On April 15th the New England Chapter held the 15th Annual Awards Program at the Radisson Boston with more than 190 industry professionals, guests and construction management students in attendance. Featured guest speaker, James A. Aloisi, Jr., Commonwealth of Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation, addressed the gathering concerning pending transportation reform in Massachusetts, which will consolidate numerous agencies under a comprehensive transportation group.

Awards were presented to the construction management teams for 9 different projects with categories including Infrastructure, Building Project – New Construction, Building Project – Renovation and Program Management. The NE Chapter modified its Award Program this year to align more closely with the national awards program, thus making it easier for local projects to be submitted for national awards. A Distinguished Service Award was presented to long time CMAA member and past New England Chapter President, Rich Martone. Rich was cited for his long, enthusiastic and tireless service to both CMAA National and to the NE Chapter including 4 years as President in which the chapter grew and prospered.

The 2009 Person of the Year Award was given to Sam Sleiman. Sam has been a consistent and effective supporter of CMAA, construction manager certification, and alternative delivery methods. His leadership and commitment to the principles and goals of CMAA has made a significant impact here in the New England Region and with the national organization. Sam came to the United States in 1980 from Lebanon to attend Northeastern University, where he received both a Bachelor and Masters Degree in Civil/Structural Engineering. He worked in the engineering consultant industry until 1993 when he joined Massport as a Project Manager. He worked on the Logan 2000 program, later called Logan Modernization, and took on the position of Director for Aviation Administration and Development. This played a critical role for Logan International Airport during the Logan Modernization Program as he teamed with other project stakeholders to oversee and manage over two billion dollars of infrastructure construction in a safe environment.

In 2006 Sam became Massport’s Director of Capital Programs and Environmental Affairs where he now oversees Massport’s five year one billion dollar capital program. The NE Chapter has had a longstanding Scholarship Program and 11 students from Northeastern University Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Rodger Williams University and Wentworth Institute of Technology were recognized for their achievements with scholarships totaling $22,000.
Welcome back to our Spring 2009 Chapter Newsletter.

Our volunteer Board of Directors and our Committees have been busy and working hard and have been successful over the past few months in setting up our Breakfast Programs and preparing for our annual Awards and Golf Program Events. The attendance for the Breakfast Programs is at an all time high for the 2008-2009 season.

Since our last Fall 2008 Newsletter we have experienced an unprecedented economic downturn to our industry and are all challenged with the current condition of the overall economy and how that affects our industry as a whole. This has been a very painful process for all of us as Americans, to experience these bad economic times when one year ago things seemed to be on track and fairly stable.

Our Chapter was recently visited in February by Bruce D’Agostino. Bruce was extremely impressed by our leadership, and in the way we set up our committees and our Chapter’s commitment and dedication to the CMAA mission On the National CMAA level. Our President Bruce D’Agostino has been influential in Washington, DC with the proposed stimulus incentives being offered by the Obama administration. Much of this money will certainly be welcome by us, but as we all know it is not the entire solution to solve our massive debt and boost our industry once again. It will however be a good motivator for us all to attempt to jumpstart our State and Nation. Many of us who have been in the Construction industry for some time have ridden this wave before. There will be a time soon when we will prosper again. The CMAA has developed a link to the stimulus package updates and may be found at www.cmaanet.org/stimulus, Bruce spoke briefly at our Chapter breakfast on February 10, 2009 and offered some encouragement to us, in moving forward with the Stimulus Money from Washington,DC., but also cautioned us that although this is not the fix all or golden parachute we may anticipate. We will recover but it will be slow and timely.

STV. PERFORMANCE MATTERS.

We see things a little differently.
That’s because at STV we are a little different. We’re 100 percent employee owned. With a stake in the business, our construction managers, planners, architects and engineers are motivated to satisfy our clients. Our team of construction professionals provides flexible, focused construction management and technical services. And, since we’re located throughout the U.S., where the work is, we’re already there. When it comes to getting your project delivered right, our differences are what count. As employee-owners, performance takes on a new perspective.
Our program committee functions are headed up by Ralph Jacobs of Massport. Ralph and his committee have done an incredible job of making sure we have quality programs and presenters that will spark interest in which our professional audience will tune in to. Some of the quality programs include Mass Highway accelerated Bridge program update, the Mass. School Building Authority presented by Executive Director Katherine Craven, There was a presentation by board members, Mike Bertoulin and Steve Marshall on how to become a CCM. In February we held a session and panel discussing lessons learned in Project Delivery, and the two remaining programs for March and April will be Building Information Modeling (BIM) and risk Management. We want to thank all of our presenters and committee members who made these events possible. And special thanks goes to Professor Mark Hasso and Wentworth Institute for their generous and free use of the dining room hall.

Our Chapter includes thirteen Committees, which include Website, Awards, Golf, Newsletter, Young Persons Group, Membership, Government Affairs, Scholarship, Financial, Governance/Nominating, Programs, CCM Certification, and Advisory Board. We have a great group of hardworking volunteers on these Committees and we are always looking for more assistance and volunteers from our membership group. We have also recently discussed holding networking sessions as an added assistance to those that are in between assignments in our industry.

The past 2008-2009 year to date has been a successful year for the Chapter. Our Fall 2009 launch of the new CMAA New England Chapter website has been instrumental in our Breakfast and event planning as well as streamlining contributions and payment online.

All of our proceeds and money earned yearly goes to our Scholarship fund. This year our Board of Directors is proud to announce once again that we will be issuing $22,000 to deserving construction management students, The annual golf tournament headed up by John Phillips committee, typically raises over $14,000 for the scholarship program, and the Breakfast presentations and the Awards Luncheon, headed up by Ken Johnson held in May 2009 funds the balance. Please read the writeups for these upcoming events further along in our newsletter and please support us again this year to all of these events.

Again, I would like to personally thank all of our Board of Directors and Committee members as well as our membership, and individuals who have supported us this 2008-2009 season. We truly have a gem of a group of volunteers. Without their volunteerism and dedication we would not continue to function.

