



SMACNA
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**SMACNA NATIONAL
CONVENTION 2024**

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A BRIGHT VISION FOR 2025

As we say goodbye to 2024 and look ahead to a new year of opportunity and prosperity, I would like to take a moment to reflect on our association's achievements these past few months and to look ahead at what promises to be a year full of opportunity.

A highlight of this fall was the annual SMACNA National Convention, which took place in Palm Desert, California. As always, the four days were packed full of educational opportunities, incredible presentations and guest speakers, and plenty of chances to connect with colleagues, our labor partners, and new friends in the making.

SMACNA SoCal represented well at this event. Our members connected with other contractors from across America, and SMACNA SoCal held a social event on Monday night with the Philadelphia contractors team. It was a great opportunity to mingle and discuss our regional challenges and opportunities. SMART General President Mike Coleman and SMACNA President Tom Martin joined us, and it was nice to have time to chat with both of them. SMACNA SoCal also held a Chapter Dinner Night at The Edge Steakhouse at the Ritz Carlton.

Since then, SMACNA SoCal has brought on six new board members, and we are so excited to get to know them and see what their vision and contributions will be. Please join me in welcoming Mohammad Alkhuder, Los Angeles Air Conditioning, Inc.; David Barberio, Westco Service Company; Don Gallagher, Circulating Air, Inc.; Bryan Graham, ACCO Engineered Systems; David Lee, G.E.S. Sheet Metal, Inc.; and Patrick Reed, Murray Company, to the SMACNA SoCal Board for 2024-26. I have done work with all of them and can attest to their professionalism and abilities.

Moving forward, our association will also be changing the products and services it currently offers the membership. Aligned with that, there will be some committee restructuring



By / Gina Medel
SMACNA-SoCal President

to ensure SMACNA SoCal is offering the very best to our contractor members.

If you have any feedback or areas you would like the association to focus on, please reach out. We are working for you and look forward to engaging with you over the coming year.

On the political side of things, we want our members to know that we are working hard at navigating the coming years with our friends at CAL SMACNA and SMACNA National. Our objective is always maximizing the value we offer our members, and we will continue to follow that mandate by prioritizing excellence and the betterment of our member businesses. Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2025 Day at the Capitol in Sacramento, February 10 and 11. This is our one day of the year we can directly communicate with our legislators. With 30 new members sworn in to the Senate and Assembly after the November election and the 37 new members from the 2022 election, more than 50% of the legislative body will have two years or less experience. Join us for the opportunity to educate these new members on issues affecting our industry.

2025 will also bring the annual events you know and love, including the MEP Conference at the end of January, the Sweethearts' Ball in February, and Evening with the Angels in May. For more information about these events, please reach out to the SMACNA SoCal office.

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MEET THE BOARD: MOHAMMAD ALKHUDER

Mohammad Alkhuder, CEO and President of Los Angeles Air Conditioning, Inc., recently joined the SMACNA SoCal board of directors on a two-year director term because he wanted to give back to the industry.



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SNAPSHOTS FROM SMACNA NATIONAL CONVENTION



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MEET THE BOARD:

Mohammad Alkhuder, Director

With 25 years of experience in the sheet metal contracting industry, Mohammad Alkhuder has built a career spanning design, sales, and leadership. Currently serving as the CEO and President of Los Angeles Air Conditioning, Inc., he has dedicated much of his career to office, sales, and project management roles, combining technical expertise with strategic oversight.

"I love the challenge of this work," he says. "It is never the same. Every day is something different, and every project is unique, whether approaching it from a design or a sales perspective. I learn something new each time."

Alkhuder recently joined the SMACNA SoCal board of directors on a two-year director term because he wanted to give back to the industry.

"The current board approached me, so I guess they saw something in me," he reflects. "I wanted to support the industry and contribute to enhancing the association's work and its reputation in affecting public policy. Anything I can do to help. I also wanted to see how things operate on the other side and what it takes to run this industry. It is a different game from that perspective."

The sheet metal industry has faced many challenges over the two-and-a-half decades Alkhuder has been a part of it, but none, perhaps, as important as the current and impending labor shortage.

"It is hard to find expertise and the people we need to enter the training program," he says. "As an industry, we need to encourage more young people to explore the trades."

He looks back to his time in university as president of the Society of Petroleum Engineering—a collegiate club that brought students in this field together for events, education, and networking. "We would get a bit of cash from some of the industry leaders and have pizza while we brought students in to explore petroleum engineering," he says. "Young people at that age were more open to exploring new options. I never saw anything like that for the HVAC industry, but it might be something worth exploring."

