January 12, 2011

A LETTER FROM THE CCMCA PRESIDENT TO ALL MEMBERS:

We have reached a crossroad in our industry’s future. For too long we have wished, speculated about the possibilities, and pondered the how-to’s of how to get more masonry in California construction. Ultimately, efforts have been derailed by the inability of all sides to come together in a truly collaborative effort.

There are, at least, four masonry industry associations in California. Each one of these associations represents a unique interest or audience. To illustrate:

CCMCA = advocate and information resource for mason contractors and suppliers with an open membership.
CMACN = publisher and promoter of masonry features and benefits to the construction customer community with a manufacturer membership.
MIA = provider of technical information and developer of masonry codes and standards with a signatory contractor membership.
MITA = implementer of education programs and trainer of future masons with an open membership.

With all of these organizations working hard on behalf of the masonry industry, movement is happening on a variety of issues at a multitude of levels. But, the question remains, what is being done to build more buildings with masonry? Well, here is brief look at what is currently being done.

✔ Masonry brochure, “CMU Profiles in Architecture” mailed quarterly to an estimated 14,600 California and Nevada architects, school districts, government agencies, construction managers, CMACN members, other associations, other design professionals, and CCMCA members. The brochure provides inspirational full-color project photos and lists principals on the project including the mason contractor and material producer.

✔ WhyMasonry campaign created to highlight four key benefits of masonry to help firms and individuals understand why concrete masonry should be their building material of choice. The campaign includes a website and brochure that was mailed to more than 20,000 firms and individuals.

✔ “Safe and Sound” ads published for the last 3 years in prominent industry publications such as California Construction, Builder and Developer, and AGC Constructor. The ads were designed to raise public awareness of the safety and other prominent qualities of masonry construction thereby creating increased public demand for masonry schools, hospitals, community centers, elderly care facilities, etc.
The list goes on to include distribution of a technical engineering document “Masonry Chronicles” to over 5,000 engineers and CCMCA members, scholarships to graduate level engineering students for their work in concrete masonry, and an annual design awards competition to which the architectural community is invited.

So, you might ask who is paying for all of this? The funding for all of these efforts is provided 100% by the manufacturers. And, despite all of this good work, our competition is still outspending us on promotion. The good news is we have a real opportunity to insert contractors into the equation.

A while back, DIR introduced ‘equal-opportunity’ industry fund contributions which began requiring industry fund contributions from all contractors not just contractors signatory to labor agreements. Since a neutral/impartial masonry industry fund does not currently exist to my knowledge, chances are you are paying those contributions on your employees’ paychecks. There is a way we can channel that money for its true intended purpose…the betterment of our industry.

In spring of last year, CCMCA began exploring creation of a masonry Industry Promotion Fund that would collect open-shop contractor industry fund contributions on public works projects. It will take some work to make a reality, but I am enthusiastic and committed to the prospect of financing the comprehensive promotion of our industry.

I am not talking about promoting a particular segment of the industry – one material over another, open-shop vs. union contractors, industrial projects pitted against commercial. I am talking about the collective promotion of our entire industry. It is time.

I challenge all of you to step up and participate in the promotion and preservation of your industry.

Please be a part of this important discussion at the January 18 CCMCA meeting in Las Vegas. We will be presenting a description of the work we have done thus far to create a CCMCA Industry Promotion Fund and some of the ways the fund contributions could be used for the good of masonry. I will be available at the meeting to answer your questions, or please feel free to contact me at my office (619) 276-5000 or Julie at the CCMCA office (916) 966-7666.

Sincerely,

Dennis Withsosky
CCMCA PRESIDENT