CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR

Q&A WITH 2026 CSEA KEYNOTE JASON KUNZ 10

BUILD CALIFORNIA SUMMER CAMPS 15

RECORD TURNOUT FOR 2026 CONSTRUCT 22

Honoring Safety Excellence

AGC of California Recognizes Winners of 2026 Construction Safety Excellence Awards Competition



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CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026



6 Q&A WITH JASON KUNZ

2026 CSEA Keynote and Change Maker Offers Insights on Construction Safety & Health

During his October 8th address at the CSEA Awards, Kunz shared strategies, approaches and insights designed to help contractors improve safety leadership within their own companies and the industry at large.

BY CAROL EATON

10 HONORING SAFETY EXCELLENCE

Construction Safety Excellence Awards Recognizes 2026 Winners

The 39th annual competition spotlights AGC of California companies and individuals who lead the industry in safety.

BY CAROL EATON

12 CSEA'S HIGH HAZARD WINNER

BALI Construction Recognized for West Harbor Development Infrastructure Project

The contractor took on critical high-hazard work beneath one of Southern California's most anticipated new destinations to successfully deliver this high-hazard project, finishing with zero lost-time injuries.

IN EVERY ISSUE

2 MOVING MOUNTAINS
Raising the Bar on Safety in Our Industry

4 ADVOCATING FOR THE INDUSTRY
California's 2026 State Election: Key Ballot Initiatives to Watch

15 INVESTING IN OUR INDUSTRY
Collective Effort Enables Build California Summer Camps to Activate Next Generation Workforce

22 BUILDING YOUR NETWORK
Record Turn Out for CONSTRUCT 2026

SHORT SUBJECTS

25 LEARN, ENGAGE & GROW

13 CSEA'S SUPERINTENDENT AWARD

Myers and Sons Superintendent Mike Stein Honored

This field leader demonstrated an exceptional commitment to safety by adopting a hands-on approach that has produced an outstanding record for his jobsites.

20 BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND GROWING MARKETS:

Owners' Showcases Shine Spotlight on Billions in Upcoming Work for California Contractors

While contractors clearly derive a host of benefits from AGC's Owners Showcases, owners similarly benefit from their participation. MWD's Michael Thomas shares his perspective.

BY CAROL EATON



Raising the Bar on Safety in our Industry

Putting people first has always been a central tenet of how to build a better construction company – and, in turn, to deliver a better project. And there is no better way to elevate and promote a people-focused culture on construction jobsites than by fostering a culture of safety.

But achieving a true culture of safety takes constant work and the willingness to change and grow. We need to always be willing to rethink what we are doing to raise the bar and continuously improve our approach towards mitigating and managing construction jobsite hazards. Simply put, we should never be satisfied with "good enough." That was an underlying theme from Jason Kunz, keynote speaker at our recent Construction Safety Excellence Awards (CSEA) event, who challenged us all to think differently about how we speak about and create safety culture and, in turn, safer jobsites.

As Kunz pointed out, for years the construction industry has talked about making sure our employees return home from work each day "as good as" when they started it. But "as good as" isn't good enough – rather, we should view our jobsites as opportunities for people to learn, grow, and leave each day better than when they started.

It is fundamental that we see this opportunity for our people. They should be able to come to work each day expecting to leave better: better trained, more experienced, and more accomplished. When we see safety and our work as an investment in our people, we see employees motivated to give more to their work and our jobsites. Additionally, we see an opportunity for our teams to be better and stronger, made up of people who care for each other and who want to help improve the overall safety culture for all.

AGC of California's 2026 CSEA Awards, held in conjunction with our CONSTRUCT Conference in Palm Springs on October 8, again demonstrated our members' ongoing commitment to making safety paramount to our industry's success. This annual awards event recognizes and rewards the best examples of safety in our industry. You'll find highlights of this year's winners within this issue of *California Constructor*, and you can also read more about what Jason Kunz had to say in his address to attendees in a Q&A on page 6.

Congratulations to all our winners and finalists for leading the way in safety for the construction industry! We are grateful to all those who were able to attend the CONSTRUCT Conference and participate with our CSEA program, our showcases, and speakers. AGC of California works hard every day to better the construction industry in our state.





Kindest Regards,
Peter Tateishi, *CEO*

AGC CALIFORNIA

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If passed, AGC of California-supported initiatives would allow the state to invest in the construction industry and build the infrastructure we need for the future.

California's 2026 State Election: Key Ballot Initiatives to Watch

BY FELIPE FUENTES



California's 2026 General Election is almost here (as of press time), bringing a clear answer to who will take over as governor of California after Gavin Newsom. Whether Xavier Becerra earns the post or Steve Hilton sweeps in, Californians will surely want to watch this election.

Alongside the race for governor, voters have many other key races to pay attention to with 80 California Assembly seats and 20 California Senate seats up for reelection. Like the State Assembly, all seats of the U.S. House of Representatives are also up for election. With the passage of Proposition 50, which mandates the redefinition of California's voter district boundaries, some surprising outcomes are likely to emerge in the congressional races.

This election cycle, voters can weigh in on 14 statewide propositions that could change a variety of infrastructure, healthcare, and tax laws. AGC has taken positions on five of these ballot measures.

Proposition 45

AGC of California remains strongly in support of Proposition 45 and has committed $250,000 toward its passage. If passed, Proposition 45 would set deadlines for environmental review on specified infrastructure projects to reduce delays and delay-induced costs. The last edition of *California Constructor* contains a more in-depth review of this proposition and AGC of California's staunch support of it. Similarly supported by AGC of California are Proposition 1 and Proposition 2; opposed are Propositions 40 and 43.

Proposition 1

Proposition 1 aims to combat the housing crisis through an $11.25 billion bond, with $1.25 billion dedicated to veteran housing, and the rest put toward affordable renter housing, homeownership, farmworker housing, and related programs. The bond has the potential to fund up to 40,000 rental units and help an additional 40,000 Californians buy a home. Through this measure, California can combat the housing crisis, create statewide construction pipelines, and support jobs in the construction industry.

Proposition 2

AGC of California also supports Proposition 2, which would allow the state to deposit more into its rainy-day fund. Proposition 2 would raise the deposit cap from 10% to 20% of general fund tax revenues, allowing for future stability during downturns.

Proposition 2 also authorizes spending tax revenues to pay off the state's federal unemployment-insurance loans and stipulates that, once capped, the funds may be spent only on infrastructure. If passed, these larger reserves would create a cushion to insulate the state from abrupt infrastructure cuts during downturns, allowing surpluses from past years to carry the general fund through dips in revenue. Additionally, the infrastructure-only stipulation directly supports funding for jobs in construction.

Proposition 40

Proposition 40 has garnered much media attention since its inception. The billionaire tax act would impose a one-time tax for 2026 on individuals and certain trusts with total net worth exceeding $1 billion. The liability for this tax depends on California residency on January 1, 2026, and it requires taxpayers to pay immediately or in five installments with a deferral charge.

Ninety percent of the proceeds from this tax would support healthcare, with the rest of the tax reserved for education and food assistance. While this measure aims to offset state and federal reductions to health, education, and food programs, multiple state offices predict that the tens of billions in temporary revenue this tax

generates could be significantly offset by an ongoing annual income-tax loss of hundreds of millions of dollars. AGC of California opposes this measure because it believes taxpayer and private business relocation could occur in response to this initiative, and because the proposition lacks dedicated infrastructure funding.

