



## ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

**TIM AYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**DECEMBER 2017**

### **Director's Comments:**



As we wind down 2017, the month of December has turned out to be quite a busy month politically. On December 12th, Democrat Doug Jones pulled the surprising upset win in the special election for the United States Senate. Jones will be sworn in by Vice President Pence on the third of January when the Senate returns. He will complete the term that runs through 2020 originally won overwhelmingly by Republican Jeff Sessions in 2014. Regardless of your opinion on the outcome, I think everyone can be thankful that this campaign is over.

On December 22nd, President Trump signed into law the \$1.5 Trillion Tax Reform Bill, known as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. This should provide a positive impact to many of our member companies and their employees as we head into the new year.

Speaking of taxes, this month AUCA Lobbyist B.T. Crowe and I had an opportunity for a conference call with Vernon Barnett, the new Chairman for the Alabama Department of Revenue, and Deputy Chairman Mike Gamble. The purpose of our call was to discuss the Sales Tax Exemption Certificate process. The call was well received, and the DOR has pledged to have a face-to-face meeting sometime in January to further discuss options to improve the process. If you have any firsthand experience with this topic, please contact the AUCA office and let us know your suggestions.

Thank you for helping AUCA have another successful year, and I hope that you all have a wonderful holiday season.

*Tim*

#### **Inside This Issue:**

News & Notes	2-5
Upcoming Events	6
CWCC Report	7-8
Health & Safety	9

**Season's Greetings from AUCA**

News & Notes:

**Recent AUCA Meetings**



**Huntsville Area Lunch Meeting  
December 12, 2017**



**Mobile Area Lunch Meeting  
December 14, 2017**



**Tuscaloosa Area Lunch Meeting  
December 19, 2017**



**Birmingham Area Lunch Meeting  
December 21, 2017**



## News & Notes:

### **U.S. Senate Special Election:**

Doug Jones has been officially certified by Alabama's state canvassing board as the winner of the December 12th special election for the U.S. Senate. This comes despite a last ditch legal challenge by opponent Roy Moore. The certification by the canvassing board made up of the governor, secretary of state, and attorney general, came after a judge denied Roy Moore's request to halt certification of Jones' win in the Alabama U.S. Senate race

Jones will now be sworn in by Vice President Pence on January 3rd when the Senate returns. The final margin of victory was 21,924 votes, the Secretary of State's office said before the certification began. Official vote tally: Jones, 673,896, or 50 percent. Moore, 651,972, 48.3 percent and write-ins, 22,852, or 1.7 percent.

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### **2018 AUCA Membership Dues Renewal**

AUCA 2018 Membership Dues Notices will go out in early January. Please be on the lookout for the notice. We appreciate your past support of AUCA, and hope that your company will renew your membership with our group and help us continue to reach our goals in 2018.

We ask that you please return your dues promptly to ensure your listing in the upcoming Membership Directory, and to guarantee no disruption in member benefits.

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### **OSHA Accepting Electronically Submitted Injury, Illness Reports Through December 31st**

On December 18, OSHA announced that it will continue accepting 2016 OSHA Form 300A data through the Injury Tracking Application (ITA) until midnight December 31, 2017. OSHA will not be taking enforcement action against those employers who submit their reports after the December 15, 2017 deadline, but before December 31, 2017. Starting January 1, 2018, the ITA, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#), will no longer accept the 2016 data.



## News & Notes:

### **Birmingham Water Works Board Corruption Probe**

A special grand jury in Birmingham this month charged three people - the chairwoman of the Birmingham Water Works Board, a former vice president of the board's engineering company and the mayor of Mt. Vernon - with violating the Alabama ethics law.

Investigators questioned witnesses about money flowing from water works vendors to politicians, board members and their families, through cash, entertainment and no-show jobs. Both the FBI and the Alabama Attorney General's office have been investigating water works and city dealings in separate grand jury probes.

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### **Alabama One-Call Notification System Study Commission Report:**

The One-Call Study Commission has completed their report to be submitted to the Governor, Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate. The One-Call Commission was established in 2015 to develop a report on the expedience and validity of having a single One-Call notification system to serve the entire State of Alabama, including the appropriate governance, legislative oversight, and membership outreach practices of the organization; the adequacy of the enforcement provisions of current law; and other items related to the One-Call Law that may increase the level of safety of its citizens.