I look forward to another successful season with the CMAA New England Chapter. I know that we will all make it through the challenges and the tough road ahead of us and we will continue to improve on our lessons learned from all that has transpired in the past year. We are all in the Construction business not because it is easy but because it is hard, unpredictable, and challenging. Overall I would not swap it for any other industry.

Paul F. Hemphill, CCM, AC
President CMAA New England Chapter
Chapter Officers

President
Paul Hemphill, CCM, AC
STV Construction, Inc.
Paul.Hemphill@stvinc.com
Tel: (617) 303-1725

Vice President in Charge of Programs
Ralph Jacobs, PE
Massachusetts Port Authority
rjacobs@massport.com
Tel: 617) 568-5970

Vice President in Charge of Membership
Matt Poirier
Keville Enterprises, Inc.
mpoirier@keville.com
Tel: (617) 482-3888

Secretary
Bill Kearney
Gilbane Building Company
wkearney@gilbaneco.com
Tel: (617) 478-3328

Treasurer
Missy Reed
FTI Rubino & McGeehin
monita.reed@fticonsulting.com
Tel: (617) 956-7722

Past President
Richard Martone
PMA Consultants, LLC
rmartone@pmaconsultants.com
Tel: (617) 342-1280

Board of Directors

Joe Allegro, PE
Allegro Construction Services
jjalegro@bigdig.com
Tel: (617) 342-1097

Joseph Barra
Seyfarth Shaw, LLP
jbarra@seyfarth.com
Tel: (617) 946-4890

Mike Bertoulin, PE, CCM
Parsons Brinckerhoff
bertoulin@pbworld.com
Tel: (617) 960-4863

Anne J. Gorczyca, PE
Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
Anne.Gorczyca@masspike.com
Tel: (617) 342-1045

Mark Hasso
Wentworth Institute of Technology
hassom@wit.edu
Tel: (617)989-4186

Ken Johnson
Harvard Allston Initiative
ken.johnson@harvard.edu
Tel: (617) 384-5229

Steve Marshall, PE, CCM
Massachusetts Port Authority
smarshall@massport.com
Tel: (617) 668-5967

Nicholas Macy, PMP
PinnacleOne/ARCDIS-US
Nicholas.Macy@arcadis-us.com
Tel: (413) 374-8833

Clark McCormick, PE, CCM
PMA Consultants
cmcormick@pmaconsultants.com
Tel: (617) 342-1088

John Phillips, PE
O’Brien & Gere
philijj@obg.com
Tel: (617) 592-8331

Bob Poitrast
Tishman Construction of NE
poitrast@ne.tishman.com
Tel: (617) 723-2050

Dan Ramos
Bond Brothers, Inc.
dramos@bondbros.com
Tel: (617) 293-5971

Carl Sciple, PE, CCM
Keville Enterprises, Inc.
csciple@keville.com
Tel: (617) 482-3888

Larry Sodano, JD
Keville Enterprises, Inc.
lssodano@bigdig.com
Tel: (617) 951-6277

Mike Willlet
William Berry & Son
mwillett@berry.com
Tel: (978) 774-1057

This Newsletter is published for members of the CMAA New England Chapter of the Construction Management Association of America for the purpose of informing the members of local and national news, chapter events and industry trends. Articles published in the CMAA New England Region Chapter Newsletter contain the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the CMAA New England Chapter. Inquiries regarding the newsletter can be directed by e-mail to: rcollins@pmaconsultants.com

We are seeking contributors for upcoming newsletters. Those contributions could include technical articles, descriptions of projects, or profiles of individual or firm members. If you have information you would like to contribute, or if you have ideas about information or other types of material which you would like to see in the newsletter, please contact: Rob Collins, rcollins@pmaconsultants.com

We look forward to your contributions.
CMAA New England Chapter members have joined with AGC of Massachusetts members to mentor sophomore Construction Management (CM) students during the 2009 spring semester (January to May). This year’s mentoring program, managed by Wentworth Associate Professor Scott Sumner, has matched up 40 CM students with the same number of mentors, who will share their industry experience with the aspiring CM understudies.

On February 4th the program kickoff began with a breakfast meeting at Wentworth, where students and mentors met and took the opportunity to learn about each other and to initiate a plan of shared activities during this spring semester. Shortly after the initial meeting Shawmut Design and Construction offered an optional mentor training session for the mentors to hone their skills and learn about suggested mentoring activities to be used to enhance the mentoring effectiveness and experience. In the following months the mentors invited their students to visit their offices and learn how their firm functions including the firm’s CM role within the industry. Visits could have involved shadowing individuals in specific industry disciplines, such as estimating, designing, GIS, survey, etc. Students have also been given the opportunity to visit one or more construction sites to get some hands-on exposure to various construction activities. Mentors have additionally made it a point to invite their student to an industry meeting such as the CMAA NE Chapter monthly meetings. If the mentor’s firm has a summer intern program, the mentor is encouraged to hire the student for the summer, so that the student can obtain additional experience.

The mentoring program has continued to grow in the last few years, doubling the number of students participating in the program. Past surveys of participating students have shown a real appreciation for the program and the strong value to them at this point in their academic career. Given this year’s increased student numbers, the impact to the Wentworth CM student body will continue to grow. Mentoring doesn’t only benefit the students; this program is enriching to the mentors as they share their experience and teach these students hands-on lessons. An additional benefit to the mentors is they achieve points towards their CCM recertification.

Many thanks go out to Associate Professor Sumner, also a NE Chapter CMAA member, for his leadership role and for his encouragement to the students to participate. If Scott continues with successful growth in the program, we’ll need additional mentors from the CMMA New England Chapter membership next year.
It’s never too late to set goals for yourself, both short term and long term. This is true not only for personal but also professional goals. You could have as a personal goal to lose or gain ten pounds in the next year; or to drop 5 strokes off of your handicap; or to take a vacation to the Burgundy Region of France; …. And for long term personal goals, you might plan to get married and have two children; or to buy a vacation home in Sedona, Arizona; …. 

