



# SYNERGY

OUR 48TH YEAR

CONTRA COSTA CHAPTER

NOVEMBER 2011

## *Thanksgiving Holiday 2011:*

*At this time of Thanksgiving we pause to count our blessings . . .*

*It is not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them that  
is the true measure of our Thankfulness*



## A Season of Changes

*. . . at Local 302*

Mike Yarbrough, the Business Manager/Financial Secretary of IBEW Local 302 since 1995, has announced the occasion of his retirement at the end of this year. The Local 302 Executive Committee has appointed Hershel Barton to serve out the remainder of Mike's term as Business Manager.

Bart joins an interesting collection of individuals that have held the position before him including: Joe Giovanini, Tommy Ryan, E.F. Stark (who later became our first NECA Chapter Manager), Art Mainini, Jack McCann, John Hunter, Wayne Whitehurst, and now Mike Yarbrough. Bart is a graduate of our Inside Apprentice Program, a member of the LMCC and Negotiating Committees, and currently an Assistant Business Agent and an Organizer at Local 302.

Most people do not recognize the long hours, unending responsibility and constant stress associated with the position of Business Manager. We wish Mike all the happiness retirement can bring along with our heartfelt thanks for his efforts to keep the industry together over the past sixteen years. These have been challenging times indeed.

*. . . within our Health Plan*

The Board of Trustees for the Electrical Workers Health and Welfare Trust for Contra Costa County has made a decision to return to a self-funded plan of benefits for the Local 302 Inside Wiremen participants that do not select Kaiser coverage. We will be terminating the Pacificare HMO and PPO plans for the active participants, as the cost of providing those plans has become prohibitive. With the record level of unemployment over the past couple of years we are down to less than 700 active members with health coverage and about 300 retirees. More than half our active participants select Kaiser coverage, which presented us with a 17% increase in the renewal for 2012. With plan changes, we reduced that somewhat, but the impact will be substantial. Estimated savings on the self-funded program will be about \$2,000,000 per year.

For those of you who cover your non-bargaining employees under the plan, please note the change from the Pacificare HMO or PPO to the self-funded plan with the Anthem Blue Cross PPO Network. The deductibles will be \$150/person, \$300/family in network and \$500/person, \$1,000/family out of network.

The Trustees are making every effort to control the costs of the plans we offer, but with the downturn in work we continue to run a deficit in the Trust. For the nine months ending September 30, we lost nearly three-million dollars. When you divide that by the hours worked, it amounts to about \$4/hour more than the \$12.10/hour contribution you pay every month on the fringe benefit transmittal, making the actual cost closer to \$16/hr. If health costs keep escalating at the rate they have over the past several years, we will need to make progressively more drastic changes going forward. There will be a Benefit Fair on November 19th for plan participants to find out more about the plan changes. See Synergy eLink [Benefit Fair Announcement](#) if you are interested in attending.

# Sound and Communication

## Negotiations Update

The bargaining committees for NECA and the IBEW have arrived at a Joint Recommendation for Settlement of this year's negotiations over the Sound and Communication Agreement, which expires November 30, 2011. The result is a new three year contract effective December 1, 2011, with annual adjustments of \$1.00, \$1.25 and \$1.55 per hour.

There were not a lot of other significant changes to the agreement. Last Saturday, the IBEW voted to allocate \$0.75 of the \$1.00 December increase to the Health Trust. New Wage Rate and Employer Cost/Hour sheets are available for download at [Sound & Communication Agreement](#).

We would like to say a special thank you to Randy Weber of Communication Service Company for serving as our Chapter Representative on this year's negotiating committee. Randy diverted a considerable amount of time from his business to work on a "project" that everyone who has ever represented either NECA or the IBEW in negotiations knows is "thankless," at best.

*Thanks Randy!*

## Electrical Industry Trust to Sponsor Basic Competent Person Training for "Scaffolding"

### Topics Covered

- What it takes to be a Competent Person
- OSHA Safety Standards (state and federal) for Scaffolding
- Working Around Scaffolding
- How to Handle an OSHA Inspection at your Scaffolding Site



December 9<sup>th</sup>

On Friday, December 9, 2011, our Electrical Industry Trust will be sponsoring a program called "Competent Person Training Course for Scaffolding," featuring Jeff Juhala, Independent Safety Consultant, and former Safety Director for Contra Costa Electric, Inc.

Who is a Competent Person? A competent Person is someone who, through training and/or experience, is knowledgeable of the various Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) standards that apply to their workplace, is capable of identifying workplace hazards relating to their specific operations, and has the authority invested in him or her by their employer to correct the hazards to protect workers. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Employer, and not OSHA, to determine who is the Competent Person (s) for their particular construction sites.

The "Competent Person Training Course for Scaffolding" will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. and will conclude by noon at our Training Center in Martinez. The program is being offered free of charge to contractors who contribute to the Contra Costa County Electrical Industry Trust (IBEW Local 302 and Contra Costa Chapter, NECA).

If you plan to attend or send others from your firm, please return the registration form ([Registration for Basic Competent Person Training for "Scaffolding"](#)) as soon as possible.

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## Contra Costa Chapter



### **November 2011 Membership Meeting**

The next regular meeting of the Chapter Membership will take place on Tuesday, November 22, beginning at 6 p.m. with hosted cocktails at the Grissini Trattoria & Wine Bar, located at the Concord Hilton Hotel.

