



ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

TIM AYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FEBRUARY 2022

Director's Comments:



Last month, I wrote about the death of my father that occurred on January 25th. I was hoping that as the calendar turned to a new month, things would get better. However, that was the exact opposite of what was to come. On February 2nd, my oldest dog died after valiantly battling cancer. Then, on February 7th, my mother was hospitalized after suffering a debilitating stroke. She remained in the hospital and an inpatient rehabilitation center through last week. Her stay also included a Covid-19 positive test result, which complicated matters further. Thankfully, she is now home and with continued rehabilitation therapy is expected to eventually make a full recovery.

During this month, I also had a 51-year old cousin, and a 48-year old friend/neighbor die. I write this newsletter while keeping a keen eye on the Russian invasion of Ukraine that could potentially lead to World War III. I'm normally a positive person, but it's been very hard not to feel depressed lately when it seems as though we're constantly embattled in some sort of literal, or spiritual warfare.

While we don't always understand or agree with the plans that God has made for us, or our friends and families, we must trust that his plan and timing is still perfect. Even on the darkest of days, that is enough to get me through. Spring is on the horizon, and I pray that better times will be ahead for everyone!

With Spring also comes the annual AUCA Spring General Meeting, Golf Tournament and Crawfish Boil on April 21st in Montgomery. Registration is now open, and we hope you can make plans to join us.

The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) is a committee of the Alabama Workforce Council established to identify regional and statewide in-demand occupations, career pathways, and credentials of value. The ACCCP is recruiting subject matter experts to help create the DNA of in-demand jobs in our field. AUCA has been asked to represent our industry at a meeting in Montgomery with Governor Ivey on March 17th. If you would be interested in joining me, please let me know.

Tim

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Upcoming Meetings & Events:

AUCA "In-Person" Industry Lunch Meetings
Dates and Locations To Be Announced

Alabama Damage Prevention Alliance
Large Project Task Team Virtual Meeting
February 22, 2022
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

AUCA Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, March 9, 2022

AUCA 2022 Spring General Meeting,
Golf Tournament and Shrimp & Crawfish Boil
Thursday, April 21, 2022
Arrowhead Country Club - Montgomery, AL



AUCA 2022 Fall General Meeting
& Sporting Clay Shoot
Thursday, October 13, 2022
Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club -
Montgomery, AL





AUCA 2022 Spring General Meeting & Golf Tournament

Thursday, April 21, 2022

Arrowhead Country Club

50 Ocala Drive Montgomery, AL 36117

General Meeting & Buffet Lunch - 11:30 a.m.

Golf Tournament - 1:00 p.m. Shotgun Start

Low Country Shrimp & Crawfish Boil

(Immediately Following Golf Tournament)



General Meeting & Buffet Lunch

Cost: \$20/Person

(Included with Golf Registration or Corporate Sponsorship)

Attend the statewide General Meeting, enjoy a delicious lunch and then hear a presentation from our scheduled guest speaker.

13th Annual Golf Tournament

4-Person Scramble Format

Cost: \$600/Team or \$150/Individual

Complete attached registration form and return ASAP.
Hole and Corporate Sponsorship opportunities available.
Sign up now before the event fills up!



Low Country Shrimp & Crawfish Boil

Cost \$20/Person

(Included with Golf Registration or Corporate Sponsorship)

Come out and enjoy networking with your industry peers at our after tournament Low Country Shrimp & Crawfish Boil.



APRIL 21, 2022 - EVENT REGISTRATION FORM



To register, please complete this form and return to the AUCA office by fax or email.

A copy of the registration form should also be submitted with payment.

