



# Industry Reporter

SUMMER 2022



## Xcel Mechanical Systems

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Fire Life Safety Training

SMACNA-SoCal's Angel Game Night

Legislative Updates

**GOODBYES AND NEW BEGINNINGS**

Often, with the blistering pace of our workdays and the unending demand of meetings, we do not take the time to reflect on meaningful milestones, especially within our own industry. One such milestone was marked in June when, after eight years of service, SMART Local Union 105 Business Manager/President Luther Medina announced his retirement from office.

I wish to thank him for his willingness to calmly discuss matters the industry faces and for honoring his handshake. If we cannot do those two things, we are not representing our industry.

I wish Luther well as he starts this new chapter in his life.

The CAL SMACNA Convention at the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort, Koloa, Hawaii, on April 20–23, 2022, presented a beautiful, peaceful, and perfect setting in which to learn. Especially impressive was workshop leader Kris “Tanto” Paranto, who gave a room full of businesspeople a new understanding of “performing under fire”. Also of note was our keynote speaker Chris Bertish, who crossed the Atlantic Ocean on a big “paddle board”... by himself! However, we were informed that he surfs in his free time... of course he surfs 60-foot waves!

My term in office as President of CAL SMACNA has also ended. The new president, Mitch Hoppe, will do as fine a job



By / Hector Vargas, SMACNA SoCal President

of carrying the CAL SMACNA banner forward. My thanks for your trust and support!

Finally, I'd like to invite all members to mark their calendars for the following events:

- Fire Life Safety Seminar – July 15, 2022, Southern California Sheet Metal JATC
- Cybersecurity Seminar – August 16, 2022, Doubletree by Hilton, Norwalk, CA
- SMACNA National Convention – September 11–14, 2022, The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO
- Technical Seminar – September 28, 2022, Westin Anaheim

For more information about any of these, please call or email the SMACNA SoCal office at 562-944-6345 or [kim@smacna-socal.org](mailto:kim@smacna-socal.org) ▪

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Cover photo courtesy of Xcel Mechanical Systems. Project Manager Chris Balch and Sheet Metal Foreman Jesse Gaytan Jr. were in close collaboration throughout the safe and successful delivery of Phase 1 of the company's \$15 million LAX Tom Bradley International Terminal Cores and APM Interface Project, one of the company's largest to-date. Photo credit: Philip Bonney.

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## NORM LUSSIER, DIRECTOR SMACNA SOCAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Norm Lussier is currently serving a two-year term as a director on the SMACNA SoCal board of directors. Besides this, he chairs the SoCal Sheet Metal Workers Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, is a National SMACNA Joint Adjustment Board Panelist, and member of the California SMACNA Advisory Group. Association involvement is nothing new for him—over his 45 years in the industry, he has also held seats as Chair of the Orange Empire Board of Directors and Chair of the Orange Empire Industry Fund. He is a past Labor-Management Cooperation Trust (LMTC) member and past Joint Industry Council (JIC) member.

Outside of SMACNA, he was on the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) Advisory Committee, the Abram Friedman Occupational Center Advisory Committee, and was an apprenticeship instructor for five years and still has an active teaching credential.

When he is not contributing his time and energy to the association and affiliations, Lussier owns and operates Direct Air Conditioning, which specializes in commercial and industrial HVAC. Entering the sheet metal industry was a matter of luck.

“Having no friends or relatives in the industry, it was between attending Cypress College to become an automotive mechanic or the HVAC program,” Lussier says. “I thought, ‘Wow it’s hot in Southern California. That might be a good line of work, so HVAC it is!’”

He worked part-time while going to college and full-time during the summer in the office of a large union HVAC contractor.

“I enjoyed walking through the shop seeing how the sheet metal workers could take a flat piece of sheet metal and fabricate any item the foreman could draw,” Lussier says. “Once I learned what an apprentice could earn starting out, I completed my degree in air conditioning and refrigeration and applied and was accepted into the four-year apprenticeship program.

Lussier competed in the local, regional, and national apprenticeship contests during all four of his apprenticeship years and finally reached his goal with a national first place win in his third year.

“I stayed with the same company moving up to journeyman, foreman, and superintendent,” Lussier says. “Then I decided to make a career move and accepted a project management position in another large HVAC union contractor in Long Beach before deciding to start my own company in 1995.”



He says he’s learned that the greatest challenge the industry has faced over the years is “finding the risk takers who are willing to stick their necks out and become union contractors,” compounded by the ‘mature’ contractors retiring. “We’re losing all that wisdom,” he says. “[They need to] pass that wisdom onto their key people before it’s too late.”

He adds that standing out as union contractors means continuing to train the work force in the most challenging aspects of the industry and trade. SMACNA can help with providing expert member services in the form of education.