For professional goals, you need to think first long term and then short term. If your long term goal is to rise to a top level in the Construction Management profession, you probably have thought about becoming a Certified Construction Manager (CCM) and you have also considered getting broad construction experience and developing a reputation as a proven performer. Since you are reading this article, chances are that you are in, or work in an industry closely related to, the construction management business. And most likely, you are fully aware of the CCM credential. Well, what’s a next step that you should consider taking? Just like aspiring doctors might try first becoming an EMT, and prospective engineers need to first work toward the “engineer-in-training” plateau, those in construction management field should weigh the pros and cons of entering the Construction Manager in Training (CMIT) program before applying to become a CCM.

Even though you do not need to become a CMIT if you aspire to become a CCM, it surely is worth considering. In fact, I would recommend it. The CMIT program was established within the last four years and it has proven ideal for a broad spectrum of people from second semester junior college students, to college graduates, to working graduate degree candidates, to mid-career individuals who are new to the profession, to experienced professionals just embarking on the path to become professional construction managers. That covers almost everyone in our business.

What then are the requirements for being accepted into the CMIT program? We’ll start with the educational requirements. One must have a bachelors or a masters degree OR have status as a senior in construction management or a
closely related field at an accredited college or university OR have an associate’s degree or certificate-level professionals with degrees in construction management or a closely related field, plus two years of general design/construction experience OR have four years of general design/construction experience without a degree in construction management or a closely related field. I should point out that while an applicant can be accepted into the CMIT program, the CMIT designation is only awarded after an applicant has received an undergraduate degree.

Next, a simple, three page, CMIT application has to be submitted with a copy of the applicant’s resume and a check for $195 (or $60 if the applicant is a member of CMAA). But why would a prospective CCM (which I’ll call a “want to be”, or “wantabe” from here forward) want to do that? There are several good reasons. First, the wantabe will receive the CMIT/Capstone text and assessment. “The History of Construction Management Practices and Procedures” is a thorough orientation for both new and experienced CM professionals. It provides a framework for people to learn/refresh their knowledge of the CM lexicon. So if the wantabe scores at least 80% on the Capstone course assessment (an open book examination), the wantabe would then be awarded the designation CMIT. Also the CMIT program provides just that, a program, a structured approach which will help keep a wantabe on track. Additionally, the CMIT designation shows clients, supervisors, peers and the general public, a commitment to acquiring the knowledge and capabilities of a professional construction manager. It further increases the wantabe’s awareness, as a CMIT, to the body of knowledge and principals represented by a CCM.

Once becoming a CMIT, that individual has five years to get the CCM designation. Now you might ask whether becoming a CMIT does in fact assist a wantabe in getting the CCM. The answer is a resounding yes. A CMIT is eligible to be paired with a mentor, typically an experienced CM from either the CMIT’s own organization, or a CCM from another company/agency. These mentors are seasoned hands, wise, knowledgeable and experienced, who are not only very qualified CMs but also have been down a similar CCM path that the CMIT is starting to travel. Consequently, the mentors can offer valuable guidance and as mentors are there for the CMITs to talk to whenever they feel the need. Also, a CMIT has CMAA membership and all of the benefits that accrue to a member, e.g. discounts on products and services, networking opportunities and member perks. Again, if the CMIT has an undergraduate degree, the “CMIT” designation may be used as a suffix, i.e. the CMIT initials following his/her name.

I’ve tried to summarize the requirements for becoming a CMIT and the reasons a wantabe should seriously consider applying to become a CMIT. To get the ball rolling, just go to the CMAA web site, “cmaanet.org” and navigate to professional development and then to CMIT. Explore it, go for it and follow your dream! Carpe diem.

Postscript. CMAA has 5,500 members and 1124 of them are CCMs. The New England Chapter has about 200 members and 35 of them are CCMs. Let’s grow both of those numbers in New England! It’ll pay all professionally. CMIT is a good, first, formal step.
Richard P. Martone finished his term as president of CMAA-NE region in the middle of 2008, leaving behind a time of productive growth for the association. ‘Rich’, as he is known to friends and colleagues, has worked in project management for over 30 years, with almost half of them spent at PMA Consultants, a consulting firm that has more than a dozen offices providing project management services nationally and internationally. Although the local office is in Braintree, MA, Rich finds himself frequently traveling in his search to find new opportunities for the company, especially ones that will help to develop the younger staff. During his time with the company, PMA has been involved with small and large projects, including such mega-projects as the CA/T in Boston, a $14.7 billion budget, and, in NYC, the Transit’s East Side Access, 2nd Avenue subway and the 7-Line Extension, with over a $7 billion budget.

Although Rich’s resume lists extensive experience as an expert consultant in dispute resolution to such entities as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Capital Construction Company and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority’s Central Artery/Tunnel, as well as work in expert claims analysis, he describes this experience as ‘issue resolution’, and states ‘Resolving issues to the benefit of both parties that leads to successful project completion is critical to the construction management process… I find it to be a tremendous learning experience. You have the opportunity to work with the best and the brightest in the construction field. The important thing to do is take the lessons learned to the next project so that the same mistakes are not repeated.’

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This win/win attitude has been a great boon to New England’s CMAA chapter during Rich’s time as a member and as its recent past president. Discovering CMAA after giving a talk at its national conference, Rich joined the local chapter, eventually became a board member and then its president. Rich speaks highly of the chapter and the board, praising its energy and enthusiasm for working to make the Chapter a success. And there is a litany of successes: an interesting and lively series of chapter meetings from September to April, typically breakfast meetings hosted at the Wentworth Institute of Technology; an increasingly visible awards program culminating each year in an awards banquet in April; an expanded certification program in Boston for obtaining CCM (Certified Construction Manager); the granting of tens of thousands of dollars for scholarships to students pursuing careers in construction management; and a highly successful annual golf tournament which is the tool by which a substantial amount of scholarship money is raised. And although these have flourished during Rich’s presidency, he is quick to acknowledge the ‘great guidance from Christine Keville, DJ Mason, Carl Sciple and Ed Bond,… and the hard work of the board resulting in three Chapter of the Year awards from CMAA National.’

