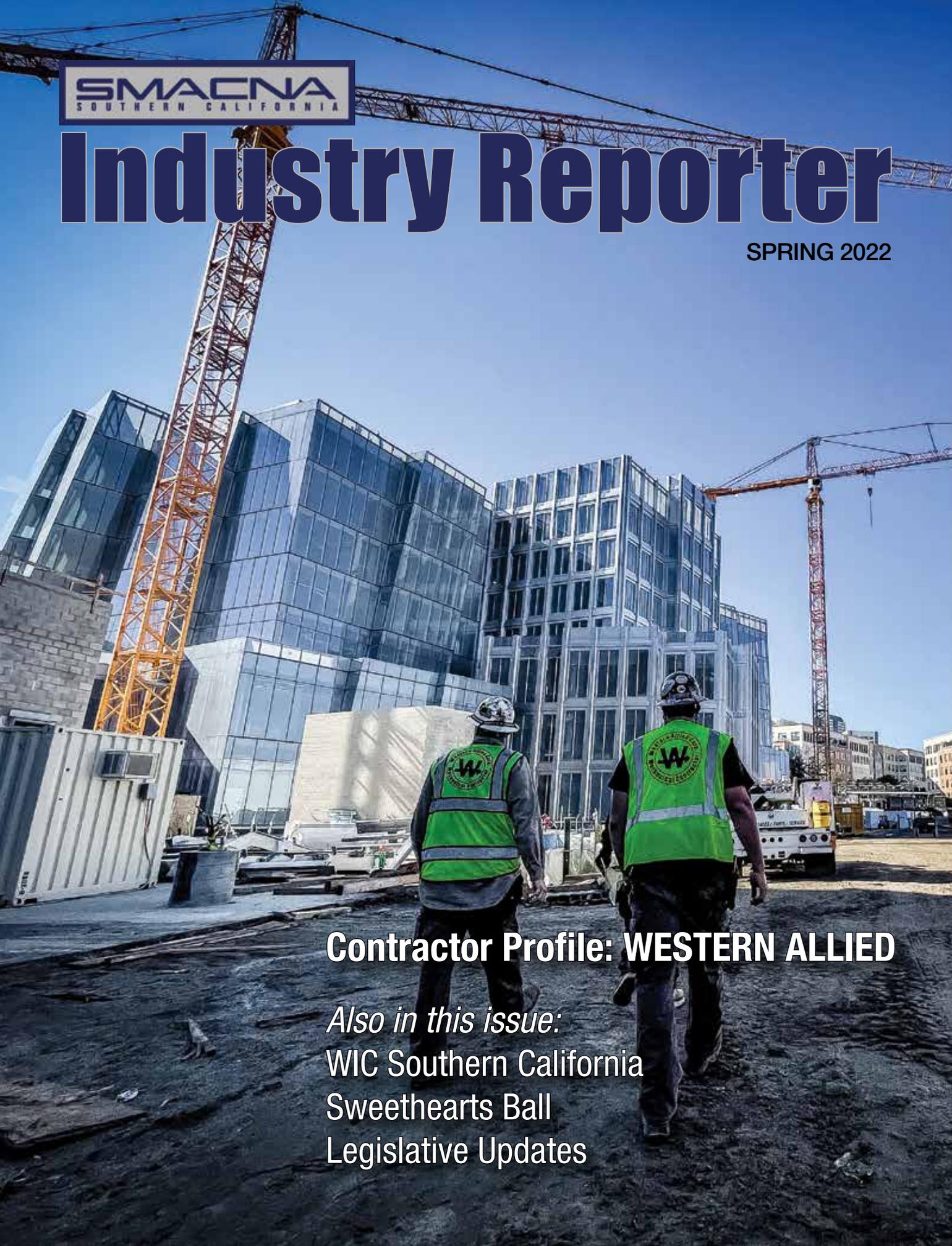




SMACNA  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Industry Reporter

SPRING 2022



**Contractor Profile: WESTERN ALLIED**

*Also in this issue:*  
WIC Southern California  
Sweethearts Ball  
Legislative Updates

**ON LEADERSHIP AND PRUDENCE**

On March 1-2, 2022, SMACNA and SMART leaders from across the United States and Canada attended the 2022 Partners in Progress Conference at Resorts World in Las Vegas. The event was well attended and included interactive workshops and great speakers like Jim Abbott, the former New York Yankees pitcher, who spoke on resilience and optimism in leadership and in life, and Mike Abrashoff, former commander of the *USS Benfold*, who imparted wisdom and practical advice on team-building, leadership, and finding the best in people. These were just a few in a line-up of excellent speakers who shared insight and direction for how to change the way we think about cultivating, building, and maintaining positive relationships between organizations.

