

Flentge Named Committee Chair

Smith Served 10 Years; Helped To Start Safety Awards, Partnership

The Levy Company's Bob Smith would like safety professionals to look at OSHA not as an adversary, but as their best friend. In a decade as Chairman of the Builders Association's Safety Committee, Smith did a lot to help bridge that gap.

Smith's last Safety Forum as Chair of the Committee took place in February, as he handed the reins to Pepper Construction Company Safety Director Paul Flentge.

"I've had the privilege of chairing the Safety Committee for 10 years now, and in that time we've had the chance to do a lot of cool things," Smith said. "The Safety Forum's been a real well received event since its inception and we can also be proud of instituting the Builders Association's Safety Awards Program and building the Safety Partnership with OSHA.

"I know Paul Flentge's going to do a great job and I'm happy to still be on the Safety Committee and helping continue the progress that we've made."

Flentge thanked Smith, who will still serve on the Safety Committee, and praised him for his part in creating one of the most comprehensive safety partnerships in the country.

"We kind of end up preaching to the choir," Flentge said. "The people that are here are from companies with strong safety programs that they're actively trying to make better. Safety's important to every company in the Association and we have to continue to make efforts to be sure these messages reach the right people."



W.B. Olson, Inc.'s Luke Lukowicz makes a point during the most recent Contractor Safety Forum at the Chicagoland Construction Safety Council.

Denise Herdrich, the Builders Association's Director of Safety for the majority of Smith's time at the helm of the Committee, marvels at what was accomplished with his help and is excited about what will be accomplished in the future.

"Bob works so hard to make sure that safety is a priority at The Levy Company, and he brought that dedication to his Chairmanship of the Committee, which I can't thank him enough for," Herdrich said. "He worked tirelessly to encourage every company in the Association to improve its safety program. He made my job a whole lot easier.

"Paul Flentge's done a great job with the safety program at Pepper. He's served well on the Committee and I know he'll do the same as Chairman."

Attendees at the Forum heard a presentation on electrical safety from Rich Cassetto of ComEd. One photo featured a homeowner's attempt to build a porch around an electric pole, resulting in a smattering of laughter.

"I had Vice Presidents of companies who I showed this photo to tell me 'I don't see a problem here,'" Cassetto said. "You'd be surprised how many of the basics of electrical safety are misunderstood. I know I was."

Not every picture was humorous, as slides included photos of electrical burns and statistics on deaths caused by contact with electricity in construction vehicles. Cassetto underlined the importance of having safety materials printed in different languages, pointing out that half of the people who come into contact with active power lines don't speak English as a primary language.

Cassetto listed things that contractors should keep in mind regarding electrical safety and answered questions concerning ComEd inspections and response times.

Contractor Safety Forums are designed to help safety professionals address issues on job sites by discussing those issues with their peers at other companies. Take part in the next Safety Forum Thursday, May 14. Contact Kristin Garcia at 847.318.8585 for more information.



Pepper Construction Company Safety Director Paul Flentge (left) and Levy Company Safety Director Bob Smith (above).