Although Rich hails from New York, he received his engineering degree from Tulane University in New Orleans, and later received a MBA in Finance/Management from the University of Houston at night, an interesting combination that has informed his engineering and construction experience, his project management work, and his work with CMAA. His experience in the southern half of the country has informed his personal life as well, with two of his children attending the University of South Carolina. Although Rich cites a 10-year old still in grammar school and the weak economy, his passion for the industry and his enjoyment in seeing the results of hard work seems to be the key to why he and his wife will not become ‘snowbirds’ anytime soon. Rich’s energy, curiosity, drive and the enduring competition between those two baseball teams will keep him enthusiastically engaged in New England, construction and CMAA for some time yet.
It is hard to believe in these tough economic times, but the design and construction industry is looking at a severe shortage of trained professionals in the next 5 to 10 years! There will be limitless opportunities to work on building projects on every continent for well-paid architects, engineers and construction managers. But the number of smart and talented men and women majoring in the building disciplines today won’t meet tomorrow’s needs! The industry needs to reach out to the younger generation at the middle and high school levels and demonstrate just how exciting career opportunities can be in the fields of construction, engineering architecture. Enter ACE!!

ACE National

ACE stands for Architecture, Construction and Engineering. The program was begun in 1991 by Charles Thornton of Thornton-Thomasetti, a structural engineering firm in New York City. Charles started the program as an outreach effort in the New York City area to local high schools to mentor students at an age when they are thinking about future careers. He felt that with advice and mentoring from young professionals in the fields of our industry, students could gain tremendous exposure to the design and construction field thus increasing their interests and the talent in the industry! The ACE program expanded in the mid-90’s when Thornton involved some 17 firms in New York to collaborate with 3 teams of mentors and 90 high school students. The mentors did presentations on their design and construction specialties and the students visited project sites and mentor offices. In addition students began to work on mock project designs solving “real world” problems.

After the program was well underway in New York, a national ACE organization was incorporated in 2000 and is currently active throughout the United States in more than 100 cities. Its emphasis is on urban areas and in assisting those students with an interest in the industry, especially those who are economically challenged. The national program is growing each year. It really took off in 2007 – it has expanded from 93 to 102 locations in 31 states supported by over 3,000 mentors and double the number of participant firms to 1,600! Its effects are far reaching --- over 37,000 students have gone through the program in the last 10 years and currently about 10,000 students are active annually. The program’s goal is to reach 100,000 students annually by 2012!!

ACE National includes the participation of very large national organizations as sponsors/partners including AECOM, American Bar Association, AIA, AGC, ABC, International Bricklayers Union, Clark Construction, EMCOR, Gilbane, Limbach, MCAA, Parsons Brinckerhoff, McGraw-Hill, PSI, Seyfarth Shaw, Haskell, Turner, Thornton-Thomassetti, and the USGBC. An impressive list of organizations!

Mentor firms are the backbone of the program and they consist of architects, interior designers, engineers, construction managers, contractors, college and university representatives, trade organizations, and other companies in our industry. These firms typically have a champion on a local ACE board of directors and ask younger professionals to volunteer time to this mentoring activity. The response is always overwhelming!

ACE Massachusetts

The ACE Mentor Program of Massachusetts is a non-profit 501c3 organization with an active Board from 14 different organizations in the industry that include such names as Turner, Consigli, Tocci, Gilbane, SBRA, SAMA, SGH, Syska Hennessy, VHB, Baer Architecture, Gensler, The New England Regional Council of Carpenters, Service Point, and Feeley and Driscoll. Our goal is to reach out to high school students to enhance their awareness of career opportunities in our industry and to provide scholarship opportunities for their next step in their education process. Our affiliate has active programs in three locations –-Boston, Worcester, and Woburn. The high schools we work with are Abbey Kelly Foster in Worcester, Woburn High, and two in Boston – The Engineering School in Hyde Park and Madison High School in Roxbury.

Our program includes a Board that consists of approximately 14 members that meet every month to administer the business of the affiliate and committees for such activities as Curriculum, Fund raising, Scholarships, Mentor outreach, and Finance. Also included on the board are members of the high school administration that participates in the program.

Each program is an extra curricula activity for the students as it typically occurs at the end of school day. It runs throughout the
entire school year starting in early October. The team meets for approximately 15 sessions on an every other week basis. These sessions include instruction in a facet of our business as well as hands on exercises that enhance the learning experience. The location is either at the high school or in a mentor firm's office. The Boston group has been meeting at SBRA’s office adjacent to the World Trade Center. The goal of the sessions is to have a presentation of a project at the end of the school year in May. A project is defined upfront and is used by the mentors in their teaching presentations and later in group work sessions.

The students work best in small groups so the 25 to 30 students that participate choose an area of interest and work in that group to develop the designs or construction information necessary for the final presentation. The groups are typically 5 to 6 students. During a typical session, the mentors in each discipline, such as Civil or Structural, will teach the large group and then the small groups will work on specific exercises. It is a tremendous learning environment when there are 3 or 4 mentors for those 5 or 6 students!

In addition to the regular sessions, a tour of a jobsite occurs early in the year which allows students the opportunity to experience the physical nature of the industry. This year the students in Boston are working on the Fan Pier project and they got a tour of the project while it was in the structural steel phase. The Woburn group has the renovation of the Woburn library as their project and they visited the existing library.

Also included during the year are activities like a tour of a local college or university – this year all programs got a tour of Wentworth Institute and the Board has collaborated to enhance the program to include sessions on financial aid and the transition to college. In addition Wentworth has offered to have students teach a CAD program to the ACE Students on their “off-week” from ACE.

Another trip that has occurred is to the Carpenter’s Apprenticeship Competition in Millbury, Massachusetts. That trip provided a great learning experience for those students who were interested in joining trades after high school --- ACE promotes that journey as well since so many of our construction professionals came up through the trades!

ACE Benefits

The success of all of the ACE programs is the continued interest of the students as they proceed to college or a university or a trade school. In order to assist the students that have that desire in the ACE fields, fundraising is done for scholarships at both the National and Local levels.