Proposition 43

The final ballot initiative AGC of California addresses is Proposition 43, which would make it harder to enact or increase local taxes by requiring two-thirds voter approval for citizen-initiated local special taxes. Supporters of Proposition 43 argue that the measure provides uniform taxpayer protection by preventing public agencies or labor groups from using citizen-led initiatives to bypass the two-thirds standard.

However, opponents argue that the proposition would make it much harder to approve locally supported revenue for transportation, public works, housing, and similar projects. AGC of California supports protections against ill-advised special taxes; however, dedicated local taxes are a pivotal tool for funding infrastructure. To prevent adverse impacts on the construction community, AGC of California leans toward opposing Proposition 43.

If passed, AGC of California-supported initiatives would allow the state to invest in the construction industry and build the infrastructure we need for the future. Voices in construction are more important than ever. Elections shape our industries, our schools, our communities, and by voting, we participate in that change. Go vote!

Voices in construction are more important than ever. Elections shape our industries, our schools, and our communities, and by voting, we help drive that change. Go vote!



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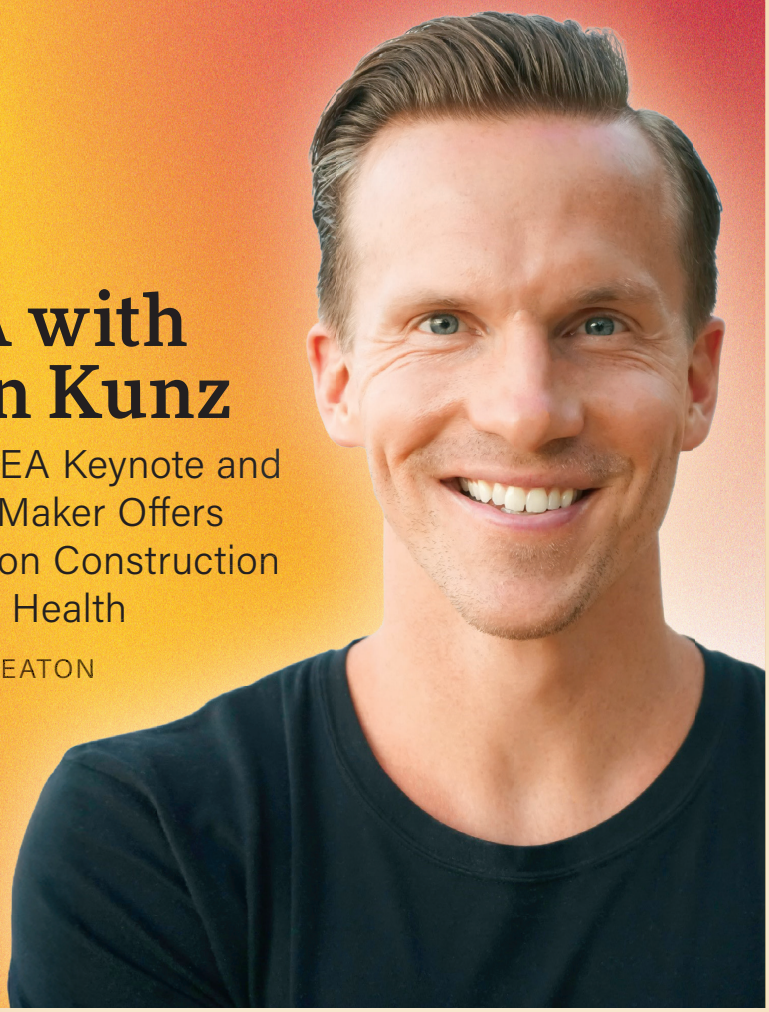
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Q&A

Q&A with Jason Kunz

2026 CSEA Keynote and Change Maker Offers Insights on Construction Safety & Health

BY CAROL EATON



As a nationally recognized consultant, advisor, keynote speaker, and change maker in the health and safety arena, Jason Kunz brings a strong passion and unique perspective to his work helping organizations and leaders reduce serious injury and fatality (SIF) risks in the construction industry.

A co-author and contributing architect of the newly updated ASTM standards that address SIF prevention, Kunz was named a Rising Star of Safety by the National Safety Council in 2025. He launched his Minneapolis-based firm, The Kunz Company LLC, in 2024 after more than a decade in health and safety-related roles at 3M Company.

During his October 8, 2026 keynote address to several hundred attendees at AGC of California's Construction Safety Excellence Awards (CSEA) in Palm Springs, Kunz shared strategies, approaches, and insights to help contractors improve safety leadership within their companies and the industry at large.

California Constructor spoke with Kunz before his CSEA address to learn more about his professional journey, what he planned to share, and the biggest takeaways for his audience. Excerpts from that interview follow.

CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR: You've delivered sessions and keynotes to more than 40,000 people across 40 countries on various safety topics since you began this work. What sparked your interest in using your voice to amplify the topics of safety and leadership?

JASON KUNZ: I spent about 15 years at 3M, where I cut my teeth in safety and health. What really opened my eyes was when I spent four years in sales for their Personal Safety Division (the customer-facing side of the business), selling respiratory, fall protection, head, eye, and face protection to customers across various industries, construction included.

During those four years, I drove across the Midwest (and beyond), putting about 80,000 miles on the company vehicle every year and making about 4,000 in-person, customer-facing sales calls. A lot of that time was spent with our construction clients. I began to understand that, statistically, it's more dangerous to work in the construction industry in the United States than it is to get deployed to the Middle East as an American soldier. I started to learn about the significant strain and stress construction professionals can face from a mental health perspective.

The data shows there were 1.6 million suicide attempts in 2023 – that's just what's reported. There is six times the likelihood for a construction worker to die of an opioid overdose compared to any other industry. And I believe that's down from what it used to be. So, there's been progress, but it's still clearly a problem. I want to contribute in some small way. For me, that means speaking to the industry and giving them tools to improve their companies, their worksites, and their lives.

The other piece is that construction is as open and as interested as any industry I work with in serving, supporting, and improving their people and operations. Every construction client I work with wants to do better. They want ideas, insights, suggestions and solutions. And then they don't just think about it; they actually implement it. There's a real opportunity in construction to serve and support, to leave people better than we found them.

CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR: What shifts in the health and safety culture in

construction have you observed since you've been in it – has there been significant movement?

JASON KUNZ: There are a few things. Number one, when I first started, we treated every injury the same. We treated a paper cut like a fatality or an ankle sprain like an amputation – at least on paper – as absurd as that sounds. Companies obsessed over their TRIR (total recordable incident rate). As long as your TRIR was below 2.0, for example, you were safe, and this somehow meant you were a "good" company. And if for some reason your TRIR was above 2.0, say, that must mean you are unsafe.

It would be similar to your doctor checking only your blood pressure to determine your holistic health. No one would argue that's a useful approach.

As this industry knows especially well, TRIR is statistically irrelevant. It has no direct correlation with serious injuries or fatalities (SIFs). So you've seen the construction industry willing to evolve, willing to adapt, willing to ask the hard questions, and really, leading the way when it comes to things like embracing the principles of SIF prevention, and adopting Energy Based Safety (EBS) – evolving their measures and metrics for what it truly means to be "safe."

When you look at implementing and integrating EBS, construction is leading the charge, and other industries are picking it up as a result. Understanding that energy causes harm. More energy causes more harm, and safeguards save lives. Those principles (around EBS) are not just ideology or theory; they are physics-based principles that come from the Construction Safety Research Alliance.

