

For Members Only



A Word from the President Final Thoughts

by Karen Maine
President, MEA Board of Directors

My term as President of MEA is coming to an end, and I have been reflecting on the association's successful year. It was my honor to serve MEA and the industry in this capacity. I want to thank the officers, directors, committees, members and staff for helping make 2018 such an excellent year.

Educational offerings through the association have continued to grow over the last year. We hit record-breaking numbers in our apprenticeship program (280 enrolled) and have already trained over 1000 electricians throughout January and February of this year. There are numerous basic electrical videos available online in the education library to get new employees additional training that they might need—trade jargon, boxes, raceway fittings and measurements to name a few. Business training webinars are being delivered online live and on-demand to provide us and our teams those additional business skills that are crucial to success. Customized training for electrical contractors as well as corporate customers is continuously being created to meet the increasing needs for the industry.

Partnerships with organizations such as Avivo, Goodwill-Easter Seals and Project Build are helping us further the discussion of trades as a career path for our future generations. Our role in these collaborations has been important while we continue to develop our own pathways as well. MEA's workforce development committee has continued to find ways to provide resources to

membership throughout the year to make these conversations easier and more exciting. A demo board can be rented from MEA, a box of LED light-up helicopters can be purchased as well as numerous brochures highlighting the electrical industry as a viable career opportunity.

Financial stability of the organization was maintained even through this lowest year of the NEC cycle. Typically, on the 3rd year of the Code cycle, the association operates at a deficit. However, in 2018, sales from business products, private & public training, and apprenticeship sales exceeded budget expectations, and the association was able to remain in the black by year-end for the first time in many of the 3rd years. This is significant and will launch us forward as we begin to develop new programs & services such as on-demand continuing education.

Lastly, we celebrated MEA's 90th anniversary and I was thrilled to be a part of such a monumental event. As electrical contractors, we are incredibly lucky to have a stable and thriving organization on our side as we navigate through business in a highly regulated industry. I am optimistic for the results the association will continue to produce, and I know we are in good hands with Joe Gatewood (Gatewood Electric, Wilmar) as our new President. By starting out the 2019 year conducting and setting a new strategic plan, MEA will catapult into the next 3 years using our new roadmap to success. I am grateful to have been part of it and am eager to continue involvement in new ways with MEA.



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Clara DeRosier
Executive Director

From the Executive Director Strategic Planning

The Association conducted a 2-day strategic planning session Jan 31 and Feb 1 with an outside facilitator, board members, committee chairs and staff of the Association. I want to share with you, as members, a few of the key initiatives we will be focusing on in the next few years.

We surveyed members prior to the planning session and learned that there are 3 top MEA functions that the membership values most: Education Offerings; Government Action; and Publications and Information.

The median length of membership is 24 years, which suggests that members who retain their status with the organization continue to find value in the association, even during turbulent economic cycles. This reflects an organization that is clearly delivering value.

Strategy #1 – Education

Providing meaningful educational opportunities for members and their employees to obtain the management and technical training they need to prosper.

- This strategy will be accomplished through a number of formats, live program content, conferences and events and online platforms. Repurposing content to ensure distribution to all members will be key.

Strategy #2 – Government Action & Advocacy

Ensure the voice and interests of Merit Shop Electrical Contractors is heard and represented with state legislators, regulators and industry stakeholders.

- MEA's advocacy efforts have been increasing significantly with our lobbyist and our internal Government Affairs Manager working side by side to make sure we have a voice at the Capitol. Continued support will be needed from membership at large to assist in grassroots initiatives in the next few years.
- We will continue to engage in collaborative workforce development initiatives with other industry partners and encourage MEA members to participate.

Strategy #3 – Member Services & Resources

Establish and maintain strong connection to membership base and deliver quality programs and services at a fair value.

- Effective communication with members and prospects will be crucial as we focus on informing the next generation business owners of the value that MEA offers to them as a new electrical contractor. We have also been asking, listening and creating new pro-

grams and services to provide solutions to problems that current members have. Communicating these new programs to existing member will be equally important.

Strategy #4 - Organizational Sustainability

Maintain a professional, dynamic and financially sound organization.

