Prompt Pay Law Will Lead To A Healthier Economy

West Newton, MA – When the Prompt Pay Law took effect November 8, 2010, it was a key step to ensuring the well-being of Massachusetts’ construction industry and the Commonwealth, both during the current economic climate and as the economy rebounds. The Boston Chapter of NECA has been a strong and vocal supporter of this legislation, as it assures that subcontractors, and indeed all contractors, are paid in a fair and timely manner.

The Prompt Pay law applies to projects of over $3 million, and is designed to speed up the flow of funds in construction projects. It provides reasonable time periods for each step in the payment process: 60 days to submit payment application from the date work started; 15 days for approval; and 30 days for payment after approval.

With the passing of the Prompt Pay Law, Massachusetts has joined 29 other states that have passed prompt pay legislation. Our law is not nearly as restrictive as the laws in most other states, and has just four key elements:

1) It allows for reasonable “not to exceed” times for approval or rejection of regular payment requests.
2) It provides sufficient time for approval and payment of change orders.
3) It sets restrictions on the use of “pay if paid” provisions, which are often used to avoid having to pay altogether.
4) It allows a contractor or subcontractor to stop work if not paid in a reasonable time, which was virtually impossible before it was passed.

The importance of this legislation comes down to this: delays in payment create serious cash flow problems for any business, especially small businesses. They are a major problem for subcontractors in particular, because subcontractors pay most of the costs for labor and material on a construction project. Throughout the time they are not paid, subcontractors essentially finance the project out of their own pockets. This can continue only so long before a company can no longer meet its obligations.

By ensuring fair payment practices, the law promotes the survival of businesses and the preservation of jobs, so vital to the Massachusetts economy. NECA is proud to have been involved in its passing. And, although the law applies to projects of over $3 million, we believe the same principles should apply in projects of all sizes. Small and mid-size companies working on projects of any dimension, when delivering services that meet project parameters, should be paid in a fair and timely manner. It’s the right way to conduct business.

ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY NEWS

It’s Official: Prompt Pay Now the Law in Massachusetts!

Massachusetts’ new Prompt Pay Law was passed on Nov. 8. It applies to all prime contacts signed from that date on that have a project value of $3 million or more. The law covers all parties from owner down to subcontractors and material suppliers.

Boston Chapter Contractors Honored as 25-Year NECA Members

West Newton, MA – At the October NECA Boston Chapter meeting, A. Murphy, Inc. of Hanover, T.J. Cunningham, Inc. of Boston, and Seaboard Systems of Weymouth were honored for their 25 years of industry service as NECA member firms.

Dagle Electric Installs I-495 Solar Panels/Electric Alert Board

Methuen, MA – Dagle Electric of Melrose has installed two solar panels on I-495 between Exits 46 and 47 powering an Electric Alert Board displaying Construction Delays, Lane Closures, Traffic Jams, and Amber Alerts. The system also integrates traffic cameras and traffic counters, sending info to Mass Highway’s Traffic Operations to improve traffic flow.

Cruz Electric On Schedule with Hamilton Canal District Project in Lowell

Lowell, MA – Cruz Electric of Woburn is on schedule for an April 2011 completion of the electrical construction of Lowell’s Hamilton Canal District revitalization project. Cruz has a field crew of 18 electricians.

Accompanying This Issue

The Boston Chapter of NECA is pleased to include a recent issue of Electric Design Library with this issue of Connections – An Energy Audit Of Your Building Will Outline Saving Options. It offers building owners and managers valuable information on improving energy efficiency and reducing costs.

Connections is a quarterly publication of the Boston Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association / Electrical Contractors Association of Greater Boston, Inc., 106 River Street, West Newton, MA 02465. Phone 617-969-2521.

