up to date industry related news. This week, however, is going to be dominated with news related to the Corona Virus Outbreak and how it has and could potentially impact the industry. We at NECA will keep you informed with the most up to date information related to Corona Virus. We encourage you to call the office if you have any questions and most importantly want you to take the necessary precautions to stay healthy and safe.

UPDATE – DAVID LONG, CEO, NECA

NECA is monitoring the latest developments with COVID-19 and tracking all updated health information coming from the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Our top priority is to keep our members, chapters, partners and staff, safe and sound. Please monitor the NECA Coronavirus Resource Center and the NECA Events At a Glance page for the most up-to date information. NECA staff has been and is committed to being thoughtful and transparent with our decision process and communications. As David stated, NECA's 30 to 60 day outlook will allow us to address future meetings and travel. We ask for your patience, understanding and communication. Please reach out to chapters and NECA staff for more information or with any concerns. In light of the recent health reports, NECA has made the difficult decision to postpone the following conferences and meetings.

Women in NECA and Future Leaders Leadership Conference (WINFL)
NECA 2020 Large Contractors Spring Meeting
Codes and Standards Committee Meeting
Please contact meetings@necanet.org for more information.

NECA encourages you to download the following COVID-19 resource documents. These documents will serve as talking points when interacting with your fellow contractors, co-workers and peers about COVID-19 and are available on the NECA Coronavirus Resource webpage.

COVID-19 Labor and Employment Q&A
NECA Fact Sheet on COVID-19
NECA Safety Talk: COVID-19

We will provide details in the coming weeks on any additional reschedules, cancellations and updates. For immediate concerns, please don't hesitate to contact NECA staff at (301) 657-3110. To every NECA member and everyone in the NECA family, please make safe choices.

RANDOM DRUG TESTING SUSPENDED

Note from Lee Centrone, Senior VP/Plan Manager from Benesys

As a result of the COVID-19 virus and the Public Health emergency declared in Oregon and Washington, until further notice the Drug Free Workplace Program will not be providing random drug selections. Employers and Training Centers can still send employees/apprentices to test where it is required to work on a job site, or for post-accident or reasonable suspicion testing. But for now random testing will be suspended. The primary reason for the decision is to have the employees and members staying out of overtaxed clinics, where a higher concentration of potentially sick individuals congregate and the collection process is typically done. If you have any questions, please do feel free to give me call (503-242-1622) or send me an email (lee.centrone@benesys.com). (The Puget Sound Chapter recommends calling our office first if you have any questions.) I'm sure there will be questions that haven't been considered and we will do our best to answer as quickly as possible.

JATC TO CLOSE ON MARCH 22nd

Note from Clay Tschillard, Training Director at the PSEJATC.

Our COVID-19 Response Team began meeting formally on March 2, 2020. The Administrative Staff has been meeting every morning and throughout the work day to review new and timely information regarding COVID-19, and if necessary, we adjusted our actions. We continued to monitor state and county health agencies as well as surrounding primary and secondary schools. We enhanced our custodial practices to emphasize further sanitation in the school and classrooms. We have begun to have more apprentices and their families being impacted by the school closures. There are also concerns about the spread of the virus through close contact within our classrooms and labs. We also have a tremendous amount of contact happening in our building between apprentices, instructors, administrative staff, guests, and apprenticeship applicants (e.g. completing applications, dropping materials off, aptitude testing, interviewing, etc.). Our ability to maintain a sufficient amount of cleaning and disinfecting products has been a challenge.

Actions related to school closures, event cancellations, and governmental restrictions have increased since we first started our response planning. It is now evident that our preparations for a full closure of the PSEJATC Training Center has become necessary. Effective immediately, we have canceled all non-essential classes, such as Continuing Education, Monday Makeup, Test and Tutor sessions, Aptitude Testing, and Interviews (after the 03/12/2020 session). We are planning for a staggered school closure that would allow us to finish out the current quarter by reducing the total number of apprentices in the

building at any one time. All Inside Wire, Limited Energy, Residential Wireman, Boot Camp, and Peninsula classes would continue through next week (March 16 through March 21) as planned. We would accomplish a full school closure by Sunday, March 22nd. We are also planning to suspend acceptance of new apprenticeship applications and freeze all open applications effective on March 22, 2020.

