

# Partners **IN** PROGRESS

SMACNA & SMWIA—Building A Future Together SPRING 2005



## MARKET EXPANSION:

WHAT WE'RE DOING  
WHERE WE'RE GOING



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## NEWS AND SHORTS



### TABB Conference: May 20-21 In Chicago

Customer relations, instructional speakers, a trade show, and much more are on the agenda for the Testing, Adjusting, and Balancing Bureau's 4th annual conference—set for May 20-21 in Chicago. More info: [www.tabbcertified.org](http://www.tabbcertified.org), or call 703-299-5646.

### Did You Know: Residential Survey Posted!

Did you know that NEMI's 151-page *Residential HVAC Market Research* report on single-family housing has been posted to the Web? Download it (you'll need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer first), here: [www.tabbcertified.org/pdfs/residential%20report.pdf](http://www.tabbcertified.org/pdfs/residential%20report.pdf).



### SFUA Adds Commitment To Stronger Local Partnerships

Changes to the Standard Form of Union Agreement—outlined in a joint five-page memo from SMWIA and SMACNA—have been posted to the Web. “The changes to the new standard form reflect a joint commitment to strengthen local partnerships and improve the organized sector's competitive position,” according to the memo.

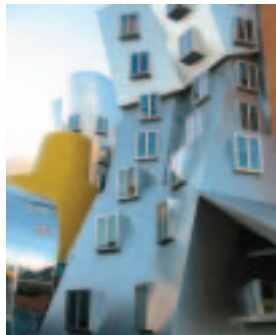
See it here: [www.smacna.org/products/njab/list\\_changes\\_standard\\_form.pdf](http://www.smacna.org/products/njab/list_changes_standard_form.pdf).

### Architectural Metal NL—Free!

SMACNA's latest issue of the *Architectural Metal* newsletter was posted to the Web in early April, at this URL:

[www.smacna.org/council/index.cfm?fuseaction=view\\_issue&newsletter\\_id=2](http://www.smacna.org/council/index.cfm?fuseaction=view_issue&newsletter_id=2).

Included in the issue are three “success stories”—and an important news piece, which carries the headline: “Finally, Architectural Training has its Own Stand-Alone Training Program.”



### What They're Saying

“Kevin Harpring has seen business fluctuations before. At 52, he figures he's been in the sheet metal business 30 years—more, if you count the days when, as a teen, he drove the company's trucks to work sites. ‘My father was one of those guys who believed you started by pushing a broom and worked your way up,’ he said.”—from a profile of Harpring, Inc., home of SMACNA President Kevin Harpring, in *SNIPS*, 10/04.

Find the article by going to [www.snipsmag.com](http://www.snipsmag.com) and entering “Harpring” in the search rectangle. ■

# UPDATE:

## FIVE ITEMS FROM OUR 'TO-DO' LIST...

W

hat are SMWIA and SMACNA doing together—in their partnership efforts—to shape the industry's future? Here are answers on five key topics.

1

### Recruiting:

#### *The Problem's Enormous Dimensions*

American society faces problems in the near future, as “baby boomers” begin stepping back or retiring from their professional careers. Stories have begun appearing in mass-media and business publications about current and/or looming shortages of registered nurses, air traffic controllers, and other skilled and needed persons.

For the construction industry—and especially the sheet metal trade—this problem has three major elements:

The older cohort of SMWIA's membership may be on the verge of retiring. While stories in the mainstream media talk about workers pursuing their careers beyond age 65—out of love of their work or financial need—construction workers typically step back (according to anecdotal evidence) around age 62.

In the HVAC business, this problem is exacerbated by anticipated growth. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in its recent 10-year projection for every occupation, believes the sheet metal trade will grow by 19.8% in the years 2002-2012—much higher than the national average for all occupations.

Making all of this worse is the public perception that construction work is a dirty, sweaty, miserable job. In a much-publicized poll of high school students, construction finished at the bottom of 250 future occupations.

***What's the solution?*** Increasing public awareness of the great opportunities in the construction industry in general—and the HVAC and sheet metal business in particular!

*continued on page 4*





## 2

### Division 23: *Implementing The New MasterFormat*

MasterFormat is the “blueprint” for construction project organization. Architects, engineers, and specifiers use the MasterFormat specification system voluntarily—but as a project of the Construction Specification Institute ([www.csinet.org](http://www.csinet.org)), this system of organizing projects has broad support.

A major SMACNA-SMWIA behind-the-scenes triumph was the emergence of Division 23—HVAC. Previously, ventilation was merged into the Mechanical division of the specifications, along with unrelated project elements. For many SMACNA members, that meant they ended up as sub-subcontractors (to the mechanical contractor).

As the revised “MasterFormat ‘04” is implemented, more projects will incorporate the new project organization scheme—giving HVAC contractors a better shot at being “prime subcontractors.”

