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Research and Education for the Electrical Construction Industry

ELECTRI 2025 Summer Council Meeting Meeting Recap

DAY 1

SLIDES FOR DAY 1

Opening Session: Josh Bone, ELECTRI

Josh Bone kicked off the meeting by framing the theme as “Strategic positioning and adaptability.” Key points include:

- Strategically positioning your business
 - *You cannot “future proof” your business; you can only “future ready” yourself.*
- Painting the picture of where the industry is going
 - Be intentional about how you identify and invest in your high potentials
 - The past was built on commodities, the future is built on data
 - It takes a ton of power to fuel the future, and we are in a good position
 - Did you know that GCs are pushing to have a stronger tie to the customer?
 - How are they creating services to “own the customer”?
 - This showcases that competition is changing
- We have to be strategic thinkers and planners
 - Strategic planning
 - Digital fluency
 - Work force intelligence
 - Process agility
 - Customer-centric innovation
 - Change management policies
- What type of contractor are you?
 - 1.0 Lifestyle Mindset (Revenue Process)
 - 2.0 Growth Mindset (People Process)
 - 3.0 Progressive Mindset (Process)
 - 4.0 Abundant Mindset (Insight Focus)

GSD Recognition

Josh awarded Matt Lamb (Rosendin) and Steve Killius (Legrand) with the first ever ELECTRI GSD (Get Stuff Done) pins for going above and beyond to help the ELECTRI Council.

Wendt Award Recipient 2025

Josh recognized John Frantz (Sidney Electric Company) as the 2025 Wendt Award recipient. John will be recognized at the NECA Convention in Chicago.

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Welcome to Toronto: Tom Beros, President, Greater Toronto Electrical Contractors Association

Tom Beros, President of the Greater Toronto Electrical Contractors Association, welcomed the ELECTRI Council to Toronto! He spoke about the current market and the foothold that the non-union electrical contractors have on various projects currently happening in Toronto. He also emphasized that this is a growing market with a lot of opportunities.

Update from ELECTRI Council Chair: James MacDonald, Miller Electric

- Introduced the **Legacy Council** members, purpose, and impact.
 - Members include past ELECTRI Chairs:
 - Jerry Hayes
 - Kellie Holland
 - Greg Long
 - James MacDonald
 - Michael Parkes
 - David Peterson
 - Sonja Rheume
 - Mission: ELECTRI International will lead the construction industry through dynamic change by empowering electrical contractors with cutting-edge research and education, actionable insights and tools, enabling them to thrive amidst digital transformation, industrialization, and electrification.
 - Core Values: IMPACT
 - **I – Innovation** -Championing forward-thinking ideas, emerging technologies, and research that keeps the industry ahead of the curve.
 - **M – Member Engagement** -Valuing the leadership, insight, and contributions of ELECTRI Council Members as essential to our mission and success.
 - **P – Partnership & Empowerment** -Building strong relationships across the industry and empowering contractors, educators, and the next generation with tools to lead.

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- **A – Adaptable Sustainability** -Ensuring electrical contractors' long-term business success through resilient practices, strategic planning, and workforce development.
 - **C – Collaboration** -Creating space for open dialogue, shared knowledge, and industry-wide solutions through united effort.
 - **T – Tangible Results** -Delivering measurable results that advance electrical construction and benefit the entire industry ecosystem.
- He reviewed the Road Ahead research proposal that the Council would be voting on:
 - Focus Areas
 1. Workforce Evolution
 2. Industry Consolidation
 3. Emerging Market Opportunities
 4. Industrialized Construction
 5. Business Model Adaption
 6. The Future of Construction Technology
 - Deliverables
 - Report
 - Case studies
 - Strategic matrix
 - Presentation
 - Article
 - NECA/IBEW Strategy
 - Training
 - Podcasts
 - James highlighted that there are twelve ongoing research projects that will be completed in the coming months.
 - He recognized Pueblo Electrics Inc. as a new member of the ELECTRI Council and the following companies and NECA Chapters that upgraded their commitments to ELECTRI this year:
 - Governor Level-\$150,000**
 - Electrical Corporation of America
 - Southwire
 - St. Louis Chapter NECA
 - Champion Level-\$200,000**
 - Inland Empire Chapter NECA
 - Oregon-Pacific-Cascade Chapter NECA
 - Diplomat Level-\$350,000**
 - Rosendin