During his time on the SMACNA SoCal board, Lussier hopes to bring in new, younger board members with fresh ideas and support them in expanding SMACNA services.

“As a trustee on our local Sheet Metal Workers Apprenticeship Training Committee for the past 25 years and as its Chair for the past six years, I’ve seen tremendous change in the quality of our training, and I am proud to be a part of continuing that effort for the benefit of our contractors,” Lussier says.

Lussier’s secret to success or words to live by are, spend time to train your replacement, give back to the industry that’s given you so much, invest in yourself, and continue to learn.

“And make yourself a valuable asset to you employer,” he adds. “Find a career you love and it’s not work. You can learn something from everyone you come in contact with—even if the lesson is what not to do!” ■

# Xcel Mechanical Systems

## Helps LAX Take Flight



*Xcel Mechanical's LAX Tom Bradley International Terminal Core & APM Interface sheet metal crew gets a visit from Local 105 Business Representative Jesse Ayala (front row, fourth from right). Photo by Angelo Snedeger.*

By / Robin Brunet

For an established mid-sized contractor with a long list of large-scale clients (Northrop Grumman, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, USC, and Paramount Pictures, to name a few), Xcel Mechanical Systems considers the LAX Tom Bradley International Terminal Core and APM Interface Project one of the largest and most significant in the firm's 23-year history.

"It's an important project for the City of Los Angeles and for our company," said Xcel Mechanical Project Manager Chris Balch, who is overseeing the \$15 million, multi-phase, mechanical and plumbing design-build effort. "It's a large project that will ultimately impact millions of travelers. Phase I is completed, with Phase II just ahead, so there is plenty of work still to do."

The \$15 billion airport modernization program now underway at LAX is the largest public works program in Los Angeles' history. The centerpiece of the effort is the \$2 billion Automated People Mover (APM) system—a 2.25-mile rail line that will connect LAX passengers to off-airport transportation facilities for the first time in the airport's 75-year history. Central to the APM project are now-under-construction LAX Terminal Core & APM Interface projects that will link designated passenger terminals to the new people mover.

The LAX Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT) Core & APM Interface project is the largest of these terminal buildouts. With a resume of more than 50 projects completed at LAX, Austin Commercial selected Xcel Mechanical to handle the mechanical and plumbing design and construction elements.

"LAX TBIT is critical to movement of millions of people from around the world," said Xcel Mechanical President Kevin Michel. "We are using our experience and knowledge, which come from serving mission critical clients, to ensure this important work goes smoothly."

Xcel Mechanical thrives on complex undertakings. For LAX TBIT, the Core & Interface project will expand the entire front of the 1.1 million square foot terminal by an additional 141,549 square feet.

Xcel Mechanical faced a host of design and construction opportunities and challenges, the biggest being that the bustling international terminal—located in the center of the world's third-busiest airport—needed to remain operational throughout construction. That meant designing a solution that ties into existing utilities to keep half the building fully functional while the other half was brought down for heavy construction.

"A seven-story barrier consisting of studs and drywall was erected to separate work crews from terminal passengers and staff, which allowed us to work safely and separately from the public," Balch says.

Still, meticulous scheduling was required. "For example, in order to get air handlers into the terminal we had to close two of the four traffic lanes immediately outside the airport's busiest terminal, in the middle of the night, set up a crane, and make multiple equipment lifts up to the roof," Balch says. "Working

*Another aspect of the project's success to date has been the ongoing safety training and preparedness of Xcel Mechanical's field teams to work in such a busy environment.*



*Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) – The \$15 billion airport modernization program now underway at LAX is the largest public works program in the history of the City of Los Angeles. Photo by Wes Whittle.*

at LAX is about scheduling, logistics, and mitigating risk at all times.”

Xcel Mechanical’s work was facilitated by the use of technology, specifically Procore’s Models tool and plugin, which allowed the project team to bring both the design model and construction model from the office into the field, essentially connecting company field foremen to live-time design changes, saving countless hours and dollars by eliminating double-installations and potential rework.

Another aspect of the project’s success to date has been the ongoing safety training and preparedness of Xcel Mechanical’s field teams to work in such a busy environment. “We’re a union contractor that places an incredible emphasis on keeping our employees and project partners safe, and so yes—safety has been a critical focus of this project since Day 1,” says Steve Prisk, Xcel Mechanical’s safety director.

Balch also cites Xcel Mechanical’s relationship with SMACNA as vital to the LAX project. “SMACNA is the industry standard when it comes to the practical application of mechanical design, construction, and fabrication,” he says. “A

significant portion of this project lands on the sheet metal side, so referencing SMACNA standards has been huge for us.”