Registration Deadline is April 15, 2022

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

GOLF TOURNAMENT



4-PERSON TEAM - \$600



INDIVIDUAL - \$150

Includes: Lunch, Golf/cart, goodie bag, beverage tickets, prizes, and Low Country Boil

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____
- 4.) _____

- Handicap: _____
- Handicap: _____
- Handicap: _____
- Handicap: _____

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



CORPORATE SPONSOR - \$250

Includes: Company logo on AUCA website, all event signage and promotional materials, and admission for two (2) company representatives to General Meeting & Low Country Boil



HOLE SPONSOR - \$100

Includes: Name recognition on hole signage and may set-up tent on course to network with golfers and distribute company prizes or literature during tournament

GENERAL MEETING

General Meeting Lunch: \$20/Person x Quantity () = \$ _____

LOW COUNTRY SHRIMP & CRAWFISH BOIL

Low Country Boil: \$20/Person x Quantity () = \$ _____

PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE OR ON DAY OF TOURNAMENT! Return form and payment to:

Alabama Utility Contractors Association

P.O. Box 383185

Birmingham, AL 35238-3185

Phone: (205) 582-9436

Fax: (205) 582-9155

Email: tim@aluca.org

To pay by credit card, please contact the AUCA office at (205) 582-9436.

Alabama Legislative News:

The 2022 Alabama Legislative Session has reached the midpoint, after completing the 15th legislative working day in Montgomery. With only a maximum of 30 legislative meeting days possible, and lawmakers showing no indications to change the recent three-day work week pace, the session looks to be quickly moving towards the finish line. Being that 2022 is an election year, many incumbents that are running for re-election want to finish the session as quickly as possible, in order to get out on the campaign trail. The 2022 election calendar includes a May 24 primary, June 21 primary run-off and a November 8 general election.

However, before legislators can worry about adjourning sine die, there is still much important business to be done. One such issue relates to broadband expansion. The Senate has unanimously passed a three-bill package to promote the expansion of high-speed broadband internet service across the state. The bills, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Clay Scofield, R-Guntersville, includes Senate Bills 123, 124 & 125. These bills have now moved to the House for consideration.

Constitutionally, the only requirement of legislators before they can adjourn is to pass the Education and General Fund Budgets. The General Fund was approved in the Senate in a 29-1 vote. The \$2.7 billion General Fund Budget is the largest in the state's history, and now goes to the House for consideration.

Despite the session running short on time, the number of new bills filed continues to grow. To date, there have been a total of 679 bills introduced this session, with 415 in the House, and 264 in the Senate.

Legislators will reconvene in Montgomery on Tuesday, March 1st, for the 16th legislative day.

Also worth noting, Governor Kay Ivey has signed into law and assigned Act #2022-1 from the special legislative session that concluded on Thursday, January 27th. Act #2022-1 calls for \$277 million to go toward expanding broadband; \$225 million toward water and sewer improvements; and \$146.7 million, toward health care, to be split between hospitals and nursing homes. It also includes \$79.5 million for the state's Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, and \$11 million to reimburse the counties for the cost of housing state prisoners.

As a result of Act #2022-1, our industry should see a quick influx of new infrastructure project opportunities. All of these projects funded with the ARPA money have to be finished by the end of 2026.

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



News & Notes:

2022 AUCA Membership Dues Renewal:

AUCA 2022 Membership Dues Notices are now being distributed. 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 work towards our goals in 2022.

We ask that you please return your dues promptly to ensure no disruption in member benefits.

AUCA 2022 Scholarship Program:

The application process for our 2022 Scholarship Program is now open. Up to six scholarships will be awarded to applicants that have not previously received an AUCA scholarship. Deadline for submissions will be February 28th, and winning applicants will be selected at the March 2022 AUCA Board of Directors Meeting.



- Scholarships awarded will be worth \$1,500 each.
- Money will be paid directly to the College or Trade School of the applicant's choice.
- Applications are available on the AUCA website:

<http://www.aluca.org/scholarship-program.html>

Application Criteria:

- Must be a resident of Alabama.
- Must be enrolling in, or attending a community college, technical school, or university in Alabama.
- Open to any field of study, but preference may be given to applicants enrolled/enrolling in a construction-related curriculum.
- Must be either employed by, or have a parent or grandparent employed by a current AUCA member company.
- Cannot have previously received an AUCA Scholarship.
- Application must be received by February 28, 2022.

Pritchard Water Works & Sewer Board:

Former Pritchard Water Works & Sewer Board manager Nia Bradley has been arrested on numerous charges. State and federal agencies raided the offices earlier this month in response to what is being described as one of the worst cases of public corruption ever seen.



News & Notes:

Alabama Damage Prevention Alliance (ADPA) - Large Project Committee:

The ADPA Large Project Committee held a virtual meeting on February 22nd to resume discussions for developing a draft for a Large Project Process in Alabama.