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Program Guarantor Level-\$500,000

- Oregon-Columbia Chapter NECA

The Future of Leading an Electrical Contracting Company: Chris Foster (Whitehead Electric), Ken Brouwer (PJS Electric), Rob Smith (Sargent Electric)

- Chris Foster, Whitehead Electric Company, Founded 1938
 - Navigating the Post Covid Business Environment
 - Supply chain disruptions, rampant inflation, labor shortages
 - Office renovation
 - Working remotely, improved technology, increased collaboration
 - New leadership team
 - Redefining roles within the company and setting the tone for great accountability
 - Pursuing the right kind of work
 - Relying on proven relationships, the location of projects is key, avoiding bad contractors and mega jobs
 - Training the Next Gen
 - Embrace technology, focus on people skills, finding leaders in the field
 - Work outlook
 - More Design/Build projects, more vertical construction, more service work
- Ken Brouwer, PJS Electric
 - Talked about his technical skills and career journey
 - Spoke transparently about mental health struggles that impacted him personally and professionally
 - Covid landscape- constantly changed their bidding strategy to pick up shorter-term projects during an uncertain time
 - Focus on diversified markets to include private work, Prime Design Build, and expanding partnerships with Minority business
 - Embrace new technology and integrate it into current programs, empowering younger professionals to lead this initiative
 - Explore new markets and customers
 - Unique, complex projects that garner lower competition and typically higher margins
 - Full development of prefab operations
 - Grow your people and focus on succession planning for key roles
- Rob Smith, Sargent Electric, Founded 1907
 - Power Generation, Utility, Industrial, Telecommunications, Commercial, Service

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- Have almost 2.5x in revenue over the last 5 years
- Discussed covid impacts – experienced very similar struggles as other NECA contractors
- Strategic positioning
 - Investing in leadership through the NEXT Academy
 - VUCA Matrix: Vision, Understanding, Clarity, Agility
 - What do your people need to thrive?
 - Succession planning and talent development
 - Disciplined SOPs and Risk Management
 - Consistent cadence of business
 - Leveraging data
 - Prioritizing relationships
- Q&A with panelists
 - Q –Challenges with bringing new people in versus growing from within
 - A – Rob Smith: Always want to promote from within. And take note of people with ambition to try new things and give them the tools to expand and succeed.
 - A – Ken Brouwer: Implemented a referral bonus to encourage employees to find other talent to bring into the company. And allow people to grow through their challenges to create an environment for people to be comfortable to try new things. Do career mapping meetings with your people to better understand where they want to grow.
 - A – Chris Foster: Allow people to learn to grow by making mistakes. Step back as a leader to allow your people to step up.
 - Q –Are you creating new titles within your company to encourage growth and promotion?
 - A – Rob Smith: We aren't creating the titles for the sake of creating titles. We trust our younger professionals to step into these roles and show what they can do. We want to support our employees. Everyone has a place to fit, we help them find that.
 - A – Chris Foster: It is important to have a written description of each person's role, so they have a clear understanding of the expectations. Things change, but having a baseline understanding of the role maintains alignment between leadership and staff.
 - Q –In terms of creating a more flexible workforce, is that geared toward the field or office?
 - A – Rob Smith: He was specifically referencing that there needs to be a focus on finding more ways to adapt to the needs of the field workforce, understanding the constraints in the field and learning where/how to pivot.

