

APRIL 2014

SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Connections

The Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' Association

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Happy Hour at the Harbor

April 10

Join fellow members,
customers, and
suppliers

At:

McCormick & Schmick

National Harbor

5 – 7 p.m.

Register Today!



Maryland Debates Sick & Safe...Again!

In February, the Maryland House Economic Matters and Senate Finance Committee took up legislation (HB 968) that if passed, would require all Maryland companies with nine or more employees to provide paid sick days. Introduced last year, the bill did not make it out of committee.



Maryland House Economic
Matters Committee

SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Chapter's Executive Director Bernie Brill testified on behalf of the Alliance for Construction Excellence (ACE) on February 18 in opposition to the bill.

The bill would not only make sick leave mandatory, but would also allow employees to use the leave for other specified purposes such as taking care of parents, children, and others. There was a similar bill (HB 527) also dealing with mandatory sick leave, but that was more targeted at low wage earners employed by the health care industry.

Recently, the New York City Council overwhelmingly voted to expand a law requiring employers to provide workers with paid sick days, giving more than 350,000 new workers the power to stay home when they are sick. The legislation, which passed on a 46–5 vote, is expected to be signed by new Mayor Bill de Blasio. Current law requires paid sick days to be offered to workers at businesses with more than 15 workers. The new law would lower that threshold to five workers or more.

If you would like to see a copy of Brill's testimony, please email Bernie@smacnaatl.org.

Welcome Yates Insurance

SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Chapter welcomes Yates Insurance as a new associate member. Since 1992, Yates Insurance has provided service to a variety of clients, including businesses, homeowners and others. Yates Insurance prides itself on providing expert, highly personal service, specializing in exceptional insurance and financial products that protect what individuals have worked their entire lives to obtain. For more information, please call Rod Yates at 410/956-7360.



SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Annual Golf Tournament

May 14



Argyle Country Club
Silver Spring, MD

Your day includes:

- ▶ Green Fees & Cart
- ▶ Lunch & Dinner
- ▶ Prizes

Sign up as an individual or bring a group!

Call 301/446-0002 x 100

QCA Issues Conference –Get the Message/Deliver the Message:

- ✓ Pension Reform to Protect your Business
- ✓ Energy Efficiency Incentives to Expand your Market

Dana Thompson, SMACNA Director of Public Affairs

Take Action! You can have an impact on what Congress does so don't just sit back and worry. Join us April 30 – May 2, in Washington!

The path to success is educating Members of Congress and then maneuvering around the political issues. As "job creators" in Maryland and Virginia, your message carries a lot of weight in those Congressional offices.

The 2014 Quality Construction Alliance (QCA) National Issues Conference in Washington, D.C. is going to deal with two issues important to contractors in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C.:

- **The Future of Multiemployer Pension Plans: Getting Meaningful Reform**
- **Gaining Business in a Weak Economy: Enacting Energy Efficiency Market Incentives**

Help us secure residential, commercial and industrial tax incentives: This legislation, once passed, could expand your market like the energy efficiency tax incentives.

Help us lay out the middle ground, educate Congress on the need for pension reform and manage the politics in our favor. Business editorials frequently demonize defined benefit pension plans and harp on the possibility of union bailouts. On the other hand, retirement security advocates ignore looming cuts in retiree benefits if nothing is done.

There is a great deal of anxiety among members of Congress about what is the right thing to do. Your help crystalizing their thinking is key in passing pension reform before the current Pension Protection Act Multiemployer provisions expire in December, 2014.

Maryland and Virginia have 23 members of Congress, many of them in key committee or leadership positions. SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Chapter and SMACNA's legislative office on Capitol Hill are working closely together and need your support and participation.

To start, we urge you to invest a little of your time by joining us at the conference to arm yourself with the HVAC facts of life. Simply drive in on Wednesday for our opening session, reception and dinner. Come back Thursday for our forum on pensions and energy efficiency which will arm you with all the information you need for your Capitol Hill visits. Join other contractors from around the country on the Hill Thursday afternoon or let us set up appointments for you later. If you want, come back Friday for the OSHA session on the Silica rule.

To register, call SMACNA Mid-Atlantic at 301/446-0002 ext. 100.

Better Buildings Act



Recently, the House Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously approved and the House passed The Better Buildings Act (H.R. 2126), a

bipartisan energy efficiency bill authored by Rep. Peter Welch and Rep. David McKinley (R-WV). Welch is a member of the Committee and the House leader on energy efficiency issues.