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### **Alabama 2018 Legislative Session:**

The 2018 Alabama Legislative Session will convene at noon on Tuesday, January 9th in Montgomery. There have already been 46 bills pre-filed in the House, and 32 in the Senate. Of interest to AUCA members are:

- *HB25 - Creation of State Transportation Commission*
- *HB35 - Tax Exemption for Public Water or Sewer Authorities, Districts, Boards, and Systems*
- *HB43 - Competitive Bid Law - Minority-Owned Business and Minority Group Terms Defined*

Once the Session begins, we will continue to update our members on the status of these bills, as well as any newly introduced bills of relevance, throughout the remainder of the Legislative Session.

***Remember to check our weekly "Legislative Pipeline" email report for continuous Legislative updates***



## News & Notes:

### **AUCA Membership "Affinity" Programs:**

#### **Workers Compensation Insurance:**

Before you renew your workers' compensation policy, ask your insurance agent to get a quote from CompTrust. Make sure the agent mentions that you are an AUCA member. If you have questions, you or your agent may contact Terry Young from Millennium Risk Managers at (256) 504-3288. MRM is the Third Party Administrator (TPA) for the CompTrust fund, and a valuable member of AUCA.

#### **Group Retirement Planning:**

BenSource Employee Benefits, also an AUCA member company, is staffed to take your call with any questions you may have about starting a retirement plan, or to compare your current plan with the ***Contractor's Retirement Plan***. BenSource can be reached at (205) 536-9204.

Here are just few of the unique benefits of this plan:

- Eliminates all TPA costs, all audit costs, 5500 costs and document costs
- Greatly reduces employee investment costs - the *power* of group buying
- Eliminates nearly all of the HR tasks typically associated with 401k
- Diverts the significant fiduciary liability away from the business owner

#### **AUCA Scholarship Program:**

In recognizing the labor shortage for workers entering the construction industry, AUCA plans to award two (2) scholarships worth \$1,250 each in the Spring of 2018. Priority will be given for children/family members of AUCA members in good standing that are studying for a career in the construction industry at either a local trade school, or four-year university.

A Scholarship Committee has been established to review applications including AUCA Board Members Gavin Jones - Bama Utility Contractors, Ronnie Golden - Golden Construction, Randy Bishop - CLS General Contractors, and AUCA Director Tim Ayers.

#### **Group Health Insurance Program:**

AUCA continues to investigate the possibility of offering an Association Group Health Insurance Program to member companies. If you have any questions, or insights into your company's current Healthcare policy that you would like to share, please contact the AUCA office.



*Upcoming AUCA Events:*

***Charge the Hill - Legislative Awareness Day***

**Wednesday, March 7, 2018**

**Alabama State House Building**

**Montgomery, AL**

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***AUCA 2018 Spring General Meeting  
& Golf Tournament***

**April 19, 2018**

**Arrowhead Country Club**

**Montgomery, AL**

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***Infrastructure Fly-In  
& Clean Water Construction Coalition Reception***

**Date To Be Announced**

**Washington D.C.**

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***AUCA 2018 Fall General Meeting  
& Sporting Clay Shoot***

**October 18, 2018**

**Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club**

**Montgomery, AL**



## ***Clean Water Construction Coalition Report***

From Bob Briant, Jr. - Chairman CWCC

### **TRUMP ADMINISTRATION INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE - PROGRESS ANTICIPATED**

With announced progress in Congress on tax reform, it appears likely at this point that Congress will finally take up infrastructure early in the New Year.

Although Clean Water Construction Coalition representatives know that final principles of the Administration's efforts have been developed, these details still have not been publicly distributed. The details remain unclear and are not expected to be unveiled until tax reform has been completed.

Recent signals sent from White House officials lead us to believe that at least one of the pots of federal funding will be tied to what states are able to leverage locally with non-federal dollars. In addition, that pot of funding is said to be flexible enough for states to decide on their own what infrastructure priorities (e.g. transportation, water, telecommunications) should be funded and how.

As previously reported, the plan will propose a \$1 trillion, 10-year program funded by a one-time repatriation of \$200 billion; that it is multifaceted in terms of infrastructure modes; that it relies heavily on non-Federal funding to leverage greater investment; and that it provides various incentives to solicit non-Federal funding support.

