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Volume 9, Issue 3

## 2014 General Meeting Dates

### *Mark your Calendar!*

\*All meeting topics are subject to change

#### **March 13, 2014**

Pittsburgh Building Inspectors  
Tambellini's, Bridgeville

#### **April 3, 2014**

##### **6 pm Social Gathering**

Latitude 40 - Robertson Town Center  
"Access Bar" 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
More info inside.

#### **April 10, 2014**

OSHA and the Contractor  
Carmody's, Wexford

#### **May 8, 2014**

Fleet Mgmt/Electronic Form  
Solutions  
DoubleTree, Meadowlands

#### **August 14, 2014**

Lone Pine Golf Club

#### **September 11, 2014**

TBA  
Peter's Place, Bridgeville

#### **September 17, 2014**

Community Service Project

#### **October 9, 2014**

Collecting Bad Debt  
Tambellini's, Bridgeville

#### **November 13, 2014**

Employee Drug Testing  
Carmody's Wexford



## Lawsuit Challenging

### **National Survey Will Help Identify Fuel Switching Issues With Regional Furnace Standards**

By Charlie McCrudden | January 30, 2014

The lawsuit challenging the Department of Energy's (DOE) regional standards for residential HVAC equipment continues to plod its way through the legal system as the parties to the case began resubmitting briefs to the Court this month. The proposed settlement that would vacate (rescind) the 90% AFUE minimum standard in 30 northern states remains on the table, however, the exchange of briefs will continue through April and it could be at least six months (or likely longer) before the case is heard in a court room.

Meanwhile, the American Gas Association (AGA) and the American Public Gas Association (APGA) have been working with the Gas Technology Institute (GTI) to develop a survey targeted to builders and contractors in an effort to better understand the potential for fuel switching if new minimum efficiency standards for natural gas furnaces were to require the replacement of non-condensing equipment with condensing equipment.

The data obtained as a result of this survey will be submitted to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory with the hope that it will be incorporated into their models as the DOE considers going forward with new efficiency standards for natural gas furnaces.

**It's important that all ACCA contractors, not just those in the northern states, take just a few minutes to complete the survey go to:**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FK3PDWG>**

You may have already seen the survey as AGA and APGA member utilities began distributing the link to the survey to their HVACR contractor networks last week. If you have already completed the survey, there is no need to complete it a second time.

The survey responses will be used to improve the technical basis if and when the DOE rewrites the energy efficiency standards for residential natural gas furnaces. The information contractors will be providing has never been obtained before and should play a key role in developing any new furnace efficiency requirements. Based on feedback from a trial launch, respondents noted that it was well worth the 15 minute investment to complete the survey knowing that it will influence their own futures positively.

## House Energy Committee

### House Energy Committee Approves Bill To Boost Commercial Building Energy Efficiency Improvements

By Charlie McCrudden | January 30, 2014

On January 28 the House Energy and Commerce Committee approved by voice vote The Better Buildings Act (H.R. 2126), bipartisan legislation designed to encourage energy efficiency improvements to the leased space of commercial buildings. The legislation was authored by committee members Rep. David McKinley (R-WV) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Verm.)

The legislation directs the Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to create a voluntary “Tenant Star” recognition program that certifies leased spaces in buildings as energy efficient. Efforts to spur energy efficiency improvements in commercial buildings usually focus on how real estate owners and developers may lower energy consumption at the “whole-building” level.

But in fact, owners and managers of large buildings control only about 50% of their structures’ total energy; tenants consume at least half. The legislation would expand on the successful and widely adapted ENERGY STAR for buildings program, which saved American businesses over \$2.7 billion in utility bills in 2012 alone.

With a goal of achieving optimal performance levels in commercial buildings, The Better Buildings Act will establish energy efficiency best practices for tenants in commercial building spaces. Tenants meeting these high standards will be awarded the “TENANT STAR” certification.

The next stop for H.R. 2126 is the House floor. Similar legislation is prepped for debate when the Senate takes up the Shaheen Portman energy bill.

## Message from the President

### America Jobs for America’s Heros

The Returning Heroes Tax Credit provides up to \$5,600 to employers for each veteran hired who either has received food stamps for three months in the past 15 months, OR has been unemployed for at least four weeks in the past year.