While outsiders may assume that a project as large and as important as LAX TBIT could strain the resources of any mid-sized company, Michel said his teams are in fact invigorated. “We’re extremely focused in our core markets and complete about 200 projects annually across the aerospace, education, entertainment, healthcare, and transportation sectors,” he said. “But some projects just stand out. LAX TBIT is one of those.” ■

## **2022 SMACNA SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRE LIFE SAFETY TRAINING (FLS)**

**Friday, July 15, 2022**

**Location: Southern California Sheet Metal JATC 633 Baldwin Park Blvd, City of Industry, CA (626) 968-3340  
10 am – 1 pm**

SMACNA SoCal Members and Local 105 business agents are invited to attend SMACNA SoCal’s 2022 fire life safety training at the SoCal JATC July 15. The training will cover fire and smoke damper (FSD) testing and acceptance, smoke control system (SCS) testing and acceptance, NEPA Fire & Life Safety Ecosystem, and related certification and training.

The morning session will begin with an introduction from SMACNA SoCal Executive Director Kevin O’Dorisio. Nathan Culley and Joe Cisneros (Penn Air Control) and Christopher Ruch (NEMI) will discuss code requirements, NEPA FLS Ecosystem, testing procedures, inspector training, and market opportunities for the inspection of fire smoke dampers and smoke control systems. The SoCal JATC will cover FSD and SCS Technician Curriculum, and Culley and Cisneros will end the morning with a presentation on SMACNA and fire life safety, followed by a

discussion of SMACNA’s relevant standards and CAL SMACNA resources.

Participants will enjoy lunch followed by skilled trained workforce demonstrations by Brian Lehmkuhl, Local 104 D2 instructor, and Laura Harris, Local 105 instructor. They will deliver a description and demonstration of how the hands-on training equipment can be used in the classroom as well as a demonstration for fire inspectors.

Station 1: Smoke Control Systems Mock-Ups will feature a demonstration and discussion of the importance of correct stairway pressurization.

Participants will find a demonstration and discussion of FSD installation and inspection at Station 2: Fire Smoke Damper Mock-Up – Fire Smoke Damper Inspections.

Ruch will then conclude the training.

There is no cost to attend, but participants must be registered in advance. Please email [kim@smacna-socal.org](mailto:kim@smacna-socal.org) to register your firm’s participants. ■

# SMACNA Southern California's

## *Pre-party and Angel Game Night*

SMACNA Southern California hosted its annual Pre-Party & Angel Game Night on Saturday, May 7, 2022. The pre-party was held at The Rose Garden located inside Angel Stadium. More than 300 guests were in attendance. They enjoyed cheeseburger sliders, hot dogs, bratwurst, chicken fingers for the kids, mac n' cheese, fresh fruit, brownies, and cookies. Oh, and don't forget the roasted peanuts in shell and Cracker Jacks! An interactive DJ kept the pre-party crowd entertained with trivia questions and prizes.

SMACNA SoCal also held a raffle with great prizes like a Yeti cooler, Beats Studio buds, a laptop, a tablet, and an assortment of gift cards from Home Depot, Nordstrom, Lowes, Amazon, and Bass Pro Shop. The highly anticipated prize table also included Laker tickets and Clipper tickets. SMACNA SoCal donated \$2,500 from the raffle ticket sales to the SMACNA Political Action Committee (SMAC-PAC).

After the pre-party, guests headed into the stadium for the game. The Angels played the Nationals and unfortunately did not win, but all had a great time. We look forward to seeing all again next year!

SMACNA SoCal would like to thank its generous raffle prize sponsors:

- Atlas Sheet Metal
- Certified Air Balance
- SoCal Sheet Metal JATC
- Penn Air Control
- Precision Air Balance
- R&R Duct Work
- SMACNA SoCal
- Superior Duct Fabrication



## Q1 2022 BOARD UPDATE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS / SMAC PAC

The first quarter of the second session of Congress has been filled with key developments and historic wins in the regulatory area, as well as involving new programs funded by the landmark infrastructure bill signed into law.

The biggest ticket item for our industry was just unveiled. The school HVAC and IAQ retrofit funding program involves \$500 million in quick issue direct grants to schools for an entire project's cost or a partial grant to share the cost of a more expensive school construction or HVAC retrofit. In addition, the White House announced \$3 billion in financing for school retrofits using energy saving performance contracts—a record number for schools anywhere. Each project would comply with prevailing wage and registered apprenticeship guidance rules.