Pending Areas to Address on Large Project Process

Areas that still need to be finalized include the following:

- Definition of urban area
- Definition of suburban area
- Finalization of what constitutes a project request
- Complete operational changes needed within Alabama 811 and communicated to members

If you would like to participate and help have a voice for your industry, please contact the AUCA Office for additional details.

A dark blue rectangular advertisement with a yellow border. At the top, the text "WE'VE MOVED" is written in large, bold, yellow, uppercase letters. Below it, "EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2022" is written in smaller, white, uppercase letters. In the center, "ALABAMA LICENSING BOARD FOR GENERAL CONTRACTORS" is written in bold, yellow, uppercase letters. Below that, the address "445 Dexter Avenue, Suite 3060" and "Montgomery, AL 36104" is written in white. At the bottom, there is a white line-art illustration of a city skyline, including a prominent domed building (the Alabama State Capitol) and several skyscrapers.



Fleet Safety:

Provided by Marsh McLennan Agency—Southeast Risk Control Services

New CDL Regulations Are In Effect – How Do We Pay for Trucking School?

Effective February 7th, 2022 new DOT Regulations went into effect that will impact all Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Drivers. Drivers seeking to either upgrade or obtain a New Class A, Class B, School Bus, Passenger Vehicle, or HazMat Endorsement will now be required to attend training through a qualified and registered provider. This change in Regulation does not impact those that have already have a CDL and are not seeking to upgrade or change their current CDL status.



For Drivers that did not obtain their CDL (or any necessary upgrades or endorsements) prior to the deadline, they now need to attend training through a provider that is registered with the Department of Transportation (DOT). For many drivers and businesses, this also raises the additional question of, "How am I going to cover the cost for this training?"

Pell Grants, Military Grants & More

Prior to attending CDL training through a Registered Training Provider, applicants may want to consider researching their eligibility for grants, or other financial aid resources, that may help cover the cost of their training. Unlike traditional loans that require repayment, [Pell Grants](#) don't need to be repaid and many drivers may qualify for these types of grants.

For those that served, Veterans may also qualify for Grants through the Military to pay for all, or some, of their training. Additionally, some States or Training Providers may offer Scholarships and other programs to assist with paying for training. If you think you may qualify for certain programs, it is certainly worth your time to research these options.

Once you decide on your Trucking School, or Registered Training Provider, be sure to ask them if they have anyone that may be able to assist you with qualifying for any programs that you may be eligible for through available resources. For an overview of Pell Grants and Federal Student Aid, please watch this short video: [Federal Student Aid You Tube Video](#)

**Tips for Grants and Resources from Smart-trucking.com and TheTruckersReport.com*



Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

From Dan Kennedy - Chairman CWCC & Sante Esposito - Key Advocates

February 7th, 2022

With "Build Back Better Act" Stalled – Focus on BIF Rollout

The chance of the \$1.9T Build Back Better (BBB) bill moving forward (at least the version that passed the House) any time soon remains unlikely at this point. Congress came back from recess only to have priorities such as voting rights and the filibuster reform effort be defeated for the time being.

As previously reported, On Dec. 16, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee released its title to the Senate's version (whatever that becomes) of the BBB. In addition to the authorized formula funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework (BIF), this measure includes \$9B for SDWSRF-funded lead remediation projects, \$225M for rural and low-income water assistance grants, \$125M for Alternative Water Source Program grants, and \$500M for sewer overflow and storm water reuse municipal grants.

Key Advocates provided intel that White House released a listing of the timing of competitive funding announcements. That has been shared with the Coalition previously and is reprinted below:

