

Industry Reporter



MEET MICHAEL DEAN



JACT Tour with State Senator



Safety Sponsorship Award



The Mold Act

PASSING THE BATON

This will be my last editorial as president of SMACNA Southern California, and what an honor and privilege it has been to serve the membership and work with the association's amazing staff.

During my term, the board of directors has worked hard on a number of valuable initiatives that have provided education, networking, and connection to our membership. The education committee is working hard on training programs for the membership and held a great seminar in September on AI and construction contracts. Annual events, like the Sweethearts' Ball, the golf tournament, and the Annual Meeting & Dinner/Dance, continue to bring people together to celebrate all we have achieved as an organization and as an industry. And bringing in Kristine Hammond to lead our group was a great decision, as she works tirelessly to make our association the best it can be.

In October, Michael Dean will step into the role of president. He is a fantastic person and a dedicated business owner. He has lots of experience in our industry and as a leader, and he will no doubt bring a lot of great ideas to our association. Please take the time to welcome him as his term begins after the AGM.

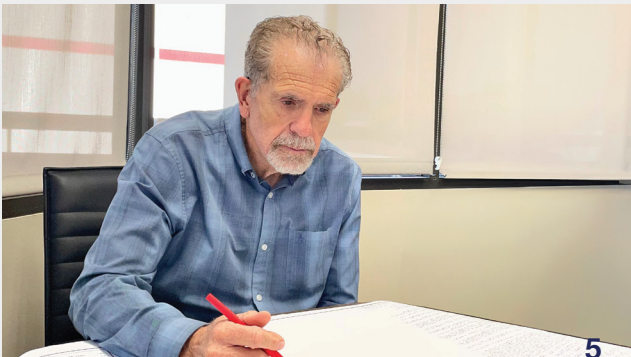


By / Gina Medel
SMACNA SoCal President

I will have a short break before taking on the CAL SMACNA president role in April. CAL SMACNA has a strong, dedicated team, and I am so excited to be a part of it. I hope to connect with SoCal members and the broader membership through my position there, and I look forward to learning about what matters most to CAL SMACNA members so I can continue to build on their successful initiatives.

In closing, I want to thank our amazing SMACNA SoCal staff—Kim Williams, Kristine Hammond, and Rubi Diaz—as well as our Board of Directors and the membership for your support and encouragement during my term as president. You made it a great experience, and I am honored to have worked with you all. ▪

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SUMMER RECAP AT SMACNA SOCIAL

The SMACNA SoCal office had a busy summer!

One of our accomplishments was an upgrade to our online remittance reporting portal, WebERF. Technical upgrades have been made to the platform, including some modifications to the interface, but the reporting process will essentially remain the same. Most importantly, for the two trust funds administered through the SMACNA SoCal office—the Sheet Metal Industry Fund (SMIF) and the Labor Management Cooperation Trust (LMCT)—we have enabled payment by electronic funds transfer (EFT). In the future, we hope to enable payment by EFT to the other entity funds, as well.

EFT provides a safe, secure, and convenient way to make payments electronically and reduces risks and delays associated with sending checks through the mail. Contractors who prefer to continue paying by check may certainly continue to do so.

An EFT Authorization Form must be on file with our office before electronic payments can be initiated. Please reach out to Rubi Diaz, member services & administrative coordinator, if you have any questions. She can be reached at rubi@smacna-socal.org or (562) 944-6345.

We hope this added payment option will make the monthly reporting and remittance process a little easier while giving contractors the flexibility to choose the payment method that works best for them.

The Education Committee wrapped up the summer with an in-person seminar on September 9 at The Westin Anaheim Resort. The seminar focused on two timely topics: artificial intelligence and construction contracts. Attendees explored practical ways AI can improve efficiency, decision-making, and business operations, and learned how to identify key contract provisions and potential risks.

Although the state legislature has adjourned for the 2026 session, we used this opportunity to follow up on connections made at our Day at the Capitol back in May by providing State Senator Bob Archuleta (District 30) a tour of the JATC on September 10 with the administrator, David Garcia. Although the City of Industry is in his district, Senator Archuleta never had the opportunity to see it firsthand. He was quite impressed with the facility and took time to speak with several of the apprentices.

