



Sept. 21, 2005

Upcoming Events

- **9/27:** [Electrical Hazards](#), Albany
- **Beginning 9/28:** [Basic Blueprint Reading](#), Albany.
- **9/29-10/2:** [GBC 50th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Membership Meeting](#), The Sagamore, Bolton Landing.
- **Beginning 10/6:** [STP Unit #1](#), Albany
- **10/14 and 10/21:** Deadlines to register for the GBC [Project Manager](#) and [Future Construction Leaders](#) courses.
- **10/25:** [Traffic Control Safety](#), Albany

The Countdown Continues!

One week until
the GBC's 50th
Anniversary
Celebration!
It's almost
party time!



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GBC Workers' Comp Group – Another Banner Year



The GBC Workers' Comp Safety Group #550 Executive Committee held its Annual Meeting last week in New York City and declared a 25% dividend. In its 13-year history, the group has always declared a strong dividend and during the last several years we have consistently been at the 25% level. In addition, the group increased its up-front discount to 25%.

Group Manager G.C.G. Risk Management noted that the group had another excellent year with only an 11% loss ratio and a very strong contingent balance. The #550 Safety Group is underwritten by the New York State Insurance Fund. The representative from NYSIF told the Executive Committee that #550 is performing remarkably well, and our loss ratio is far better than many similar safety groups.

In short, this GBC program has become a solid program for approximately 30 Member firms, with slow quality growth, strong historical results and almost \$2 million in premium. It clearly is a strong competitive alternative for Members come policy renewal time.

WC Rates in Decline in Some Construction Codes

As part of our workers' compensation discussions, it was also noted that while there was a general workers' comp rate increase for employers, many of the construction classifications that apply to GCs are in decline. Every company is different, of course, but given good results from groups like #550 noted above and declining rates in some classes, beginning with the October 1, 2005 renewal, contractors may see their compensation insurance rates go down. Welcome news in an otherwise volatile marketplace. A copy of the current manual rates is on the GBC website at www.gbcnys.agc.org/public/GBCsafety/05.WC.RateChart.pdf.



AGC Mid-Year Meeting – Katrina and Politics

This week, AGC of America completed their annual Mid-Year Meeting in Washington, DC. As you can imagine, the meeting had a political and Katrina theme. A series of Congressmen, legislative and agency staff people and political pundits spoke at the meeting. GBC's Paul B. Richards Memorial Scholarship Fund received recognition from the AGC and we had an effective discussion with two congressional staff representatives, courtesy of AGC, on tort reform and Alaskan preference issues that have become very important to GBC Members in New York.

On Katrina, there were several forums on the relief effort and the impact of Katrina on construction material costs. The contractor community response has been impressive. The economic impact is, of course, as clear as mud, but most believe there will be widespread shortages and price increases as a result. We urge you to go to the AGC website for more detailed information (www.agc.org). If you are not a recipient of the AGC's "Data DIGest," you should be. AGC economist Ken Simonson is an acknowledged expert and his bi-weekly pieces are very informative. You can find them on the GBC website at www.gbcnys.agc.org/public/Economist/index.asp.

AGC has also developed a Katrina Construction Workers Fund to support impacted construction craftworkers. AGC has seeded the fund with \$50,000 and several chapters and individuals are helping also.

Finally, note that the 2006 AGC Convention site has been changed from New Orleans to Palm Springs, California – March 19-22, 2006. More to follow.

Governor Vetoes Another Labor Bill

Again this week, the Governor vetoed a labor-oriented bill which would have required all public owners to do daily headcounts of workers for prevailing wage enforcement purposes. The burden on large and small owners would have been great. The Governor has now vetoed this year, as he has done in the past, four of this type of bill and there are still three to be considered in the coming months. GBC has supported most of the vetoes, believing some of these ideas to be without merit or, if they have merit, in need of a much better approach. (Veto 96 – S.5464)