Transportation

- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure Sustainably and Equitably (RAISE) Grants**– This existing competitive grant program at the Department of Transportation provides \$7.5 billion with an additional \$7.5 billion subject to Congressional approval in funding for road, rail, transit, and other surface transportation of local and/or regional significance. Selection criteria safety, sustainability, equity, economic competitiveness, mobility, and community connectivity. Applications will open in the first quarter of 2022.
- **Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants** – This existing \$2 billion Department of Transportation program funds investment in the modernization and expansion of U.S. ports to remove supply chain bottlenecks, ensure long-term competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability while reducing impacts to the environment and neighboring communities. The infrastructure law expanded the program's eligibilities to include projects that improve goods movement, as well as port electrification projects, idling reduction solutions, equipment charging infrastructure and related worker training initiatives. The Department of Transportation expects to open applications in February 2022.
- **Bus & Bus Facilities Competitive Grants** – This existing \$2 billion program at the Department of Transportation provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate, purchase, or lease buses and bus related equipment and to rehabilitate, purchase, construct, or lease bus-related facilities – as well as capital funding for low or no emissions bus projects. Fiscal Year 2021 grant selections will be announced soon. Applications are expected to open for the Fiscal Year 2022 grant program in the first quarter of 2022.
- **National Infrastructure Project Assistance** (also known as "Megaprojects" or MEGA)– This \$5 billion competitive grant program supports multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects of regional or national significance. Communities are eligible to apply for funding to complete critical large projects that would otherwise be unachievable without assistance. Selection criteria for the program



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will be posted on the Department of Transportation website in February 2022.

- Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grants – This Department of Transportation program supports highway and rail projects of regional and economic significance. Applications will open in the first quarter of 2022.
- Safe Streets and Roads for All – This new \$5 billion competitive grant program at the Department of Transportation will provide funding directly to and exclusively for local governments to support their efforts to advance “vision zero” plans and other complete street improvements to reduce crashes and fatalities, especially for cyclists and pedestrians. Applications are expected to open in May 2022.
- Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants – In addition to the \$5 billion formula program distributed to states, this \$2.5 billion discretionary grant program at the Department of Transportation will fund the strategic deployment of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure, as well as hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling infrastructure, along designated alternative fuel corridors and in communities. The Department is seeking comments on program design by January 28th
- Clean School Bus Program – This new \$5 billion competitive grant program at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will provide funding to replace existing school buses with low- or zero-emission school buses. Applications for funding will be made available later this spring.
- Reconnecting Communities – The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law creates a first-ever \$1 billion program at the Department of Transportation to reconnect communities divided by transportation infrastructure – particularly historically disadvantaged communities too often nearly destroyed or cut in half by a highway. This new competitive program will provide dedicated funding to state, local, metropolitan planning organizations, and tribal governments for planning, design, demolition, and reconstruction of street grids, parks, or other infrastructure to address these legacy impacts. Applications will open in the second quarter of 2022.
- Rural Surface Transportation Grant - This new \$2 billion competitive grant program at the Department of Transportation will improve and expand surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas, increasing connectivity, improving safety and reliability of the movement of people and freight, and generate regional economic growth. This amount includes specific set asides for small projects (\$200 million), rural roadway lane departure improvements (\$300 million), and the Appalachian Development Highway System (\$500 million). Applications will open in the first quarter of 2022.

Climate, Energy & Environment

- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program – This existing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program will distribute \$1 billion to support communities undertaking hazard mitigation projects to reduce the risks they face from disasters and other natural hazards. FY21 applications are open until January 28th, 2022, and hundreds of millions of dollars in funding remains available. Communities will apply as sub-applicants under their



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states. Applications for FY22 are expected to open no later than September 30th, 2022.