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NECA and ELECTRI Working Together: David Long, NECA CEO

- Convention and education updates
 - The NECA Convention is early this year, so register soon!
 - Take advantage of the education classes based on ELECTRI's research
- NECA/IBEW updates
- What's keeping us up at night?
 - Direct hire letter- Joint hiring initiative (Released July 1)
 - Navigating the current presidential landscape
 - Specific concern about the copper tariffs
 - Data center markets and disruption
 - How do we get people to the jobsite?
 - How do we avoid burnout?
 - Labor demands and impacts from 2015-2025
 - In 2024:
 - 120K applied to the field apprentice
 - 37.5% had a chance to interview
 - 14K accepted, which equates to a 12% acceptance rate
 - For every person we add to the field, we need to add more to management

Why Service? Why Now?: Toby Mitchell (Classic Electric), Eric Carlson ('Joe' Dickey Electric), Dan Shea (Shea Electric)

- Competition is changing
- NFPA 70B / Insurance
- Business Model / Reoccurring Revenue
- Data disruption
- NECA / IBEW / etA
- MCAA/MSCA has a major focus on service
 - Is NECA/ELECTRI providing enough training or focus in service?
- Service and Maintenance Umbrella:
 - Service work – Emergency vs. Not emergency
 - Maintenance work – schedule work (planned) vs. reoccurring revenue (contracted) vs. pull-through work (upsell pathway)
- Call to action for contractors to join the taskforce

DAY 2

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SLIDES FOR DAY 2

Opening Remarks: Jessica Cardenas, ELECTRI

- Jessica emphasized that ELECTRI needs to be impactful in its meetings, resources, and research.
- In terms of meetings, the audience voted to keep the Summer Council meeting to 2.5 days instead of reducing it to 1.5 days.
- Attendees voted the top three resources that ELECTRI offers are research, monthly webinars, and in-person presentations.
- Attendees said the resources missing are:
 - Meaningful recap videos for the research
 - Outside expert speakers
 - Mentorship opportunities
 - Seminars to bring research to reality
 - More usable tools and classes
 - Connecting contractors with similar expertise and projects
 - High value field trips
- In terms of research:
 - The majority of attendees have read between 1-5 research reports this year
 - The top three most useful research deliverables are education classes/webinars, interactive tools/PDFs, and short educational videos.
 - Attendees recommend the following for research topics in 2026:
 - Service
 - Leadership development
 - Changes to the industry to remain relevant
 - Preconstruction
 - Fault Managed Power and how soon it will impact our industry
 - AI
 - Latest technology in Smart buildings
 - Job descriptions for leadership in the field and office
 - How to improve marketshare
 - Standardization
 - Scale your business through data maturity strategies
 - Workforce development and recruitment
 - Raising the go/no-go bar
 - Increasing productivity
 - Strategic estimating with AI
 - Creating lifelong customers
 - How to improve building design

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- Scheduling on projects

PRC Updates: Dave Peterson, ERMCO

- Discussed the fundamental problems that we are having with contractors consuming research
- We need to find new ways to deliver research to meet the needs of contractors
- Academic information is very black and white—we need the information to translate to the real contractor experience
- We need to bring more SMEs into the fold, finding ways to learn from others (i.e. Industry Partners on onboarding)
- Overview of research proposals
 - 42 were received, and 7 were selected
 - Many proposals were technology related and would be outdated quickly
 - Several were not suited for academic research
 - Deliverables did not meet expectations
- What's keeping you up at night?
 - Are we going to stay in front of all the changes? Can we keep up with the pace?
 - Do we have the support we need to do the job? Do we have the right training and leadership in place?
- Research budget considerations
- The Road Ahead—how it will change the way ELECTRI moves forward
 - Encompasses critical topics rather than just one idea
 - Research team that knows the industry
 - Actionable deliverables released as completed
 - Includes the marketing of materials

Review of the 2025 Research Proposals

Members of the PRC presented the following research proposals:

- Strategic Growth for ECs: Transitioning from Founder-Driven to scalable Operations
- Foreman Field Leadership Manual: A Peer-Informed Guide to Leading in the Field
- Small Modular Reactors: A Roadmap for ECs
- Pathways to Electrification: Education Roadmap for ECs in Decarbonization
- Getting Started with AI: Learning from Leaders
- A Financial Maturity Toolbox to Measure the Health of ECs and their Projects