Fund Raising Events are held and the local boards reach out to the industry for annual scholarship donations. Many of the national sponsors of ACE are involved in local chapters and are very involved in both providing donations and requesting other firms and organizations for them.

Each affiliate gives out at least one scholarship each year – Alex Vilme of the Boston group received a $3,000 national scholarship this past year for his hard work and achievements. He has stayed active while at Ben Franklin Institute as he has come back to provide presentations and some mentoring to current students.

The participation in the ACE program is a real enhancement for a high schooler’s resume – it shows real proactive outreach on the student’s part to learn so much more about the fields in our industry.

On many occasions, mentor firms have provided summer intern jobs to participating ACE students. This is another way for a student to learn about how the company and industry works and provides opportunity for the student to mature in his or her relationships with others.

Many graduates of the ACE program are continuing to participate in ACE by providing college tours as students and mentoring as young professionals. So many are very appreciative of the mentoring they received that they want to give back.

In conclusion this is a great program for high school students interested in careers in the design and construction industries and all ACE teams are in the process of growing their programs with lots of support from so many organizations and professionals. A real team effort to reach out and give back by all!!!!!
CMAA NE announces the formation of a Networking Support Group for any members who have been caught in the economic downturn. The group meets the first Wednesday of each month and had its first meeting on April 1, 2009 at the Perini Conference Center at Wentworth Institute of Technology from 5:15 – 6:15PM.

One of the needs tabled by participants is help with critiquing resumes, particularly with respect to making them electronically readable for a specific position. Anyone with experience in this area and interested in helping should contact Steve Farrell, Chair (sfarell@dcadvisory.com) or plan to stop by the next meeting.

The agenda will be driven by the needs of the group and by volunteers interested in contributing their talents and time and sharing networking opportunities as we talk about retooling, the optimistic outlook for our industry, and our temporarily displaced CM colleagues in New England.

You can help in any number of ways. Some near term needs are:

1) by getting the word out to HR departments in your own organization
2) and to colleagues who may be on the bench….
3) helping to organize a web based job posting and resume data base,
4) volunteering 20 minutes of time to address the group as the needs get determined and to let folks know about the bright spots that are out there.

The group is being chaired by Steve Farrell of The Design & Construction Advisory; he can be reached at sfarell@dcadvisory.com and at (781) 934-6340.

CMAA NE colleagues who are interested in participating / contributing, are encouraged to contact Steve directly. Thanks to Mark Hasso for his assistance and for providing a meeting place.
Summary

• Processes and procedures are important. So are project meetings, critical path schedules, milestones, and team building meetings. But when good project management staff lead teams well, projects thrive.
• People management skills are just as critical as project management skills.
• Specific factors that lead to project success:
  • Build trust within the team first
  • Establish an open door policy so that problems are aired and discussed
  • Communicate appropriately and concisely; listen effectively
  • Approach and resolve problems with skill and tact

The search for factors that lead to better overall construction project performance and success spans many years and over many different project types. Factors that lead to better project performance and success have developed a whole new industry of gadgets, buzzwords, and technology. Though some of the new technology has assisted the construction industry, such as project control software (which delivers total project management control by providing collaboration, cost control, and document management); BIM (Building Information Modeling) which addresses constructability issues, and CPM (Critical Path Method) scheduling (which provides the network logic through the maze of project activities to show the project team where to best focus their resources for the greatest benefit); these “tools” are only useful in the hands of bright, resourceful, and motivated project managers and project teams. So there still remains the most important ingredient in these processes and procedures, “People”. People solve problems! Not meetings, not protocols or procedures, though all planning, procedures and protocols are necessary, they can’t eliminate the most important ingredient in the project - People. So, people management is just as critical as project management. Sometimes in managing large public construction projects the “People Management” gets overshadowed by the “Project Management”. This is largely due to the contract requirements and the reporting requirements; I have yet to see any requirements that specifically call out for people management experience.

I also don’t want to underscore the necessity of maintaining a solid foundation in the Fundamentals of Project Management which is critical for all team members. The Project Management Institute (PMI) and the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) have spent considerable time and resources over the last 10 years developing, maintaining, and providing educational resources and a standard body of knowledge that are invaluable to all project managers. We can all take advantage of the incredible training that they offer, but this cannot be at the expense of people management skills. So this leads me to telling a story of how “People Leadership” and “Project Management” are a joint venture.
Project Story

About six years ago I was asked to take over a troubled public construction project that was approximately 30% complete. I was told that it was going to be an extremely difficult and painful project to manage. As the senior staff member explained that it would not be the technical difficulty or complexity of the occupied renovation project that was going to test my knowledge and expertise but rather the project team’s low morale and extremely polarized perspectives. This, I was told, was largely due to the number of outstanding issues that had not been addressed. I found that there had been no comprehensive list compiled addressing the entire project.

At the time about 35% of the space had been turned over to the owner, and the remaining 65%, the older portion of the campus which included the pool, gymnasium and an extensive site package, had not yet started. I was taking over the role of the project manager/owner’s rep two years into the project after the client had fired the original PM from my company. One of our biggest challenges was to manage the project in such a way that we would gain the support and trust of the Architect and General Contractor and win back the client’s trust.

At my first Building Oversight Committee meeting, the chairperson spent 20 minutes accusing the principal of the architecture firm of incompetence and belittling the Contractor with a comparison of his operation to the movie Animal House. That’s when I knew that this project was going to take more than just managing the fundamental tasks of project scope, cost, schedule, and quality management. The first thing we had to do was build a team.

By focusing on our common purpose and beginning to address the outstanding issues one by one, we minimized the opinions and backbiting and began to create a space where trust could grow. The funny thing about the project was that after I started reviewing the specific details of the schedule and budget, I found that the fundamentals were pretty good; the contractor had met all the current and former project milestones, and four out of the eight milestones had been met ahead of schedule. With help from the subcontractors, school officials, project staff, and the designer, I developed a comprehensive list which later developed into a punchlist, portions of which then in turn were tracked on the project cost control reporting. With this comprehensive list, we developed a change order tracking forecast which showed the Owner the executed change orders, the proposed change orders, and the potential change orders. The new forecast more accurately portrayed our over-all contingency balance, budget constraints, and possible schedule impacts. Tracking the outstanding items uncovered a list of unresolved claims and costs that were in some cases two years old.

