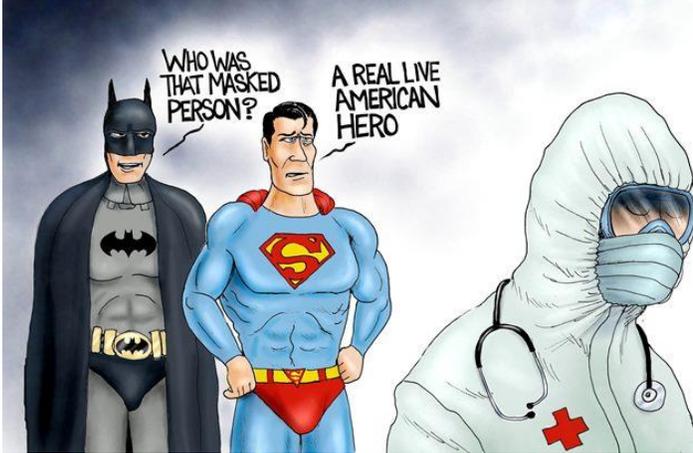




MONDAY MORNING NEWS

Puget Sound Chapter • National Electrical Contractors Association

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APRIL 6, 2020
MEETINGS

5/21/20 – NECA MEMBERSHIP MTG

PUGET SOUND CHAPTER, NECA & CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

As most of you are aware, Governor Inslee’s Stay at Home Order has been extended through May 4, 2020. Construction projects continue to be in flux, one day up and running, and the next day “temporarily” shut down. Boeing announces airplane production will resume on April 6th, and then does a 180 later that day and keeps production closed down for now. Public agencies are still sorting out which construction projects are essential and which ones can wait. NECA contractors continue to react to owners’ and General Contractors’ short notice announcements on project delays and shutdowns.

NECA continues to provide specific recommendations for contractors, with widely varying situations and scenarios. Many times we can only provide observations and share solutions that other contractors have put it place. This is an unprecedented situation, and last time I checked the library, there are no books on how to handle all of the different challenges that face us all in our businesses and personal lives. Especially with the landscape changing on a daily basis.

Most NECA Contractors’ crews are on Standby with the Employment Security Department. With the maximum weekly benefit of \$790 (depending on current income), and the Feds providing an additional \$600/week through July 31, 2020, Standby is the quickest way to supplement a worker’s income during the widespread shutdown of jobsites.

Some employees will qualify for Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Emergency Family and Medical Leave, new benefit programs established by the Federal Government. Eligibility for these programs is very restrictive and employers may assist employees in determining whether or not the employee qualifies. In some cases, Washington State Standby will provide approximately the same weekly income that these Federal Programs provide. ESD recently acknowledged that some applications for Standby were rejected

inappropriately. ESD asks employees to resubmit their applications for Standby each week, and asserts that the problem was resolved as of April 3rd.

It is important for contractors to remember that it is the responsibility of the employee to determine which, if any, State or Federal benefit program the employee chooses to apply for. Normally, the employer can provide guidance, but it is up to the employee to make that decision. Contractors need to remind employees that they are only eligible for one benefit program at a time, which may include PTO or sick pay provided by the employer. For a small percentage of workers, they may apply and be eligible for the Emergency Family and Medical Leave and Emergency Paid Sick Leave concurrently. This would allow the worker to receive the Paid Sick Leave immediately, during the 10-day waiting period invoked in the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Program. Yes, it can get confusing!

It is likely this week that contractors who have not already done so, may begin processing applications for loans with the new SBA “Paycheck Protection Program” (See article below). There has been quite a bit of uncertainty and misinformation floating around over the past week on how this program works. Contractors should check with their financial institutions to learn more about this program. For some contractors, it is an extremely attractive program, with generous “loan forgiveness” provisions – if the contractor satisfies certain obligations through the remainder of 2020. Please contact NECA if your financial institution is not participating in this program.

The NECA Office is open for business and we are here to help you work through this difficult time. We may not have all of the answers, but we will make every effort to assist you and your firm with any challenges that may arise.

And we have one final word for all you OCD folks out there: You Rock!!!

Stay safe and “Let’s be careful out there!”

NECA SAFETY UPDATE: INFECTIOUS EXPOSURE CONTROL PLANS, RISK ASSESSMENTS, AND COVID-19 WEBINAR

Attend this webinar to learn how to create your own Infectious Exposure Control Plan. Learn the proper steps to take for risk assessments and recordkeeping procedures. In addition, hear an updated review of NECA resources and discussions on job-related duties and state directives pertaining to stay-at-home orders. The webinar is scheduled for this Thursday, April 9th at 11:00 AM (PDT). Click [here](#) to register.

APPLY TODAY FOR PAYROLL PROTECTION LOANS THROUGH SBA

Small businesses are eligible to apply for the Payroll Protection Loan through the Small Business Administration (SBA) beginning April 3, 2020. NECA encourages eligible and interested contractors to apply ASAP, as there is currently a funding cap of \$350 Billion on this program. Beginning April 10th, this program will be open to independent contractors as well as small businesses.