Progress report: CSI itself is embarking on what seems to be a major educational effort about the new MasterFormat. It is pursuing a “MasterFormat Accredited Instructor Program,” education programs at its active local chapters, and offers customized education for governments, architectural firms, engineering firms, and others.

Note that the MasterFormat is considered the “flagship” publication and program of CSI by many of its specifier members. Kick-off for all of this was set for the mid-April CSI Show, at which four major educational programs on MasterFormat were scheduled.

SMACNA’s *HVAC Systems Expertise* newsletter—available free online—recently ran two noteworthy articles on the MasterFormat: “New MasterFormat Makes HVAC Separate Division” and “Bid Specs Task Force to Provide Complete Division 23 Education Package.” Access both from the newsletter’s contents page: [http://www.smacna.org/council/index.cfm?fuseaction=view\\_issue&newsletter\\_id=10](http://www.smacna.org/council/index.cfm?fuseaction=view_issue&newsletter_id=10).

## 3

### Certifications: *Life-Saving Inspections In The Offing*

As noted in a *Partners In Progress* feature one year ago (February 2004 edition), SMACNA and SMWIA are, through the National Energy Management Institute (NEMI), pursuing a number of certifications. The reason: Customer demand.

For more, see the story beginning on page 8 of the 22-page PDF of that issue downloadable here: [www.pinp.org/resources/PIP/Feb2004.pdf](http://www.pinp.org/resources/PIP/Feb2004.pdf).

**What’s new since?** An additional certification with a great deal of future promise has been added to the list. Discussions and investigations have turned up evidence that fire damper systems in high-rise office buildings are not reliable. In one specific investigation, 40% of systems in place in existing buildings did not work.

**What’s the solution?** Testing of ventilation control systems in existing buildings (not currently mandated by most municipalities). With local and state governments cutting back on employees, it’s unlikely that fire marshals will find the time to inspect many buildings.

A program under consideration—which has strong support from the nation’s fire marshals—would see building controls and fire damper systems testing conducted by certified personnel. Working through NEMI, SMWIA and SMACNA are



on the forefront of efforts to create meaningful certification criteria that will help to protect the public in the future.

# 4

## Housing *Help Is On The Way!*

SMACNA and SMWIA have targeted the residential market for potential future industry gains. For one thing, contractors doing residential work tend to gain “fans”—people who also own, run, or work in businesses! One result: Good residential HVAC contractors are sometimes asked: “Hey, do you do office buildings, too?” . . . and other very nice questions!

With that as a given, what are the Partners In Progress doing about the residential market? A wealth of material is being developed or already exists. It’s being pulled together into an online database that will be accessible by SMWIA-SMACNA team members.

*A sneak peek:* As of this year’s first quarter, the database included more than 30 items. Some items are compact (i.e., there are links to articles from previous *Partners In Progress* editions); others are timeless and informative (a summary of the 2004 focus group held on Residential work); and still others contain a serious amount of detail (i.e., the NEMI report on single-family housing).



# 5

## Florida *You Can't Hurry Progress*

Some words from the wise:  
“Rome wasn’t built in a day.”

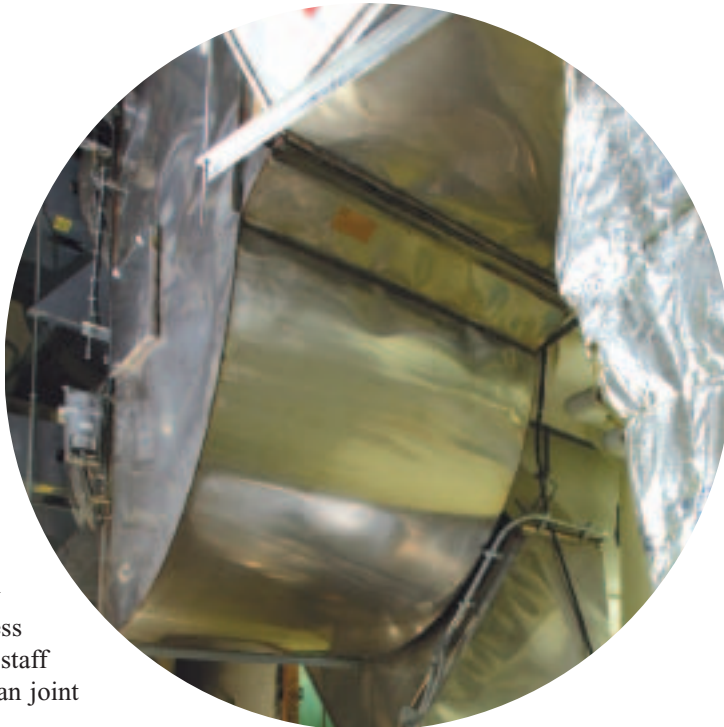
“Act in haste, repent at leisure.”

“Today is the day we didn’t plan for yesterday.”

Based on pure common sense, the SMACNA-SMWIA effort to rebuild our markets in Florida is not trying to hit a seven-run home-run. It took decades for our industry, collectively, to dig the market-share hole we’re in; we won’t catch up in a few months.