In my first few months on the project, I began to alert the project team of the current issues that needed to be addressed that were of high importance and urgency (see the highlights from excerpts of memos sent):

- Newly occupied student space; frozen sprinkler heads: “On Monday, January 20th in the early am, in the vestibule area of Building C the sprinkler lines froze thus causing the heads to burst and dump water into the vestibule and the lobby and a couple of the rooms. It appears that the vestibule unit heater stopped working and the sprinkler lines froze thus causing the damage (It is still unclear which occurred first) ..”
• School Administration Wing with heat problems: Newly completed and occupied Administration wing: “Per my meeting with the Superintendent of Schools, I verified that it was 45 degrees at 8:30am in the building G hallway and 50 degrees in the administration wing and the superintendent’s office…..”

• No Heat in over (4) weeks: “… Lower Bldg. C, has three rooms that still have no heat; B030, B029, and C151 (Machine Shop) have had no heat in over (4) weeks. Let’s meet at 10am in the machine shop to address this issue and come up with a remedial repair scheme.”

• Phase 2 Work/Bldg. G (Guidance Offices & Reception Area): “The project team was surprised that we were not informed of the damage caused by the demolition subcontractor in Building G. The following rooms in Bldg. G (C182, C183, C184, C185, C186, C200, and C201) were damaged when the demolition subcontractor removed the roof out of sequence with the other trade contractors: 1) Fire Sprinkler lines damaged (cut and left on floor); 2) HVAC ductwork (see photo) cut from its supports and hanging off the bent steel studwork; 3) Rough Electric with some receptacle boxes damaged; 4) HVAC piping damaged; Rough Fire alarm wiring show some burn marks/need contractor to resolve extent of problem…”

• Site Contractor Damaged Underground Power, Fiber Optic, and Telephone Lines: “The accident occurred back on February 11th in which the subcontractor damaged the emergency power lines to the freezers in Culinary, NP, and Main Café, and have the contractor address and resolve this issue…”

• Water main compromised three times: Site contractor broke the water main three times in a two-week period on the project with over 1,000 students/faculty/staff having to be evacuated each time (this occurred during the month of January).

After reading through these issues one might get extremely discouraged and may look for new employment, but in spite of the number of problems, the project slowly got back on track, month by month. We started with close to 600 issues; after eight months the number had shrunk to fewer than 50. The project was eventually completed on-time and within the budget, but the factors key to its success had more to do with people leadership than project management. What I learned from this project can help any project:

Build Trust with Team First
The level of mistrust among the project stakeholders was palpable. I spent an enormous amount of time showing that though I was a representative of the Owner, I was fair and balanced in my assessment of additional work outside the
scope of the contract. My evaluation of the contract drawings and specifications did not make the general contractor think that I was siding with the designer as it related to errors and omissions. Once the Contractor saw me as trustworthy, he began to bring more and more items to the table, showing that he would also work in good faith. This slowly changed the dynamic of our working relationship with the contractor's project manager.

Open Door Policy – Desire to Address Issues
Too often I have worked on projects where the project manager has been unapproachable, where dropping by the manager’s office with a question about some policy or procedure, or project issue was not welcome. This is completely unacceptable, not to mention counter productive. Project managers who are not approachable are often the last ones to find out about problems. On taking over the project, I made it clear that all members of the team (Designer, Contractor, and Owner) were welcome to come by my office and talk. As a result, personnel from the school staff to the contractor as well as the design professionals took the time to give me their input on the number of items that were missing, poorly installed, or just problematic. Making it clear to the team that I welcomed hearing from them, even when their news was bad, opened the communication channels.

Communicate Concisely and Listen Effectively
From Chapter 10 of the Project Management Body of Knowledge - PMBOK® Guide, states, “Project Communications Management is the Knowledge Area that employs the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and ultimate disposition of project information.” No process is more important than communication in the design and construction of a project. Timely, accurate distribution of information is crucial to a large and diverse number of key players converging on the common goals of meeting the schedule and the budget. As leader of the project team, the PM is in the hot seat for communication, not
just for distributing project-generated information, but also for gathering, analyzing and responding to technical questions or addressing design and constructability issues.

Considering which means of communication is most appropriate and likely to be most effective is like choosing the right tool for the job. When requesting information or outlining expectations for performance, taking the time to write clearly, concisely and specifically about what we need especially when it can prevent misunderstandings and create a reference tool is critical. On the other hand, when a difference of opinion, attitude or perspective interferes with doing the job, e-mail may be a poor substitute for a face-to-face meeting or a phone call to resolve the issue.

Another vital facet of communication is listening. A successful Project Manager not only actively listens but also shows the members of the design/construction team that he or she is willing to listen. An attentive PM learns a lot about what is going on by the tenor of team members’ communications, both in what is said and what isn’t.

**Approach Problems with Skill**

How a project manager handles problems is critical to how the team see him or her as a leader. When a PM bears down on a problem, using whatever resources and input appropriate to devising and implementing a solution, s/he trains the attention of the team on the job. A manager who deals with problems as if there shouldn’t be any tends to over-react and looks for someone to blame when normal problems arise. Those managers manufacture additional problems and demoralize their team. A confident, experienced project manager, on the other hand, responds calmly to the problems that inevitably arise and learns from them, setting a good example to the team members all the while.

**In Conclusion**

Upon conclusion of the project, a senior staff person asked me to provide a lessons-learned report on what had gone wrong with the project planning and how we had resolved the issues and put the project back on schedule and budget. I let him know that the project planning itself was not the problem (the project plan had been very thorough). The problem was that the plan had not been implemented with any real people leadership skills. At first the senior staff person was surprised that the project had a good plan in place and yet had still gone so badly. It was difficult for him to accept that simply having a good project plan does not necessarily result in a successful project.