These advocacy connections are an important part of the SMACNA mission and go a long way toward building relationships with policymakers and helping them better understand our industry, our workforce, and the significant investment our contractors make in apprenticeship and training. Opportunities like this allow us to demonstrate firsthand the important role our members and our skilled workforce play in Southern California's economy.



By / Kristine Hammond
SMACNA SoCal Executive Director





Finally, I look forward to seeing you at the 2026 Annual Meeting & Dinner Dance on October 17 at the Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach. This special evening is a wonderful opportunity for members and their guests to connect over dinner, hear the chapter president's annual report, and enjoy live entertainment and dancing. We will also conduct our biennial election of the board of directors for the 2026–2028 term.

For more information or to reserve tickets for this regular and associate members-only event, please reach out to Kim Williams, Office Manager and event planner extraordinaire, at kim@smacna-socal.org.

Thank you! ▪



SAVE THE DATE

CAL SMACNA's 2027 Day at the Capitol

February 9 - 10, 2027 | Sacramento, CA

CAL SMACNA's 2027 Day at the Capitol will provide you with an opportunity to help shape state policy on CAL SMACNA's top issues. Help us educate and influence the California legislature on issues of importance to the health of our industry.

Registration Deadline

January 13, 2027

Hotel Information: CAL SMACNA will cover one night of hotel accommodation for arrival on 2/9/27 and departure on 2/10/27. If you need additional accommodations, please contact our office.

Non-member attendance requires prior approval from CAL SMACNA. Please contact our office for additional information.



Save the Date: 2027 Sweethearts' Ball

February 20, 2027

The 2027 date and location for the much-anticipated annual Sweetheart's Ball have been set. Get out your calendar, put a big, red heart around February 20, and plan to be at the Langham Huntington, in Pasadena.

The Sweethearts' Ball is a night of dinner, dancing, and mingling in celebration of the partners and families who support sheet metal business owners every day.

Watch your email and the SMACNA SoCal website for more details.

Meet MICHAEL DEAN

President and CEO of AireMasters Air Conditioning will be SMACNA SoCal's next president.

Michael Dean started at AireMasters Air Conditioning in 1986 as a sheet metal journeyman, but he quickly rose through the ranks. Working hard and learning all he could, Dean soon became a foreman/detailer before moving into AutoCAD (BIM) detailing. Over the years, he continued to take on new responsibilities, eventually serving as general superintendent, project manager, and vice president of operations.

In 2011, he began buying into AireMasters as a minority owner, and in 2024, he became the majority owner and President/CEO.

“My vision for AireMasters is to continue doing the things that have made us successful for 50 years while developing the next generation of leaders who will carry the company forward long after I leave,” he says.

AireMasters is a full-service commercial contractor that designs and installs HVAC, refrigerant piping, and direct digital control systems. They also provide general contracting, specializing in public and private works, schools, and industrial projects. “We thrive on fast-paced, challenging modernization projects,” Dean says. “Those are the types of jobs where our experience, teamwork, and ability to solve problems really shine.”

An example of the company's stellar work is the recently completed Lifetime Gym in Brea, a large project for the AireMasters team. It is a large, two-story gym with pools, saunas, yoga rooms, kitchen, and a lounge area.

“We are very proud of the finished product and the HVAC system we delivered for the client,” Dean says. “We also had the opportunity to work with Superior Duct, which fabricated all of the ductwork for the project.”

Another project in which AireMasters' expertise shone was the air-conditioning system installation at Anaheim Union High School District's main office. This was a challenging



project because the existing roof structure wasn't designed to support the new air handlers. “We had to build large wood platforms and install all-new ductwork, controls, roofing, structural steel, plumbing, new electrical system, along with patching and painting walls and ceilings,” Dean expands.

What made the project even more challenging was that all this work had to be completed while the site remained opened and operational. In the end, AireMasters finished the project on time and within budget.

“*We thrive on fast-paced, challenging modernization projects,” Dean says. “Those are the types of jobs where our experience, teamwork, and ability to solve problems really shine.*”

In October, Dean will step into the role of president of SMACNA SoCal—an organization and role he is excited to be involved with. “SMACNA is an amazing organization,” he says. “It brings contractors together to learn from one another, strengthen our businesses, and make us better and more competitive within the industry.”

He says that being part of SMACNA SoCal is a privilege, and serving on the board of directors is an honor. “My mentor and business partner, Chuck Thompson, had a tremendous impact on SMACNA SoCal,” Dean says. “He served on the board for many years and served as president. To now become president of SMACNA SoCal is very humbling.”

