

ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

TIM AYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NOVEMBER 2023



Director's Comments:

Earlier this month, I received a call from a Contractor member that was extremely disappointed due to the fact that a major telephone utility has continually failed to locate their underground facilities within the required amount of time allowed by law. I completely understand the frustration, but this serves as a reminder to help draw attention for the need to always file a formal complaint with the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA) whenever such incidents occur.

AUCA was one of the groups that worked extensively to help with legislative revisions to the Alabama One-Call Law that went into affect back in 2020. One of the revisions was the creation of the ALUDPA. In fact, AUCA President Doug Blankenship serves as the subject matter expert for the "Professional Excavator Industry" on the ALUDPA Board, as well as on the Executive Committee that reviews all complaints. Page 7 of this newsletter includes additional information regarding how to go about filing a complaint. In order for our industry to improve, it is imperative to educate yourselves on this process.

Also this month, qualifying closed for candidates planning to run in Alabama's newly drawn 2nd Congressional District. The new district was drawn by a special master after a federal panel of judges found the Alabama Legislature had disregarded its order to draw a new map that gave Black voters an opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice. Thirteen Democrats and eight Republicans qualified for the seat ahead of the 2024 primary election. Primaries will be held in March, for what should be an extremely interesting race.

As the year begins to wind down, and the holidays are upon us, make sure to give thanks for all that we have been blessed with, personally as well as professionally.

Tim

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Happy Thanksgiving from AUCA

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

AUCA Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 2023
Montgomery, AL

Tuscaloosa Area Holiday Lunch Meeting

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Huntsville Area Holiday Lunch Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 2023

Mobile Area Holiday Lunch Meeting

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Birmingham Area Holiday Lunch Meeting

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

AUCA 2024 Spring General Meeting, Golf Tournament and Shrimp & Crawfish Boil

Thursday, April 18, 2024
Arrowhead Country Club
Montgomery, AL

AUCA 2024 Fall General Meeting & Sporting Clay Shoot

October 2024
Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club
Montgomery, AL





JOIN US FOR THIS SEASON'S
**BIG DOG
CHRISTMAS
PARTY**

DEC 13

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM



CRANEWORKS BIRMINGHAM

2728 REVEREND ABRAHAM WOODS JR
BOULEVARD, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35203

News & Notes:

In Memory of Tim Irvin:

We are saddened to report that Coy Timothy "Tim" Irvin, a beloved member of the J.M. Wood Auction family, passed away on November 13, 2023. Please keep the Irvin family and the employees of J.M. Wood Auction in your thoughts and prayers.

AUCA PAC Raffle:

Through the generosity of AUCA supporters, over \$4,000 was raised for our PAC Fund to help support our continued Legislative efforts at the federal, state, and local levels. Winners were drawn at the 2023 AUCA Fall General Meeting & Sporting Clay Shoot that was held on October 12th at Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club in Montgomery.



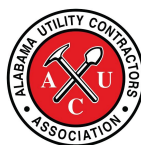
\$1,000 Cash Prize Winner:

Carla Crawford
Water Services Group
Tuscaloosa



\$500 Cash Prize Winner:

Shirley Byrd
Bill Carter Consulting
Birmingham



News & Notes:

AUCA 2024 Calendars:

AUCA has received a supply of 2024 AUCA Calendars. If you would like to have one of these hanging on your office wall before they're all gone, please plan to attend one of our upcoming Holiday Lunch Meetings to get one, or contact the AUCA office and we will make arrangements for delivery.