Second, the long advocated and endorsed *Davis-Bacon Act* reform regulations were issued with our extensive involvement with the Wage and Hour Division and Department of Labor. In addition to favorably commenting on the many SMACNA advocated reforms in the new draft rules, SMACNA has boosted lobby efforts on Capitol Hill to thwart any weakening tactics by *Davis-Bacon* repeal forces. In addition, the Administration's PLA Executive Order met a SMACNA endorsed position directly given to White House staff on many occasions since 2020.

Continued focus on key issues in coalitions and alone on the following priority positions:

- **CHIPS Construction Bill** – advocacy in coalition and alone to pass the CHIPS legislation providing \$55 billion in tax incentives/support for chip plant construction with prevailing wage coverage-conferrees for House and Senate
- **Infrastructure Building Provisions** – educating membership on the buildings program, funds and benefits coming from the infrastructure law, and recent appropriation package

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



- **Building Efficiency Tax Incentives** – continue advocacy of the residential, industrial, commercial, and public building energy efficiency tax incentives remaining from infrastructure package
- **Project Labor Agreements** – building support for Executive Order and issue in general to outflank attacks
- **179d Reform** – maintain active coalition and SMACNA lobby efforts to pass alone or in extenders tax package/ includes prevailing wage-apprenticeship language
- **Davis-Bacon Act** – supporting the process of regulatory reform with Members of Congress, and opposing repeal efforts
- **Pro Codes Act** – supporting reforms to boost the copyright protects of codes and standards issuing groups/coalition and SMACNA
- **Pension Reforms** – monitoring opportunities to advance our policy position as part of generic pension legislation and various packages
- **Main Street Efficiency Act** – small business efficiency grant legislation advocated with coalition partner Alliance to Save Energy and alone
- **Supporting Continued Funding Stream for School Construction** – programs included in the American Rescue Plan intended for four years of retrofits
- **Boosting Registered Apprenticeship Program** – support and general workforce development programs for construction industry
- **Advocate Passage of the SAFE Banking Act in Senate** – to provide access to the federal banking system for cannabis related industries ▪

## SMACNA NATIONAL CONVENTION

### September 11-14, 2022

The 2022 SMACNA National Annual Convention is being held in person September 11–14, 2022, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This year will be different in many respects, yet we will find comfort in the high-quality networking and educational experience members have come to expect. Visit [smacna.org/learn/events/calendar/2022-smacna-annual-convention](https://smacna.org/learn/events/calendar/2022-smacna-annual-convention) for more information.

## LOS ANGELES / ORANGE EMPIRE AGREEMENT

Pursuant to our Collective Bargaining Agreement, the following wage and fringe package shall be effective July 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022. The taxable wage is increased by \$1.65 per hour, the National Pension is increased by \$0.09 per hour, and the Retiree's Supplemental Health Plan is increased by \$0.05 per hour. The total package is increased by \$1.79 per hour.

Effective July 1, 2022, the Local Union 105 – Los Angeles / Orange Empire wage and fringe package shall be as follows:

	Journeyman Wages	Foreman/Detailer	General Foreman
Hourly Taxable Wage (increase)	\$51.88	\$59.66	\$62.26
* Savings Plan (taxable)	-10%	-10%	-10%
* 401(a) Plan - mandatory	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
<b>* Retiree's Supplemental Health Plan (increase)</b>	<b>\$0.55</b>	<b>\$0.55</b>	<b>\$0.55</b>
* Health Plan	\$10.60	\$10.60	\$10.60
* Health Reimbursement Acct. (HRA)	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
* Local Pension	\$11.82	\$11.82	\$11.82
** Local Training JATC	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$0.70
*** National Training ITI	\$0.12	\$0.12	\$0.12
<b>*** National Pension (increase)</b>	<b>\$4.45</b>	<b>\$4.45</b>	<b>\$4.45</b>
*** NEMI	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03
*** SMOHIT	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.02
**** LMCT/FP-ACC	\$0.09	\$0.09	\$0.09
<b>Total Wage Package:</b>	<b>\$81.76</b>	<b>\$89.54</b>	<b>\$92.14</b>
**** Industry Fund	\$0.56	\$0.56	\$0.56
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$82.32</b>	<b>\$90.10</b>	<b>\$92.70</b>

The mileage rate established is fifty-eight and one-half cents (\$0.585) per mile. See Zone and Subsistence.

\*\*\*\*\* WORKING DUES RATE (No Change): Effective July 1, 2022, the dues check-off rate remains at two dollars and twenty-six cents (\$2.26) per hour worked.

\*, \*\*, \*\*\*, \*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*\*: Please note that there are changes on the enclosure titled, "Funds Payment and Remittance Reporting Procedure effective January 1, 2022" for information regarding remittance payable names and the remittance mailing addresses.

If you have any questions, please call the union office at (909) 305-2800.

### 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
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		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