However, efforts continue apace. “Roadshow” presentations for workers and management at several companies have been held in Jacksonville; Quarterly meetings of SMWIA local union business managers with key SMACNA members and staff are being held—to monitor progress and plan joint initiatives.

*Next up on the agenda:* An every-other-month statewide newsletter launches this Spring. The recipients— SMWIA members and SMACNA and signatory contractors—will be kept informed of what’s going on, where progress being made, and the tasks that lie ahead. ■



# 2005 Forecast:



©James Endicott/Images.com

The data look good. Here's a quick tour through 2004's construction data and projections for 2005, as presented here in four tables and one graphic.

**Table One:** As America loses industrial jobs and “muddles through” its current slow-but-steady recovery, the story as told by this data is an increasing amount of residential construction work. As shown in the column at the extreme right, in 1990 residential construction was 40% of the industry; now, it's more than half.

Not shown in the table, but making this bad news for many readers of this publication: Unionized construction's share of the residential market could potentially reach 10% nationally someday soon—if it tripled.

**Table Two:** Economists of all stripes, including some high-powered ones who work for the National Association of Home Builders, believe rising 2005 interest rates will lead to stagnation in 2005 and 2006. However, they point out that the “slightly down to flat” projection still leaves this year and next at a very high level.

**Table One: Construction By Segment, 15 Years**

Current Construction Dollars (not adjusted) in Billions

Year	Residential (private)	Nonresidential (private)	Public Construction	Total Construction	Residential As % of Total
1990	\$191.1	\$143.5	\$107.5	\$476.8	40.1%
1992	\$199.4	\$105.6	\$115.8	\$463.7	43.0%
1994	\$258.6	\$120.3	\$120.2	\$539.2	47.9%
1996	\$246.4	\$140.9	\$141.5	\$568.7	43.3%
1998	\$297.1	\$170.9	\$146.2	\$657.0	45.2%
2000	\$358.4	\$217.8	\$183.6	\$807.9	44.4%
2002	\$414.8	\$168.1	\$204.4	\$846.2	49.0%
2004*	\$542.7	\$222.2	\$233.5	\$998.4	54.4%

Figures do not add to “total” due to intentional omissions in government data and changes in the way it has been reported over time.\*2004 data for 10 months.

Source: Census Bureau, U.S. Dept. of Commerce

**Table Two: NAHB Forecasts For 2005 and 2006 Housing Starts**

Year	Single-Family	Multifamily	Total
2006f	\$1,470,000	330,000	1,800,000
2005f	1,523,000	330,000	1,853,000
2004e	1,593,000	342,000	1,935,000
2003	1,499,000	348,700	1,847,700
2002	1,358,900	346,900	1,705,800
2001	1,273,300	329,400	1,602,700

Source: National Association of Home Builders (www.nahb.org)

e=estimated, f=forecast

# It Looks Good!

**Table Three: Space & Dollars—Offices & Apartments**

	2003A	2004P	2005F	05/04 Change
<b>Office Buildings</b>				
Sq. Ft. (millions)	144	155	170	+10%
\$ (millions)	\$18,396	\$20,450	\$22,950	+12%
<b>Multifamily Housing</b>				
Sq. Ft. (millions)	542	558	575	+3%
\$ (millions)	\$40,795	\$45,425	\$48,775	+7%

Source: McGraw-Hill Construction (www.construction.com).  
A=actual, P=projected, F=forecast

**Table Three:** Multifamily dwelling units and office buildings have gone through some tough times in 2003 and 2004. Vacancy rates remain relatively high in each building class. However, thanks to prevailing low interest rates, the “values” of each building type have increased anyway! The result, for 2005, is projections for more office and apartment building construction.

**Table Four:** Population changes drive the health care and education construction market. As more “Baby Boomers” age, it is thought, health care construction will remain a stalwart. Education construction (as shown in the table) ascended in the recent dull period for other types of nonresidential construction.

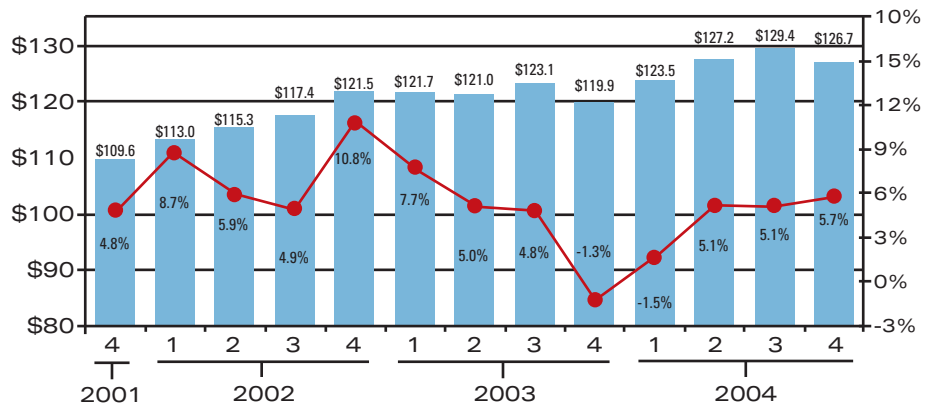
**Figure One:** One source of work for those with HVAC Expertise—SMWIA members and their employing contractors—is residential renovation and remodeling. The Joint Center for Housing Studies, domiciled at Harvard University, follows this market—more closely than the Department of Commerce. According to the JCHS, remodeling spending rose 5.7% in 2004. ■