Secondly, I have a saying: "Where focus goes, energy flows." Construction has REALLY started focusing on the hazards that can seriously harm and kill – what some call STCKY. Not the hazards that can cause paper cuts and ankle sprains.

"I have a saying: 'Where focus goes, energy flows.' Construction has REALLY started focusing on the hazards that can seriously harm and kill – what some call STCKY. If and when we are able to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities across all industries, it will partly be because the construction industry said, 'Enough is enough.' They've been leading the way for some time."

– JASON KUNZ

Construction has set its sights on identifying, prioritizing, and controlling the hazards that can seriously harm or kill, doing so with proven methods such as effective pre-task planning to verify safeguards and controls, evolving its metrics, and emphasizing EBS strategies such as the Energy Wheel and HECA (High-Energy Control Assessment – a standardized safety metric and observation process used to measure frontline worker protection against life-threatening, high-energy hazards.) If and when we are able to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities across all industries, it will partly be because the construction industry said, "Enough is enough." They've been leading the way for some time.

Finally, I had a conversation the other day with an executive at a national subcontractor based in Minnesota. She said that a few of her superintendents still say things like, "I need you to leave your problems at the gate." She called it a 1980s leadership mentality. These outdated styles are by far the minority now. She was particularly impressed with how frontline and front office leaders in construction have been willing to evolve their own leadership styles, practices, and beliefs. These "soft" skills, as we used to call them, are more essential than ever in the modern and future of work of construction, and leaders are more willing to embrace new styles of leading, and leading well.

CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR: Construction has traditionally been seen as slower to change than other industries. What sparked this shift toward more effectively addressing workplace safety, in your opinion?

JASON KUNZ: First, anytime a leader sneezes, somebody is going to catch the cold. What I mean is that leadership creates culture, and culture drives behavior. If you're an executive or senior leader in construction, you're probably a very intelligent, driven individual. Construction leaders started thinking, behaving, and acting differently because they recognized what was needed. They noticed the SIF problem was unacceptable. They acknowledged we were underserving



workers across the industry from a "whole person health" perspective. They led the way – and as a result, we're seeing improvements.

And let me also make sure to give credit where credit is due, in terms of the association work that is happening here. AGC of America, AGC of California, CPWR, the National Safety Council, ASSP, Construction Safety Research Alliance (CSRA), and MANY others – these associations drew a line in the sand, made bold commitments, and let their actions follow. I believe their support has really started to move the needle. Ten to 15 years ago, those associations started doubling down on the right things when it comes to safety. This really helped companies move in the right direction on health and safety in the industry.

CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR: What do you want to be the biggest takeaway from your CSEA keynote?

JASON KUNZ: Every great keynote does three things: it engages the audience, educates the attendees, and empowers people to take action.

Engagement in construction only happens when more than one person learns. And if we truly are going to send people home better, we need to make sure that more of our observations lead to better conversations, which lead to engagement where both people walk away with an insight or idea, and where the leaders get smarter. Because when leaders get smarter, organizations move forward. And when workers get sharper, they can make better decisions in the field and go home at the end of the day feeling even better about the work they did that day.

CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR: Are you bringing some specific tips/marching orders/how to's that you want people to absorb?

JASON KUNZ: Betty Flowers said this originally: "If you're not getting the answers you want from your workers, it's not a problem with your workers; it's a problem with your questions." And so, if when we ask questions, we get "yeses and no's" or "maybes" or "kind-of's, fine or good or not sure," that's ok. But the quality of those responses is in direct proportion to the questions that we ask.

So we're going to give this group a handful of questions to ask. We might do a live AI demo, or maybe a demo before the address. We will show them the power of using AI to create better questions during pre-task planning, JHAs and JS's, post-event investigations, and debriefs. We want to give people actionable, tangible ways to improve the quality of their engagements!

CALIFORNIA CONSTRUCTOR: Anything else you'd like to share?

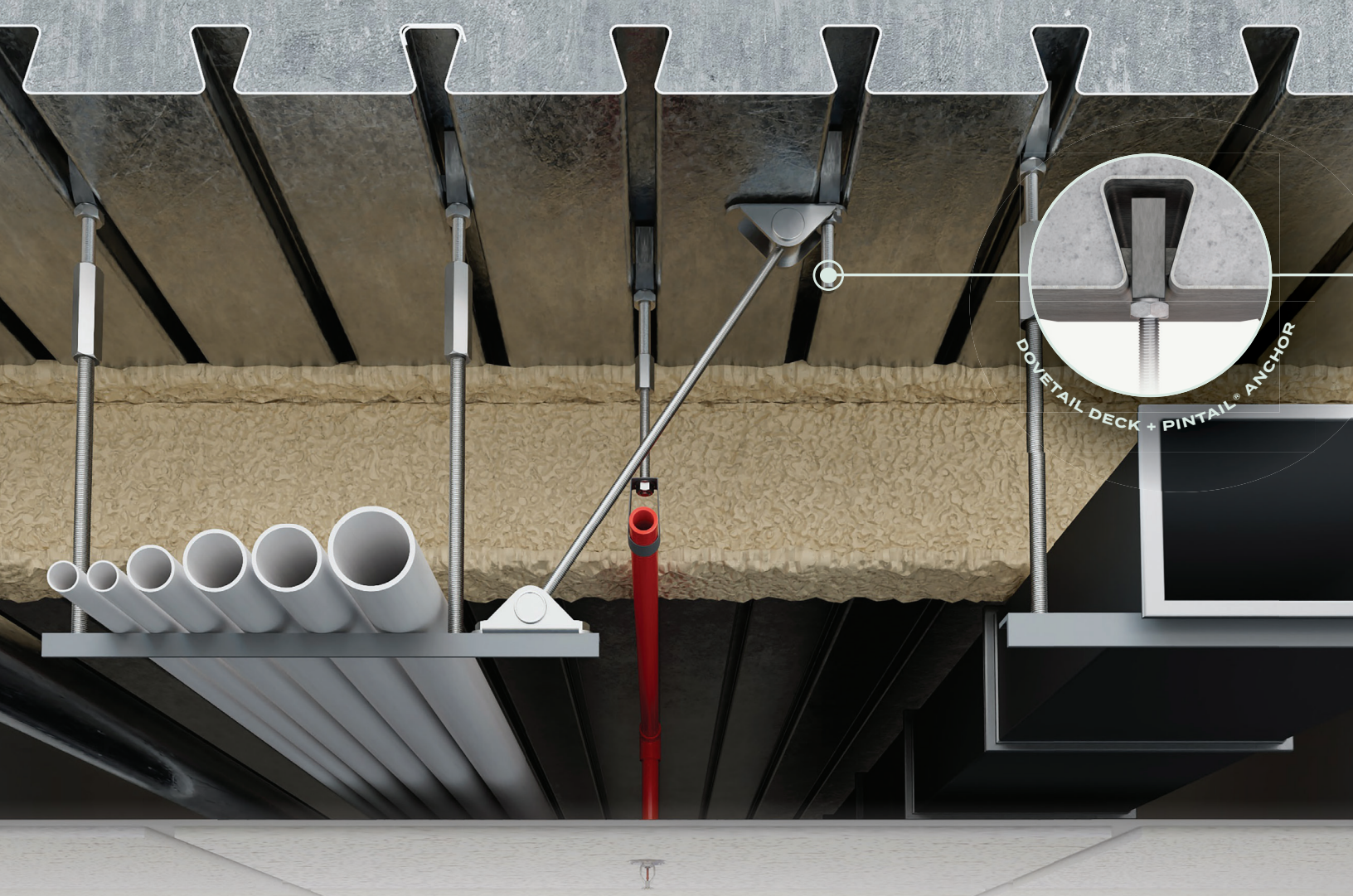
JASON KUNZ: YES – a "thank you!" Thank you to the men and women in the state of California and beyond who work diligently every day to send every construction professional home a little better than they came, who work intentionally to keep critical infrastructure scaling up, who work thoughtfully to ensure we're caring for the whole person.