Moving forward, Alkhuder would like to see the association continue its work with the union and JATC to boost recruitment and retention. He sees competition with non-union contractors as another challenge the industry will continue to have to deal with.



"We need more union people in the field," he says. "We are working through it now, but what happens ten years from now? Kids are not exposed to this field early enough to make a decision about it and to realize they make good money in sheet metal and won't need to pay back any student loans."

He sees important opportunities in the refit market with the existing building stock housing older equipment that is desperately in need of upgrading. "Newer, more efficient equipment pays for itself," he says. "This is a good opportunity for smaller companies like ours that are agile enough to handle a large volume of smaller and tenant improvement projects."

Los Angeles Air Conditioning, inc. is more than 60 years old and specializes in sheet metal and piping. Tenant improvements are its edge because they call for agility. New builds hinge on labor estimates that are based on plans, and they operate under compressed timelines that are subject to other trades' work. Los Angeles Air Conditioning, Inc. can meet refit and tenant improvement project labor needs accordingly and accurately because they can walk into an existing building and see first-hand what is required.

"We can be flexible and creative in how we complete the job without losing out," he says. "When difficulty and rigidity are driving a project there can be a lot of pressure on contractors."

Over the next two years, Alkhuder hopes to bring new ideas to the board. As a new recruit among board experts, he expects to learn a lot and hopes to contribute new ideas.

"Other than that, I hope to learn what the board is all about and go from there," he says. ■

SAVE THE DATE: CAL SMACNA'S DAY AT THE CAPITOL 2025

California SMACNA's 2025 Day at the Capitol will be held in Sacramento on February 10-11, 2025, featuring events at the Hyatt Regency in Sacramento. This is CAL SMACNA and SMACNA SoCal members' opportunity to speak directly with legislators. This year is more important than ever because 30 new members will be sworn in to the Senate and Assembly after the November election. Combined with the 37 new members from the 2022 election, over 50% of the legislative body will have two years or less of experience. Educating these new members on issues that affect the sheet metal contracting industry is paramount, and it will be a primary focus of this year's event.

"Our main objective in 2025 is to familiarize and educate our new Legislature to the industry and the contributions SMACNA contractors make to California," says Chris Walker, executive vice-president of CAL SMACNA. "We want them to know about the kind of work we do; our involvement in infrastructure, energy efficiency programs, and meeting the public health goals of the state; our recruitment programs; our apprenticeship and JATC systems; and the high paying middle class jobs we provide."

At last year's event, CAL SMACNA's top issues related to public works, public contracts, promotion of shop classes in K-12 public schools, PAGA legislation reform, and CARB board mandates concerning low-emission fleets.

SMACNA SoCal's president, Gina Medel, has attended this event several times to stand in solidarity with contractors as they face legislative challenges to doing business.

"I know how hard it is for our industry and business, and when we meet with the assembly men and women, it really makes a difference," she said, adding that talks in 2024 on most topics of importance were productive.



"Legislators appreciate our effort to communicate directly with them because they know we are busy and yet we are taking the time to talk to them about issues we are experiencing," she said. "They recognize and appreciate that, and they see we are not just lobbying. We are real people telling them about the obstacles we face and what we need to be successful."

CAL SMACNA has requested SMACNA SoCal's assistance in identifying contractor members who have homes/businesses in districts that will see new legislators and encouraging them to attend the event.

"This is an historic year where CAL SMACNA is losing many established relationships and we need to work hard to regain our connectivity," Walker says. "We are still falling short of the number of contractors needed to meet with our new legislators."

"Attending this event is important," Medel adds. "Everyone gets a lot out of it. It's important that everyone knows the issues because you can't complain if you aren't willing to do anything about them. We all have a responsibility to take a stand and do our best."

Reach out to cal-smacna.org/event/2025-day-at-the-capitol with questions and to register for this event. ■

SMACNA-SOCAL EVENTS

Sweethearts Ball

Saturday, February 22, 2025 • Terranea Resort, Rancho Palos Verdes
Join SMACNA SoCal members and their guests for an evening of fellowship, food, and dancing. Each lady leaves with a beautiful jewellery treasure.

Angel Game Night

April 5, 2025 • Rose Garden at Angel Stadium

The Pre-Party and Angels Game Night at the Rose Garden and Angel Stadium is one of most anticipated events of the year for SMACNA SoCal members. Historically, up to 300 members and their guests have gathered for lunch, tasty dessert, a photo booth, games, a raffle draw, and of course, an exciting ball game. Don't miss it as SMACNA SoCal hits it out of the park once again with this fabulous event!