**Table Four: Health Care & Education—Recent History**  
(dollars in millions)

Year	Health Care \$	Education \$	Total	% of All Construction
1997	\$11,499	\$25,617	\$37B	10.2%
1998	\$11,897	\$31,475	\$43B	10.6%
1999	\$13,795	\$34,706	\$48B	10.7%
2000	\$12,452	\$38,117	\$50.5B	10.7%
2001	\$14,133	\$44,481	\$59B	11.9%
2002	\$16,550	\$45,175	\$62B	12.3%
2003	\$15,719	\$43,934	\$60B	11.4%
2004 P	\$16,800	\$42,700	\$59.5B	11.0%
2005 F	\$15,719	\$46,100	\$62B	11.4%

Source: McGraw-Hill Construction.  
P=projects, F=forecast.

**4-quarter Total Homeowner Expenditures in Billions of \$**      **Annual Rate of Change 4-quarter moving totals**



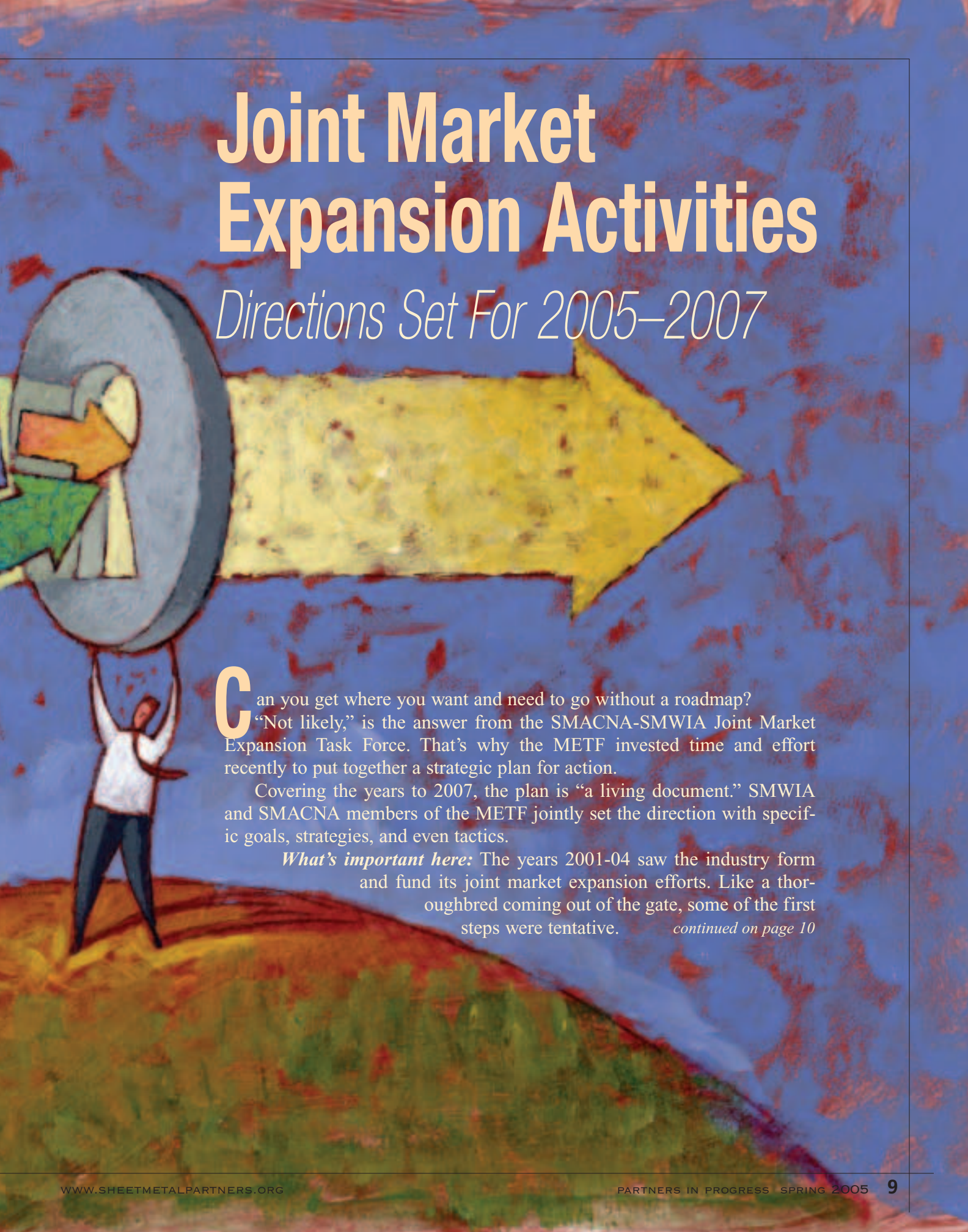
Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies.