Most of this room will have heard of energy-based safety. But for the most part, they won't have heard of energy-based leadership. And we'll talk about that and include an engaging, fun exercise.

Energy-based leadership is straightforward; it says that influence is binary. We either add to our influence or subtract from it based on what we say and don't say, and what we do and don't do. Energy-based leadership also means that in every interaction, we either leave people lifted or we leave people with less. So we'll talk about that, what it looks like, and how we truly can leave people lifted.

The last thing I want to make sure this audience really understands is this idea: if we are truly going to send people home better – it's like, no one is coming to save them. And at same time, nobody is coming to stop them. Their agency and autonomy to do that are greater than ever.

I want to make sure they understand my and others' strong appreciation for the work they've done during the past several years to ask the hard questions and have the difficult conversations. And for many of them to lean in and step into areas that they really haven't had to before. I want them to feel a deep level of appreciation for how many people they have impacted and will continue to impact moving forward, based on them humbly being willing to evolve their personal leadership abilities and philosophies.



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Honoring Safety Excellence

AGC of California Recognizes Winners of 2026 Construction Safety Excellence Awards Competition

BY CAROL EATON

AGC of California recently recognized the best in safety in the California construction industry with the 39th annual Construction Safety Excellence Awards (CSEA), in partnership with presenting sponsor Safety Mojo.

The prestigious annual awards event was held on October 8, 2026 at the Grand Hyatt Indian Wells in conjunction with CONSTRUCT 2026, AGC of California's annual networking and professional development conference. The CSEA luncheon drew several hundred construction executives, safety professionals, and student chapter members to honor leading California construction companies and individuals for safety excellence.

AGC of California President-Elect Allison Otto, Otto Construction, helped kick off the safety awards and welcomed attendees while offering a few comments on safety in the industry.

"In construction, safety is at the heart of every successful project. It's built into the way we plan, the way we work, and the way we look out for one another each day," Otto commented. "At the end of the day, our greatest responsibility is simple: to make sure every person who steps onto a job site has the support, resources, and environment they need to return home safely.

"AGC of California and our member companies continue to lead important conversations around what it truly means to create a safe workplace," Otto continued. "That means protecting our workforce physically, but it also means supporting their mental and emotional well-being. Over the past several years, AGC of California has continued to expand its efforts around mental health awareness, providing resources, education, and opportunities for our industry to have conversations that haven't always been easy

Some of the sponsors, winners, and finalists of AGC of California's 2026 Construction Safety Excellence Awards gathered at the 39th annual Awards Luncheon at the Grand Hyatt Indian Wells on October 8. Companies and AGC leadership that are represented in this picture include, left to right: AGC Safety and Health Council Chair Robert Rodriguez; Bali Construction (second and third from left); Myers and Sons Construction; ISEC, Inc.; Myers and Sons (Superintendent of the Year); W.M. Lyles (Frontline Foreman); Hensel Phelps; Teichert Construction; Royal Electric Co.; Blach Construction; AGC of California Senior Safety Manager Tresten Keys; and AGC of California President-Elect Allison Otto.



AGC of California Safety and Health Council Chair Robert Rodriguez



AGC of California President-Elect Allison Otto

2026 CSEA Award Winners

Main Category/Worker Hours

Building Division

Under 500,000 Worker Hours

1st place – **Blach Construction**

Finalist – **BNBuilders**

Over 500,000 Worker Hours

1st place – **Hensel Phelps**

Finalists – **Clark Construction and Webcor Builders**

Heavy, Civil and Highway Division

Under 500,000 Worker Hours

1st place – **Guy F. Atkinson Construction**

Finalist – **NOVA Group**

500,000-1.5 Million Worker Hours

1st place - **Myers & Sons Construction**

Finalists – **Sully-Miller Contracting Co. and W.M. Lyles**

Over 1.5 Million Worker Hours

1st place – **Teichert Construction**

Finalists – **Granite Construction and Griffith Company**

Specialty Contractor Division

Under 900,000 Worker Hours

1st place – **ISEC, Inc.**

Finalist – **Trademark Concrete**

Over 900,000 Worker Hours

1st place – **Royal Electric Company**

Finalist – **Murray Company**

Specialized Awards

Individual Safety Effort of a Frontline Foreman – John Kenney, W.M. Lyles

Individual Safety Effort of a Project Superintendent – Mike Stein, Myers and Sons Construction

Safety on a High Hazard Project – Bali Construction, West Harbor Development – Phase 1 Underground Utility Infrastructure Application. **(Finalist: SKANSKA for Gilman Springs Road Phase 6 project).**

For the fourth year, the Safety Professional of the Year will be presented at the AGC of California Installation & Awards Gala on February 5, 2027 at the Fairmont San Francisco.

Thank You to the Judges for the 2026 AGC of California CSEA Awards

- **Mike Donlon** – *MD Safety Service LLC*
- **Lisa Prince** – *The Prince Firm*
- **Kevin Thompson** – *Cal/OSHA Reporter*

For more information on AGC of California's safety and health services or upcoming activities of the AGC of California Safety & Health Council, contact Tresten Keys, senior safety & regulatory manager, at KeysT@agc-ca.org.

to have. Together, we can continue building a stronger, safer industry—one that protects both the body and the mind, and one where every worker knows they are supported.

2026 AGC of California Safety & Health Council Chair Robert Rodriguez, safety director with Bali Construction, delivered opening remarks at the awards luncheon alongside Cory Linton, CEO and founder of Safety Mojo, the CSEA partner safety sponsor. Keynote speaker Jason Kunz, founder of The Kunz Company LLC, delivered a compelling address on using energy-based safety and energy-based leadership as essential tools to reduce serious injury and fatality risks in the construction industry.

BALI Construction Wins CSEA High Hazard Award For West Harbor Development Infrastructure Project



BALI Construction took on critical high-hazard work beneath one of Southern California's most anticipated new destinations to successfully complete the West Harbor Development – Phase 1A Underground Utility Infrastructure project at the Port of Los Angeles waterfront in San Pedro, CA.

The project formed the essential below-grade backbone for a development that is transforming approximately 42 acres of the former Ports O' Call Village into a waterfront destination. BALI's work included approximately 15,400 linear feet of sanitary sewer, storm drain, domestic water, fire water, and irrigation piping; installation of a sanitary sewer pump station; approximately 30,000 square feet of infiltration basins, manholes, and more. The contractor also provided trenching and excavation support for the electrical and communications subcontractor.

BALI completed this high-hazard work with zero lost-time injuries. That result is substantive because crews worked for approximately 18 months around deep excavations, Type C and sandy soils, shallow groundwater, active dewatering, fall hazards, and many other hazards. It reflects the combined



The West Harbor project required extensive coordination of underground utility construction, heavy equipment, material staging, and adjacent public infrastructure within a highly active waterfront environment.

effect of multi-tiered oversight, daily hazard analysis, adaptable protective systems, planning, and supervision.

AGC of California awarded the project and BALI Construction its Construction Safety Excellence Award for "Safety on a High Hazard Project" for 2026.