Dean will use his time in the position to help move the industry forward, while also recognizing that he is following

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SAFETY SPONSORSHIP AWARD

Athena Chiera

Wins SMACNA Safety Sponsorship Award

Vice president of California-based Athena Engineering recognized for her efforts in advancing women in construction.



Athena Chiera, vice president of Athena Engineering in California, has won the SMACNA Safety Sponsorship Award.

Since joining the family business in 2008, she has developed the company's safety program, which also earned recognition from the ICW Group.

Looking ahead, Athena hopes to expand her skills to raise mental health awareness at her company and improve near-miss reporting to prevent injuries. She also wants to support women in construction by making sure PPE fits properly, improving bathroom access, and encouraging more reporting of harassment.

In talking about the award, Athena said, "I've spent 18 years running our safety program while sending everyone else to the conferences. This scholarship is the first time it's been my turn. Grateful to SMACNA and RISE for opening a room I wouldn't have sent myself to."

The SMACNA Safety and Health Committee, in partnership with the Representation, Integrity, Support, and Empowerment (RISE) Committee, offers an annual Safety Sponsorship to one eligible individual in the safety field. This program provides the opportunity to attend the National Safety Council (NSC) Safety Congress & Expo to promote professional development, learning, and networking.

About SMACNA's Safety Sponsorship Program

The Safety Sponsorship program is an annual program that

supports a diverse and inclusive unionized sheet metal industry. It encourages safety professionals who share this vision to apply and advance their careers in a supportive environment. SMACNA understands that ongoing learning is key to professional growth. That's why each year this sponsorship offers one eligible individual the chance to attend the prestigious National Safety Council (NSC) Safety Congress & Expo—the largest safety event for over 100 years.

The winner receives up to \$5,000 to cover expenses related to attending the NSC Safety Congress & Expo, along with the opportunity to

- learn about the latest regulations and insights into regulatory organizations.
- gain valuable knowledge for effective safety measure implementation.
- network with industry professionals and explore collaborations.
- find solutions for longstanding safety issues through discussions.
- stay updated on emerging trends and advancements in safety regulations.

Application Update

Please check back on March 1 for updates and application details for the 2027 Sponsorship Program. ▪

SMACNA ADVOCATES FOR BILL TO IMPROVE IAQ, LIVING CONDITIONS IN MILITARY HOUSING

The *MOLD Act* would address insufficient oversight, poor maintenance, and substandard HVAC systems that have exposed military families to increasing levels of mold and other harmful environmental health conditions in base housing.

SMACNA is backing bipartisan legislation to improve health and safety conditions in privatized military housing across the country. Recent official audits and reports—such as a Department of Defense Office of Inspector General audit (DODIG-2025-154)—have highlighted systemic oversight failures and negligent maintenance by private housing contractors across multiple military installations.

In a statement to lawmakers, SMACNA endorsed H.R. 7188, the *Military Occupancy Living Defense (MOLD) Act*, and its Senate companion, S. 3654. Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) introduced the House bill, with cosponsors Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Don Bacon (R-NE), Eugene Vindman (D-VA), and nearly two dozen other members. In the Senate, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Tim Sheehy (R-MT) introduced the bill, with Senators Joni Ernst (R-IA) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) as original cosponsors. This legislation would set enforceable health and safety standards for housing used by about 700,000 service members and their families nationwide.

Lack of facility oversight, poor maintenance, and faulty HVAC systems have exposed thousands of military families to widespread mold and related IAQ issues, many of serious health consequences for our service men and women and their families. This exposure has been linked to serious health problems, such as respiratory illnesses, neurological symptoms, and developmental issues in children. Families also often have to pay for medical care, property damage, and temporary moves from their own financial recourses, damaging morale and often leading service personnel to leave the military earlier than planned.

This legislation would require several important assessment and remediation changes:

Uniform habitability and safety standards: The Department of Defense would have to adopt a single set of housing standards based on widely accepted property maintenance codes, including limits on humidity across all DOD housing.

Third-party inspections: Certified professionals would carry out independent inspections when families move in or out, after complaints, and after repairs. The results would be shared directly with tenants.