# Joint Market Expansion Activities

*Directions Set For 2005–2007*



**C**an you get where you want and need to go without a roadmap? “Not likely,” is the answer from the SMACNA-SMWIA Joint Market Expansion Task Force. That’s why the METF invested time and effort recently to put together a strategic plan for action.

Covering the years to 2007, the plan is “a living document.” SMWIA and SMACNA members of the METF jointly set the direction with specific goals, strategies, and even tactics.

***What’s important here:*** The years 2001-04 saw the industry form and fund its joint market expansion efforts. Like a thoroughbred coming out of the gate, some of the first steps were tentative. *continued on page 10*



**A new road show would 'communicate critical issues . . . which affect our ability to market ourselves to external customers.'**

Now, it's time for market expansion efforts to transition to full speed, with more ambitious goals and activities that produce even more opportunities for contractors and more work for SMWIA members.

### **10-year target**

METF members found themselves setting a 10-year goal that, perhaps, none had envisioned: "Achieve a net tripling of membership." That target for 2015 might sound, to some, like a fantasy.

However, SMACNA and SMWIA members—upon discussion—established to their own satisfaction that the tough-sounding goal is, instead, *a necessity*. Why?

Projections for the HVAC and sheet metal industries for 2012, from the U.S. Department of Labor (Bureau of Labor Statistics) 30% growth in the industry (union plus non-union).

Therefore, a mere doubling of SMWIA membership and SMACNA-SMWIA efforts in a 10-year period, while it sounds impressive, won't give us much traction.

What's more, there's plenty of room to grow. Construction estimates put the union share of residential construction at low single digits—as low as 3%. In much of the U.S. South, SMWIA-SMACNA market share is assessed (in the total market) at figures such as 9%, 10%, and 11%.

Tom Kelly, SMWIA's secretary-treasurer and co-chair of the METF, helped to put those numbers in perspective: "Heck, you can get an 8% or 10% market share just by putting your name in the phone book. We can do a lot better!"

### **Customer awareness**

One plank of the METF "Strategic Plan for Action" concerns increasing customer awareness over the next three years. Components include:

Aggressive promotion of "HVAC Expertise," "Architectural Metal Expertise," and "Industrial Expertise" to potential customers "in all appropriate venues to achieve a consistent and continuous public image."

Continue publication of this magazine (*Partners In Progress*). Further, selected issues of *Partners* will be targeted "at our external customer groups," with the goal "to educate them on the high value we offer."

As of 2005, the SMWIA-SMACNA marketing effort will have four Web sites—on each of the "Expertise" specialties mentioned above in (a), plus [www.pinp.org](http://www.pinp.org) (the internally focused site for market expansion efforts). These sites must be kept current and vital.

The two organizations plan to create a "road show"—aimed at SMWIA members and SMACNA and signatory contractors. Purpose: "To communicate critical issues...which affect our ability to market ourselves to external customers."

Propagating best practices is another potent strategy. The plan is to discover local best practices in customer awareness "and communicate these to other localities for possible implementation."

### **Challenges**

In discussing this new future, the METF—composed, remember of members of each organization—realized they had to challenge SMACNA and SMWIA "to develop and implement programs which increase our influence over the award of work." Tactics under this heading include:

- A voluntary program for contractors to become "HVAC-certified" and/or "UL-certified."
- Provide support to SMACNA contractors who seek to become prime contractors.
- Position SMACNA and signatory contractors as "providers of choice."
- Continue and extend efforts to recapture residential markets, including creation of pilot programs.
- Remain continually on the look-out for new market opportunities. Assess them quickly. Make members aware.
- Conduct a 2006 industry conference.
- Data development: The METF will "develop state-by-state statistical data on market penetration."
- METF members will "work with parent organizations to develop an emphasis on recruiting new contractors to our ranks."

## Recruiting

Another section of the “Strategic Plan” concerns the future workforce:

The METF will “develop and deliver programs to contractors” and SMWIA local unions “to help them better understand the workers of the future—what attracts them, what motivates them, how to supervise them, and how to keep them.”

A Web site presence must be aimed at potential workers, as part of process to direct them to local unions and follow-up on such efforts.

Target programs at the “gatekeepers” for the workers of the future. Give them the reasons our industry represents a great opportunity for young people.

Support Local-sponsored job fairs and renewed interest in vocational education, including developing programs and concepts to make it easier for younger people to get the information they need on the craft.