RESOURCES FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND SBA:

[PPP Loan Application](#)

[Guidance on PPP loans for Borrowers](#)

[U.S. Department of Treasury](#)

[COVID-19 Small Businesses Guidance & Loan Resources](#)

NECA RESOURCES:

[Comparison of EIDL and PPP Loans](#)

[Summary of the CARES Act](#)

Important to Note:

- Please be advised that lenders have indicated aid could be delayed due to Treasury guidance not being issued until April 2, 2020. NECA recommends communicating with your lender to determine the best course of action and applying as early as possible.
- Based on recent Treasury guidance, to calculate your payroll cost for purposes of the PPP loan, include salary, wages, commissions, or similar compensation; cash tips or the equivalent; payment for vacation, parental, family, medical, or sick leave; allowance for separation or dismissal; payment for the provision of employee benefits consisting of group health care coverage, including insurance premiums, and retirement; and payment of state and local taxes assessed on compensation of employees.

SOUND TRANSIT HALTS NEARLY ALL CONSTRUCTION ON ITS MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION PROJECTS

In a reversal, Sound Transit is directing contractors to halt nearly all construction on its system expansion projects until May 4th, with discretion to extend or decrease the timeframe. The agency decided contractors largely were not prepared to take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of construction workers amid the COVID-19 health crisis, according to a news release. Sound Transit postponed work on three Eastside light rail projects Friday afternoon before announcing the comprehensive construction suspension Friday evening. Light rail extension projects make up some of the region's largest construction projects. The budgeted costs for those currently under construction amount to about \$12.1 billion.

Work will continue on the Interstate 90 floating bridge and Mount Baker tunnel, in the streets of the Tacoma Stadium District that is typically highly disruptive to the public, on particular Eastside sidewalks ramps and driveways, to demolish buildings on the Federal Way alignment and at the Operations and Maintenance Facility East. Sound Transit deemed those sites address critical tasks, ensure safety or prevent negative mobility, environmental or other impacts. Workers at continuing sites will get additional training and safety inspectors and construction managers will be reallocated from closed sites to provide additional monitoring, according to the news release. The agency expects any employees reporting for work at these sites will do so voluntarily, and not be compelled to. Some safety measures include smaller work crews, more hand washing and sanitizer stations, use of face shields, staggered sign-in times, screening employees at sign-in and emphasis on personal protective measures. Sound Transit will immediately stop work on the ongoing projects if contractors are unable to comply fully with safety plans, which happened on one construction project March 31st, according to the statement.

OH YES, IT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE – REMEMBERING THE GREAT TOILET PAPER SHORTAGE OF 1973

One store manager marveled, “They buy before we can put it on the shelf!” “I thought because there was going to be a shortage I would come and stock up,” said one customer, “but I see someone beat me to the punch.”

Yep, it happened before: a toilet paper scare during the energy crisis of the early 1970s.

Former CBS News reporter Sally Quinn covered the story at the time: “Amidst the recent preoccupation with the fuel shortage and the meat shortage, a new gap has appeared in the staples of the American household: The toilet paper shortage.”

Here's what happened back in December of 1973: A congressman from Wisconsin, Harold Froehlich, released a statement saying, “The next thing we're going to have to worry about is a potential toilet paper shortage.” The warning was picked up by late night king Johnny Carson's writers, who left out the "potential" part. As Carson said during his "Tonight Show" monologue on Dec. 19, 1973: “There is an acute shortage of toilet paper in the good old United States. We gotta quit writing on it!” The false alarm sent Carson's audience of almost 20 million running.

People all over the country stormed supermarkets, grabbed as much toilet paper as they possibly could. A month later, Walter Cronkite set the record straight: “The Scott Paper Company, citing panic buying on the retail level, said today it is implementing an allocation system for the national distribution of toilet tissue. A Scott spokesman said unfounded rumors of a shortage has caused excessive demand at retail outlets.” And then Carson issued a clarification of sorts: "For all my life in entertainment, I don't want to be remembered as the man who created a false toilet paper scare. Apparently there is no shortage!"

And there is no shortage today ... but there is another panic.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY 1917—Two days after the U.S. Senate voted 82 to 6 to declare war against Germany, the U.S. House of Representatives endorses the declaration by a vote of 373 to 50, and America formally enters World War I.

“When something goes wrong in your life, just yell 'PLOT TWIST', and move on.”

— Molly Weis

As of Thursday, April 2nd, there are 200 JW on Book 1 and 123 JW on Book 2. There are currently 32 Commercial Apprentices, 4 S&C Apprentices, and 0 Residential Apprentices available for dispatch. There are 0 unfilled Commercial, 0 unfilled S&C and 0 unfilled Residential Apprentice requests.