Mission: CONNECTIONS is designed to provide information relating to current happenings in the electrical construction industry in Eastern Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire and to report activities of the Boston Chapter of NECA and its members. Your comments are welcome. We can be reached via e-mail at: info@bostonneca.org
Pittsfield, MA – E. S. Boulos Company’s Utility/Industrial Division, based in Lewiston, ME, has recently completed the 1.8MW photovoltaic power system in Pittsfield, MA for Western Mass. Electric Co. The ground-mount system is comprised of 6,534 Suntech 280W solar modules. The project is among the largest PV systems in the Northeast to be ground-mounted on a concrete ballast system.

The Pittsfield PV Power System connects into three (3) Advanced Energy Solaron 500W Inverters. These inverters then feed solar electricity into a new step-up transformer before it is output onto a medium voltage utility power line. ESB Utility Division Manager Rick Hanlin, Project Manager Clint Chicoine and Superintendent Alan Squilanti supervised a workforce of 45 electricians based out of IBEW Local 7 in Springfield, Mass. The PV system was connected to the grid and in service in late October.

E. S. Boulos Utility Division Completes Phase I - South Gorham Substation 345kV Expansion

NECA ME Contractor Also Underway with Phase II; Project Owner: Central Maine Power Company; Engineer: Power Engineer

Gorham, ME – The Utility/Industrial Division of E. S. Boulos has completed Phase I of the South Gorham Substation Expansion project. The scope included installing a GE Protec 400 MVA Autotransformer, seven 362kV Hyosung GIS-IPO circuit breakers, two 115kV GIS Siemens circuit breakers, control house addition, physical security system, lighting arrester, CCTV, four 345kV dead end A-frame structures and a 345kV bus system.

Phase II began in October and has a targeted completion in July 2011. It entails replacing twelve 115kV general purpose circuit breakers, with twelve (12) 115kV new IPO Style circuit breakers, and (16) sixteen new protection and control cabinets.

At peak construction, ESB’s project management team, headed by project manager John Carrier and Superintendent Eric Clark, are supervising a field crew of 16, comprised of electricians from IBEW Local 567 and linemen from IBEW Local 104.

E. S. Boulos Underway With Clean Air Project at Merrimack Power Station, Bow NH

Project Owner: Public Service of New Hampshire

Bow, NH – E. S. Boulos Company (ESB) of Westbrook, ME has been awarded and is under way with the Clean Air Project (CAP) at Merrimack Power Station in Bow, New Hampshire. The project is designed to remove emissions from the coal burning process, and ESB will provide services in three distinct aspects of the project.

Dearborn Midwest Conveyor Company of Taylor, MI has contracted ESB to install the distribution power, lighting and control components for 2,400’ of an enclosed conveyor system, two concrete limestone silo storage units and two transfer towers that supply limestone to the Flue Gas Desulfurization building. Installations for a conveyor and storage facility for the byproduct of this process (Gypsum) are also part of this contract.

The Sun Sets on South Gorham 345kV Expansion & Second Autotransformer Addition Phase I

ESB is working under Construction Management group URS of Princeton, NJ to complete the Balance of Plant project. This includes a MV cable bus system from the onsite 115/5KV Substation to MV switchgear powering the Flue Gas Desulfurization Building and its processes. Numerous MV motors are employed along with multiple low voltage motor control centers providing power for the many pieces of equipment. This project also includes an upgrade of the plant’s emissions monitoring system.

At peak construction, ESB will manage a workforce of 80 to 90 electricians from IBEW Local 490 in Concord, headed by Project Managers Lyle Doughty and Scott Marquis, Supervisors Scott Morris and Jeff Lodge.

The project is scheduled to be on line January 2012.
H arvard, MA — Lighthouse Electrical Contracting, Inc., the Rockland, Massachusetts based NECA Boston Chapter member, has recently completed the design/build 220kW ground-mount photovoltaic (PV) system at Carlson Orchards in Harvard, MA. Covering approximately two acres of orchard, the project is Massachusetts’ largest solar installation at an agricultural site or farm (more than three times larger than the second largest, a 65kW system at Four Star Farms in Northfield, MA).

The system is comprised of 1,050 Evergreen 210W solar panels, a DPW Solar Corp. ground-mount mounting system at 30 degrees pitch, and solar inverters and data acquisition by Solectria Renewables. Evergreen Solar and Solectria Renewables are both Massachusetts-based companies. DPW Solar Corp. is based in Albuquerque, NM.

