

Student Chapter News

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Students Join Contractors at MCAA 2001

About 30 students and faculty advisors from MCAA student chapters across the country made their way to Wailea, Maui, Hawaii in mid-February for **MCAA 2001: An Hawaiian Odyssey**. Many ended the week with job offers, interviews, or summer internships, but all left with great memories of an amazing week.

It all started with a brief orientation meeting where students and faculty got a quick preview of what they would see and experience during the convention.

Mornings were crammed with special events and speakers, such as Astronaut Neil Armstrong (the first human being to ever walk on the Moon), and former Chicago Bears Football Coach Mike Ditka, and sessions packed with information about project management, new technologies in construction, leadership skills building and lots more. A special session dedicated to a study on change orders attracted several students.

One of the highlights was the student chapter exhibit that was adjacent to the

Manufacturer/Supplier Exhibit. Students set up their banners and tables to meet and greet the contractors and talk with them about future career plans.

Another special event was the Student Chapter breakfast where everyone talked about their programs and ideas for making them better. It was a great discussion that had to end too soon.

The convention wasn't all meetings and business. During the afternoons, students were able to get away for some sightseeing, snorkeling, scuba diving, whale watching and other fun activities. And, in the evenings, the program was packed with parties, great food, dancing, or just relaxing.

Next year, **MCAA 2002** will be in Boca Raton, Florida (February 3-7), so start planning your fundraising activities now. We hope to see you there!

Ferris State University Student Chapter is No. 1

Current and former members of the Greater Michigan MSCA Ferris State University Student Chapter were present for the formal presentation of the Chapter's award as the first MCAA **Student Chapter of the Year**. The event took place on the Ferris State University campus in late March.

MCAA Executive Vice President and CEO John Gentile presented the award plaque to Chapter President Joe Parker after noting the other chapters not chosen for the award: Texas A&M University, Iowa State University, Purdue University, the University of Nebraska, the University of Washington, among others.

MCAA's Career Development Committee chose Ferris State for this honor because—according to former Committee Chairman Bill Bianco—the chapter has a “high degree of organization, a superb relationship



Purdue University students talk with a contractor about career opportunities

with the local service contractor community and the local MCA and . . . its communications media and outreach, its can-do spirit, can truly serve as models for our other existing and future student chapters.”

MSCA Executive Director Barbara Dolim read a letter from MSCA Board of Managers President Don Batz congratulating the students and expressing MSCA’s pride in their accomplishments.

Also attending the event were former chapter leaders Ed Belenger and Kevin Dettling, UA International Representative Don House, and Scott House who helped establish the chapter before he graduated in 1996.

Careers Website Gets a Makeover

If you’re surfing the web and looking for a useful site to visit, try <http://www.mcaa.org/career>. You might be surprised by what you see, particularly if you haven’t been there for a while.

MCAA’s **Careers** has a new welcome message with built-in links to other sections of the website. The structure and functionality of the site haven’t changed, but the information is up-to-date and more timely.

The **Intern Program** has also been updated and redone to make room for new listings of Summer 2001 internship opportunities. The form that contractors use to submit listings has been simplified – it only takes a few minutes to complete – and moved to the **Members Only** section of the website (members will need to use their username and password to get access).

Students looking for an internship position just click on the appropriate link, and they’re instantly in the list. New positions are going up every day, so start checking them now.

We’ll also be adding this newsletter each time it’s published and other useful items as they become available.

So, add the site to your **Favorites** and keep checking the new features. We’ll try to make each visit worth your time.

Career Development Committee Plans Summit, Competition

MCAA/MSCA student chapters will have the chance to meet and compete at national events because of new projects sponsored by MCAA’s Career Development Committee.

The Committee, which oversees the Student Chapter program, met in Chicago on May 2 to outline the program’s first summit and first competition.

The summit, envisioned as a retreat for student chapters to discuss their programs and exchange ideas with other chapter representatives, is being planned for September 20-21, 2001 at a hotel in the Chicago area. The location has yet to be determined.