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

Timely remediation and accountability: Landlords would have to fix problem units or move families to safe housing within a set amount of time. A 24/7 complaint hotline would require a five-day response, and contractors could face financial penalties if they do not meet established housing standards.

Tenant protections: Service members could keep their Basic Allowance for Housing if their units do not meet standards. The legislation would also create a DOD office to oversee compliance.



Stan Kolbe, SMACNA's executive director of government and political affairs, explained SMACNA's support for the legislation. "SMACNA supports this legislation because the conditions it addresses are, at their root, mechanical system failures... cosmetic remediation that leaves the underlying moisture and ventilation deficiency in place guarantees that the next family assigned to that unit will file the same complaint," he says.

"This effort is fully consistent with the broader indoor air quality agenda SMACNA has advanced as a top priority to Congress for many years, including the recently introduced H.R. 9886, the *Federal Facilities Indoor Air Quality Assessment Act*, requiring an assessment for IAQ in the federal building portfolio to require targeted remediation of IAQ problems." ■

SAFETY AND HEALTH CONFERENCE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Registration is officially open for the 2027 Safety & Health Conference, taking place January 11–14, 2027, at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.

This year's program will tackle some of the issues shaping the industry today, including construction risk management, mental health and well-being, emerging technologies, and evolving jobsite safety challenges.

From expert-led education and hands-on learning to meaningful conversations with safety professionals from across the construction industry, the 2027 Safety & Health Conference is where ideas, experiences, and solutions come together.

And when the sessions wrap up, Las Vegas offers world-class dining, entertainment, and plenty of opportunities to continue connecting with colleagues.

Register today at smacna.org and make plans to experience everything the 2027 Safety & Health Conference in Las Vegas has to offer. ■

WEBINAR: CIPA LAWSUITS IN CALIFORNIA

CAL SMACNA held a webinar in September to update members on the status and nature of *California Invasion of Privacy Act* (CIPA) lawsuit abuse in California. Trial lawyers continue to file CIPA claims against businesses and commercial website owners, alleging privacy, wiretap, and pen-register violations. These suits seek tens of thousands to millions of dollars in settlements—even when plaintiffs allege no injury, are not customers, and have no connection to the business.

MEET MICHAEL DEAN

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in the footsteps of many great leaders. As an association, he says, SMACNA SoCal's greatest strength is its unity and the respect its members have for the industry and for one another. "We may compete in business, but we also recognize that we are stronger when we work together to improve our industry."

The biggest challenge is getting more members involved in the association's activities and governance. "We have so many talented people within our membership who aren't currently participating and may not realize how valuable their experience and perspective are to the organization," he says. "One of my goals is to get those people excited about SoCal

The webinar, hosted by Fisher & Phillips law firm, addressed what to expect and how to respond if a claim is made against your website, the impact of SB 690 (including the two-year retroactivity) and remaining risks, and practical steps to reduce exposure and help avoid lawsuits.

CAL SMACNA posted a notice alerting members to this issue and explaining actionable steps to mitigating risk. These include

- conducting a comprehensive website audit with advice from your IT, marketing, and legal teams
- implementing robust, affirmative consent mechanisms
- updating and prominently displaying your privacy policy
- documenting and maintaining consent records
- reviewing and updating contracts with third-party vendors
- considering technical mitigations
- training relevant teams and establishing governance
- monitoring developments and consult counsel

CAL SMACNA is pursuing two tracks to help its membership:

1. Actively alerting and educating members to these new claims
2. Lobbying in Sacramento for the passage of SB 690 (Caballero) to mitigate these claims by exempting any "commercial business purpose" as defined by the *California Consumer Privacy Act* (CCPA) from civil and criminal liability pursuant to the *California Invasion of Privacy Act* (CIPA), which prohibits wiretapping, eavesdropping on, or recording confidential communications, intercepting and recording cellular communications, or using a pen register or trap and trace device.

Read the full text of CAL SMACNA's bulletin on this topic at cal-smacna.org/membership-legal-alert-new-shakedown-lawsuits-hitting-california-businesses ■

SMACNA, encourage them to participate, and help them recognize that their involvement matters."

That sentiment sums up Michael Dean's primary message to the membership: Get involved.

"Come to SMACNA events," he says. "Learn everything you can about our industry and then pass that knowledge on. Share your experience with the next generation and give them the same opportunities that others gave us.

"Our young people are our future—and our future is bright." ■