Lighthouse teamed with the architectural firms Stephen Kelleher Architects of Fairhaven and kWind, Inc. of Mattapoisett in the project. Lighthouse Project Manager Newell Thomas and President Herb Aikens supervised a field crew of nine (9) IBEW electricians at peak construction during the three-month project.

The site’s topography mandated special architecture for the system. Lighthouse and Stephen Kelleher Architects designed a racking system that employs variable length legs to yield a level installation that maximizes each solar panel’s electrical potential. “It was important to preserve the contour of the land so as not to significantly disrupt the natural feel of the orchard,” said Aikens. “With that design requirement in mind, we took great care to design the array in smaller sub-arrays that fit into the existing topography.”

“Because of the uneven terrain, the Carlson Orchards project presented a unique set of design challenges,” said Chuck Fougere, Architectural Project Manager for Stephen Kelleher Architects. “Due to time constraints, we determined that the fastest and most accurate way to incorporate Lighthouse’s design was to model the system in three dimensions on the computer. Using three-dimensional terrain maps and a model of the array we were able to lay out the initial plan and design the foundation and steel beam leveling system capable of supporting the panels and to prevent uplift from the wind. In early meetings with the orchard’s owner Frank Carlson and his project coordinator Symantha Gates, the solar team was able to arrange the array to suit the site while minimizing the amount of land that had to be converted from apple production.”

The solar project was funded in large part by grants from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC)/Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (CEC). It is among the first solar projects in the State to incorporate virtual net-metering and an MTC/CEC grant.

Lighthouse completed the project, as scheduled, in July. A special “ribbon-cutting” celebrating the Carlson Orchard’s solar system’s interconnection to the power grid was held on Friday, August 13. Fifth District Congresswoman Niki Tsongas was joined at the ceremony by Symantha Gates, Carlson’s Project Manager; Scott Soares, Massachusetts Agricultural Commissioner; Jay Healy, USDA Rural Development State Director; Lighthouse principal Aikens; and officials from Massachusetts Farm Energy Program and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

The PV system is expected to generate approximately 70-80% of the annual energy usage of the orchard, totaling an estimated $40,000 annually, largely for the operation of refrigeration units used to chill and preserve harvested apples.

Carlson Orchards is New England’s largest producer of apple cider, producing more than 500,000 gallons annually, sold through major chainstore supermarkets, including Whole Foods, Roche Bros., and Donelans. The 120-acre working farm is run by the second generation of Carlsons — Franklyn Carlson, Bruce Carlson and Robert Carlson.
CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT

Staying Power in a Tough Economy – A. Murphy, Inc.
Focuses on Energy Management, Quality and Safety

Meeting the challenge in 25th Year as NECA Member

A full service electrical construction company, 25-year NECA member A. Murphy, Inc. of Hanover, Massachusetts, is a second generation NECA contractor founded in 1983 by its President, Arthur “Art” Murphy. Art is a past member of the Board of Directors of both NECA Boston Chapter and the Greater Boston Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC). The Company’s day-to-day operations are now handled by Art’s sons, co-Vice Presidents, Brian Murphy and Michael Murphy, both of whom have over 20 years of electrical industry experience and have been longtime IBEW Local 103 Master electricians.

A. Murphy provides electrical construction services and expertise to a diverse range of commercial and institutional projects throughout Greater Boston. The Company specializes in data center installations, power distribution projects, and tenant fit-up projects. A. Murphy serves a number of prominent commercial and institutional companies, including Fidelity Investments, John Hancock, ManuLife Financial and J.P. Morgan.

The Company currently employs an office staff of eight (8) and a field crew that ranges from 35 to 50 electricians. Notable projects A. Murphy has recently completed include the lobby renovation of John Hancock Tower, the World Trade Center ballroom renovation, the World Trade Center generator installation project, and One Financial Center Lobby.