The competition will challenge students to use their education in construction management, mechanical engineering, and other relevant courses to solve a mechanical contracting problem.

“The competition is really about how well students use their ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness to solve problems,” said Jack Wilhelmi, Career Development Committee Chairman. “It’ll require them to put their education to work, much like what they’ll experience with a project.”

The competition details will be developed more fully over the next few months for presentation to the summit in September.

Virginia Tech Student Chapter Sees the Mechanical Side of D.C.

Submitted by MCA of Metropolitan Washington, D.C.

March 31-April 2, MCA of Metro Washington hosted a 3-day field trip for 25 Virginia Tech “Senior and Junior” Student Chapter Members. Along with the opportunity to expose the VT students to career opportunities in the mechanical contracting industry, this field trip also allowed 15 junior class members to participate in a Project Management Competition.

The students were divided into three groups of five members and were tasked with

bidding the mechanical portion of a job in the metropolitan area. The selected project was a John J. Kirlin, Inc. jobsite in Virginia that was 60% complete. Prior to the field trip, MCA President, Gary Grandchamp, (Vice President



Virginia Tech students tour John J. Kirlin jobsite that was the subject of the competition

of John J. Kirlin, Inc.) and Greg Stearns, Project Manager of the Kirlin project, met with the students to explain the bid process for the mechanical portion of the job.

Each of the three groups were then assigned an MCA member who was their mentor and guide through the bidding process if or when they needed assistance.

The students toured the jobsite Sunday to have a first-hand look at the mechanical contractor's installation process for their portion of the job. Monday afternoon the competition began as the three groups of students presented their bids to four MCA judges. Their presentations were in PowerPoint and booklet form. All members of each team had a chance to speak to the judges. The judging was not based on the lowest bid, but *Best Value* overall. At the MCA General Business Meeting on Monday, the three competing groups presented their bid packages to the MCA membership.

Also included in this field trip were site visits to Dominion Semi-Conductor Plant in Manassas, VA (a High Purity Systems and Stromberg Metals project), Pierce Associates' jobsite at NIH, and three of Pierce Associates' fab shops in Alexandria, VA.

Of course, the trip would not have been complete without an evening escapade to Georgetown.

Chapter Roundtable

The following are brief student chapter reports about news, recent activities and plans for the coming months.

Mechanical and Electrical Contractor Association of Texas A&M University

Submitted by Assistant Professor Dr. John Bryant

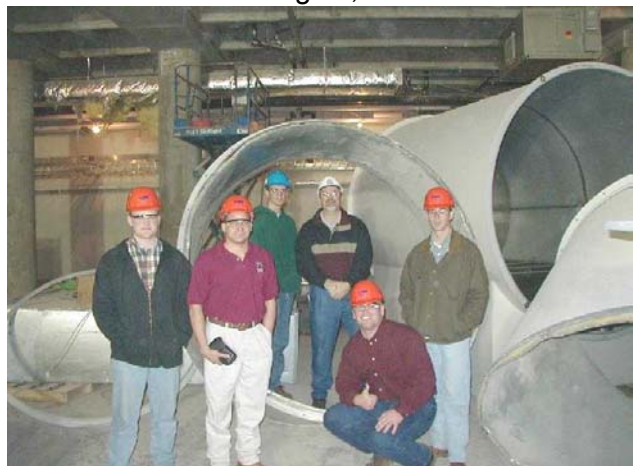
The Texas A&M University student chapter has had a busy year, including a name change, a great tour, and a fundraising project.

The chapter is finally an official student group and the name has changed to "Mechanical and Electrical Contractor Association (MECA)."

The chapter has 10 students, with hopes of recruiting more when the Fall term begins.

TD Industries took the students on a great tour of several project sites in Dallas. First was the Nortel world headquarters (tertiary electrical system backup being installed). They went from the 5 MW diesel generator through the electrical distribution to

the ATS and UPS systems. Next was the new Dallas Mavericks basketball and hockey stadium being built in downtown Dallas. TD pointed out that none of their guys had ever hung 8-foot diameter round duct at 120 feet off of the floor before. Again, the scale and



(l-r) Brandon Dooley, Craig Campbell (president), Stephen Bryant, Dr. John Bryant (advisor), Zach Prince, Pat Ferguson (vice president)

complexity of the MEP systems was impressive and TD gave more than a "gawking" tour.