- Assess staffing needs and outsourcing as it pertains to accomplishing goals while maintaining financial stability. Ensuring return on investment on these additional investments. Determining additional technology needs to deliver quality products and services to customers. Leverage information from our database to make informed decisions on the future.
- Develop future leaders, succession and transition plans for key staff and board/committee members to ensure knowledge transfer and smooth shifts in association development. This includes continuous creation of a highly engaged culture from leaders and staff to retain these key people for the industry.

I have included a one-page summary on the enclosed insert. If you have any questions, I would love to chat. The full report is 15 pages with many tactics and ideas that were discovered through the planning session as ways to ensure success in the 4 strategies listed above. We look forward to working on these goals and for your continued support as we may ask for your opinions, help or participation on task forces to get us where we want to be faster.

Building Committee Day is being revised! If you have never been to the MEA office, stop by, check it out, and pitch in with a few projects around the building. We will be holding the event on a Friday afternoon this year and, of course, there will be food and drinks for all!



You Need to Know

COMPLIANCE

Proposed Overtime Rule Covers More Workers... The Dept of Labor has proposed an increase in the salary-level threshold for white-collar exemptions to \$35,308/yr from \$23,660. The new overtime rule would result in the reclassification by employers of more than a million currently exempt workers as nonexempt and an increase in pay for others above the new threshold. (www.shrm.org, Mar 2019)

CONSTRUCTION TRENDS

National Housing Starts... Builder confidence in the market for newly-built single-family homes held steady in March, according to the latest National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). "Builders report the market is stabilizing following the slowdown at the end of 2018 and they anticipate a solid spring home buying season," said NAHB Chairman Ugalde. (www.nahb.org)

Minnesota Employment in Construction... Construction has added jobs in every month since March. Annually the supersector added 7,711 jobs (6.7%). It was the largest proportional increase of any supersector in Minnesota. Construction has shown over-the-year increases of greater than 3% in every month since May. (MN DEED)

ECONOMY

US Consumer Confidence Index... increased in February, following a decline in January. The Index now stands at 131.4 (1985=100), up from 121.7 in January. The Present Situation Index – based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions – improved, from 170.2 to 173.5. The Expectations Index – based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business and labor market conditions – increased from 89.4 last month to 103.4 this month. (www.conference-board.org)

MN Interest Rates... 30-yr fixed 4.31% (down); 15-yr Fixed 3.67% (down); 1-yr CD 2.72% (flat); 5-yr CD 3.02% (flat). (www.bankrate.com)

ENERGY

Legislative Update... Governor Walz announced his Path to Clean Energy Act—a short summary can be found at <http://bit.ly/mn100clean>. Key components in the bill include an emphasis on clean energy resources, like solar and energy efficiency, and increasing and expanding CIP to become the "Energy Optimization" program. Load shifting and efficient fuel switching, including strategic electrification, could also be included in CIP. Any net energy savings from efficient fuel switching would be in addition to the overall efficiency targets for the investor-owned utilities—increased to 1.75% of gross annual sales for IOU electric utilities and reduced to 1.0% for IOU natural gas utilities. Municipal and cooperatives utilities would need to reach a 1.0% goal in energy efficiency to be able to count net energy savings from efficient fuel switching. (www.mncee.org)

LABOR & MANAGEMENT

National Unemployment... In January, ND, VT, and WY had unemployment rate decreases (-0.1 % each). The three states with rate increases were AZ (+0.2 %) and GA and MN (+0.1%). The remaining 44 states had jobless rates that were not notably different from the month earlier, though some had changes that were at least as large numerically as the significant changes. (www.bls.gov/cps)

MN Employment... Center for Rural Policy and Development: "There are few significant differences in employment when comparing urban and rural areas. Education and health services along with trade, transportation, and utilities employ nearly 50% of the labor force in most of our counties no matter how rural. Rural counties have a higher % employed in agriculture and government jobs or are self-employed, while the Twin Cities has a significant share of people employed in the professional/business sector...There continues to be significant opportunity for employment in regions outside the metro. The highest job vacancies and largest increases in wages for job vacancies have occurred in Greater MN...Although the largest gains in earnings per job have occurred outside of the most urban counties, the growth hasn't been enough to close the gap between this region and the rest of the state." More: <http://bit.ly/2DSioWU> (RuralMN.org)