As “baby boomers” retire, workforce attrition is likely to become a serious issue for SMACNA and SMWIA—just as it is for the rest of the nation’s workforce. This issue will be brought to the forefront in internal communications.

## Eye on the future

The fourth of four elements of the METF’s “Strategic Plan” is to “work with the rest of SMACNA and SMWIA organizations to ‘organize ourselves for the future.’” What’s meant by that? Some dramatic challenges:

**Structural change**—work is slated to reexamine “sacred cows,” with the idea being “to determine which structural changes would make us more effective at customer awareness...and growing our membership.”

**Removing barriers**—the METF has seen, in its activities thus far, a need “to reassess the relationships existing between the national and local organizations, and to determine methods to create improvements.”

**Efficient work**—METF members want to work with SMWIA, SMACNA, and their joint Taft-Hartley funds “to achieve recognition of the ‘total resources’ concept.” The goal here: “To insure that funded programs are focused on industry priorities” and to minimize duplication—so that “programs are executed by the entity best suited for success.”

## Bottom line

There’s a saying “People who say it can’t be done shouldn’t interrupt those who are doing it.” That might be a good summary of the METF’s efforts thus far—and these plans for the future.

SMWIA and SMACNA have the resources. The will exists, as does the need, to improve the joint prospects for members of both organizations. Now, the METF has assembled—and will continue to grow and update—the goals, strategies, and tactics in this “Strategic Plan.”

All that seems to remain is to run the plays! ■

## Who Serves On The Market Expansion Task Force?

### Co-chairmen



Thomas J. Kelly, secretary/treasurer, SMWIA—co-chair



Mark C. Watson, immediate past president, SMACNA (Climate Engineers, Cedar Rapids, Ia.)

### Members

Richard J. Cramer, Sr., Dee Cramer, Inc. (Holly, Mich.)

Reggie Hohenberger, SMWIA Local Union 33 (Cleveland, Ohio)

Ernest R. Menold, Sr., Ernest D. Menold, Inc. (Lester, Pa.)

Joseph J. Nigro, assistant to the General President, SMWIA

David E. Norris, Dean E. Norris, Inc. (Wichita, Kan.)

Craig Sandberg, SMWIA Local Union 10 (St. Paul, Minn.)

Joseph Sellers, SMWIA Local Union 19 (Philadelphia, Pa.)

Matthew Smith, Smith Heating & Air Conditioning (Stockton, Calif.)

R. Dean Steward, Heating & Plumbing Engineers (Colorado Springs, Colo.)

Bruce Word, SMWIA Local Union 104 (San Ramon, Calif.)



# Savvy Customers Spell Safety

s - m - o - h - i - t

Buyers of sheet metal and HVAC construction and related services know safety is their #1 concern. The industry's 19-year-old answer: SMOHIT.

By Kaarin Engelmann

**C**onstruction owners, contractors, and workers have a common interest—safety. Workers don't want to be hurt; contractors don't want their people hurt; customers don't want the liability.

And there's more: Workers are less productive after a jobsite accident, whereas those who feel secure can concentrate on the job. Contractors can't serve their customers efficiently with high workers' comp costs; customers want to avoid court costs and insurance bills.

Beyond the money, there's the human part of the equation. Most people who do HVAC work, architectural sheet metal work, or work in related fields are strong and healthy. Job site mistakes can end that for someone—sometimes, for the rest of his or her life—in seconds.

"That's why we work so hard to get the safety message out there," says Gary Batykefer, SMOHIT's Administrator. For the uninitiated, SMOHIT is the Sheet Metal Occupational Health Institute Trust. SMOHIT is a joint program of SMACNA (Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors National Association) and SMWIA (Sheet Metal Workers International Association)—the sponsors of this magazine.

## Moving to 'a safety culture'

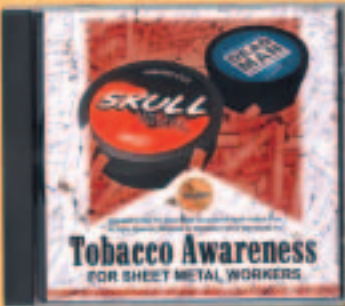
According to Batykefer, too many people—in all works of life and lines of work—seem to expect safety "to just happen." What's needed, he adds, is for contracting companies and their workers to create a safety culture.

In the HVAC industry, SMOHIT is the leader. SMACNA and SMWIA created it in 1986 to lead the way in providing the right mix of products and services to reduce occupational illness and injury in the organized HVAC and sheet metal industry.

*continued on page 14*

## SMOHIT Training Products

The following is a list of some of SMOHIT's training products. To learn more visit the SMOHIT web site at [www.smohit.org/pr\\_menu.htm](http://www.smohit.org/pr_menu.htm).