### **SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

CWCC representative Sante Esposito followed up with key officials and staff of the Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) and reinforced the importance of substantial funding increases for the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water SRF's in any mega infrastructure bill.

To review, all Committee Democrats signed a letter that allocates EPW's \$625B as follows:

- \$100B for roads and bridges
- \$100B for local priorities
- \$10B for TIGER
- \$200B for major infrastructure projects
- \$110B for drinking and wastewater
- \$10B for ports
- \$60B for Corps projects,
- \$25B for disasters



# *Clean Water Construction Coalition Report*

*Continued from Page 7*

- \$10B for leveraging projects

## **HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

CWCC Representative Sante Esposito confirmed that there are discussions underway with Committee Republicans and Democrats on an infrastructure bill that would include the Clean Water SRF. T&I hearings have yet to be scheduled.

Our support for H.R. 1647, the "Water Infrastructure Trust Fund Act of 2017," has been reemphasized with key supporting entities. The bill establishes a Water Infrastructure Investment Trust Fund and appropriates to it amounts equivalent to the fees received in the Treasury before January 1, 2022, approximately \$7 billion. Enactment of this legislation would be a critical first step in establishing a self-financed national clean water and safe drinking water trust fund.

## **MISCELLANEOUS RELATED CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS**

- **"REBUILD AMERICA" TASK FORCE**

In the House, CWCC representatives are engaged with the office of Congressman Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34), Co-chair of the "Rebuild America" Task Force, regarding the outcome of a Member level forum on general infrastructure that was held recently.

- **Earmarks**

No further developments. Still pressing for return of earmarks, at least with respect to the upcoming mega infrastructure bill.

- **FY18 Appropriations Status**

The government is operating under a Continuing Resolution funding it at FY17 levels until Dec. 22nd. No bills being tracked have seen Floor action in either House.

- **FY18 Interior Appropriations**

To review, on July 18, the House Appropriations Committee approved the FY18 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill. For the Clean Water SRF the bill provides \$1,143,887,000 (compared to \$1,393,887,000 for FY17) and for the Safe Drinking Water SRF, \$863,233,000 (the same amount appropriated for FY17). Also included is \$25M for WIFIA. No action to date in the Senate.



## **Health & Safety:**

*Provided by Josh Broaddus @ J. Smith Lanier & Company*

### **Distracted From Our Work:**

We are all here for one reason – to get the job done. If it is done in the proper way, there should be no problems. Have you ever heard the saying, “We never have time to do it right, but we always have time to do it over”? In many cases, this appears to be true.

However, if we don’t have time to do a job safely, what happens? The job will have to be done again, of course, but who will do it? There’s a good chance that whoever completed the job under high pressure of urgency disregarded a few safety precautions and got hurt in the process. He/She might not be able to redo that particular task at all. Safety must be a part of every job we do. It must be on our minds before we begin any task.

We are reminded almost daily that safety plays such an important part of our everyday lives. It makes no difference what we may be doing; we must include a certain amount of SAFETY. We tell our children not to do this or that, and yet when we come to work, we have to be told the same thing.

One thing to remember is that your company can only do so much to preserve your health and well being on the job. The rest is up to you. No safety program, strategy, or device was ever invented that equals the effectiveness of a safety-minded employee. Where possible we need to maintain a focus on our work. Our work often involves a sequence of activities that can be construed as a work plan. Within these activities there are hazards we must be aware of. Distractions from our work can cause us to lose focus on the work plan and forget about the hazards present.

#### **Avoidable Distractions Include:**

1. Blasting a radio loud enough to affect the ability for others to hear what they are doing.
2. Using a cell phone while working.
3. Poor housekeeping within the work area.
4. Disturbing fellow employees during critical activities.

We must practice what we preach. We can make our jobs a lot easier by doing this, at least where safety is involved. Don’t we all want to be safe on the road and the shop? It only takes a fraction of time for an accident to happen. If we just take the time given us to maintain a focus on our jobs, the environment, and potential hazards, a potential accident could be avoided.



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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**

Please print out this newsletter to share with others in your company. And, if you are receiving this for the company owner, please print out a copy for him/her.

**Let AUCA Be Your Source For All Your  
Training Needs**  
Contact the Association Office for more information



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