To build a strong future, leaders from labor and management must work together and focus on a common goal. One common goal is growing market share while providing adequate wage and benefits to members. Increased market share with great wages makes it easier to attract the future work force required. I am proud to say that your SMACNA Southern California Labor Committee has a strong and true partnership with our Local 105 SMART Union.



By / Hector Vargas, SMACNA-SoCal President

While work in our area seems to continue at levels slightly below 2021, it is very important that you are properly planning for price escalation and material shortage. Current average lead times for HVAC equipment are running at 28+ weeks. Please make sure you are properly planning and researching when bidding projects. Cost increases are unavoidable, and it does not seem like the situation will improve anytime soon. Make sure you are conscious of this when bidding and adjust as required.

Hope everyone is safe, business is good, and wishing lots of success to all. ▪

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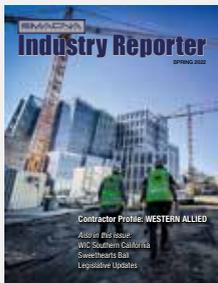
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**PUBLISHER / EDITOR**  
 Jessica Kirby • 250.816.3671  
 jessica.kirby@pointonemedia.com

**CREATIVES**  
 Lara Perraton • 877.755.2762  
 lperraton@pointonemedia.com

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
 Robin Brunet  
 Natalie Bruckner  
 Stan Kolbe  
 Hector Vargas



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## NEW WIC SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GROUP GETS OFF THE GROUND

By / Natalie Bruckner

When Carmen Koo, owner of Applied Air Condition in Orange County, California, had a vision to create a Women in Construction Group (WIC) for Southern California, it wasn't just to recruit new women into the sheet metal industry, but also to retain them.

Over the past 30 years, studies have shown that the number of women in construction has grown 81.3 percent, and yet more than four in 10 women and non-binary tradespeople have left or seriously considered leaving. Reasons cited include harassment, lack of respect, and lack of support.

"It's important we not only grow the number of women in the sheet metal field, but look at ways to retain them," Koo says. "What we've seen in the past is that women will start in the trade, but at a certain point they kind of fall off—and we're not exactly sure why that is. I believe that if we had mentors in the trade, women that other women can relate to and share things with, retention will grow."

Koo originally came up with the idea for WIC Southern California a few years back. Inspired by other WIC groups in the California area—in particular the Bay Area SMACNA WIC group that was established in 2018—she started to explore whether Southern California was in need of its own group to support the development and retention of women.

"To be honest, at first I wasn't sure if we needed a group like this," Koo says. "So I started talking to other women, and especially our counterparts in the labor section and those working on the ground day-to-day. It became apparent that they needed more support."

She decided it was time to take the bull by the horns and reached out to her colleagues in the sheet metal trade to see what steps needed to be taken next. "I was instantly supported in my endeavour," Koo says. "We have had so much help from the Bay Area WIC!"

Assistance to gain a better understanding of how WIC Southern California could better serve its people came from all around. Among those offering assistance were Karen Fox (president of Precision Air Balance), Julie Muller, (SMACNA Western Washington, Inc.), Angie Simon (CEO of Western Allied Mechanical), Gina Medel (chief financial officer at The Penn Air Group), and Taylor Mortensen (Superior Duct Fabrication), to name a few.

However, an endeavour like this requires someone to bring the idea to life . . . and that takes time, something Koo has very little of. So, she reached out to Kim Williams, office manager



at SMACNA, to see if she would be interested. She agreed. "The support was amazing," Koo says. "There are so many inspiring women, many of whom have been amazing mentors. We have had interest from the men in our industry, too, but they are a little unsure with it being a women's group. But we don't discriminate! Everyone is welcome."

The next step was to collaborate with other WIC and Women in Construction Operations (WiOPS) groups to listen, learn, and consider how to make the most of the group for the benefit of all.

"I've had meetings with them to better identify the women in our area that are interested in this and would want to join our group," Koo says. "We want to better understand what kind of events we can put on that will be helpful and also make the connection with our labor counterparts and identify their needs and what will be helpful to them."