- Aerial Lift CD
- Asbestos Worker Training
- Big Four, Plus Two CD
- Bloodborne Pathogens CD
- Confined Space Entry CD
- Ergonomics Safety Training
- Eyecare Training for Sheetmetal Workers CD
- Hazardous Materials Safety Training Handbook
- Hazmat for TAB and Service CD
- HAZWOPER Refresher Course
- Hoisting & Rigging VHS
- Job Site Safety DVD
- Lead Exposure Training CD
- Lead Hazard Awareness CD
- OSHA 10 CD
- Portable Safety Kit
- Powder-Actuated Tool Safety CD
- Powered Industrial Truck Safety CD
- Reducing Injuries Through Ergonomics OSHA 10 Module CD
- Safety Sense Toolbox Talks
- Scaffolding Safety CD
- Shop Safety DVD
- SMOHIT Awareness Video Presentation DVD
- Sound Advice Hearing Protection CD
- Sound Advice H.P. Decibel Chart
- Tobacco Awareness CD
- Vision Preservation CD
- Welding Safety Wheel



## Protect People, Protect Profits

“No one should consider on-the-job health and safety programs simply a legal necessity,” says SMOHIT Administrator Gary Batykefer. “Injury prevention programs actually save contractors money in the long run.”

Mathematically, he could not be more correct. Here’s a list of the direct costs of occupational injuries:

- medical expenses;
- compensation payments;
- insurance premium increases; and
- potentially, litigation fees.

Adding insult to the injury, these expenses cannot be depreciated, used as a tax write-off, or deducted in the form of everyday expenses.

So, mathematically, where does the money to pay for this come from? Look no further than the bottom line.

Worse, we’ve thus far ignored indirect costs—job site disruptions (on the day an accident occurs, and possibly for days thereafter); lost productivity; repair charges; new employee hiring and training; and bad publicity.

Here’s how the math works: Let’s say Contractor Jones has a target of a 3% profit. Suddenly, a personal-injury accident causes Jones to lose \$50,000 as the result of injuries, job-related illness, or property damage. How much business would the contractor need to add in order to replace that bottom-line \$50,000?

At a 3% profit, Jones would need to win a \$1,667,000 project to get the \$50,000 back.

Try on some additional math: Contractors could easily justify investing 2.5% of project costs into a good health and safety program. The payoff: Lower injury rates will increase their net profit!

Originally, the organization’s most important task was to assess exposure to asbestos of those within the sheet metal industry. With that task accomplished, SMOHIT’s mission these days includes health fairs, legal referral services, and research.

*What about that “safety culture?”* It starts with awareness. In the past five years, more than 30 free SMOHIT health and safety training and awareness products, programs, and services have been created for workers and contractors in the HVAC business as well as the architectural and industrial sheet metal specialties, and others.

### Safety expertise on-board

If you want to create six or more new, specialized safety programs annually, it helps to have safety expertise inside the

organization. Charles Austin, SMOHIT’s industrial hygienist, has been instrumental in development of the organized sheet metal industry’s safety materials.

“If someone has an issue related to health or safety, he or she can call me,” says Austin. “For example, if there is an accident, I help evaluate the contaminants to which workers may have been exposed.” Austin also recommends corrective measures—such as engineering controls, training, or work practices—to help prevent accidents and reduce health hazards and conducts OSHA training.

Austin’s portfolio is broad and deep. His job description includes working with SMOHIT national staff, regional safety coordinators, and health professionals. Specialized tasks for a one-of-a-kind staffer include developing safety and health training materials, directing research, and consulting on environmental, safety, and health concerns.

But the key, he and Batykefer say, is training. “Since he can’t be everywhere at once, Charles’ main mission is to develop training materials that help owners, contractors, and workers resolve their safety and health issues,” Batykefer notes.

In the six years since Austin has been at SMOHIT, he has developed some of the first programs for protecting workers’ hearing and increasing welding safety.

### ‘Toolbox talks’ on safety

One key service created by SMOHIT— which, again, feeds the creation of a safety culture—are the Safety Sense Toolbox Talks. These feature one-page safety primers for onsite supervisors and foremen, designed to provide the source material for short weekly job site safety discussions.

“The great thing about this tool is that each section is specially designed to provide the basis for a concise 10-minute presentation,” Batykefer explains. “It gives workers the key health and safety information they need, and supervisors get helpful instruction tips and areas of emphasis.”

“Safety Sense” talks cover a wide range of discussion topics, from confined spaces, first aid, and HAZCOM to respiratory protection equipment, vehicle and welding safety, and take-home exposures.

“If a foreman simply uses one of the lessons each week, he’ll be able to provide his guys with critical safety information throughout the entire year,” Batykefer says.

### Ounce of prevention

A popular and effective SMOHIT service is the Health Fair, conducted at industry events (including SMWIA’s annual convention). Workers who drop by the Fair find registered nurses ready to conduct free blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and bone density tests. Attendees get health resource and training materials from SMOHIT staff, too.

“Preventative care is always the best way to maintain good health,” says Ann Barr of the SMOHIT staff. “It allows participants to identify potential health issues before they develop into serious problems.”