Six years after the project completion, I called the co-chairperson of the former building committee from this project. She sent me a letter of recommendation and a personal note which stated: “enclosed is my signed reference, much more diplomatic than I when referring to my 3 “boys”, but you were always upfront and honest…onward & upward, Retired Co-Chair School Building Committee.” The “3-boys” reference refers to the Contractor, Architect, and Owner’s Project Manager, and how at times we got along like her “3-boys”, and her favorite expression was, “boys will be boys.”
The green building movement has taken hold and continues to grow throughout all facets of the construction industry. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building System implemented by the U.S. Green Building Council provides benchmarks for design, construction and operation of green buildings. The program provides the ability to quantify and verify that a building will be environmentally responsible, profitable and a healthy place to live and/or work. The media attention paid to businesses and projects that focus on developing alternative fuel sources, reducing carbon footprints, using recyclable materials, and other green concepts is significant, to say the least. Social awareness and the grass roots green building movement have resulted in positive publicity for companies that adopt market and provide green design and construction techniques and technologies. Green design and construction and the movement towards creating environmentally conscious, profitable projects is clearly here to stay. All of that said, as with any change in our industry one must be aware of potential traps for the unwary construction industry practitioner.

The marketing efforts behind new green building projects often emphasize all advantages in order to maximize sales value to the end-user. Often times such efforts go so far as to advertise a particular level of LEED certification that the project will achieve. End-user sales or leases may in fact be based in part on the representations made in project marketing/sales materials. That, coupled with the notion that many construction projects change over time, based on delays, budgetary constraints, availability of building materials and a host of other issues creates a potential trap for the prospective green building practitioner. For example, if the advertised LEED certification level is not conferred by the Green Building Council, owners may be liable to end-users for a breach of the sales or lease agreement. Such owners will no doubt seek recovery for or contribution from their design professionals, contractors or project managers who may or may not have satisfied the green building requirements of their contract and/or of the portions of the contract documents over which they had control.

Additionally, if certification is not obtained as planned, the owner may not be able to realize tax benefits and/or collect funds from other governmental green building initiatives. To date in such cases, owners have attempted to recover lost tax credits and incentive dollars from contractors and others. It has been argued that contractors and design professionals should be held liable for construction defects or deficiencies that result in a failure to meet the Green Building Council’s LEED quality standards. Depending on the size of the project, an owner’s potential damages for failing to collect on green building tax (and other) incentives can be astronomical.

These examples are just two potential risks among many. These risks however are just like any other of the myriad risks inherent in a construction project; they can be managed and managed effectively. The first step in managing any risk is identifying it and becoming familiar with the landscape under which the risk is created.

In the LEED context, construction industry practitioners must, of course, first familiarize themselves with LEED standards and the ways in which LEED project goals are met and judged. Using this knowledge, construction practitioners should, during the pre-construction/project evaluation and/or bid phase, enlist all assistance required to accurately assess the probability of accomplishing the LEED certification goals of the project team. Early discussions and realistic expectations will serve to ensure that the project goals can be met and the end-user will get what is sold. Finally, LEED certification and the design, construction, project and program management duties that go along with the LEED goals will become contract requirements. These types of contract clauses are still under development and have yet to be fully standardized or vetted. Further, construction, design and management green building contract clauses have yet to be litigated or decided to a degree that creates any real level of certainty as to how they may be interpreted by the various courts and legal tribunals. In short, green building law is still in its infancy. As painful as it may be, prior to entering into a contract requiring work or services relating to green building and/or LEED requirements, consultation with a construction lawyer is advisable.
New Member – David Boucher
Newest CMAA New England Member David Boucher, Resident Engineer/Project Manager is currently working for the Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) in their Springfield, MA project office as a Resident Engineer.

CMAA Board Member – Nicholas Macy
One of the CMAA New England Board Members, Nicholas Macy has recently joined the ARCADIS PM CM Division as Senior Project Manager, he is involved with the R.L. Putnam Vocational School project and assisting on the firm’s other OPM projects in Northampton, Holyoke and Granby. Nicholas is serving in the new Massachusetts office in Springfield, MA. Nicholas is currently serving as the Owner’s Project Manager heading up the $125M Putnam Vocational Technical High School for the City of Springfield, MA. The project is currently in the Design Development stage and the CM at Risk firm has been selected for the project.

Membership Update:
The CMAA New England Chapter has recently surpassed the annual goal of increasing our membership by greater than 10%. Currently we have 214 members which is an increase from 188 members at this time last year, and 151 members in June of 2007. These steady increases are a reflection of the efforts of our Officers, Board of Directors, and many of our existing members who consistently promote and support the goals of the CMAA. We would like to remind all our members that we are always seeking your participation in any of our 11 sub-committees; including website, awards, golf/fundraiser, newsletter, young persons, membership government affairs, scholarship, programs, financial, and/or CCM certification. This is a great opportunity to have a voice in the future growth of the CMAA New England Chapter, If you are interested in participating in any of our committees, please contact Matt Poirer at mpoirer@keville.com

New Members In 2009

Kenneth Gerard Antonucci
Gregory B. Janey
David Capra
Kenneth Denny
Kamran Ghavamifar
Michael Herlihy
Chris Lawson, PE
John J. Phillips, PE, SAME
Allyn E. Yoakam, PE
Francis H. (Skip) Parker
Nicole Carrington

Keville Enterprises, Inc.
JaneyCo, Inc.
Wentworth Institute of Technology
STV, Inc.
Northeastern University
Ames & Gough
URS Corporation
O’Brien & Gere
CDM
Stantec Consulting Ltd.
Autodesk, Inc.