Cherie Cabral will be our featured speaker at the meeting and will bring us up to date on her activities on behalf of our local LMCC. Cherie has been working for us on business development and governmental relations for the past year, and brings an interesting perspective to the politics at various levels in Contra Costa County.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

### **Electrical Code Committee Holiday Luncheon**

The Electrical Code Committee holiday luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, at Zio Fraedos Restaurant in Pleasant Hill.

We plan to have a presentation on the NEC issues associated with Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

Like all Code Committee Meetings, the Holiday Luncheon is sponsored by our Electrical Industry Trust and is free of charge to all contractors, inspectors and Building Officials.

### **Chapter Holiday Party Cancelled**

We will not be having our traditional Chapter Christmas Party this year because of the . . . you guessed it. Since the Annual Christmas party has primarily been a social event, the Directors felt that the membership would concur that this step would result in a more efficient utilization of Chapter resources.

We hope to continue the Christmas party again beginning next year. Let's hope that 2012 will bring bigger and better things.

The Voice of the Electrical Contracting Industry

# NECA ACTION ALERT

NECA's Constituent Action network is a critical component of the association's key contact grassroots program and is designed to help NECA contractors have a greater voice in public policy. It is a voluntary network of the associations members, Chapters, and ECPAC contributors, all of whom are motivated to influence the outcome of legislation - both in supporting pro-business legislation and opposing legislation that can have a negative impact on their businesses.

You are encouraged to log-in to [NECA's 'take action' web site](#) where you will find links to direct you to contact your legislators on issues affecting your business.

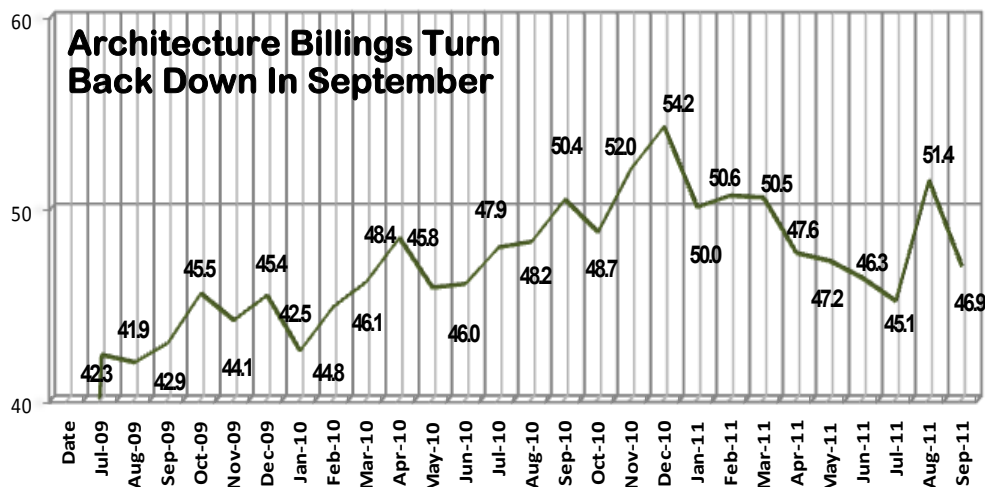


New to NECA Action Alert Web Site? Register and take action today with your NECA ID number. If you need any assistance, contact the chapter office @ 925-372-3222.

## Other Bills Currently Listed on NECA Action Alert Web Site

110HR0006	<a href="#">Energy Bill</a>	For
110HR1023	<a href="#">H.R. 1023 Meek-Herger Repeal 3% Withholding</a>	For
110HR3033	<a href="#">HR 3033 -- Contractors and Federal Spending Accountability Act of 2007</a>	For
110HR3854	<a href="#">H.R. 3854 -- Construction Quality Assurance Act of 2007</a>	For
110HR4088	<a href="#">H.R. 4088 -- SAVE Act of 2007</a>	Against
110S1639	<a href="#">S 1639 Immigration Bill</a>	Against
110S2044	<a href="#">S. 2044 Worker Misclassification</a>	For
110S2394	<a href="#">S. 2394 -- Good Government Contractor Act of 2007</a>	For
110S777	<a href="#">S. 777 Repeal 3% Withholding</a>	For
110SAMDT4419	<a href="#">Energy Extenders</a>	For

## Architecture Billings Turn Back Down In September



Any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings.

**NECA**  
NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION  
**SYNERGY**  
eLinks

[Benefit Fair Announcement](#)

[Sound & Communication Agreement](#)

[Registration for Basic Competent Person Training for "Scaffolding"](#)

[Personal Best](#)





# November 2011

**Sun**

**Mon**

**Tue**

**Wed**

**Thur**

**Fri**

**Sat**



**Contra Costa  
Chapter  
1024 Court Street  
Martinez, CA  
94553**

**Board of  
Directors**

**Casey Dias  
Michael Dias  
Rick Henry  
Skip Stewart  
Jim Szuch, Jr.  
Ray Trebino  
Randy Weber**

**Manager**

**Michael Geller**

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**JATC**

**Training  
Center  
Martinez  
12:00 p.m.**

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12

**Health &  
Welfare**

**Training  
Center  
Martinez  
1:00 p.m.**

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**NECA**

**Grissini's  
Concord, CA**

**Bd: 4:30 p.m.  
Ch: 6:00**

*Thanksgiving*

27

28

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**November 24 & 25, are both scheduled Thanksgiving holidays under ALL of our agreements with the IBEW. Contractors who normally issue payroll on Thursdays should advance payroll to Wednesday for that week.**