A cleaning company that has been contracted to conduct a disinfecting deep clean of the entire building will begin the process on Monday, March 23rd. That work is scheduled to be completed by the end of the week. The full-time instructors will not be onsite during this process. Our administrative staff will begin to be platooned during the closure. The Dispatch of Apprentices and Boot Camp Apprentices will be maintained throughout the closure. A schedule is being developed for the administrative staff to be able to continue to work with rotating reduced staff numbers. This is all designed to reduce the total number of individuals in the building at any one time.

NECA SUSPENDS ESTIMATING AND UW SUPERINTENDENT COURSES

Last week, the Chapter made the decision to suspend our Estimating and Superintendent Course until further notice. The estimating course is currently 50% complete and the Superintendent Course is in the sixth of seven modules. All students have been notified and the Chapter will continually evaluate the situation with the hopes of resuming the classes as soon as possible.

DON'T PANIC IS ROTTEN ADVICE

To end this uplifting edition of the newsletter, we call on our favorite guest columnist, Peggy Noonan to take us home.

This coronavirus is new to our species—it is “novel.” It spreads more easily than the flu—“exponentially,” as we now say—and is estimated to be at least 10 times as lethal. Testing in the U.S. has been wholly inadequate; history may come to see this as the great scandal of the epidemic. “Anybody that needs a test gets a test; they’re there, they have the tests, and the tests are beautiful,” as the president said last weekend, is on a par with “If you like your doctor you can keep your doctor” as a great, clueless lie.

Because of the general lack of testing we don’t have a firm sense of the number of the infected and the speed and geography of spread. Many people would be working sick, afraid of losing pay or job security if they take time off. Some would be at home, unable for financial or other reasons to see a doctor or go to a hospital.

In the past few days the World Health Organization declared a pandemic. The physician used by Congress reportedly said behind closed doors that 70 million to 150 million Americans will be infected. The Harvard epidemiologist Marc Lipsitch estimated 20% to 60% of adults world-wide might catch the disease. Cases are rising in Spain, France and Germany, where Prime Minister Angela Merkel warned that 70% of the nation could wind up infected. The president gave a major Oval Office address Wednesday night aimed at quelling fears; it was generally labeled “unsettling.” Immediately after, Tom Hanks announced that he and wife Rita Wilson have tested positive, and the National Basketball Association suspended its season after a player tested positive.

Health professionals and scientists have been on TV explaining what they know, and they've been impressive—crisply professional, helpful in conveying the contour of things. This week I spoke to a physician with a small practice on Long Island who's dealing with problems on the ground.

He spoke of his biggest immediate challenge: Local health authorities are offering little practical information on how to handle patients or receive personal protective equipment—masks, gowns and gloves. “Regular doctors in a regular practice don't have big numbers of these things,” he said. “The hospital sent out an email saying, ‘Go here if you're having equipment trouble.’ So I did. And within an hour they said, ‘We can't help you.’ ”

“At this point we get an email every few days, and what they're doing is planning a seminar on Covid-19, which is no practical help.” Doctors are already read in on the disease, they know what viruses are, they keep track of what's happening in the larger sphere.

His biggest worry is that local hospitals aren't ready—and aren't readying—for a surge in patients. When he looks at the projections, he fears “health facility inundation and fatigue.” He worries that “routine life-threatening illnesses will not be treated adequately.” He means heart attacks, strokes, infections; he fears such patients won't receive timely treatment “in overstressed systems.” The great danger to the elderly and immune-compromised is viral pneumonia. “They will need mechanical help, ventilators and ECMO machines”—oxygen pumps. “This system probably doesn't have enough. Who is thinking about this?”