While Batykefer and Austin are pleased that workplace safety is winning more attention these days, they stress that owners, contractors, and workers can't afford to let down their guard. While customers say safety is their top concern and contractors abhor accidents and injuries, it all starts with the worker—and a safety culture!

“Your ability to adapt to continuous changes in the industry will determine your long-term health, prosperity, and

quality of life,” Batykefer concludes.

To learn more about SMOHIT and take advantages of its products and services, visit the SMOHIT web site at [www.smohit.org](http://www.smohit.org). Contact Charles Austin, SMOHIT's industrial hygienist, with health and safety questions at [caustin@sheetmetal-iti.org](mailto:caustin@sheetmetal-iti.org) or 703-739-7130 ext 627. ■

KAARIN ENGELMANN IS A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR BASED IN SPRINGFIELD, VA.

## How Botting Makes Safety Matter

Safety is a serious matter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. When it awarded a Celebrate Safety Award to W.A. Botting Company, it recognized a company with superior safety programs.

Botting Co. experienced **zero accidents** on the Corp's Bassett Hospital Replacement project in Fort Wainwright, Alaska. Overall, the company's recordable incident rate in 2004 was 4.91, and its Experience Modification Rate (EMR) hit an all-time company low of .04361.

Only five years ago, Botting (of Woodinville, Wash.) had a troublesome recordable incident rate of 30.93 and an EMR of 0.8345?

Here's how Botting went from not-so-good . . . to great!

### Starting at the beginning

“Between 1911 and 1998, safety wasn't a top priority. We had never had a fatality, but lost-time injuries were prevalent,” explains Pete Botting, the company's chairman and CEO.

“It wasn't until the general contractors starting demanding a low EMR that we decided to take safety more seriously.”

Taking safety serious required a turn-around. First, Botting hired Lynn Sullivan to fill a new slot—full-time safety director. Changes—and improvements—quickly followed.

“When Lynn came on-board, she went through everything,” Botting says. Sullivan immediately involved the company with SMOHIT, the National Safety Council, and other entities. She took inventory of the company's current programs and jobsite requirements and developed a safety plan based on lessons learned at other companies.

Before her 12-month hiring anniversary, Sullivan had created a “safety culture” such that Botting earned a large rebate check from its insurer.

### Bottom-line benefits

Management took notice. “Not only were there fewer accidents and less time lost on the job, but also we could see an immediate difference on our bottom line,” Botting remembers.

Today, safety is routine at the company. All Botting employees undergo rigorous training covering a wide spectrum of health and safety issues. Superintendents and foremen take part in an even more in-depth program on policies and procedures, fondly referred to as “Botting University.”

Worker loyalty to Botting has increased, too. “Directly related to our safety program, our workers are more productive and more likely to stay with us,” Sullivan notes. The average employee has been with the company 10 years.

Productivity, of course, leads to those bottom-line benefits that Pete Botting has seen: “When you take safety seriously, it instills confidence in everyone at the company and increases morale,” he notes.

But the company isn't done yet. Sullivan notes that the company's safety program must conform with requirements of three states and the federal government, so she remains busy.

“I get a generous budget every year to make sure that personal protection is covered,” Sullivan says. “We tailor our safety program to the specific needs of each project. Sometimes our safety program is overkill—but in a good way.”

All of the above explains why one of SMOHIT's 2004 Safety Matters awards went to W.A. Botting Co. ■



# Markets & Trends

## WHY YOU NEED A LICENSE FOR THESE LOGOS

Why should anyone on the SMACNA-SMWIA team, including an IFUS signatory contractor, have to sign a license to use any of these logos? Why does everyone, from SMWIA locals to SMACNA chapters to contractors, need to sign on the dotted line?

Answer: Working together, SMWIA and SMACNA must maintain control over how the logos are used. In the past, various organizations have “lost control” over their visuals. Result: A contractor who was “union today, gone tomorrow” could be found—quite frequently—sporting a union organization sign on trucks, letterhead, and more...years later.

Together, SMACNA and SMWIA have developed these logos and plan market expansion investments to build customer awareness of them. Our joint decision, backed by a serious commitment, is to protect the image we’re building for our industry. That means no one can use any of these logos without a license!

To license the logo, e-mail the request to Sheet Metal Industry Labor-Management Cooperation Fund (licensor of these logos) [info@sheetmetalpartnrs.org](mailto:info@sheetmetalpartnrs.org). ■



## SAVE THESE DATES IN 2006

DATES: MARCH 30 TO APRIL 1, 2006

LOCATION: LAS VEGAS, NEV.

EVENT: PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

SMWIA and SMACNA will hold their every-two-years Partnership Conference in late March next year. Current plans call for quite a transition: The Partnership event is to begin just as the annual ITI Apprentices Contest ends.

ITI's annual contest ends with an Awards Dinner. If current plans come to fruition, that dinner will also be the kick-off event for the Partnership Conference! ■



## Partners PROGRESS

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