Despite being in its early stages, interest in the WIC Southern California group is growing, from those working in air balancing to others in architectural sheet metal, and Koo says they are doubling down on efforts to spread the word about the group.

Koo is quick to stress that WIC Southern California is all inclusive and considered a safe and supportive space for all women in the trades. "I don't want to just focus on the women in SMACNA, but women in general. When you come to SMACNA, most of the women are already established, but the women in the trades, that's where I feel we can make a real difference. Ultimately, I envision a group of women and even men from all the various realms of sheet metal coming together to further strengthen the ties within our industry." ■

# WESTERN ALLIED



Western Allied delivers excellence on every project with the help of strong company values, a skilled workforce, and six decades of experience.

By / Robin Brunet

In a sector as demanding as sheet metal, maintaining a simple corporate philosophy is sometimes the best strategy. Such is the case with Western Allied Corporation, which first opened for business in Santa Fe Springs in 1960 and recently completed Building Y and Central Plant, which serves the stages at historic Culver Studios.

Matt Calabrese, partner and project manager at Western Allied, explains. “We’ve been prominent in the Los Angeles basin for over 60 years due to a commitment to retaining the right people and delivering quality HVAC systems with exceptional client service, regardless of project size,” he says. “Many years of effort and innovation got us to the level we are at today, and we never take our success for granted.”

Building Y is a good example of Western Allied’s skill in tackling complex jobs. The four-storey, 76,000-square-foot facility was developed as office space to support Culver Studio’s sound stage productions, with Gensler architectural

firm giving it the appearance of the studio’s original warehouse-style buildings.

Western Allied began design work on the design-build project in 2019 and had to surmount numerous challenges, including placement of an 1,100-ton Central Plant within the limited footprint of the building, as well as creating a pleasing industrial aesthetic with the architectural concept of exposed-to-view overhead ductwork and piping throughout the building.

“A lot of additional planning and coordination went into the overhead design to streamline ductwork and pipe routing to create a near single plane and symmetrical appearance,” Calabrese says. “That isn’t required when there is a drop-ceiling to hide everything above. We had to avoid crossing of MEP elements to achieve that aesthetic, which we managed to do successfully.”

Another challenge in making the ductwork appealing was noise. “You can never completely cancel the sound of HVAC systems in an exposed concept, but careful consideration was given to balancing duct sizing with available space to maintain typical acoustical standards for an office space,” Calabrese says. “So, we were meticulous in our air distribution design and very careful to construct a tight/sealed system.”

Unsurprisingly, the mechanical design for the Building Y core building took a year to complete using Revit, with another three months for the tenant development.

In addition to in-house sheet metal, Western Allied is also skilled in piping fabrication thanks to a newly constructed piping pre-fabrication shop. This was crucial to Building Y because of the Central Plant as well as an underground network of pipes leading from the plant located within the building to seven nearby sound stages. “We ultimately ran over 5,000 feet of chilled water pipe—above and underground—to the stages, under the stage floors, and distributed to headers within each stage,” Calabrese says. “All in all, this was a nice project to showcase all of our capabilities: design-build, sheet metal, piping, and DDC controls.”

Calabrese goes into detail about Building Y because, like the other projects in Western Allied’s portfolio, the work required a team of HVAC specialists to be at the top of their game. “And in that regard we are proud SMACNA members,” he says. “It’s no secret the construction industry is facing labor challenges, but as a SMACNA contractor we continue to have access to union trained sheet metal workers, and that’s a huge advantage. Additionally, we continue to rely upon SMACNA’s Duct Construction Standards as a resource for building all projects, namely those with challenges related to space and support constraints.”

Building Y is just one of a few recent noteworthy projects for Western Allied. The company completed Entrada Creative Office Building, a new six-storey facility in Culver City, in a design-build role. The project included a 650 ton high efficiency heat recovery VRF core system with smoke control systems and parking garage ventilation.

Calabrese adds, “We are finishing up a complete renovation of the five-storey former Bank of America Data Center in Pasadena. The project includes a complete building retrofit to a new 760-ton VRF core system, complete with new conditioned DOAS air handling units and relief fans.

“Among several entertainment based projects, we are currently working on a new sound stage production studio in Los Angeles, with the challenge of fitting and supporting large duct



mains from an existing building structure while meeting the stringent acoustical criteria of a production space,” Calabrese says.

Western Allied recently completed an expansion of its piping fabrication shop and invested in equipment and space to create UL-listed industrial panels. All of this, combined with pent-up post-pandemic demand, makes the company well positioned to remain prominent in a highly competitive market.