Alabama Utility Contractors Association
We Dig Alabama
 Phone: (205) 582-9436 Fax: (205) 582-9155
www.aluca.org

JANUARY 2024

1 Total Days Elapsed in the Year
365 Total Days Remaining in the Year

365 Working Days Remaining in the Year (Excluding Saturdays and Sundays)
365 Working Days Remaining in the Year (Excluding Sundays)

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|---|---------|---|--------------------------------|--------|----------|
| | 1 <small>NEW YEAR'S DAY</small> | 2 | 3 <small>THIRD QUARTER MOON</small> | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 <small>NEW MOON</small> | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 <small>MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY</small> | 16 | 17 <small>FIRST QUARTER MOON</small> | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 <small>FULL MOON</small> | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

2024 JANUARY

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2024 FEBRUARY

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2024 MARCH

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2024 APRIL

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2024 MAY

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2024 JUNE

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2024 JULY

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2024 AUGUST

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2024 SEPTEMBER

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2024 OCTOBER

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2024 NOVEMBER

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2024 DECEMBER

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| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |



News & Notes:

ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION 2024 LEADERSHIP TEAM

The list of Officers and Directors below reflects the members elected to serve on the 2024 Leadership Team at the October 12, 2023 Fall General Meeting in Montgomery.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: JAY HOLCOMB, LAMBERT, INC.

1ST VICE PRESIDENT: RONNIE GOLDEN, CG JONES, LLC

2ND VICE PRESIDENT: GAVIN JONES, BAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS, INC.

SECRETARY/TREASURER: ROBBIE BUTLER, CLEARY CONSTRUCTION, INC.

BOARD MEMBERS

RANDY BISHOP, CONSTRUCTION LABOR SERVICES, INC.

DOUG BLANKENSHIP, BLANKENSHIP CONTRACTING, INC. *

ANDRU BRAMBLETT, AFL

BILL CARTER, BILL CARTER CONSULTING, LLC

TIM GILLIAM, JOHN PLOTT COMPANY

SHAUN GONZALES, WEAVER ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY, INC.

LARRY LOGSDON, WALLACE, JORDAN, RATLIFF, & BRANDT, LLC

MARK MAYFIELD, MILLER PIPELINE, LLC

RYAN McCLENDON, MARSHMcLENNAN AGENCY

BILL McGOUGH, W.R. MITCHELL CONTRACTOR, INC.

RICHARD MURPHREE, EMPIRE PIPE & SUPPLY

AARON SCHMIDT, SCHMIDT ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRUCTION, INC.

CHARLES SMITH, VULCAN MATERIALS COMPANY

CHAD TUBBS, FERGUSON WATERWORKS

STEVE WALKER, JOHNSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT*



News & Notes:

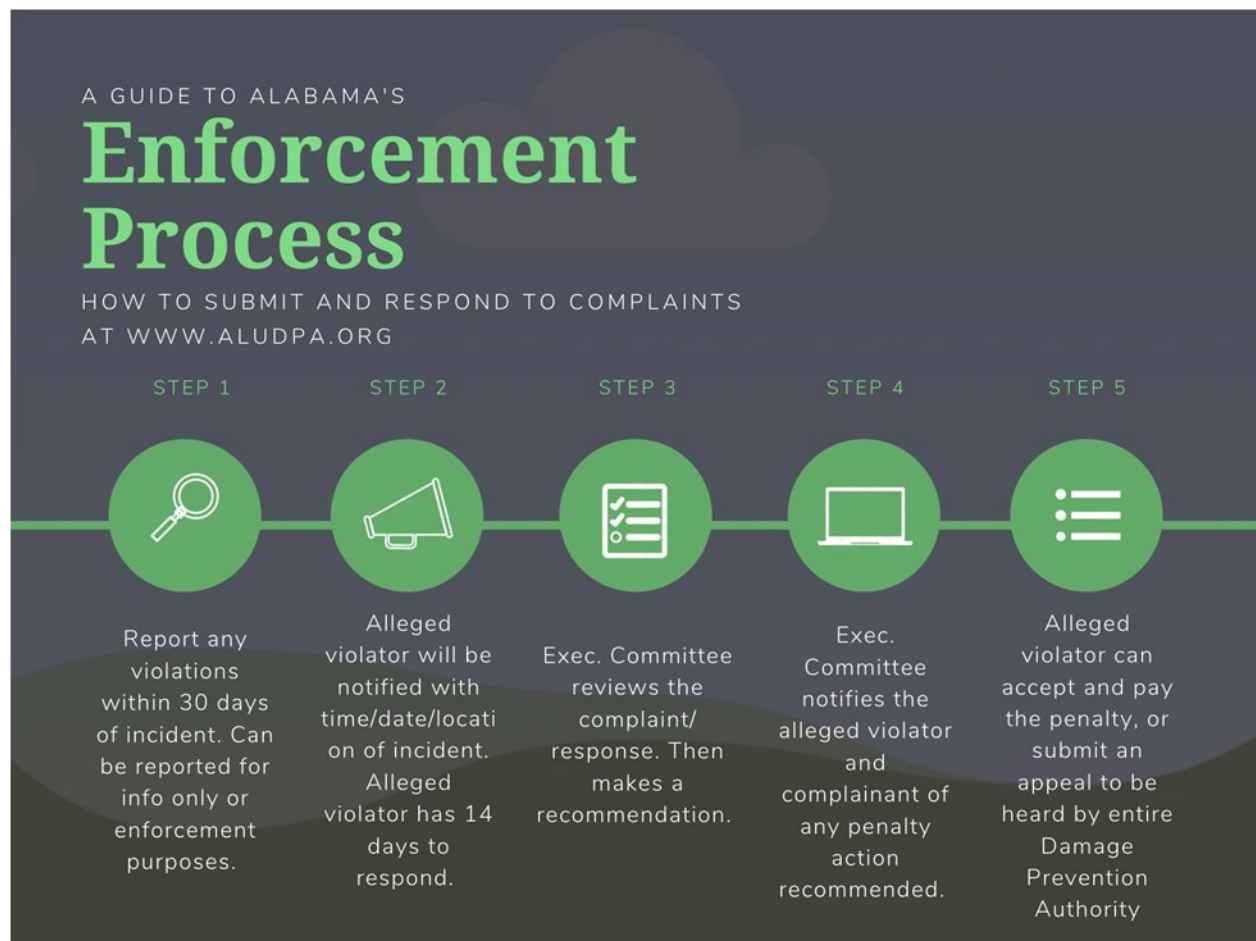
Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA)

The Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA) was established for the purpose of enforcing the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law, for reviewing penalty provisions, and for reviewing the adequacy of the Alabama State Law Enforcement Program.

The Enforcement Program is a complaint-driven process where a complaint may be submitted against an entity for violation of the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law. A complaint may be submitted as information only and not designated for enforcement penalties.



A complaint may be submitted using the Complaint Form [at this Website](#) no later than 30 days after the occurrence of an alleged violation. The submitted Complaint Form is reviewed by the ALUDPA for determination of an alleged violation and for penalty provisions that may apply. The reported violator is then notified by the ALUDPA that a response may be submitted using the Response Form at this Website no later than 14 days after the ALUDPA notification.



Industry Insight:

Provided by Chris Cain - Partner at Carr Riggs & Ingram, LLC

Contractors Can Remain Profitable in a Down Market

Many contractors focus more on winning projects than making a profit. The reason? Clients, particularly in the public sector, typically award contracts to the lowest bidder. That makes it challenging for any contractor to maintain profitability while working on large, complex projects.

There are a variety of factors that can shrink a profit margin. An inability to control cost plays a huge role. Also, poor productivity can, and does, have a detrimental effect as it ultimately impacts job cost. Similarly, rising wages can put a dent in a contractor's margins since they must increasingly fight for a smaller worker pool.

There are some steps a contractor can take to maximize profitability, even as profit margins are squeezed in the midst of a challenging construction market.

What to Do

Technology can play a role in boosting profitability, including anything from an accounting software upgrade to the use of software for billing, estimating, bid proposals, purchase orders, and credit card management. Owners and contractors have also increased their reliance on scheduling tools as a means to improve efficiency.