Overcoming the project's many high-hazard challenges took a multipronged approach. Among the solutions deployed:

- **Excavation protection matched the field conditions.** BALI used a flexible approach, selecting the protective systems best suited to the depth, soil, access, and adjacent improvements at each project location. This varied approach included using engineered beam-and-plate shoring, slide rail systems, trench shields and boxes, vertical hydraulic shoring, and properly sloped excavation.
- **Dewatering protected the excavation and waterfront.** The approximately 500-GPM dewatering system was operated and maintained as part of the excavation-protection plan for about 14 months, with around-the-clock monitoring, maintenance, and support. BALI continually coordinated groundwater extraction for the active work areas.
- **Daily planning converted the design into field controls.** BALI used daily Job Hazard Analyses, Competent Person excavation and shoring inspections, site audits, traffic-control plans, soils technician collaboration, and continuous field supervision, while piloting an enhanced, more effective stretch-and-flex and body-mechanics program that helped reduce companywide soft tissue injuries by 60% year over year.
- **Coordination across work crews, utilities, and trades.** Utility coordination and confined-space procedures were integrated into the daily plan. BALI consistently and effectively worked with MATT Construction, Jerico Development, the Port of Los Angeles, LADWP, and other stakeholders to exceed goals and expectations in budget and schedule.
- **Emergency and environmental readiness supported the work.** The project-specific Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plan established a common response framework for leaks, releases, changing water conditions, and other urgent events.

Through these and other solutions, BALI successfully completed the project without any major safety incidents.

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Myers & Sons Superintendent Mike Stein Honored

Leading complex water and wastewater projects for Myers and Sons Construction in Southern California, including the San Bernardino Tertiary Treatment System and the Carancho Pump Station Expansion for Rancho California Water District, superintendent Mike Stein has long demonstrated that safety leadership starts with personal accountability.

During the past year, he produced more documented safety inspections than any other person in the company, in any role – including people whose entire job title is safety. Although nobody assigned him that task, Stein has adopted a hands-on approach to safety that has produced an outstanding record for his jobsites, which finished the year with no recordable injuries.

Stein was recognized with the 2026 AGC of California Construction Safety Excellence Award for Individual Safety Effort of a Project Superintendent.

In recommending him for the award, Myers & Sons President Clinton W. Myers noted that the complex work he manages places crews in permit-required confined spaces and alongside energized plant systems that remain in service throughout construction. "Mike evaluates each of his projects for the hazards that exist, as well as those that could present themselves during the course of construction," Myers said. "He is especially diligent in coordinating shutdowns, isolations, and lockout directly with the plant operators, so that no member of his crew is working from an assumption about the condition of a system."

"Mike has fully embraced our use of behavior-based safety tools, recognizing crew members and project sites for safe practices," Myers added. "His enthusiasm and dedication toward safety have resulted in crews that report conditions openly, correct them early, and complete their work without injury."

W.M. Lyles Foreman Honored

W.M. Lyles foreman John Kenney was recognized for his exceptional work in jobsite safety with the "Individual Effort of a Frontline Foreman Award" by AGC of California this year.

During 15 years with the company, Kenney has made safety a priority every day and exemplified what it means to lead by example. Each morning, he walks the jobsite with his crew, identifies potential hazards, and ensures everyone understands the risks associated with the day's work.

Through the first eight months of 2026, he led W.M. Lyles' Fresno foreman group in both safety inspections and hazard observations, and his crew worked the entire period without a single recordable injury. Beyond those numbers, Kenney's quick thinking and hazard recognition skills have come into play to produce direct results on jobsites. In one notable example, he helped avert a potentially serious rigging incident on a jobsite in 2025 through detailed hazard recognition, earning a safety recognition award for his quick action and leadership.

Whether mentoring apprentices on the jobsite, working alongside his crew, or collaborating with safety professionals, Kenney consistently demonstrates that safety and productivity go hand in hand, and his leadership and commitment have earned him the respect of coworkers, management and clients.

TOP RIGHT: CSEA award winner Mike Stein (third from left) accepted the award for Individual Safety Effort of a Project Superintendent from AGC of California Safety & Health Council Chair Robert Rodriguez, AGC of California President-Elect Allison Otto, and AGC of California Senior Safety & Regulatory Manager Tresten Keys.

TOP LEFT: CSEA Frontline Foreman award winner John Kenney (second from right) accepted the award for Individual Safety Effort of a Frontline Foreman.

Collective Effort Enables Build California Summer Camps to Activate Next Generation Workforce

BY CAROL EATON


Eros Mejorado with another student at the 2026 Build California Camp in Southern California.

It takes a village.

When it comes to activating and engaging the next-generation construction workforce, this age-old proverb has never been more true.

From parents, educators, and industry-leading programs such as Build California to the construction professionals who devote time and energy connecting with students in classrooms, on jobsite tours, and at career fairs, internships, and summer camps, inspiring young people to consider the many well-paying, fulfilling career options in the construction industry is a team effort.

To further this goal, Build California launched its Northern and Southern California summer camps two years ago. Created as a catalyst for students interested in exploring construction career pathways, the camps also advance the industry's goal to strengthen the construction workforce pipeline in California.

In 2026, the Build California summer camps provided 34 rising high school juniors and seniors a comprehensive look at diverse construction career opportunities through a mix of hands-on learning sessions, presentations by industry professionals, interactions with trade and contractor representatives, and professional development workshops on resume building, personal communications, interview tips, and more. In post-camp surveys, 75% of participants reported an increased interest in pursuing a career in construction.

But even as participants rated the experience as overwhelmingly positive after attending, convincing high school students to commit to a week at a summer camp can be a challenge. It requires educators and schools to raise awareness, parents to provide support and encouragement, and students to be willing to try something new.

Standout Long Beach Attendee

One example of that dynamic is Eros Mejorado, a senior at Millikan High School in Long Beach. He decided to attend the 2026 Build California Summer Camp after seeing information about it through his school – and was strongly encouraged to attend by his parents.

"I found out about the camp through a flier in my weekly newsletter from my school," Eros recalled. "I wanted to do something to show (my parents) that I could take control of my own future, so I signed up – and I'm really glad that I did."

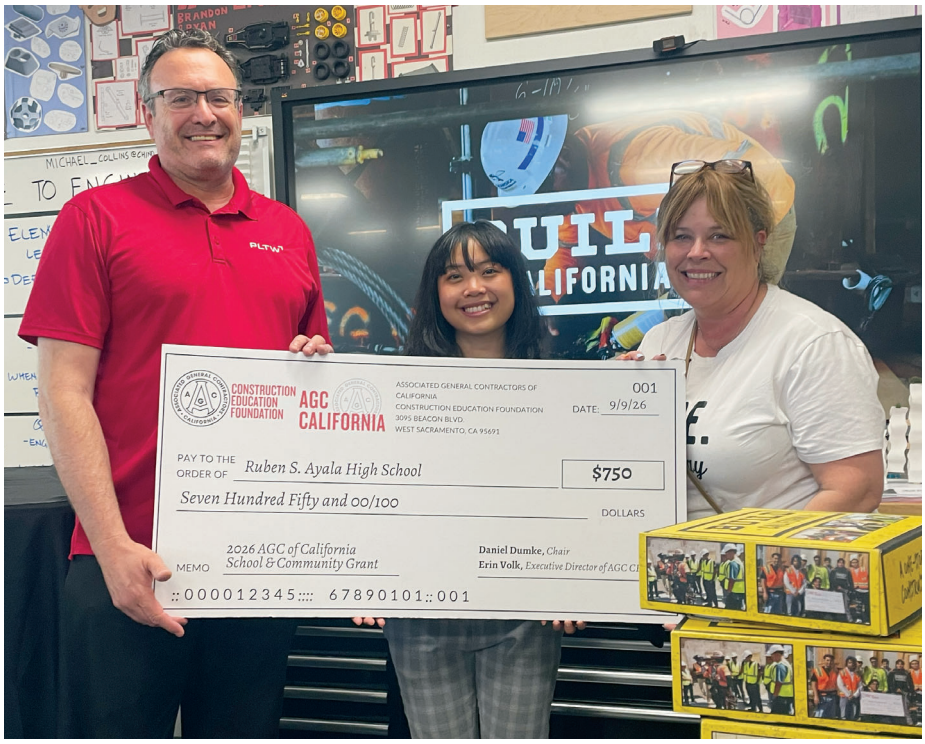
Traveling 30 minutes to an hour each way from Long Beach to the camp at the Southern California Laborers' Training School in Azusa took commitment, but was well worth it, according to Eros. He not only met other students from throughout the region but also networked with trade representatives and local contractors.