Safety News GBC Holds Grand Opening of Albany Safety Training Center

On September 13, many Eastern New York GBC Members turned out to view the new GBC Albany Safety Training Center. The Grand Opening was a big success and we thank all the folks who took the time to visit. The next day GBC got front page business section coverage in the Albany *Times Union*, with a color picture. You can see the TU page on our website at www.gbcnys.agc.org/public/GBCsafety/Safety_training_center.asp. Pictures of the training center can also be viewed on the GBC website at www.gbcnys.agc.org/public/GBCsafety/05%20Alb%20Safety%200Lab.pdf. We encourage all GBC, NESCA and ECA Members in the Eastern New York area to use the lab for in-house training and meetings. Contact Dennis at GBC (518-869-2207, ext. 13, or dennisk@gbcnys.agc.org) to schedule the date and time. At the same time, we also encourage Members in the Rochester area to take advantage of our Rochester training center.



Jeff Zogg (GBC), John Tomich (OSHA Director, Albany Office) and Mike Misenhimer (NESCA) at the Grand Opening.

GBC Safety Staff Changes

Bill Howard, one of our two safety professionals, working primarily in Eastern New York and downstate, has left the GBC this month for another safety opportunity with a developer. Bill joined the GBC in August of 2000 with little experience in the safety field and grew into a very qualified safety professional. We thank him for his five years of excellent service and wish him luck in his new endeavor.

As a result of this change, we have now designated Membership Director Dennis Kiefer to assume much of Bill's safety work. We are also looking for alternative ways to help Members, especially downstate. Dennis has been learning the safety business over the past year and has taken the 10 and 30 hour OSHA courses. In November, he will be taking the OSHA 500 "Train the Trainer" course. We anticipate that Dennis will be able to teach a 10 Hour OSHA course in early 2006 and help with other courses. All this is a continuing effort to upgrade GBC staff skills to provide important services to the Membership.

Welcome New Member!

We're pleased to welcome the following new Associate Member:

Liberty Mutual Surety, Syracuse.
Represented by Philip Downes, Bond Manager.

GBC Comments on Proposed Asbestos Regulations

GBC offered formal comment last week on the proposed changes to Industrial Code Rule 56 (asbestos regulations) to the New York State Labor Department. As has been reported previously, those proposed changes include a provision that the general contractor and construction manager bear responsibility for ensuring that the asbestos contractor on the project follows all the rules. In the comments, GBC pointed out the view that this rule change is not in line with the enabling legislation. The tremendous potential for negative impact relative to competition, cost and liability was also noted along with some specific, technical comments. The text of that commentary may be viewed on our website at www.gbcnys.agc.org/public/legislative/05.09.15/AsbestosComments.pdf.

With the formal comment period now closed, GBC is in the process of sitting down with the Labor Department, as we agreed last month. Stay tuned!



PCB Contaminated Caulk

GBC received a copy of a missive from the State Education Department's Office of Facilities Planning which was issued to design firms relative to "Potential PCB Contamination in Caulk." The memo was precipitated by a recent event at a school that has caused a "costly remediation project." Apparently, a window replacement project where the presence of PCBs in the caulk was not identified left caulk debris on the ground around the school. That PCB-laden debris, in turn, contaminated the soil. Given that, State Ed is looking to identify any and all completed projects that involved the removal of caulk that had been originally installed prior to 1977 and, if so, whether it was tested for the presence of PCBs and properly abated and disposed of. What they will do with the information, we do not yet know, but GBC will stay in contact with SED on the matter.

More Respect for Contractors?

The GBC was recently approached by a Member requesting our assistance in helping a construction management student find out who built the Guggenheim Museum in NYC. We all know that Frank Lloyd Wright designed this one-of-a-kind building, but no one readily knew the general contractor. After some time searching the internet and questioning our NYC Members, a response from the research department at the NYC Library and a Member confirmed that the contractor was Euclid Contracting Corporation, run by then President George N. Cohen.

After all of that research, the GBC staff wonders if the real question of the day is, "Why was it so difficult to find out who the GC was on such a world-renowned masterpiece?" A unique design comes to life only if a contractor can build it! Too many projects have plaques with a list of the owners, designers and politicians, but few have the names of the contractors who built them.