One of these time-consuming and error-prone processes is the monthly payment application. Therefore, switching from a paper-based process to an automated payment application can eliminate wasted time and decrease costs and the potential for human error. This process switch will also improve communication and reduce misunderstandings with clients.

However, controlling capital costs, managing risk, and dramatically improving project performance will take more than adopting new technology. Some companies have begun minimizing the number of hand-offs and interfaces throughout a project's lifecycle to drive certainty and predictability. They're also pushing toward a more integrated and construction-driven approach to their projects.

It has become commonplace for many companies to move a lot of their fabrication work offsite and look at new modularization approaches and innovations. By moving the work to a more controlled environment, they become more cost-competitive and improve efficiency. Other contractors are focusing on the supply side of the equation through enhanced recruitment and training efforts.

The following are other ways a contractor can increase its profit margins, even during the down-times:

1. **Don't Lower Prices.** Many contractors consider lowering prices in order to win more contracts. Unfortunately, this is a lose-lose situation for both contractors and clients. While a client might think that they're getting a deal, they could ultimately get a substandard product when the contractor must cut corners. Instead, construction companies should focus on landing projects that take advantage of their unique skillsets.



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Industry Insight:

Provided by Chris Cain - Partner at Carr Riggs & Ingram, LLC

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2. **Reduce Request for Informations (RFIs).** RFIs are a necessity in the construction industry, as they're used to gather and clarify information not included in the project's initial plans and specifications. However, RFIs can slow down a project and lead to a negative impact on profits. Contractors should find ways to reduce the need for RFIs as well as the costs associated with them. One way is to streamline communication between designers and builders through a unified communication platform, whereby all project participants can access documents. The use of this platform will improve review and response times.
3. **Minimize mistakes.** Re-work is one of the more expensive issues at a job site since it impacts a company's profits and damages its reputation. Ensure that there is open communication between all team members to minimize the need for rework. Participating earlier in the project can also go a long way towards reducing changes down the road and improving labor and equipment productivity.
4. **Get paid on time.** Payment issues are rampant in the construction industry for a variety of reasons. Whatever the cause, it is crucial that contractors use any means available to get paid on time.

When it comes to maximizing profitability in your construction company, there are several ways that you can approach winning projects and maintaining efficiency. If you have more questions information, reach out to a CRI advisor for further guidance and assistance.



Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

From Ryan Sharpe - Chairman CWCC & Sante Esposito - Key Advocates

November 2023 Insights

FY24 Appropriations

As we have noted in previous updates, the House and Senate continue to remain far apart in their views on allocations for State Revolving Funds (SRFs).

Their inability to resolve these differences resulted in the late September passage of a Continuing Resolution that maintained federal spending at current levels through Nov. 17.

This resolution, combined with the failure to enact Republican-supported spending cuts, helped lead to the ouster of House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

Appropriations Bills Status

With the election of a new Speaker, the House will need to devise a FY24 funding strategy which addresses debt limits and spending cuts wanted by conservative Republican House members.

In the House, 10 of the 12 appropriation bills have been approved by either the House or a Committee, while 2 bills have not yet been considered.

All 12 Senate appropriations bills have been approved by the Appropriations Committee, but none have passed the Senate.

SRF Base Allotments and WIIN Grants

The proposed base allotments for the State Revolving Funds (SRFs) remain unchanged with the Clean Water SRFs slated to receive \$1 billion in the House bill while the Senate bill provides \$1.639 billion.

For the Safe Drinking Water SRFs, the House bill would provide \$870 million while \$1.126 billion would be allocated by the Senate bill.

The House and Senate Energy and Water Appropriations bills provide \$20 million for Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WINN) grants.

Earmarks

The House Interior Appropriations bill provides \$470 million for earmarks while \$345 million is appropriated through earmarks in the Senate Interior Appropriations bill.