Exposure to Different Career Options

While the camp had many standout moments, Eros said he especially loved hearing about one instructor's journey at the Laborers Training School, who found his path into the trades after starting out planning to be an accountant. Other highlights included visiting the Western States Carpenters Training Center in Whittier, where students enjoyed hands-on training demonstrations; brainstorming the "shark tank" project; and interacting and networking with trades representatives and contractors, including Granite, Turner, and others.

"Getting exposure to different trades and finding out if it is a fit for you was pretty cool," he said. "I'm glad we were able to have multiple types of industry people come in to talk to us. It was also cool to learn about the people who work in the (construction) office and finance part of construction or have different types of jobs within the construction industry, which is something that really interests me."

AGC of California Workforce Placement Manager Everly Torres said Eros brought a high degree of enthusiasm and engagement to the camp, which the Build California team and event sponsor Turner Construction both noticed. "Eros was one of the campers who really stood out throughout the week," she noted. "He was very engaged, personable, showed lots of leadership within his team, asked good questions, and really seemed to be into it."



Michael Collins, left, receiving the AGC CEF grant check from Build California Workforce Outreach Manager Lyn Nhong and Inland Empire Board Member/Swinerton Sammi Shepherd.

Turner Construction was so impressed they offered him an externship that he completed in the month following the camp. During that externship, he not only had the opportunity to tour a Turner jobsite at Caltech but also gained additional exposure to the administrative and management side of construction by spending time in various Turner departments, including finance andhuman resources.

As a result of his experience at the Build California summer camp and the Turner externship, Eros said his interest in construction has grown considerably. "I do definitely want to go more into the construction industry now, while I also am still keeping college as a backup," he said.

For his parents, Veronica and Cesar Mejorado, the camp was a unique opportunity they strongly encouraged Eros to capitalize on.

"We are both the product of [attending] LA Trade Tech, so we've always tried to expose him to a lot of trades because we find it so beneficial," commented Veronica Mejorado, who works for the Long Beach Unified School District. "In addition to the contributions (a trade career makes) to society, it helps with discipline, provides consistency in terms of always having a reliable job, and brings so much growth personally and professionally to individuals."

She added that the impact the summer experiences had on Eros was clear to see.

"After the camp and externship, I saw him being more disciplined and able to

Help the Next Generation Find their Construction Career Path

In 2027, Build California is offering a Northern California Summer Camp June 14-18 and a Southern California Summer Camp July 12-16. Contact Lyn Nhong, Workforce Outreach Manager, at NhongS@agc-ca.org to get involved and support these important events.



Students who attended the Build California Camp in Southern California.

communicate a little more effectively," she said. "We heard so many amazing things that he was exposed to through this camp, and then (for Turner) to give him this externship experience was amazing. For us as parents, it's just so fun to hear about all these hands-on activities and how he was able to get so much exposure to all these companies and trades."

The Influence of Educators

The role that educators play in influencing their students to consider opportunities like Build California summer camps and other industry programs cannot be overstated.

One example is Michael Collins, who serves as the PLTW CTE-Engineering & Architecture Instructor/Chair for Baldy View Regional Occupational Program, operating in partnership with Ruben S. Ayala High School.

Collins connected with Build California in recent years as he recognized the need to "expose students to other pathways for careers that don't require a college education," he said. Invited to Build California's Educator's Summit last year, Collins said the experience was transformational. Held at the Laborers Training School in Azusa, it brought together teachers, counselors and school leaders for hands-on exploration of construction career pathways.

"I was able to hear firsthand from a lot of tradespeople, general contractors, and subcontractors," Collins said. "It was really eye-opening."

He brought back Build California trade cards to the school's career center that provide hands-on construction career information, and he noticed a strong positive response from some students.

"You could start to see eyes opening and excitement coming back to some students," he said. "The biggest thing was trying to introduce students and families to the multitude of pathways possible beyond the traditional four-year college cycle. Build California has been a really good partner for that."

> "The biggest thing was trying to introduce students and families to the multitude of pathways possible beyond the traditional four-year college cycle. Build California has been a really good partner for that."
>
> – EDUCATOR MICHAEL COLLINS

The school also received an AGC CEF Riverside/San Bernardino District School & Community Grant for 2026, enabling it to offer OSHA 10 certifications as part of its Regional Occupational Program.

Collins helped spread the word about the 2026 Build California summer camps through his program and had at least two students attend as a result. The response he heard from them? "They absolutely loved it," he noted. Feedback from the female student who attended was that "it made her more interested in construction, but she sees herself more on the business and management side," he said. "Both of their takeaways was that it was a really cool experience."

NORCAL NECA

2026 PROJECT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Each year, the NorCal NECA Project Excellence Awards recognize outstanding electrical and technology installations and the NECA contractors whose expertise, innovation, craftsmanship, and commitment to excellence bring these remarkable projects to life. These award-winning projects represent the very best of Northern California's electrical construction industry and reflect the collaboration of NECA contractors, IBEW electricians, project owners, general contractors, architects, engineers, and industry partners.

In 2026, NorCal NECA proudly honored twenty-one (21) Project Excellence Award-winning projects and the exceptional contractors and project teams behind them.

The Northern California Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NorCal NECA) represents union electrical contractors across nine Northern California counties. Through advocacy, education, labor relations, workforce development, and industry leadership, NorCal NECA provides its members with the resources and support they need to compete, innovate, and succeed.

Photos and additional information about these award-winning projects are available at **www.norcalneca.org**.

Congratulations to this Year's Winners!