Nate Scott and Kelcey Henderson with Continuum Advisory Group presented their Road Ahead proposal, outlining key deliverables this project would offer:

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- **Strategic Matrix:** A matrix that provides specific implications and strategic options relevant to specific types of NECA members.
- **NECA Strategy:** A summary of research implications and potential strategic actions for NECA to support contractors' success in the future, and potential solutions for NECA to work with IBEW on this effort.
- **Training:** A learning plan and outline for a training course that can be delivered virtually or in person at events.
- Regular Short-Term Updates
- Case Studies and/or Whitepapers
- Summary Article
- Summary Presentation
- Podcasts
- Detailed Research Report

Current Research Updates: Josh Bone

1. VDC Time Study- IN FINAL DESIGN
2. Helmet Safety Study-IN PROGRESS-WEBINAR RECORDING AVAILABLE
3. The Impact of Incentive Pay-FINAL REVIEW
4. Exploring the Value of Early EC Involvement-FINAL REVIEW
5. Forecasting Absenteeism-COMplete
6. Examining the 4x10 Workweek-DATA COLLECTION
7. Managerial Strategies for Improving Project Level Cash Flow and Payment Terms-PILOTING CLASS/SPEAKING AT CONVENTION
8. Fault Managed Power white paper-COMplete
9. Optimizing Fleet Management-DATA COLLECTION
10. EC Growth Markets: Blue Ocean vs. Red Ocean Opportunities-DETERMINING MARKETS
11. Exploring Opportunities and Barriers in Planning for Productivity-DATA COLLECTION
12. Advancing Electrical Service and Maintenance Practices in alignment with NFPA 70B/E-IN PROGRESS

Contractors are encouraged to participate in the current research surveys to ensure the following projects have enough data to be impactful:

- 4x10s Workforce Survey
 - Goal is to understand the perception and workforce opinions on 4x10s
- Fleet Management Survey
 - Goal is to develop benchmarks and actionable strategies to enhance fleet efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and overall management
- Materials Management Practices Survey

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- Builds on the ELECTRI OUTGAME research by Hala in 2024
- Goal is to quantify the potential return on investment for modern materials management solutions and highlight the greatest opportunities for improvement across the electrical contracting industry

Participate in surveys here: <https://www.electri.org/research-overview/electri-research-engagement-hub/>

KPI Updates: Josh Bone

The KPI Benchmarking Tool will be available soon! Contractors are encouraged to attend two upcoming webinars to learn more about the tool and how to use it.

-  **Tuesday, July 22nd at 12 PM ET - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83937897231>**
-  **Thursday, July 24th at 3 PM ET - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82709046400>**

The Politics of SMRs: Geoffrey Olynyk, OPG

- Overview of Ontario Power Generation (OPG)
- OPG's nuclear growth:
 - Pickering Refurbishment Project – 2024+
 - Darlington Refurbishment Project – 2007-2026
 - Large Nuclear Development (DRP) – 2023+
 - Darlington New Nuclear Project (SMRs) – 2019-2036
 - Ontario, pan-Canadian, and international SMRs
 - Gen-IV SMR Development
- Building four 3,000 MW SMRs
 - Based on existing tech
 - Provide safe, reliable, low carbon power
 - Flexible, scalable and modular
 - Strong economic benefits
- Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) Model
 - Singular team focus
 - People, system and business integration
 - Joint management and collaborative decisions
 - Unique cost and profit structures to promote teamwork
- A fleet approach
 - Create standardized processes and procedures across multiple projects

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- 2,000 lessons learned on refurbishment project that will be applied to SMR projects to modify the design to make it more modular and prebuilt offsite. Continuous improvement on these projects to reduce costs.
- Questions:
 - Cost to build- much higher price point for first SMR (around \$7 billion) with decreased prices for additional SMRs
 - What is the environmental impact- No notable environmental impact because of regulations to mitigate potential risks