On the fundraising front, the chapter did a service project for the Texas A&M University Child Care Center. The group installed shelving systems in all of the center's classrooms as part of a spring work event at the Center. Since the center was having some cooling problems (yeah! HVAC) in their kitchen, the students got a chance to take a look.

Mechanical Specialty Contracting Student Chapter of Iowa State University

Submitted by Matthew Jesson

The Iowa State chapter has been preparing for the next school year.

The first activity in the Fall semester will be a golf tournament with MCA of Iowa, which will be a great way for contractors and students to meet. We are also collecting supplies and information to build a learning lab for the Construction Engineering department's Mechanical Systems course. This will include samples of material and equipment to facilitate hands-on learning. Finally, our goal for next year is to build up our membership by promoting the benefits, such as scholarships and career contacts, to the students.

University of Washington Mechanical Contractors Student Chapter

Submitted by Heather Helgen

The MCA student chapter at the University of Washington has just elected it's new officers for the upcoming year and Heather Helgen takes over from Rick Wiseman as the student chapter president for MCA of Western Washington.

The UW student chapter has been working to put together a mechanical team to compete at the [Associated General Contractors] regional competitions held in February 2002 in Reno. In the past, there have only been general contracting teams, and this year we want to send a mechanical team to

the competition. A mechanical contractor from California wants to sponsor the program, and hopefully, if everything works out, there will be a mechanical side to the competitions!

Heather is starting to plan fundraising activities to help sponsor the students that will attend the national MCAA convention next year. She is getting ready to work at the MCA of Western Washington Golf tournament this summer, where she will sell Mulligan's to raise money for the convention. A small portion of the entry fee will also be given to the student chapter to help with funds.

Student Chapter for Mechanical/Electrical Specialty Contracting of the University of Nebraska

Submitted by Tim Wentz, Assistant Professor

Our student chapter had another successful year.

For fund raising, our students conducted our fourth annual holiday wine tasting party. Attended by over 75 contractors and guests, the evening represented an excellent opportunity for networking with industry professionals and for building support for the student chapter.

Additionally, with the help of the local MCA chapter of Omaha, the student chapter was able to raffle a golf putter autographed by Arnold Palmer and Gary Player for over \$1,000.

The students also benefited from a number of outstanding tours, including the



U of N-L students at MCAA 2001 in Maui, Hawaii

Strategic Air Command's new museum, the new Tecumseh State Prison, and the Lied Aquarium project. Additionally, Mr. Blaine Wilcoxson, a recent graduate who is now a project manager for Waldinger Corp., spoke to the chapter about the transition from college life to the working world.

The big trip of the year, of course, occurred when six chapter members attended the MCAA national conference in Maui, Hawaii this past February. In April, the student delegation that attended the national conference gave a presentation to the MCA of Omaha on the new CII Change Order Study that was unveiled in Maui.

Student Chapter of Mechanical/Electrical Specialty Contracting

Submitted by Dr. Awad Hanna

The Midwest's largest gathering of design and construction professionals took place in Madison's Monona Terrace on March 30, 2001. The fourth annual Construction Club

Banquet, hosted by the student organization which includes the MCAA student chapter, brought together almost 500 students, faculty and members of the design and construction industry.

"This year's event really did a good job at promoting interaction among our students, UW-Madison researchers and industry leaders," said Awad Hanna, faculty advisor for the Construction Club. "I think we made great progress in building new relationships to benefit both the industry and the university."

Joseph Ivey, chairman of the board at Encompass, Inc., delivered the keynote address which focused on leadership development. Later in the evening, six industry leaders received Lifetime Achievement Awards. The award honors and recognizes individuals who have made an impact on the industry and have shown an interest in helping students become future leaders in the profession. Recipients included Timothy J. Howald, president, Tweet/Garot Mechanical, Inc.