1. **Beaman's, Inc.**
   - The Phoenix (Oakland, CA)

2. **Beci Electric, Inc.**
   - Merritt College Landscape and Horticulture Complex (Oakland, CA)

3. **BEI Construction, Inc.**
   - Bear Canyon & West Ford Flat BESS Projects (Middletown, CA)

4. **BEI Construction, Inc.**
   - Project Nexus (Hickman, CA)

5. **Bockmon & Woody Electric Co., Inc.**
   - City of Stockton Street Light Repairs (Stockton, CA)

6. **Bockmon & Woody Electric Co., Inc.**
   - Digital Infrastructure Capability Expansion (DICE) (Livermore, CA)

























7. **Bockmon & Woody Electric Co., Inc.**
   - Electrical Service Replacement for the Calaveras Government Center (San Andreas, CA)

8. **Bockmon & Woody Electric Co., Inc.**
   - Crestwood Selma (Selma, CA)

9. **Bockmon & Woody Electric Co., Inc.**
   - Tesla Oasis (Lost Hills, CA)

10. **Bockmon & Woody Electric Co., Inc.**
    - Turner Senior Academy Campus (Lodi, CA)

11. **Collins Electrical Company, Inc.**
    - Stockton Regional Wastewater Control Facility (Stockton, CA)

12. **Collins Electrical Company, Inc.**
    - Union Pacific Rail Road Lathrop Intermodal Expansion (French Camp, CA)



















13. **Con J. Franke Electric, Inc.**
    - Antioch Brackish Water Desalination Project (Antioch, CA)

14. **Con J. Franke Electric, Inc.**
    - Central Harbor Park (Pittsburg, CA)

15. **Contra Costa Electric, Inc.**
    - West County Re-Entry Treatment and Housing Facility (Richmond, CA)

16. **Intrepid Electronic Systems, Inc.**
    - Terra Linda High School Fire Alarm Upgrade (San Rafael, CA)

17. **Prime Electric, Inc.**
    - Kilroy Oyster Point Phase 2 Parking Garage (South San Francisco, CA)

18. **Quality Sound**
    - Calistoga High School New STEM Building & Campus Wide Fire Alarm (Calistoga, CA)

19. **Quality Sound**
    - Kaiser Vacaville ED Expansion Nurse Call System (Vacaville, CA)

20. **Ray's Electric**
    - Downtown Fiber Optic Network Phase 2 Civic Park Buildings (Walnut Creek, CA)

21. **St Francis Electric**
    - Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) & Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) System Improvements (Multiple Cities, CA)

NECA
NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

An Owner's Perspective

AGC of California Owners Showcase Events Help Build Connections and Critical Infrastructure in California

BY CAROL EATON



Michael Thomas, capital program unit manager with Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Building connections, learning about upcoming work opportunities, and growing their bottom lines. Those were just a few potential benefits for hundreds of contractors and construction professionals who attended nearly a dozen Owners Showcase events at the AGC of California CONSTRUCT conference in October 2026.

These forums have become a defining feature of the conference during the past few years, and they again hit the mark at 2026 CONSTRUCT as contractors embraced the opportunity to hear about billions of dollars of infrastructure work on the horizon in California. More than two dozen owners and agency representatives showcased their current and future construction programs in the airport and rail, education, maritime, and water and utility market sectors.

While contractors clearly derive a host of benefits from attending AGC of California Owners Showcase events, owners similarly benefit from participating. Increasing contractor interest in, and competition for, upcoming work can create a more favorable bidding environment, helping owners achieve greater return on taxpayer dollars. The showcases also give owners a chance to hear industry feedback firsthand and forge valuable partnerships with construction leaders, improving the project delivery process for all.

Sharing MWD's CIP with Contractors

To hear an owner's perspective on these Owners Showcase events, *California Constructor* recently spoke with Michael Thomas, capital program unit manager with Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California. Thomas' participation at a Water & Utility Showcase on October 8 during CONSTRUCT marked the second consecutive year he presented on MWD's

capital program at the AGC of California conference. He said he welcomed the opportunity to share his agency's critical Capital Investment Plan (CIP) with the contractors, subcontractors, and other construction industry firms in attendance.

"Our CIP has grown significantly during the last four years or so, and we are approaching a half billion dollars a year of capital work. It's such a good opportunity for us to get the word out on what we're doing," Thomas commented.

"There's so much infrastructure work in Southern California currently, and it's important that we get out there and engage with the contracting community as much as we can to let them know what's coming. The more interest there is in our projects, the better it is for us. We want to let folks know that Metropolitan Water District is a good partner to have."

During the Water & Utility Showcase, where Thomas presented alongside representatives from Southern California Edison (SCE) and San Diego Gas Company, panelists shared some of their biggest challenges working with contractors. Thomas offered the example of receiving a very low winning bid from a new contractor that had clearly left money on the table.

"We know that's going to be a challenge, but this happens to us all the time," he commented. "When we know that a particular contract is going to be especially challenging, we put extra resources on it. If it takes getting more of our engineers involved or more of our construction managers involved, then we'll do that."

At the end of the day, he said, "Our goal, which we think is the same goal as our contracting partners, is to deliver a good project and deliver it at a good value – to get in, get out and finish with a facility that is something to be proud of."

Advice to Contractors

What advice would Thomas offer contractors looking to work with MWD to achieve the smoothest workflow on their projects?

"Your submittals have to be complete, they have to be well thought out, and they have to be timely," he said. "We know pretty quickly how well our contractors have set up their office engineering and their submittal process. That is very important because our work is submittal intensive. Also, making sure you're doing everything very safely, making sure that you're setting up schedules, and having free-flowing communication between the contractors and our staff – those are all parts of delivering the whole project. The sooner the contractor figures out working with us in those ways, the better the jobs go."

While a large portion of MWD's delivery is traditional design/bid/build, more collaborative delivery approaches are now making their way into their project mix. MWD is currently employing collaborative delivery methods on two major projects underway in Southern California.

"One of the real benefits of collaborative delivery is you can mobilize more resources quickly and accelerate schedules," he noted. "We're kind of figuring it out as we go, but I'm very optimistic that this will ultimately become a regular part of our capital delivery program."

AGC To Recognize MWD as 2027 Owner of Year

MWD's participation in the 2026 Owners Showcase at CONSTRUCT is just one example of the ways in which this critical Southern California water agency works with the construction industry and AGC of California contractors throughout the year to deliver vital water project to build a better California.

Recognizing the nearly 100-year-old agency's vital role helping build California in partnership with AGC of California and its member contractors, AGC of California recently announced MWD will be recognized as its 2027 Owner of the Year during the upcoming Awards Gala on February 5, 2027 in San Francisco.

"We're certainly proud to be recognized by the contracting community for the work we do," commented Thomas. "Our partnership with industry and the work we accomplish together is critical to maintaining and expanding our critical water infrastructure in California."

> **"There's so much infrastructure work in Southern California currently, and it's important that we get out there and engage with the contracting community as much as we can to let them know what's coming."**
>
> – MICHAEL THOMAS, MWD



Another Record Set for CONSTRUCT 2026

AGC of California Conference Engages Industry Professionals in Educational, Business and Networking Events

BY CAROL EATON

A record turnout of more than 750 construction industry professionals and guests gathered at the Grand Hyatt Indian Wells October 6-9 for AGC of California's annual networking and professional development conference, CONSTRUCT 2026, presented by PlanHub.

The much-anticipated annual event drew top construction industry leaders from across California as well as dozens of students from AGC of California student chapters. They participated in a variety of business, educational and networking sessions and meetings and spent time with industry solution providers and vendors at the related Construction Expo.

Kicking off the conference with a dynamic opening session, 2026 AGC of California President Ryan Aukerman welcomed attendees and noted that "strengthening collaboration between owners and contractors continues to be a central part of our program this year."

Aukerman also announced that AGC of California won the J. Howard Mock Award from AGC of America, recognizing the AGC Chapter with the largest overall net growth in contractor membership of any AGC Chapter across the country. "That is an incredible accomplishment and one that reflects the strength of this organization and the value of the AGC of California community," he said. "It takes all of us – our members, our leadership, our partners and our staff – working together to create the programs, advocacy, resources, relationships and opportunities that make AGC of California what it is today."