MEA SPRING CONFERENCE (APRIL 11-13)

- **Lunch presentation—learn about communicating with all generations in today's workplace**
- **Tour of the St Croix bridge with MN DOT—Todd Clarkowski & John Pederson will walk us through aesthetics, traffic signals, interior box beam lighting, and electrical systems**
- **Annual Awards Dinner—a wonderful night to recognize those who have gone above and beyond**

Watch your email & check back: www.electricalassociation.com/conferences

NFPA 70E Private Training

- 1 See what can happen if safety protocols are not followed
- 2 Recognize what you can and can't work on and why
- 3 Understand why it's critical to follow company safety rules



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2019 EDUCATION CALENDAR

CODE TRAINING

Based on the 2017 NEC®

Classroom 16 Cont Ed Credits—Approved by MN, WI, SD, ND, NE, IA, WY, MT. (2 days; 8am-5pm)

May 3-4 **Cottage Grove at Werner Electric Supply** 2017 NEC Grounding & Bonding; Motor Installation & Overcurrent Protection. Jeff Kunkel, Trainer.

Cottage Grove & La Crosse Sponsored by

May 16-17 **La Crosse, WI at Werner Electric Supply** NEC 2017 Grounding & Bonding; Motor Installation & Overcurrent Protection. Mike Miller, Trainer.



Online 2 Cont Ed Credits—Approved by MN, WI, SD, NE, IA, WY.

Apr 11 (8:00AM-10:00AM) NEC 2017 Motor Transformers. Tim Zinniel, Trainer.

Apr 24 (6:30PM-8:30PM) NEC 2017 Special Occupancies, Pt 3. Chad Kurdi, Trainer.

May 14 (8:00AM-10:00AM) NEC 2017 Grounding & Bonding, Pt 5—Special Locations. Mike Miller, Trainer.

May 22 (6:30PM-8:30PM) NEC 2017 Overcurrent Protection for Unlic Personnel. Chad Kurdi, Trainer.

EXAM PREP COURSE

Apr 13-14 **Edina** at Federated Insurance. Chad Kurdi, Trainer.



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2019 - 2021 Strategic Plan Summary

Vision:

The Electrical Association is *the* association that Electrical Contractors aspire to join.

Mission:

The Electrical Association provides leadership in partnering between contractors, government, employees, and consumers to promote quality construction built safely, on time, on budget, and at a fair price and profit. The Electrical Association also provides a strong commitment to quality in education, communication, government relations, and ethics.

Core Purpose:

To partner with Electrical Contractors to ensure success in their businesses by providing the customized programs and services they require to improve their business.

Values:

We believe in agility, accountability, positivity, service and situational awareness.

Strategy # 1 - Education:

Provide meaningful educational opportunities for members and their employees to obtain the management and technical training they need to prosper.

- Objective 1.1 Deliver high-quality and value-added technical education
- Objective 1.2 Share best practices to increase the potential for the business success of Electrical Contractors
- Objective 1.3 Provide opportunities for on-demand education

Strategy #2 - Government Action & Advocacy:

Ensure the voice and interests of Merit Shop Electrical Contractors is heard and represented with state legislators, regulators and industry stakeholders.

- Objective 2.1 Continue the current advocacy focus and involvement in the political process
- Objective 2.2 Participate in collaborative advocacy efforts to expand the workforce talent pool for electricians

Strategy #3 - Member Services & Resources:

Establish and maintain strong connections to membership base and deliver quality programs and services at a fair value.

- Objective 3.1 Enhance member engagement, retention and recruitment
- Objective 3.2 Assess opportunities to enhance member benefits
- Objective 3.3 Improve communication effectiveness with members and prospects

Strategy #4 - Organizational Sustainability:

Maintain a professional, dynamic and financially sound organization.

- Objective 4.1 Achieve net operating income, cost and margin targets
- Objective 4.2 Review opportunities to expand membership and revenue
- Objective 4.3 Refine leadership development opportunities for members and staff to ensure continuity
- Objective 4.4 Establish a highly engaged member culture to increase the desire of Electrical Contractors to join and maintain their membership