Friends of the Industry Golf Tournament

June 16, 2025 • Friendly Hills Country Club

SMACNA SoCal's Annual Friends of the Industry Golf Tournament lives up to its name. Every person is invited to enjoy themselves and celebrate SMACNA's history at Friendly Hills Country Club, which has kept the fairways and greens pristine for over 30 years since SMACNA SoCal members began playing the course.

SMACNA National Convention 2025

October 26-29, 2025 • Grand Wailea, Maui, Hawaii

It's never too early to start planning for the event of the year. The SMACNA 2025 Annual Convention will be held from October 26-29, 2025, at Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort/Wailea Beach Resort in Maui, Hawaii. Save the date!

UNLOCK 100% TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR SMACNA EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH CAL SMACNA AND SMACNA SOCAL

Investing in professional development has never been more accessible. SMACNA's 2025 educational programs are renowned for their industry-leading content, providing participants with actionable insights and skills to elevate their expertise and productivity. These programs are a valuable opportunity to strengthen your leadership, management, and technical abilities, and now, thanks to CAL SMACNA and SMACNA Southern California (SMACNA SoCal), the financial barrier to participation has been significantly reduced.

SMACNA's 2025 Education Programs

SMACNA's upcoming programs offer comprehensive training tailored to various roles within the sheet metal industry:

- **Business Management University**
February 24 – February 27, 2025 | Phoenix, AZ
Gain an in-depth understanding of business practices essential for running a successful sheet metal company.
- **Project Managers Institute**
March 9 – March 12, 2025 | Minneapolis, MN
Master effective project management skills, including leadership, planning, time management, and change order processes.
- **Senior Project Leadership Institute**
March 16 – March 19, 2025 | Rosemont, IL
Navigate the complexities of leading a sheet metal project through a simulated experience of real-world challenges.
- **Supervisor Training Academy**
March 24 – March 26, 2025 | St. Louis, MO

Whether you're a new or experienced supervisor, this program equips attendees with essential tools for leadership success.

Tuition Reimbursement Programs: CAL SMACNA + SMACNA SoCal

To make these exceptional programs even more accessible, CAL SMACNA and SMACNA SoCal both offer tuition reimbursement programs that allow members to receive up to 100% of tuition or registration costs for SMACNA educational programs. Each organization provides up to 50% reimbursement, making full coverage possible when benefits are combined.

Reimbursement Details

- Reimbursement covers up to 50% of tuition costs from each organization.
- No more than 20% of the annual education budget will be allocated to any single member company in a calendar year.
- Funds are issued on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Required documentation includes:
 - A certificate of completion.
 - A copy of the paid invoice.
 - Instructions on who the reimbursement should be made payable to.

SMACNA SoCal's program mirrors CAL SMACNA's Member Education Program, so members can easily combine both benefits to take full advantage of these reimbursement opportunities.

Act Now

Don't miss out on this chance to invest in your professional growth. With limited funds available and reimbursement requests processed on a first-come, first-served basis, early enrollment is key.

For more information and to register for SMACNA Educational Programs visit smacna.org/learn/events/calendar

For questions about CAL SMACNA's program, contact Veronika Darrach at (916) 363-7460 or veronika@cal-smacna.org. For details about SMACNA SoCal's program, reach out to the SMACNA SoCal office at (562) 944-6345 or kim@smacna-socal.org.

By taking advantage of these tuition benefits, you're making a commitment to growth—for yourself, your team, and your company. ■

IN MEMORIAM

BILL BLACKSTONE

It is with great sadness that SMACNA SoCal shares the news that our dear friend Mr. Bill Blackstone passed away on December 5. Bill was a part of this industry for more than 60 years. He was former president of Cal Air, a SMACNA Board Member, Chapter Manager of SCEBB, and a SMACNA SoCal Technical Consultant. He was a great friend and mentor to many of us. He will be truly missed. We ask that you keep his wife Joyce and son Mark in your prayers. ■



THE ELECTION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR KEY POLICY ISSUES

Former President Donald Trump won a narrow popular vote victory in the United States election on November 5, the second closest popular vote margin in more than half a century, next to Nixon vs Humphrey in 1968. He also became just the second president ever to be elected to non-consecutive terms.

A reason for Trump's popular-vote gains is that Harris was well below President Biden's 2020 vote totals in blue states. Just in New York and California, Harris was off Biden's totals by almost 3 million votes, and most of that was not vote-switching. In New York, Harris was off by about 900,000 votes, but Trump only gained about 200,000 from his 2020 total. In California, Harris got roughly 1.9 million fewer votes than Biden, but Trump only got about 60,000 more.