Commenting on the Company’s vision and focus, Brian Murphy said, “Energy management and Data Center UPS and/or Stand-By Generation systems are the keys to our future growth. A. Murphy has a dedicated group of skilled employees and we’ve been able to remain very competitive, which is vital in this economy.” He also discussed the importance of safety. “Safety and quality have always been and remain our key focus on every project.” The Company has achieved a solid safety record, testimony to its comprehensive safety program, headed by Safety Director Keith Prendergast, who also serves as a Safety Instructor at the Greater Boston JATC.


INSTALLATIONS

An inside look at recent projects completed by NECA Greater Boston Chapter members

A. Murphy, Inc. Completes World Trade Center 25,000 s/f Ballroom Renovation Project

Boston, MA - A. Murphy has recently completed the renovation of the World Trade Center’s 25,000 sq. ft. ballroom space on an aggressive project schedule. The project scope included complete demolition of the existing space, back to core and shell construction, and the installation of a new power distribution system. The Hanover, MA based contractor installed extensive specialty lighting and energy efficient lighting control systems, including day-light harvesting systems and Lutron Dimming Systems providing multiple levels of control.

The scope also included the installation of fire alarm systems and a data center. The exterior of the World Trade Center’s ballroom space features 7 motorized awnings. Installations and integration of two electrical closets were also integral to the contractor’s work on the project.

NECA Contractor Recently Completes Data Center Projects and Fire Alarm Upgrade Project

Boston, MA - A. Murphy has also recently completed electrical construction of Fidelity Investments & Manulife Financial data center and tenant renovation projects in Boston on aggressive project schedules. The 25-year NECA member has also concluded work on the comprehensive MI Cable fire alarm upgrade project on Berkeley Street in Boston.

The Seaport World Trade Center waterfront ballroom renovations include state-of-the-art lighting and A/V systems.

A recent data center project in Boston completed by A. Murphy on a fast-track schedule.
Keynote speaker and deep sea explorer Robert Ballard opened, discussing the value of venturing into the unknown and the prospect of discovery:

"You have to expand your thinking to embrace the possibilities that maybe we don’t know everything. And then you have to be willing to try something new."

He also stressed the importance of sharing discovery with the next generation.

Boston, MA – NECA continues to power its leadership role in the field of energy management, as evidenced at the annual NECA convention and trade show – NECA 2010 Boston, held October 2 – 5 at the BCEC. Thousands of electrical contractors from throughout the U.S. got a firsthand view of the latest advances in electrical products and technologies that they will use to connect facility and infrastructure projects with the most energy efficient power, lighting, and integrated building systems.

NECA 2010 Boston featured dynamic educational seminars for electrical contractors, estimators and project managers. Contractors learned from industry experts about business practices and building technology that keeps them at the forefront, and their construction industry clients up-to-date with their power, lighting, tel/data, and integrated building systems. Diverse topics included:

- Facility Energy Audits
- Building Information Modeling (BIM)
- LEED and the Electrical Contractor’s Role
- Power Quality
- Building Automation and Controls
- Cost-efficient Methods and Processes

Pre-Convention Workshops designed to ensure NECA contractors maintain their technological superiority in the industry, included:

- NFPA 70E 2012
- NUATC Healthcare Systems
- Achieving Selective Coordination
- OSHA 10 for Outside
- LED Technology
- Alternative Energy Solutions
- EEI Contractor Safety Initiative
- E T & D Best Practices
- Advanced Lighting Controls
- 2011 NEC Significant Changes

Management Seminars were designed to enhance NECA contractors’ management teams and operations, and included:

- Project Tracking to Improve Labor Productivity: An Earned Value Approach
- Smart Grid Technologies
- Defining Business from the Client’s Perspective
- Optimal Competitive Crew Rates to Compete with Open Shops
- Leading in Turbulent Times

Technical Workshops provided information on the most innovative advances in the electrical, power, and cabling industries. Tracks included:

- Design, Finance and Installation of Solar Electric Systems
- Lighting Controls for Daylight Harvesting
- Energy Saving Fluorescent Lighting Systems
- Technology Update
- PV Grid-Tie Systems Design Principles

An Expo Energized by More than 250 Leading Manufacturers and Exhibitors

Schneider Electric
3M’s Mike Bosway and Bryan Moreau
Milwaukee Tools Booth
Graybar’s Steve Gray
John Penney, Lee Bagley and Marianne Ryan
SAFESITES

An interview conducted with electrical industry professionals on issues impacting the construction industry.

