Building a "Real Safety Culture" Starts at the Top

by Frank Knapfel

During the past decade many companies have identified the need to develop a safety culture within their organization. Interest has grown in how management's involvement in safety directly affects the bottom line of the companies' losses and profits. The safety climate in any company is represented by four components: priority assigned to safety, formal feedback, informal feedback and management commitment to safety. Just as with business development, management needs to set the tone for a true safety culture. Lip service does not work. A true Safety Culture needs to be tied to annual performance reviews, bonuses, promotions etc. Safety would immediately be a top priority in any company if the vice president's, supervisor's or manager's annual review and/or bonus were partially measured by the safety and loss history of that company. The applica-

tion of this theory in the annual review process should make safety objective equal to performance objectives.

A "real safety culture" typically involves:

◆ Upper management commitment to provide the personnel and financial resources necessary to properly implement this culture.

◆ Communication of the safety culture needs to be communicated throughout the organization all the way to the worksite employee without fear of criticism or reprisal

◆ Commitment to safety being equal to productivity, growth and expansion

◆ Sending a consistent message that is apparent throughout the organization and freely communicated. Consistency throughout the organizational is vital to success or failure of any program.

Unlike approaches that focus on employee attitude, creating a positive safety

Member News

Reed Construction Data, a provider of BIM solutions and construction information announced it will provide Autodesk with nearly 1,200 high-quality, parametric BIM objects, representing 17,000 product configurations, for the Autodesk® Seek web service.

The Autodesk Seek web service will allow construction professionals to use advanced search technology to select and specify high-quality building product content, such as 3D models, 2D drawings, visual images and product specification data.

Vela Systems, a developer of mobile field software for the AECO (Architecture-Engineering-Contractor-Owner) industry, announced that it has opened an office in the South Florida area to meet the rapidly growing demand for its technology. Vela Systems appointed Kristi Johnston Vick as sales manager for the new office.

Stiles Construction Co. has launched construction of the world's largest Junior Achievement education center -- the 59,500-sq. ft. JA World's Huizenga Center. The Jr. Achievement Center is located on a 4.8-acre site on Broward College's North Campus.

Kristi Johnston Vick

JA World's Huizenga Center

INSIDE: *Pictures of CASF's August Events*

Safety, Expertise and Access to Resources

Each month Construction FOCUS features a CASF member company, selected by drawing a business card from among those attending the monthly networking breakfast. The next breakfast, sponsored by JJW Construction, Inc., will be held on Thursday, September 18, 7:30 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott-Cypress Creek in Ft. Lauderdale.

IES Commercial, Inc. is a leading national provider of electrical and communications contracting solutions for the commercial, industrial and residential markets. From idea to execution, management to maintenance, from office buildings to wind farms to housing developments, they design, build and maintain systems that empower our lives. "We power progress." They have licenses in all fifty states.

With nearly 5,500 employees across the US, IES can custom design a solution for any size project local or national. Their end-to-end services include: Precon-struction, Prefabrication, Construction, Service and Repair, and Facility Maintenance.

The top three qualities of the company are their industry leading safety record, the experience, expertise and commitment of their employees and their access to resources including people, capital and surety. The IES commitment is to ensure their customers' projects are built on-time with the highest quality always with the safety of their employees, customers and the community as their highest priority.

IES Commercial, Inc., formerly Daniel Electrical Contractors, Inc. has been a CASF member since 2004 and George Haufler, National Business Development Manager, is active in the association attending many networking events and is well known in the area.

Daniel Electrical Contractors, now known as IES Commercial, has been with IES since its founding over 10 years. Before officially changing its name to IES Commercial in June 2008, Daniel continued its market operations as a subsidiary. IES recently realigned its operation into three major business groups focused on the markets they serve - Commercial, Industrial, and Residential.