Small Modular Reaction Constructability Plan—Technology: Martin Porzucek, Aecon

- SMRs
 - On-grid SMRs
 - Advanced reactors
 - Off-grid SMRs
- Provided an overview of the technology in a GE Hitachi: BWRX-300
- Video description of the construction of a reactor
- Recap of the Darlington New Nuclear Project
- International partnerships overview with several other countries

[View Martin's presentation here.](#)

Defining R&D: The importance of Development: Axel Schlumberger, Southwire

- Started with Southwire when the company was about \$1 billion in sales, today Southwire is between \$8-9 billion annually
- How do we take our research and create value?
 - You start with research to better understand trends... but then what? Does it turn into a new business venture? Does it turn into a project?
 - R&D is considered an expense until you provide value
- R&D Metrics:
 - What products have you produced lately and what's the ROI?
 - What is the cost to research and produce?
 - Maintenance strategies
- Growing R&D 12% every year over a 5-year plan
- Question to Axel- Is there any research happening now to look at an alternative to copper?
 - Yes, there is currently research on alternative metals and Southwire is working with national entities to explore these options.

DAY 3

SLIDES FOR DAY 3

Voting Results

The Council voted to fund the following projects:

- The Road Ahead
- A Financial Maturity Toolbox to Measure the Health of ECs and their Projects
- Small Modular Reactors: A Roadmap for ECs

Council Updates: Laura Holmes, ELECTRI

Upcoming meetings:

- NECA Convention in Chicago
 - ELECTRI Council Meeting: Sunday, September 14, 8-9:30AM
 - ELECTRI Reception: Sunday, September 14, 5:30-7PM at Revel Motor Row
- Winter Council Meeting: January 21-23, 2026 in San Antonio
 - Omni La Mansion del Rio
 - Tour of Alterman Electric
- Summer Council Meeting: July 20-22, 2026 in Dearborn, Michigan
 - The Henry
 - Exclusive Dinner at the Henry Ford Museum

New invoicing process to be more secure:

- Invoices will replace reminder letters
- Banking information for ACH payments will no longer be emailed. You must call ELECTRI for this information over the phone.

Project Management Apprenticeship Updates: Anna Jochim, ELECTRI

The NECA/ELECTRI Project Management Apprenticeship isn't just a training program—it's a future-proof strategy to grow the next generation of project leaders.

- Purpose-built for electrical contractors, it combines:
 - Expert-led coaching, on-the-job application, and industry-aligned instruction
- No need to reinvent the wheel—we handle the heavy lifting so your team stays focused on what they do best.

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- This is your competitive edge in a tough labor market: develop loyal, capable PMs from within—starting now.
- More than a talent pipeline for tomorrow—it's a leadership engine for the next decade and beyond.
- Perfect for:
 - Field leaders moving into the office
 - Rising office staff stepping into PM roles
 - New hires with high potential
- Already transforming teams at 50+ NECA companies nationwide—and growing fast.
- Have questions or ready to explore next steps? Reach out directly to Anna Jochim – Anna.Jochim@electri.org
- **Live Survey feedback**
 - Many people are taking between 1-20 apprentices in the next 1-2 years
 - Contractors are looking for tools to:
 - Understand the ideal candidate
 - Understand the ROI before investing in their next top talent
 - Understanding what a good wage/salary is

Navigating Uncertainty: Thriving Amid Complexity: Justin Kohlman (Schaeffer Electric), Dave Gralike (Guarantee Electric), Mike Cremasco (Plan Group Inc.)