For Safe Drinking Water SRFs, the House Interior Appropriations bill provides \$410 million in earmarks while \$244 million is set aside through earmarks in the Senate Appropriations bill.

CWCC Advocacy and Future Steps

The Coalition members were encouraged to contact lawmakers to oppose reductions in funding base

(Continued on page 11)



Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

(Continued from page 10)

SRFs and proposed spending cuts. The Coalition wrote to legislative leadership and provided information and sample letters for members to communicate with lawmakers on this issue.

The CWCC continues to oppose spending reductions in SRF spending and takedowns based on earmarks which are inconsistent with the intent of the BIL which aimed to increase spending on critical water infrastructure projects.

With the election of a new Speaker, it appears that passing a budget will likely be a priority in the House but a budget that includes Republican-backed spending cuts is unlikely to make it to President Biden's desk.

Issues/Bills of Interest

The Coalition continues to advocate for the STREAM Act which would provide hundreds of millions of dollars for water recycling, surface and groundwater projects, desalination projects, drinking water for disadvantaged communities, and environmental restoration projects.

In September, the Bureau of Reclamation announced a \$239 million funding opportunity for Title XVI water reclamation and reuse projects, including both congressionally authorized projects and WIIN Act projects.

The Coalition also continues to advocate for additional funding for the Alternative Water Source Program, Mega Recycled Water projects funding and for vital infrastructure projects, including drought relief, clean water and surface transportation projects.



Fleet Safety:

Provided by Marsh McLennan Agency - Southeast Risk Control Services

Thanksgiving Driving Safety

Thanksgiving is a great time for families and friends to meet, greet, overeat, and watch football. But with all the gatherings, traffic and resulting vehicle accidents rise. In fact, the Thanksgiving holiday is the busiest travel time of year. The NSC estimates that over 54 million Americans will travel over 50 miles from home for the upcoming holiday. AAA states that traffic on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving increases 42% over normal.

Unfortunately, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving is often the largest single day for alcohol sales all year. CBS News states the sale of alcohol increases over 34%. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving is nicknamed "Drunksgiving", as people celebrate the holiday, and the day off from work.

Highway fatalities rise with the heavy increase in traffic and drinking. The NSC estimates 518 fatalities for the four-day holiday period in 2023. Here are some tips to avoid becoming a statistic.

- Avoid the heaviest travel times of 4 to 8 pm Wednesday and Sunday
- If possible, travel before 11 am on Wednesday or after 8 pm on Thursday
- Plan your drive for less traveled routes, if possible, to reduce traffic exposure
- Do not drink and drive yourself. If over celebrating, arrange for a designated driver or utilize a cab or ride service
- ALWAYS wear your seat belt. NHTSA states that 52% of fatalities from the 2020 holiday season were to unbuckled drivers and passengers
- Avoid distractions such as cell phones, loud music and eating while driving
- Slow down and maintain a safe speed to allow for more reaction time
- Maintain an appropriate following distance for your speed and traffic conditions
- Inspect the vehicle before hitting the road to assure it's ready for the trip
- Drive defensively and be on the lookout for impaired or reckless drivers
- Stay alert and avoid driving when fatigued or soon after a large holiday meal

Thanksgiving can be a wonderful occasion to mingle with family and friends and enjoy good food and company. But, the heavy increase in traffic and drinking creates an elevated risk of a serious vehicle accident. Following the tips above will help you enjoy a happy and safe holiday.



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***AUCA IS A MEMBER-DRIVEN, NEEDS
FOCUSED TRADE ASSOCIATION CREATED
SOLELY TO PROMOTE AND ADVANCE THE
UTILITY INDUSTRY IN THE STATE OF
ALABAMA.***

**We're on the Web !
www.aluca.org**

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others in your company. And, if you are
receiving this for the company owner,
please print out a copy for him/her.**

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Training Needs**

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