Now, this new free publication prepared for the campaign by Caplin & Drysdale provides a clear and concise understanding along with step-by-step guidance. It even includes links to the required IRS and DOL forms employers need to submit. Whereas most media articles generalize and leave out key eligibility and filing details, this guide includes what you need to know to decide if your company is eligible and how to file.

- Returning Heroes Tax Credit
- Wounded Warrior Tax Credit
- Activated Military Reservist Credit for Small Businesses
- Federal Empowerment Zone Employment Credit

Visit <http://www.centerforamerica.org> for more details.

### SmartWords You Must Remember

"We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there."

~ Charles F. Kettering, American inventor, engineer, and businessman

## Product Spotlight

### Mastering Core Service

Learn how to successfully take and pass the NATE Service Core Exam – the fundamentals to general, construction and HVACR-specific knowledge required for certification.

To learn more about this and other tools ACCA has to offer, visit: [www.acca.org/store](http://www.acca.org/store).

## Contractors Start 2014 feeling positive!

The January Contractor Comfort Index (CCI) shows that contractors are continuing to have a positive outlook about short-term growth. ACCA began measuring contractor attitudes toward short-term economic growth with the CCI in February 2010.

For January 2014, the CCI is 69. The CCI also shows that contractors are feeling better about short-term growth than they were 12 months earlier when the CCI was 60.

The CCI is calculated based on a survey of the association's contractor members, who are asked how positive they feel about new business prospects, existing business activity, and expected staffing decisions in the short-term future. Weighted and averaged into one number, a CCI of 50 or above reflects anticipated growth.

The CCI is released prior to the start of each month; the next index number will be released during the last week of February.

## Federated Insurance

### Federated Insurance Helps You Manage Employment-Related Risks

Every employer, no matter what size, is required to manage human resource issues, government regulations, and employment law changes. Any size business can be vulnerable to employment-related litigation. Employee termination, harassment, or discrimination; improper documentation processes; and a multitude of other situations can expose your organization to potential risk of a lawsuit.

Now, Federated Insurance has enhanced resources available for clients to help them address just these types of situations. Federated is pleased to introduce the new *Federated Employment Practices Network<sup>SM</sup> (FEPN)*.

Through FEPN, all clients can access:

- an employee handbook builder tool
- online supervisor and employee training
- sample forms and policies
- labor posters
- monthly HR updates on frequently asked questions

Clients who carry Employment-Related Practices Liability (ERPL) coverage through Federated also receive:

- **Unlimited access to independent employment law attorneys**

For more information, go to Federated's website, [www.federatedinsurance.com](http://www.federatedinsurance.com). Your Federated Marketing Representative is also well prepared to discuss these new resources with you.

Federated Insurance understands and supports organizations like yours across the country through value-added risk management services. We are pleased that your association recommends us for your insurance needs. We encourage you to explore everything Federated has available to members.◇

## I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?

Does ACCA offer webinars exclusively for their members?

As needed, ACCA offers "Hot Topics" webinars that cover breaking news or items of burning importance to the HVACR industry.

Members may participate in "Hot Topics" at no charge, and as soon as possible after the webinars are held, we then make the recordings available for viewing online.

To learn more about ACCA's upcoming "Hot Topics" webinars visit [www.acca.org/members](http://www.acca.org/members).

## Ron Bladen Joins ACCA

ACCA, the nation's largest association of indoor environmental systems professionals, has announced that Ron Bladen joined the national staff as the Manager of Quality Assured (QA) Program Oversight on January 27. Bladen has extensive HVAC experience having worked as an installer for over 10 years. For the past 15 years, he worked for Fairfax County in Virginia as a Residential Combination Inspector and Code Specialist. He has earned ACCA's EPIC Certification to teach Manuals J, D, & S and has participated in editing several ACCA publications.

"We have been looking to bring on a new team member to support our QA programs, who has a working knowledge of quality installations," said Wes Davis, vice president of Quality Assured Program. "Ron's vast experience makes him a perfect fit for this position. We believe he will help us take our accreditation programs to the next level of success."

In his new position, Bladen will be responsible for ensuring that accredited contractors and verifiers meet minimum program requirements. He will be conducting administrative reviews, compliance visits, quality installation file reviews, and field evaluation visits.

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