Tenant spaces in commercial buildings account for more than half of a building's total energy consumption. With a goal of achieving optimal performance levels in commercial buildings, The Better Buildings Act will establish energy efficiency best practices for tenants in commercial building spaces. Tenants meeting these high standards will be awarded a new "TENANT STAR" certification. The new program is similar to the existing ENERGY STAR program which certifies commercial buildings as highly energy efficient. The coveted ENERGY STAR label helps commercial building owners attract tenants and investors.

Rep. Welch is also the author of the Home Owner Managing Energy Savings Act (H.R. 2128), the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (H.R. 1616), and the Energy Savings Through Public-Private Partnerships Act (H.R. 2689). Welch and McKinley are co-chairs of the House High Performance Building Caucus and Welch is the founder and co-chair of the House Energy Savings Performance Caucus.

Welch's legislation is expected to be considered by the full House of Representatives in the near future.

D.C. Council Approves Marijuana Decriminalization

The D.C. Council voted on March 4 in favor of a bill to decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use.

Mayor Vincent Gray is expected to sign the bill into law. Then it will have to wait for the standard congressional review period before going into effect. Congress has rarely used its veto powers over D.C. laws.

The vote was little more than a formality. The council had already approved decriminalization by an 11-to-1 vote. But before that initial vote, the council watered down the bill by maintaining criminal penalties for smoking pot in public.

ACE weighed in stating that prohibiting employers for testing for marijuana had inherent risks.

Mayor Vincent Gray and Police Chief Cathy Lanier supported maintaining criminal penalties for public smoking.

If the bill becomes law, the district would join the 17 states that have some form of decriminalization.

Councilmember Tommy Wells, the bill's lead sponsor, said the district will have one of the nation's strongest decriminalization policies because the civil fine for possession will be just \$25. However, he is concerned that racial disparities will persist among those arrested for smoking.

The vote was 10-1-1 with Ward 7 Councilmember Yvette Alexander casting the only "no" vote. Councilmember Vincent Orange voted "present," rather than casting an up or down vote. Councilmember Marion Barry was hospitalized and was not able to vote.

**Coming in May
"Connections"
Suppliers' Showcase
Listing of top industry
Vendors**

DC Mayoral Candidates Discuss Development



Washington, D.C. mayoral candidates discussed their vision for the city as well as development plans if elected at a special debate sponsored by DCBIA, the D.C. Chamber of Commerce, AOBA, the Greater Washington Board of Trade and others at the George Washington University.

Candidates participating in the debate (left to right) were Muriel Bowser, Jack Evans, Mayor Vincent Gray, Reta Lewis, Vincent Orange, and Tommy Wells.

The candidates presented their views on prohibiting employers from asking job applicants about past criminal history, height restrictions on buildings constructed in the District, jobs for District residence, and what the city needs to do to become more "business friendly."

While all agreed that the District needed to take action on becoming more competitive in attracting business to the city, there was disagreement on how this was to be achieved.

Most agreed that taxes had to be reduced to match those in Virginia and Maryland. Others said that the task of applying for and receiving permits had to be simplified and less time consuming.

In looking ahead, there was consensus that Washington, D.C. will continue to be a "hot bed" for development. There was talk about the new soccer stadium, the development in Anacostia with a new campus for Microsoft in the works, and new development along the New York Avenue corridor.

The candidates were equally optimistic about seeing a new bigger and domed RFK Stadium being built within the next 10 years.

Members Visit Suitland Training Center

On March 6 members of the SMACNA Mid-Atlantic Chapter toured the Sheet Metal Workers' Local Union 100 Training Center in Suitland, Maryland.



Members were joined by contractor and union JATC trustees and learned about the process of recruiting and training apprentices. School Administrator Norbert Klusmann led members through the computer labs, welding stations, and work areas where students get hands-on experience.

Members also heard about plans to enlarge the school. With groundbreaking scheduled for this spring, there was great excitement and support for this project.

**Join Fellow Contractors at the
National Issues Conference
Wednesday, April 30 – Friday, May 2nd**

**Renaissance Washington Hotel
999 9th St., NW; Washington, DC**

- **Learn about Pension Reform**
- **Meet your Congressional Representatives**

Questions: Call 202/547-8202