

June 13, 2012

Project Labor Agreements Shown the Door

San Diego Voters Reject Pro-Union Requirement on City Projects

By Rick Keene

CalGeo Legislative Advocate

Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) for government projects are a growing concern for many of our members, as they expand union requirements to non-union companies. This can include requiring prevailing wages for all employees and mandating that companies pay into a series of trust funds for their non-union employees without employees receiving any benefit. Relief from this burden may be on the way for members doing work in San Diego, but with a twist.

Prop. A was passed by San Diego voters last week, outlawing the use of PLAs in that city's contracts. The measure passed with 58 percent of the vote, which is a significant victory for non-union companies.

Despite the San Diego victory however, a union-supported bill was passed by legislature that would make cities that outlaw PLAs ineligible for state funding. Threat of the legislation didn't deter San Diego voters, but their project funding may now be in peril. Likely, the courts will have to decide.

To read more on this issue, click [here](#) or [here](#).

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Geocon Wins 2011 Outstanding Project Award

Placer County Water Agency Gold Run Pipeline Replacement

By Jeremy Zorne

Geocon Consultants, Inc.

Placer County Water Authority (PCWA) faced a geotechnical challenge when a key aging pipeline needed replacement. The PCWA Gold Run Pipeline sits in a narrow right-of-way between the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) mainline tracks and the top of a 100-foot-high bluff above Interstate 80. At two locations along the alignment, the bluff had retreated within a few feet of the pipeline, threatening the pipe, UPRR tracks and Interstate 80.



Jeremy Zorne of Geocon, Outstanding Project Award recipient

Geocon performed an extensive geotechnical investigation in difficult terrain and developed innovative mitigations that provided stability and long-term serviceability of the alignment. The project was successfully constructed without a single geotechnical-related change order. In fact, Geocon's efforts helped PCWA realize more than \$1 million in construction savings. To read more about this project, [click here](#).

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Act Now for Discounted CalGeo Membership

Annual membership renewal invoices were sent to each firm's representative in mid-May. CalGeo is offering a 20% discount on dues this year if you pay by July 1. So be sure to pass on the invoice for processing so you don't miss the deadline (and the discount)! We appreciate our members and your support of CalGeo. Thank you!

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News Flash! Hannes Richter of Stoney-Miller, Geotech and Triathlete



CalGeo director Hannes Richter of Stoney-Miller Consultants completed two Olympic distance triathlons in May. (Olympic distance is 1.5k swim, 40k bike ride, 10k run.) Hannes tackled the Wildflower triathlon on May 6 near Paso Robles and the OC Triathlon May 20 in Mission Viejo. Congratulations on an amazing accomplishment!

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Mauai Conference: A Look Back

Speaker Highlights Recent Trends in Geofam Applications

By Richard A. Martin, PE, GE
Hamilton & Associates, Inc.

For those who missed this year's Annual Conference



US101 – Willits, CA

in Maui, David Shong of Insulfoam presented an interesting new development in his talk "GeoFoam Applications and Recent Trends." Did you know that blocks of GeoFoam, or expanded polystyrene (EPS) are being used instead of soil as wall backfill?

GeoFoam is capable of carrying 500 to 6000 psf vertical loads, depending on density and allowable percent strain. Stacked GeoFoam, covered with reinforced shotcrete, has been used as retaining walls. Where the addition of soil can produce settlement in problem areas, replacing soil with GeoFoam can reduce the load and future settlement. Plus, it's quicker to install and requires far fewer truck

trips, making it a new tool every geotech should explore.

Insight on 2012 Labor & Employment Law Update

By Karen Miller

Geosoils, Inc.

Van Goodwin presented an interesting and informative discussion on updates to California's Labor and Employment Laws. Topics discussed included the Wage Theft Prevention Act, Access to Wage Statements, Contracts for Commissioned Employees, Prevailing Wage Laws and Important Class Action and Arbitration cases. It was noted that prevailing wage laws have been expanded to include the hauling of soil, sand, gravel and other construction materials. Recent rulings regarding meal periods, split shift pay and overtime pay as it applies to non-California residents who work in California were also presented. In addition, Senate Bill 22, which limits the use of credit reports when hiring personnel, was discussed. The presentation ended with comments regarding the ongoing legal battle involving the use of social networking in the place of employment.

Kamanawana Golf Tournament

By Danny Cohen

BSK Associates



Ka'anapali Golf Course

This year's Annual Conference golf tournament was held at the Ka'anapali Golf Resort, one of the most picturesque golf courses on the island of Maui. Only a handful of attendees were brave enough to lug a set of golf clubs all the way over from the mainland, but this dedicated group was rewarded with an incredible day of golfing. [Click here](#) to read more about the outcome of this event.

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Job Board

Visit our [website](#) for the latest information on current available positions throughout the industry, including:

- Entry Level Field Geologist with American Geotechnical
- Geotechnical Engineer with Geocon, Inc.
- Senior Tunnel Engineer with Condor Earth

Safety First

Prevent Strains and Sprains

Courtesy of State Compensation Insurance Fund of California

Strains and sprains account for a majority of workplace injuries and lost work time. The injuries are often caused by lifting, pushing, pulling or overreaching and usually affect the back, shoulders, and arms. Preventing strain and sprain injuries is a lot easier than correcting them.

Reaching

Strain increases in proportion to the distance of the work from your body. There's less strain on your body if the work is positioned between your shoulders and knees, with a waist-high level being the most neutral and comfortable. So, try to work with your arms below your shoulder level and stay as close to the work area as possible. You may need to raise or lower yourself with a stool or ladder for better positioning. When reaching down, put one hand on your thigh to support your back.

Bending

Strains and sprains can occur from activities performed in awkward positions or when bending over and relying on your back for support rather than your leg muscles. When performing activities below your waist, bend your knees and squat down to position yourself closer to the work. If the task requires you to maintain a squatting position for a while, alternate kneeling down on one knee to transfer the load off your legs or back and onto the floor.

Pushing or Pulling

Sometimes equipment can put more strain on your body if you push or pull it incorrectly. If given the choice, push rather than pull a load. But, in both cases, get as close to the load as possible. When pushing a load, use both hands and arms keeping them in close to your body; keep your back straight and lean into the load; then, use your whole body weight and leg muscles to walk the load as you push. If pulling a load, use both hands and arms; keep your back straight and lean away from the load; and again, use your whole body weight and leg muscles to walk the load as you pull.

Your body works best when it's used as it was designed. When you force your body to do things beyond its capability, you risk a strain or sprain injury. How can you prevent these injuries? The obvious thing is to keep yourself in good physical condition and work within your limits.

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