Hospitals need to “prepare to be inundated,” he says. “When I talk to doctors and administrators, they're only thinking within their own walls and own offices. They're not imagining being overrun.”

After we spoke, something came to mind I'd written months after 9/11. Everyone was asking how we could have missed the signs. I remembered the words of astronaut Frank Borman when he was asked in 1967 why NASA had not been prepared for the catastrophic launchpad fire that killed three astronauts. It was “a failure of imagination,” he said. No one imagined such a thing could happen on the ground.

That's where I think we have been the past few weeks in this epidemic, a failure of imagination.

Scientists and doctors say the next few weeks are crucial, that the virus's spread must be slowed. We have to slow it. We have to be health hawks.

Bite the bullet, close the schools a few weeks, and see where we are. Cancel celebrations. Marry, but have the wedding party later. Make the birthday bash twice as good next year. Put everything on pause. The need for social distancing may at this point make the difference between a hard time and hell. Work from home if you have a job that allows you to.

Get money to people who are now working sick. This is an emergency, that's your job if you're in Washington, make it work.

Get. The. Tests.

The most obvious advice in the world is still the most helpful. Don't “wash your hands”; wash your hands like Lady Macbeth with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Wash your face. Carry hand sanitizers and use

them after every interaction. Wear protective gloves—don't be embarrassed. If you can't get gloves, don't touch keypads and screens at the bank or store without covering your finger with tissue. Try to cough or sneeze into two or three tissues. If you don't have them, do it in the crook of your arm, as they say, but stop patting the other person's coat sleeves affectionately when you don't shake hands. That's where their germs are.

Sometimes paranoia is just good sense.

Is all this an overreaction? If it is, we'll recover. If we're too cautious, we'll realize after a while and we'll all get angry at the economic cost of it and have big arguments and fights. But we'll be here to argue and fight.

I wrote in February that I believed the coronavirus will be bad, that it will have a bigger impact on America than we imagine, and that a lot of people will be exposed and a significant number endangered. I was beaten up a bit and fair enough—to make a prophecy is to summon animosity, especially when men are scared and especially when they see everything as political. My assertions were based on a long reading of history and a close reading of what had happened in China, then Italy.

Now it's time to lose the two most famous phrases of the moment. One is "Don't panic!" The other is "an abundance of caution."

"Don't panic" is what nervous, defensive people say when someone warns of coming trouble. They don't want to hear it, so their message is "Don't worry like a coward, be blithely unconcerned like a brave person."

One way or another we've heard it a lot from administration people.

This is how I've experienced it:

"Captain, that appears to be an iceberg." "Don't panic, officer, full steam ahead."

"Admiral, concentrating our entire fleet in one port seems tempting fate." "We don't need your alarmist fantasies, ensign."

"We're picking up increased chatter about an al Qaeda action." "Your hand-wringing is duly noted."

"Don't panic," in the current atmosphere, is a way of shutting up people who are using their imaginations as a protective tool. It's an implication of cowardice by cowards.

As for "abundance of caution," at this point, in a world-wide crisis, the cautions we must take aren't abundant, they're reasonable and realistic.

Reason and realism are good.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY 1767— Future President Andrew Jackson is born in a backwoods region between North and South Carolina to Irish immigrant parents on March 15, 1767. Jackson was essentially an orphan—all but one member of his family were killed during the Revolutionary War—who rose from humble beginnings to become a celebrated soldier and one of the nation's most influential presidents.

America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.

President Harry S. Truman

As of Friday, March 13th, there are 148JW on Book 1 and 125 JW on Book 2. There are currently 0 Commercial Apprentices, 2 S&C Apprentices, and 0 Residential Apprentices available for dispatch. There are 3 unfilled Commercial, 0 unfilled S&C and 2 unfilled Residential Apprentice requests.