General Session Speakers Deliver

Opening session speaker Zach Giglio, CEO and co-founder of GCM, delivered a keynote address that spotlighted artificial intelligence as more than a new



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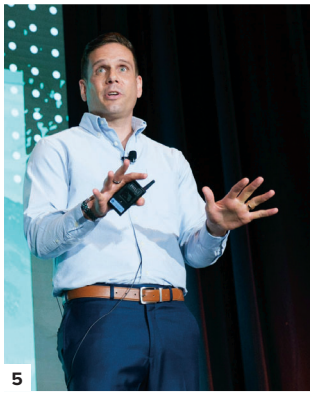
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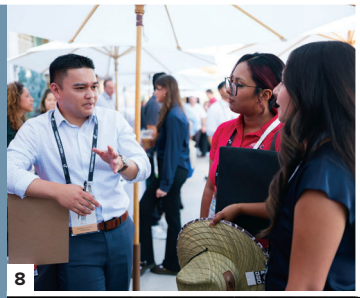


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1 AGC of California 2026 President Ryan Aukerman, Griffith Company
2 A panel of leaders from LA Metro, Caltrans, Shimmick Construction Company, Inc., and Parsons and Stacy Witbeck, led by AGC Past President Steve Rule (right) discussed the new Collaborative Leadership Initiative.
3 A group of industry leaders at CONSTRUCT who signed on to the Collaborative Leadership Initiative.
4 General Session speaker Macrina Wilkins, AGC of America Director of Market Insights
5 Opening Session keynote speaker Zach Giglio, CEO and co-founder of GCM
6 A closing general session panel that discussed politics and policy related issues included, from left, moderator Chris O'Connor, AGC of California, Alex Etchen, AGC of America, and Melanie Perron and Felipe Fuentes, Pacific Coast Capitol Advisors.
7 8 At the student chapter career fair
9 Networking at the Construction Expo
10 First Lady Kate Aukerman and 2026 President Ryan Aukerman (right) with Griffith Company colleague Ky McLeod (left) and guest during the Thursday Night Bash



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10

technology, but a true change-management opportunity. He addressed the variety of ways leaders and teams can integrate AI into everyday work to improve organizational performance and create business value.

During the October 7 general session, AGC of America Director of Market Insights Macrina Wilkins offered insights into the national construction trends and market forces at play today. Her address set the stage for the series of owner showcases that were a centerpiece of CONSTRUCT. These owner showcase sessions previewed current and upcoming work opportunities in sectors including airport, water and utility, rail, maritime work and education sectors, offering attendees the chance to hear from and interact with owners and leaders from an array of California's top public agencies.

AGC in partnership with industry leaders also formally launched an innovative new initiative called the Collaborative Leadership Project. Developed by a group of contractors, design/CM firms, owners and trade partners, the project is rooted in the premise that collaboration is a leadership choice and should exist regardless of delivery method.

AGC of California Past President Steve Rule announced the launch, explained the focus of the new initiative and then moderated a panel of leaders from LA Metro, Caltrans, Shimmick Construction Company, Inc., and Parsons and Stacy Witbeck, who helped bring the initiative to life. They invited other industry leaders in attendance to sign a formal commitment supporting the project to advance a culture of collaboration industrywide. "This is bigger than any one association, company or discipline," Rule said. "It is a place for industry to come together and advance how we work together."



AGC of California leadership on hand to accept the 2026 J. Howard Mock Award from AGC of America, recognizing the AGC Chapter with the largest overall net growth in contractor membership, were (from left): Juliana Almanza, chief of staff; 2026 President-Elect Allison Otto, Otto Construction; 2026 President Ryan Auker-man, Griffith Company; AGC of California CEO Peter Tateishi; and AGC of America President Rick Andritsch, VJS Construction Services.

The closing session for CONSTRUCT 2026 featured a panel discussion on the political and policy trends driving developments at all levels of government, as well as the industry's ongoing advocacy efforts to influence outcomes. Moderated by Chris O'Connor, AGC of California senior vice president of government and industry affairs, the session featured insights from panelists Alex Etchen, vice president of construction advocacy and risk management for AGC of America, Melanie Perron, senior advocate with Pacific Coast Capitol Advisors, and Felipe Fuentes, CEO of Pacific Coast Capitol Advisors Inc.

Opportunity to Learn, Grow and Connect

CONSTRUCT 2026 offered ample opportunities for participants to learn and connect across all generations, industry roles, and sectors.

In addition to the owner showcase sessions, more than a dozen educational sessions over three days gave student and general attendees valuable insights on everything from infrastructure funding strategies in California to jobsite security and leading from the middle.

Construction safety was also front and center with the 2026 Construction Safety Excellence Awards (CSEA) held in conjunction with the conference on October 8, as featured in this issue.

Several social and networking events provided additional opportunities to connect. These included a welcome reception, Expo with over two dozen exhibitors, Thursday Night Bash and Friday golf. Plans are already underway for Construct 2027, slated for October 5-8 again at the Grand Hyatt Indian Wells. Visit AGC of California's website at www.agc-ca.org for more on additional upcoming events in 2027.

Calendar

November 19, 2026
Women Build California Summit at McCarthy Building Companies, Inc., Newport Beach

November 19, 2026
San Joaquin District Forecast Dinner at Sunnyside Country Club, Fresno

December 4, 2026
Bay Area Region Holiday Luncheon at Pinstripes, San Mateo

December 4, 2026
Riverside/San Bernardino District Holiday Dinner at the Mission Inn, Riverside

December 8, 2026
Q4 HR Forum, Virtual

December 11, 2026
Eureka-Shasta Holiday Gathering & BOD Meeting at LuLu's Establishment, Redding

December 11, 2026
Southern California Holiday Party & Toy Drive at House of Blues, Anaheim

February 5, 2027
2027 Installation & Awards Gala, presented by Procore, at the Fairmont San Francisco

February 18, 2027
Southern California Region Wine & Beer Social - Summit House, Fullerton

February 25, 2027
Shasta District Crab Feed & Public Officials Night - Shasta District Fair & Event, Center, Anderson

April 8, 2027
San Joaquin District BBQ - Poindexter Residence, Fresno

April 9, 2027
Southern California Region Golf Classic - Pacific Palms Resort, City of Industry

April 16, 2027
Shasta District Golf Tournament - Gold Hills Golf Club, Redding

May 4-5, 2027
Legislative Day & PAC Fundraising Dinner - The Sutter Club, Sacramento

May 21, 2027
Build California Golf Tournament - Lincoln Hills Golf Club, Lincoln

June 7, 2027
Bay Area Region Golf Tournament - The Club at Castlewood, Pleasanton

June 17, 2027
Delta-Sierra District Swabbies on the River Mixer - Swabbies on the River, Sacramento

July 16-18, 2027
PAC Summer Event - The Lodge at Torrey Pines, La Jolla .

July 22, 2027
"Hackers & Slackers" Golf Tournament- Birch Hills Golf Club, Brea

August 26, 2027
Southern California Region Hot Summer Night - Puesto Anaheim, Anaheim

August 27, 2027
Small Business Construction Expo (SBCX) - Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim

August 30, 2027
Northern California Region Clay Shoot - Birds Landing Hunting Preserve & Sporting Clays, Birds Landing

September 10-12, 2027
Legal Advisory Committee Retreat* - The Lodge at Torrey Pines, La Jolla

September 20, 2027
Delta-Sierra District Golf Tournament - Granite Bay Golf Club, Granite Bay

October 5-8, 2027
CONSTRUCT Annual Conference - Grand Hyatt Indian Wells, Indian Wells

October 22, 2027
Tri-Counties District Golf Classic - River Course at Alisal, Solvang



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