Samantha Bond
David H. Cook
David Harris
Gary Kibler
George Liming
John F. Buckley
Ivan R. Lopez
Peter Menzies
James C. O’Doherty
Brian R. Wong
Doug McCutchen

Bond Brothers, Inc.
AlliedCook Construction Corp.
AlliedCook Construction Corp.
AlliedCook Construction Corp.
U.S. General Services Administration
U.S. General Services Administration
U.S. General Services Administration
U.S. General Services Administration
U.S. General Services Administration
U.S. General Services Administration

In Memoriam
Stephen J McHugh, PE, CCM
A long-time employee of the Massachusetts Port Authority as a project manager for vertical construction, died suddenly on January 25, 2009 much to the surprise and grief of his family and many colleagues at the Authority and professional community. A long-time resident of Charlestown, MA, Steve’s many accomplishments were celebrated at a memorial service and lunch on January 31, 2009. Although Steve was a relatively newly minted CCM, his professional experience and skill in the construction industry and as a project manager for the Authority are widely known and appreciated by all who knew and worked with him. He will be sorely missed.

Kenneth Gerard Antonucci
Keville Enterprises, Inc.

Gregory B. Janey
JaneyCo, Inc.

David Capra
Wentworth Institute of Technology

Kenneth Denny
STV, Inc.

Kamran Ghavamifar
Northeastern University

Michael Herlihy
Ames & Gough

Chris Lawson, PE
URS Corporation

John J. Phillips, PE, SAME
O’Brien & Gere

Allyn E. Yoakam, PE
CDM

Francis H. (Skip) Parker
Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Nicole Carrington
Autodesk, Inc.

Samantha Bond
Bond Brothers, Inc.

David H. Cook
AlliedCook Construction Corp.

David Harris
AlliedCook Construction Corp.

Gary Kibler
AlliedCook Construction Corp.

George Liming
AlliedCook Construction Corp.

John F. Buckley
U.S. General Services Administration

Ivan R. Lopez
U.S. General Services Administration

Peter Menzies
U.S. General Services Administration

James C. O’Doherty
U.S. General Services Administration

Brian R. Wong
U.S. General Services Administration

Doug McCutchen
Keville Enterprises, Inc.
CMAA 15th Annual Awards

Infrastructure Project, Less than $10 Million
Langley Road Bridge
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Building Project, New Construction, Less than $10 Million
The Dahod Center at Pike School
Erland Construction

Building Project, New Construction, Less than $30 Million
Harvard University Graduate & Affiliate Housing
Richard White Sons

Building Project, New Construction, Less than $50 Million
Worcester Polytechnic Institute New Residence Hall
Gilbane
CMAA 15th Annual Awards

Building Project,
Renovation/Modernization
Less than $20 Million
Terminal C
HVAC Equipment Replacement
Keville Enterprises, Inc.

Building Project,
New Construction
Less than $100 Million
Enhanced Force Protection Structures
Tetra Tech, Inc.

Building Project,
New Construction
Greater than $20 Million
Salem High School
Gilbane

Program Management/
Program Phase -
Infrastructure
Lead Service Removal Program
O’Brien & Gere/
Maguire LSR JV
CMAA 15th Annual Awards

Person of the Year
Sam Sleiman

Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards

Program Management/
Program Phase - Building
Mount Washington Hotel & Resort
Improvements
Parsons Brinckerhoff

Sam Sleiman, PE, CCM
Receiving Award from
CMAA-NE President Paul Hemphill
GOLF OUTING for CM SCHOLARSHIPS

Wednesday, May 13, 2009
Registration Begins 7 AM - Shotgun Start 8:30 AM

New Location - Wentworth Hills Country Club in Plainville, MA - New Location!

Wentworth Hills (WH) Country Club opened in 2001 and is located near the Wrentham Outlet Mall just off of I-495. WH is an 18-hole golf course designed by Howard Maurer with greens that feature Bent grass. The Country Club is located in Plainville, MA with five holes actually in Cumberland, RI. The course is 5,325 yards from the Whites with a 120 slope rating and offers a rolling terrain with approximately 60 bunkers and challenging water hazards. Visit www.wentworthhillsgolf.com for directions & more info.

Corporate Sponsorship $800: Includes greens fees, cart, lunch for a foursome, and a sponsorship donation to the scholarship fund. Corporate Sponsors will be asked to kindly provide a suitable prize to be used for skill holes or raffle. Your corporate name will be prominently displayed at the tournament.

Sponsorship Without Golf $200: Includes sponsorship of either a hole or one of the tournament activities. Corporate Sponsors will be asked to kindly provide a suitable prize to be used for skill holes or raffle. Your corporate name will be prominently displayed at the tournament.

Individual Player $150: Includes greens fees, cart, lunch, and an individual donation to the scholarship fund.

Reservations will be made in order of checks received. Reserve your spot by completing and mailing the registration form below with a check payable to the “CMAA Foundation” to:

O'Brien & Gere
225 Chapman Street, 4th Floor, Providence RI 02905
Attention: John Phillips

For questions, contact either:
John Phillips   (617) 592-9331          phillips@obg.com
Russell Adams  (617) 248-0300 x 2137    radams@bryant-engrs.com
Matt Poirier   (617) 482-3888           mpoirier@keville.com

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With the economy being what it is more and more companies need to invest in their online presence. Your website is in most cases is your online image and the first thing people check to see the validity of your company. In addition having a great site means more than just the look and feel, it means having the site optimized so that prospects and clients can find you before they find your competition.

"Gig IT Consulting was not only instrumental in the design and development of our new website. They maintain our contact database, integration with PayPal and distribute online announcements. Gig IT has been instrumental in the way we now do business and has become our IT Solution for all of our internet and communication needs."

Paul Hemphill, CCM  
President, CMAA New England Chapter

"Gig IT Consulting is currently redesigning our website and prior to that resolved some outstanding domain and application issues. They came highly recommended by another vendor and I can see why, as they have impressed my staff and I with their knowledge and experience, as well as their comment to my company."

Charlotte R. Stevens  
Marketing Manager, Sturtevant Inc.  
www.sturtevantinc.com

Today a website is not always enough; Gig IT has been part of a series of workshops and seminars on Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) and how to effectively use them to increase your online presence and marketing.

To learn more about how we can help you and your business Contact us at info@gig-it.com or call 617.639.5524

www.cmaa-ne.org

www.gig-it.com