Safety Is The First and Foremost Priority

In a recent interview, Keith Prendergast, Safety Instructor for the Greater Boston Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JATC) program and Safety Director for A. Murphy, Inc. of Hanover, Massachusetts, discusses important safety educational programs and initiatives that NECA contractors undertake to ensure the safest possible workforce and project sites.

Q In what ways does NECA as an organization make its member electrical contractors the most up-to-date, and safety focused electrical teams in the industry?

A NECA has always been committed to our safety concerns by having the latest and most relevant safety information and materials available to us. From OSHA training to instruction on the industry’s safest electrical and telecommunications installation standards, per the National Electrical Installation Standards (NEIS), NECA is the electrical industry’s leading resource when it comes to safety.

NECA’s focus on safety training and contractor guidelines results in a safer industry, reduction in costs, competitive pricing, and most importantly-saving lives.

Q As a Safety Director for A. Murphy, Inc., your company has exhibited a strong safety record. Please comment on what has contributed to this performance.

A It begins with our company’s safety culture. Our managers, supervisors, and electricians are all trained to identify and correct unsafe conditions, and more importantly, to have safe work practices. A. Murphy’s goal is to achieve the highest safety standard – zero incidents – which is the goal of any sound safety program.

Safety inspections on a daily basis, safety planning meetings, toolbox talks, and safety stand-downs all are contributing factors in our safety record. We take pride in having a well-trained workforce and management staff committed to being the best we can be in all aspects of our trade. The field personnel, management, and ownership equally contribute to our safety culture and program.

Q As a Safety Instructor for the Boston JATC, what aspects of the Boston JATC Electrical and Telecom Safety Training programs make union electricians and technicians more safety conscious and focused than their non-union counterparts?

A I can say firsthand that the Boston JATC at the Electrical Industry Training Center at Local 103 IBEW has made a direct impact on the knowledge and safety culture of our workforce. Five years of Safety Training and education in classrooms and workshops prepare our apprentices for various jobsite situations. Hands-on safety techniques are practiced so apprentices and journeymen are kept up-to-date with the safest practices in such areas as rigging, working in confined spaces, excavations, and CPR/first aid – and so much more.

I’ve been around for a long time now and have seen a major change in the outlook that our workforce has taken on as a result. At A. Murphy, our younger forepersons have been very impressive in making sure correct procedures are being followed.

Q In within the past year, within what would you say is the key to ensuring a safe job site?

A Building owners are very informed both through education and experience. Owners understand the importance of making sure that the electrical contractor they hire for their facility or facilities has a focused safety culture and is a company that will stand for nothing less than the safest work environment. It is now a known fact that if they hire a NECA contractor they are going to receive just that, coupled with top quality craftsmanship. I am proud to say our company has been successful because of our record of delivering quality installations and our safety performance. And, owners are right to demand uncompromising attention to safety – every day, on every project.

SAFETY NEWS

NECA Expands Online Safety Resources – Webinars, Topical News, Links

Bethesda, MD – NECA has expanded its comprehensive safety resources for NECA members to include such online programs as eSafetyLine Software, eSafetyLine Resources, eSafetyLine Webinars, Weekly Toolbox Talks, and eSafetyLine News. December’s eSafetyLine topic is Winter Hazards. Recent webinars have included such topics as Ergonomics, Scaffolding, and NFPA 70E PPE Selection. It all can be found on www.necanet.org/job/safety. The site also has links to OSHA news and key upcoming events that relate to safety.

For a complete directory of NECA Greater Boston Chapter members, visit www.bostonneca.org