Trump also won all seven battleground states, sweeping Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin to win the electoral college by a 312–226 margin. Republicans went on to capture the majority in the Senate, as expected. They needed to flip just two Senate seats to win the majority, but they flipped four by winning seats in Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

That means Republicans will have a 53–47 majority when the new Congress convenes in January, and they completed the trifecta when it was confirmed that they will retain their narrow majority in the House of Representatives.

We now know that Republicans will emerge with a narrow margin of five seats but a margin of one seat when the new President is sworn into office. That ensures a House GOP majority government by a vote or two, meaning lawmakers on Capitol Hill will inevitably make compromises and changes to his proposals or the House won't function.

One major complicating factor, however, is that President-elect Trump has nominated three House Republicans for Cabinet-level positions in his administration. Those lawmakers will need to resign from Congress, leaving vacancies for several months until special elections can be held for their replacements. These vacancies would temporarily leave the Republicans with a one vote razor-thin margin in the House, threatening their ability to pass legislation.

The new Congress will face two complex policy issues in 2025 that are critical to the markets: a debt ceiling fight and major tax legislation.

Debt Ceiling

The congressionally mandated cap on the total amount of debt the United States can accumulate has been suspended since mid-2023, part of a deal struck in the last debt ceiling fight on Capitol Hill. The cap returns in January 2025, and the United States will be unable to accumulate more debt. By mid-2025,



By / Stan Kolbe, Executive Director of
Legislative and Political Affairs, SMACNA

Congress will have to vote to raise the ceiling, a vote that will be politically tricky regardless of the configuration in Washington.

Republicans will likely want to pair any increase with spending cuts, but voting to raise the debt ceiling will draw attention to the estimated \$1.8 trillion budget deficit and more than \$35 trillion in debt.

Taxes

Expect Republicans to move quickly in 2025 to extend our favored expired or soon expiring provisions on bonus depreciation, equipment expensing, and R&D tax credits. The goal is to pass the extenders and make permanent the provisions of the 2017 tax cuts that are set to expire at the end of next year, including the lower individual income tax rates and the higher amount of assets that can be inherited without triggering the estate tax.

Trump has also talked on the campaign trail about lowering the corporate tax rate, repealing the deduction cap for state and local taxes, and ending the taxation of tip income, Social Security benefits, and overtime pay, among other ideas. It's unclear how many of these proposals will be added to the tax package next year. Each has a steep price tag in terms of lost revenue to the Treasury, so lawmakers will face tough choices on how many of them the budget can absorb.

With control of both the House and Senate, Republicans could use a parliamentary process known as "budget reconciliation," which allows for tax code changes to be passed with a simple majority in both chambers, bypassing the need for a 60-vote supermajority in the Senate. That could mean the tax issue is resolved in the first or second half of 2025, though 2017 Tax Act changes (outside the extenders) would not take effect until 2026.

Tariffs

Trump's plan for across-the-board tariffs on imports will be a key issue of interest for the markets, as they pose potential downside risk to economic and earnings growth while also being likely to increase inflation. But tariff threats might be negotiating tools to forge agreements with China and other countries.

When it comes to tariffs, the amount of the tariffs, which imports they apply to, the countries targeted and how those

countries respond will be critical factors in the broader economic impact.

Deregulation

Unified Republican control in Washington likely ushers in a “light-touch” regulatory environment in areas like the capital markets, banking, cryptocurrency, and elsewhere, but a Supreme Court decision last summer gives courts a much larger role in the regulatory process, and it will likely take a year or more for the implications of that to be fully understood.

Federal Reserve

Trump has talked about wanting a larger presidential role in monetary policy decision-making. Markets will be watching carefully to see if any steps are taken to weaken the Fed’s independence. None of the Fed governors have a term ending before May 2026, when Jerome Powell’s term as chair is set to expire, so making any changes to personnel before then (barring a resignation of a sitting Fed governor) likely raises complicated legal questions. ▪

SMART Local 105 2025 Holidays							
Holidays	LA/OE Commercial	Bakersfield Commerical	Orange Empire Residential	LA/OE S&M	Bakersfield S&M	LA/OE Residential	Bakersfield Residential
New Year's Day Wednesday, January 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Martin Luther King Day Monday, January 20	✓	✓					
President's Day Monday, February 17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Good Friday Friday, April 18	✓	✓					
Memorial Day Monday, May 26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independence Day Friday, July 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Labor Day Monday, September 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Day Before Vetran's Day Monday, November 10	✓	✓					
Veteran's Day Tuesday, November 11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thanksgiving Day Thursday, November 27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Friday After Thanksgiving Day Friday, November 28	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christmas Eve Wednesday, December 24	✓	✓	✓				
Christmas Day Thursday December 25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Day After Christmas Day Friday, December 26	✓	✓					
New Year's Day Thursday, January 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