- Justin Kohlman: Perspective from a small contractor about staying competitive when there are several large contractors in the area
 - Leveraging and staying focused on specific types of projects
 - Letting the large contractors bid on the larger projects, while they focus on connecting to projects that make sense for their skill and team size
 - Fair contract terms are critical. It is helpful to leverage larger contractors with potentially better relationships with GCs to get better contract terms
 - You're never too small of a company to buy copper in bulk
 - Diversification is key to mitigating risk
 - Investing into company culture and training
 - Closing thoughts: Partnerships are so valuable. Learning from competitors who are also peers. Be intentional with who you spend your time.
- Dave Gralike: Perspective from a large contractor on getting involved in projects
 - Discussed partnerships with GCs, understanding the goals on each side
 - Equipment and materials information
 - Closing thoughts: 5 pillars of company focus on change management. You have to be willing to change and know how to do it.
- Mike Cremasco:

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- There are a lot of mega projects in Canada—the strategy to decide getting involved depends on risk, agreeable terms, location
- Focus on partnerships and understanding each party's expectations
- Engaging with the GC early in the project to mitigate risk without raising the price
- Discussed equipment and materials purchases and navigating tariffs, the importance of early ordering and stock piling materials while getting upfront payment from GCs in the contract to mitigate risk.
- Closing thoughts: Discussed how COVID forced changes without time to walk through the best strategy to change, but now their company focuses on intentional change before potential crisis may hit.
- How do you navigate mega projects?
 - Partnerships are key—who do you partner with?
 - Understanding the schedule, manpower needed
 - Understanding equipment delivery, quality, storage, and warranty

Fault Managed Power Systems: Deniz Besiktepe, Purdue University

- Background on experience and expertise at Purdue and other partnerships
- Discussed the digitalization of buildings
- Discussed NFPA 70, specifically Class 4, or fault-managed power (FMP)
 - Benefits
 - Challenges
 - Use cases
- You can find this information in her recent ELECTRI Report:
<https://www.electri.org/product/building-the-future-how-fault-managed-power-systems-are-transforming-electrical-contracting/>

Diversifying Your Business: Strategic Positioning and Adaptability: Steven Potts (Primary Systems), Michael Meyer (Continental Electric), Tom Beros (Net Electric Limited)

- Primary Systems:
 - Profit drove the reason to diversify. Fire alarm and school intercom work was not a moneymaker, but healthcare allows for a 47% profit.
 - Went from a blue collar electrical to white collar tech company.
 - Employees are GenX primarily. Big culture shift.
 - 3 acquisitions in the last 3 years, tripled size of the company.

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- Nurses are the sales force on their healthcare jobs, and they do a needs assessment and first level of programming.
 - Stay in the healthcare market, but look for new products to sell
 - Online system monitoring allows them to track problems before they happen, being reliable to the customer
- Continental Electric:
 - Industrial, healthcare, and testing became part of the strategic plan to ride the uncertainty of the market.
 - Acquired a company for NITA; requirements keep expanding and there is a bottleneck now.
- Net Electric:
 - As a medium sized contractor, it's easier to pivot.
 - Uncertainty in the market brought them into structured cabling to get a new revenue stream to flatten the peaks and valleys of the industry.
 - Structured cabling is controlled by the manufacturers so you need to work with them to get certified.
 - It requires knowledge, training, and with that, expense. You have to dedicate people to the effort; it can't be a side activity.
- How are you educating your team?
 - Primary Systems started their own education department, hired a former school teacher, got an LMS system, and leadership coaches for staff.
 - Leveraging NECA train the trainer class.
 - National Systems Contractors Association (NSCA) training.
 - Continental Electric leverages their peer group, ELECTRI, and NECA.
 - Net Electric uses a NECA/IBEW Joint apprenticeship program for structured cabling
 - With the amount of change in technology, strategic partnerships with contractors who have the training is essential. NECA Chapters can help with those partnerships.
- Opportunity is always knocking, just have to open the door.
 - Recommended Read: Think and Grow Rich
 - Not every opportunity that presents itself is profitable. Be mindful of that.
- You don't need to be a big contractor to diversify. You can move quicker as a small contractor.
- Go all in as you build it

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- New Challenge: Owners and GCs will put in new technology in the design without knowing how it works, and it falls on the EC to make it work. It can take a lot of manhours to deliver that finished product. ECs have become the stopgap measure liable for the success of the project.
- Leverage R&D tax credits for diversifying.