“Our goal is to keep busy and continue our historically steady growth,” Calabrese says. “We’re excited about the backlog of work we have and prospective projects continuing into this year.” ■



# SMACNA Southern California's *Sweethearts* *Ball*

SMACNA SoCal recognized women in sheet metal at its annual Sweethearts Ball at The Montage Laguna Beach

By / Jessica Kirby

SMACNA Southern California members know how to celebrate in style—with recognition, gratitude, and a classic dinner and ball. This year, the annual Sweethearts Ball took place February 19 at The Montage Laguna Beach, and was a lovely evening for all. From stunning formal wear and ribbon and rose-themed decor to a gourmet dinner and a beautiful gift for the ladies, this event lived up to its reputation as one of SMACNA SoCal's most highly anticipated events.

Nearly 100 guests attended the Sweethearts Ball, a tradition that started more than 20 years ago to recognize the women in the Southern California sheet metal industry, be they contractors, members of the workforce, or spouses/family members. Besides being a nod to Valentine's Day, the event is timed nicely as a pre-cursor to Women in Construction Week, March 6–12.

Everyone enjoyed the food, which was prepared by The Montage Laguna Beach's in-house catering and absolutely delectable. Guests had the choice of seared Atlantic salmon with sweet corn puree; rainbow chard with rosemary polenta fries; chirizo vierge; or Cabernet braised beef short ribs with potato risotto, Brussels sprouts, cipollini onions, and bacon jus. The finishing touch was a 64% chocolate-lemon cake that melted in your mouth.

After a fabulous meal, participants danced the night away to The Erin Stevenson Band, who whipped out some incredible 90s through the 2000s R&B, pop, and jazz to keep everyone on their feet.

Holding with tradition, each woman who attended was recognized for her contribution to the industry — professionally, through her work or personally in support of her spouse or family business — with a gift. This year, it was a 14K prong set round diamond interlocking circles pendant necklace in a rose gold from Happy Jewelers.

See photos of this event on this page, and reach out to SMACNA SoCal for information about future association events. ▪



## WHITE HOUSE UNVEILS COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO BOOST HVAC-IAQ IN MOST BUILDINGS

In mid-March, the Biden Administration released the National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan ([whitehouse.gov/covidplan](https://www.whitehouse.gov/covidplan)), a roadmap to upgrade IAQ across all building types and continue to fight COVID-19. The Administration is launching the Clean Air in Buildings Challenge, a key component of the President's Plan, that calls on all building owners and operators, schools, colleges and universities, and organizations of all kinds to adopt key strategies to improve indoor air quality in their buildings and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The Clean Air in Buildings Challenge is a call to action for leaders and building owners and operators of all types to assess their indoor air quality and make ventilation and air filtration improvements to help keep occupants safe. As part of the Challenge, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a best practice guide for improving indoor air quality and reducing the risk of spreading dangerous airborne particles. This guide—developed in collaboration with the Department of Energy, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other federal agencies—contains a set of clear recommendations organized into four groups:

1. **Create a clean indoor air action plan** that assesses indoor air quality, plans for upgrades and improvements, and includes HVAC inspections and maintenance.
2. **Optimize fresh air ventilation** by bringing in and circulating clean outdoor air indoors.
3. **Enhance air filtration and cleaning** using the central HVAC system and in-room air cleaning devices.
4. **Engage the building community** by communicating with building occupants to increase awareness, commitment, and participation.

Under each of these recommendation areas, the EPA's best practices guide lays out clear-cut actions building owners and operators can implement. Read the guide at: [epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/clean-air-buildings-challenge](https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/clean-air-buildings-challenge)

The Biden Administration and Congress have provided hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funds that can be used in schools, public buildings, and other settings to improve indoor air quality. The American Rescue Plan provided \$350 billion for state and local governments, as well as \$122 billion for schools, that can be used to support making ventilation and filtration upgrades. These American Rescue Plan dollars are being put to work in communities around the country in improving HVAC systems.