While operating under the Daniel name, IES Commercial has always been a leader in the South Florida market and specifically noted for its skill in high rise construction. Keynote projects the company has worked on include the Four Seasons Hotel in Miami, Espirito Santo, Epic Hotel & Residences, Paramount Bay, Plaza at Brickell, and the JW Marriott. The company also operates on the west coast of Florida and in Orlando. It is in the process of completing a 1,000 room Hilton Hotel and attached convention center at the Bonnet Creek Resort. The company also provides electrical and communications services for a wide range of other projects such as data centers, retail build outs, office buildings, and government facilities. IES Commercial has in-house CAD and design capabilities, and provides a full range of low voltage voice/data cabling, system installations and a complete portfolio of aftermarket preventative, maintenance and repair services.

IES Commercial, Inc. is located at 5965 NW 82nd Ave, Miami, FL 33166-3418.

For more information, check out their website at www.ies-co.com or contact George Haufler at 305-592-8777 or email george.haufler@ies-co.com.

Building A "Real Safety Culture"

culture does not seek to blame employees for accidents. Instead it sees communication, trust and management involvement as keys to accident prevention. A safety culture can be developed through several phases such as:

◆ Assessment - observing and analyzing unsafe behaviors and prioritizing changes

◆ Planning - establish behavior goals and a process for achieving them

◆ Implementation - introduce and encourage safe behavior

◆ Measurement - evaluating, recognizing and rewarding safe behaviors

Within a "real safety culture" allocating the proper resources based only on past losses will not improve the future results. This type of thinking only will address those who have a history of accidents or safety violations. While it might appear wasteful to focus on employees without a track record of problems, statistics prove otherwise. For example, employees on the job for less than one year account for over 30% of all accidents.

The reasons are many; new hires are still learning the companies' rules, they are eager to make a good impression, they may be unfamiliar with their surroundings on the worksite, they may be working with unfamiliar tools, they may not have been properly trained. The results can be deadly.

To combat this company's need to set up formal training programs before new employees are allowed to work. Training must include a review of all safety related work practices. If the training cannot be completed before the employee starts work a mentor with knowledge of proper work practices and safety procedures should work with the employee until they are comfortable, capable and knowledgeable about their responsibilities.

Maintaining this culture requires the same commitment to safety long after the initial safety training is completed. Companies that maintain this culture should typically see accidents drop 40-50 percent initially and 20 -30 percent on an ongoing basis. In any organization managers set the tone for safety.

In other words we "need to walk the walk and talk the talk". If a supervisor does not comply with the safety procedures and does not buy into the culture then the program will suffer and possibly fail. Supervisors need to be held accountable and participate in all safety related programs. Again, leadership starts from the top.

In conclusion, the investment in personnel and hard dollars towards a "real safety culture" as well as the many positives a safety culture can provide to a company is a process well worth implementing. Historically every dollar invested towards safety and risk management saves approximately $3 in claims and overhead. A properly managed safety culture will produce employees who participate actively in training, identify and alert each other and management to potential hazards, and feel responsible for their safety and the safety of others. This culture change will not happen overnight. A total culture change may take 2-3 years. Management commitment and support is critical to the success and failure of such an undertaking. Accepting safety is an ethical responsibility for every company and demonstrates a sincere concern for each employee, which establishes the foundation for an effective and "real safety culture".

Construction Costs Rising

According to leaders of AGC of America the construction industry has faced unforeseen increases in all construction materials, which are resulting in a reduction in projects and causing job uncertainty. "Construction costs have risen much more than consumer prices this year, due to the extreme run-up in petroleum costs," AGC President, Douglas E. Barnhart explained during a meeting with President Bush at the White House. "The producer price index (PPI)

for inputs to construction rose 10.4% from June 2007 to June 2008, vs. 5.0% for the consumer price index. Barnhart continued, "The PPI for highway and street construction, the most fuel- and asphalt-intensive construction segment, rose 18.9%. The national average retail price of on-highway diesel fuel on August 4 was $4.50 per gallon, up 55% in a year, and 57 cents more than the average for gasoline."

*John Siegle presents Marti Forman, CEO **Cooperative Feeding Program** with $52,000 check as final payment on the $115k raised for CFG during CASF's '07 and '08 Golf Tourneys.*

2008 Summer Getaway
& Planning Meeting

at Hawks Cay in the Keys

Hypower's Membership Mixer attracts over 250 people