- Flood Mitigation Assistance – \$3.5 billion from this existing FEMA program can be used for projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings insured by the National Flood Insurance Program. FY21 applications are open until January 28th, 2022. Communities will apply as sub-applicants under their states. Applications for FY22 are expected to open no later than September 30th, 2022.
- Brownfields Remediation Program – This existing EPA program will provide \$1.2 billion in grants and technical assistants to communities to assess and safely clean-up contaminated properties and offer job training programs. Communities are currently able to request funding for Targeted Brownfields Assessments through their regional EPA office. Additional competitive funding opportunities will be announced this spring.
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants – This Department of Energy block grant program will provide \$550 million to states, local governments, and tribes for projects that reduce energy use, increase energy efficiency, and cut pollution. The first funding opportunity is expected for release in the Fall of 2022.
- Grants for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Improvements in Schools – This new Department of Energy Program will provide \$500 million for local government education agencies and nonprofit partners to make energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean vehicle upgrades and improvements at public schools. The opportunity to apply for funding is expected to be open in the Fall of 2022.
- Energy Improvement in Rural or Remote Areas – This new Department of Energy program will provide \$1 billion to entities in rural or remote areas (defined as cities, towns, or unincorporated areas with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants) to increase environmental protection from the impacts of energy use and improve resilience, reliability, safety, and availability of energy. Applications for funding are expected to be open in the Fall of 2022.
- Grants for Energy Efficiency and Resilience Code Adoption – This Department of Energy program will provide \$225 million to state energy agencies, in partnership with local building code agencies, codes and standards developers, utilities, and other entities, to enable sustained, cost-effective implementation of updated building energy codes to save customers money on their energy bills. Applications for funding are expected to be open by the end of 2022.
- Regional Clean Hydrogen Hubs – This new Department of Energy program will provide \$8 billion to support the development of at least four regional clean hydrogen hubs to improve clean hydrogen production, processing, delivery, storage, and end use. Applications for funding will open in the Summer of 2022.
- Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program – This new \$1 billion program at the Department of Agriculture will provide grants to communities at risk from wildfire to develop or revise their community wildfire protection plans and carry out projects described within those plans. It will in-



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clude a mix of formula and competitive funds. Applications are expected to open early in 2023.

Broadband, Cyber, and Other Programs

- ReConnect Program – This existing Department of Agriculture program will provide almost \$2 billion in loans and grants for projects that provide broadband in rural areas. Applications will likely open in the 3rd quarter of 2022 (and towns in rural areas can apply to the current \$1.15B in loans and grant funding, application deadline: February 22, 2022).
- Middle Mile Grants Program – This new \$1 billion program at the Department of Commerce provides grants for the construction, improvement or acquisition of middle mile broadband infrastructure. Applications will likely open during the second quarter of 2022.
- State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program – This new \$1 billion program at the Department of Homeland Security makes available federal funds to state, local, and tribal governments to address cybersecurity risks and cybersecurity threats to information systems that they own or operate. Applications will likely open during the third quarter of 2022.
- Smart Grid Investment Grant Program and Energy Sector Operational Support For Cyber Resilience Program – These two Department of Energy programs will provide \$3 billion and \$50 million, respectively, for electric utilities, including municipal and co-operative utilities, to modernize the electricity grid and increase resilience to cybersecurity threats. Applications for the Smart Grid program are expected to be open by the end of 2022, and applications for the Cyber Resilience program are expected to be open in the Summer of 2022.
- Water & Groundwater Storage and Conveyance This existing \$1 billion program at the Department of Interior provides funding for water storage projects with capacity between 2,000 and 30,000 acre-feet – as well as projects convey water to or from surface water or groundwater storage. The Department will hold its final stakeholder sessions this month and open applications later this spring.
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program – This existing Department of Agriculture program will provide \$300 million in technical and financial assistance to project sponsors for the design and construction of measures to help repair damages from a recent disaster. Applications open in February.

Biden Administration Withdraws Vaccine Mandate For Employers With 100 Or More Employees

Based on the recent Supreme Court decision the Biden Administration has withdrawn the proposed vaccine mandate for employers with 100 or more employees. It should be noted that OSHA is still considering it as part of their rule making. We will continue to provide updates on this important is-



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SUE.

"The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is withdrawing the vaccination and testing emergency temporary standard issued on Nov. 5, 2021, to protect unvaccinated employees of large employers with 100 or more employees from workplace exposure to coronavirus. The withdrawal was effective January 26, 2022.

Although OSHA is withdrawing the vaccination and testing ETS as an enforceable emergency temporary standard, the agency is not withdrawing the ETS as a proposed rule. The agency is prioritizing its resources to focus on finalizing a permanent COVID-19 Healthcare Standard.

OSHA strongly encourages vaccination of workers against the continuing dangers posed by COVID-19 in the workplace."

[PLEASE CLICK HERE FOR USDOL STATEMENT](#)



cleanwaterconstructioncoalition.org

Alabama Utility Contractors Association
P.O. Box 383185
Birmingham, AL 35238-3185
Phone: 205-582-9436
Fax: 205-582-9155
E-mail: tim@aluca.org

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

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www.aluca.org**

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