### Learn more:

- State and Local Government Funding | [home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds](https://www.home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds)

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



- IAQ in Schools | [ed.gov/improving-ventilation-schools-colleges-and-universities-prevent-covid-19](https://www.ed.gov/improving-ventilation-schools-colleges-and-universities-prevent-covid-19)

## Quick Summary of the Long Awaited 440+ Page Davis Bacon Reform Draft Rule

On March 18, the Biden Administration published a proposed rule that would modernize the *Davis-Bacon Act* with reforms SMACNA has long advocated and much more. The rule applies to federal construction contracts of more than \$2,000 and would return the definition of “prevailing wage” to the three-step process used from 1935 to 1983 while also boosting enforcement, survey, and project oversight efforts. The US Labor Department proposal (RIN: 1235-AA40) can be found at [aboutblaw.com/16V](https://www.aboutblaw.com/16V).

The rules for determining prevailing rates would revert to those used prior to the harmful changes the Reagan DOL installed over the lobbying and legal protests of union contractors. For decades the process identified prevailing as:

1. Any wage rate paid to a majority of workers.
2. If there is no wage rate paid to a majority of workers, then the wage rate paid to the greatest number of workers, provided it is paid to at least 30 percent of workers (i.e., the so-called “30 percent rule”); and
3. If the 30 percent rule is not met, DOL would use the weighted average rate. DOL asserts this reform is essential “to ensure prevailing wages reflect actual wages paid to workers in the local community.”

### Other notable reforms contained in the proposed rule change include:

- Periodically updating prevailing wage rates to address out-of-date wage determinations.
- Providing broader authority to adopt state or local wage determinations when certain criteria is met.
- Issuing supplemental rates for key job classifications when no survey data exists.
- Updating the regulatory language to better reflect modern construction practices.
- Strengthening worker protections and enforcement, including debarment and anti-retaliation.

The impact of the proposed rule changes on SMACNA contractors, *Davis-Bacon Act* supporters, and union workforces across the public construction industry would be substantial and respond to decades of advocacy. Additional

*Continued on page 8*

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*Continued from page 7*

analysis and information will be forthcoming long before the 60-day public comment period ends on May 17, 2022.

### **Codes and Standards Reform: SMACNA Endorses H.R. 6769, the *Protecting and Enhancing Public Access to Codes Act***

The *Protecting and Enhancing Public Access to Codes Act*, also known as the *Pro Codes Act*, is recently-introduced bipartisan legislation sponsored by Representative Ted Deutch (D-FL-22) and co-sponsored by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA-50). SMACNA appreciates Rep. Deutch's leadership for small business energy efficiency issues and related regulatory efforts, especially with the recent sponsorship of H.R. 6769. Our decades of experience and involvement in the development process for national and international building codes and standards only reinforces our enthusiasm for H.R. 6769. Further, SMACNA strongly endorses Rep. Deutch's observation that, "Vital information contained in codes must remain free and available to the public. At the same time, we must reward investments made by standards development organizations. This legislation will protect the copyright of codes when they have been incorporated by reference."

SMACNA has been an ANSI Standards-setting organization for many years and follows those procedures to ensure development is completed in a consensus-based manner. The bill has good odds of being added to a larger package of legislation by fall. ▪

## SMACNA SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S PRE-PARTY AND ANGEL GAME

**Saturday, May 7, 2022**

**Pre-party Location:** Rose Garden at Angel Stadium | 2000 East Gene Autry Way, Anaheim, CA

**Parking:** Angel Stadium \$10 cash only | Enter at gate #1



### **Event:**

3 p.m. – doors open

3–5:30 p.m. – buffet & dessert

5 p.m. – prize and cash raffle

6:07 p.m. – Angels vs Nationals game

**Price: \$45 | limit 25 per company**

Includes ticket to the game, photo booth, games, two drink tickets for beer and wine, buffet, dessert, sodas, and bottled water.

Email [kim@smacna-socal.org](mailto:kim@smacna-socal.org) for a registration form and to learn more. ▪

### SMART Local 105 2022 Holidays

Holidays	LA/OE Commercial	Industrial	Bakersfield Commerical	Orange Empire Residential	LA/OE S & M	Bakersfield S & M	LA/OE Residential	Bakersfield Residential
Good Friday Friday, April 15, 2022	✓	✓	✓					
Memorial Day Monday, May 30, 2022	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independence Day Monday, July 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Labour Day Monday, September 5, 2022	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Veteran's Day Friday, November 11, 2022	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thanksgiving Day Thursday, November 24, 2022	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Friday after Thanksgiving Friday, November 25, 2022	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Day Before Christmas Eve Friday, December 23, 2022		✓	✓					
Day after Christmas Day Monday, December 26, 2022		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Day after New Year's Day Monday, January 2, 2023		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