Construction Education Foundation
2015 Golf Tournament

The KCA held their 9th Annual Construction Education Foundation Golf Tournament at Colbert Hills in Manhattan on June 4th. The golfers had to take a little break about an hour after tee off due to rain, but that didn’t put a damper on us from raising $15,000 for the Foundation. A special thank you to all the golfers and sponsors. We appreciate your support!

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1st Place: Vern Hopkins, Rob Eichman, Curt Kitson, Mike Cole
2nd Place: Brad Werth, Chris Blasdel, Pat Short, Wade Wentling
3rd Place: Jake Strecker, Rick Zahner, Zach Frey, Tom Cunningham
From The President’s Desk

I wish I had better news to share with the membership about the last legislative session but unfortunately there is none as far as our industry is concerned. I will not take up space in this newsletter to tell you what you already know.

Although things don’t look too bright for the near future, there is always room for some optimism if everyone concerned can get their heads together and work on solutions, rather than looking back on past problems. Your executive committee and board members will be meeting with KDOT executives very shortly to discuss several items relating to our members’ concerns that have been placed on the agenda, including their proposal to complete the 10-year program that was or still is T-Works.

The future will be predicated by continued work at all levels of activity. Your board of directors and exceptional staff are leading the way, working to find the means to help our cause and to ensure continued success of the association and our members.

In July we will be mapping out a plan that will take us into next year and will be updated as circumstances progress or change. The plan can only be successful with the membership’s support and input - you may be asked to serve. Please join the effort in any way you can; be part of the success!

Thank you and have a safe summer!

Legislature Finally Goes Home
By Bob Totten, Executive Vice President

As predicted in April, state lawmakers had their hands full when they returned for the veto session. It took until Friday, June 12th for legislators to figure out the budget and go home. Even then they didn’t raise enough taxes to fill the $400 million hole. It still requires the governor to make another $50 million in cuts so that the state’s budget will balance; a requirement of the state's Constitution.

The governor’s proposed budget revealed in January is what upset most KCA members as it diverted $264 million from KDOT in the next two years. The governor chose to divert KDOT funds so as to make up for the deficit created when the governor and the legislature reduced the income taxes on businesses in 2012.

Throughout the past six weeks, the construction lobby was able to thwart any additional cuts to KDOT but in essence the damage had already been done when the governor introduced his budget in January. When the smoke cleared last week, the majority of the legislature chose not to confront the governor on his “income tax march to zero”. By one vote in each chamber, the Senate and the House agreed to go along with the governor’s plan to decrease the income taxes on businesses for the future. Unfortunately for many legislators, it meant they had to go back on their “no tax pledge” and raise taxes. The Democrats said it was the largest tax increase in the history of Kansas. However, the governor disagrees saying overall individual Kansans will be paying less taxes.

The angst over the initial governor’s budget proposal caused the KCA to embark on a public relations campaign to bring attention to the public and the lawmakers that over $1 million a day is being taken from the transportation budget. Legislators heard our message but chose to ignore it as the budget deficit was just too large for them to overcome.

At one time there was some minor discussion about hiking the motor fuels tax up to ten cents a gallon but that was quickly extinguished as the plan was for the funds raised by the motor fuels tax to be used for the budget shortfall instead of funding KDOT’s highway preservation program.

The rest of the legislative session was pretty calm or at least non-threatening to our industry...but seriously nothing compares to the loss of close to $300 million in highway funding in one legislative session.
KCA Construction Education Foundation
Donates to More Schools

More contributions were made in the past 45 days to schools of higher learning as part of the mission of the Kansas Construction Education Foundation. On behalf of the Foundation, Bob Totten, Executive Vice President of the KCA hand delivered checks to officials of KU, Pittsburg State and Washburn Tech.

This year’s donations amounted to $31,000 to six institutions. Since the late 80’s, the Foundation has donated more than $750,000 to the various schools which help train employees for the highway construction workforce.

Pictured to the left is KU’s Dr. Bob Parsons who is receiving a check for $6,000 for the Department of Engineering. Parsons will use the money for the purchase of various equipment needs at KU.

The following week, Bob was on hand with Steve Sloan of Midwest Minerals to give a check to Dr. James Otter of Pittsburg State. Dr. Otter will use the $5,000 donated for new stormwater equipment that will help students know more about stormwater concerns.

And below, Clark Coco and his instructor, Mike Evanson of Washburn Tech were on hand to receive a $2,000 check for various items needed in the department.

The Foundation raises funds for the annual gift giving endeavor through a Golf tournament held in June. Next year’s event will be held June 2nd at Colbert Hills in Manhattan.

Membership Update
By Jamie Lane

KCA is pleased to welcome Hinkle Law Firm, LLC, Wichita, KS. Thank you for your membership! We are happy to have you!

As always, I need your help in recruiting new members. Talk to everyone you work with who are not members and get them in contact with the KCA. I’ll be happy to get them the information they need.

Also, please remember to pass along your milestones or association honors so we can share it in our next newsletter.
Construction Industry Training Program Update

By Wanda Tidball

KCA will have an Environmental Inspector and Manager class on Wednesday, July 8 and Thursday, July 9 in Wichita at Seeders, Inc. Address: 4111 S Broad Street and the classes will run 8:00 - 5:00 daily. For those who attend, if you need hotel rooms, the Holiday Inn Airport location will give you a room discount if you mention KCA. Class cost will be $400 for members and $425 for non-members. This is the last class for KCA or KDOT until this fall. Please enroll today as we need to fill this class.

Coming in September KCA has been awarded a Grant AGC of America Class. The class will be on Highway Work Zone Safety Training. This will be a one-day course (7.5 hrs.) offered on two consecutive days so that members can choose between the two should a conflict arise. This will be free to attend and locations and date will be announced at a later time.

If anyone is needing a crane practical, Phil at King Construction in Hesston will be doing a few practical exams on a LS108B Link-Belt crane. It is an older friction crane, not hydraulic in which he will allow each individual 1 hour of practice time before starting the test. The first tests will be given on June 20 and he will schedule those following to fit the requests he receives but the machine will only be available for a month. Please contact Phil at King Construction if you would like to get someone certified.

AGC Calls for User Fee Increase as House Ways and Means Committee Convenes Hearing on Highway Trust Fund

AGC CEO Stephen Sandherr joined with Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer and other association leaders during a June 17 media event to call on Congress to raise the highway user fee to pay for a new long-term surface transportation bill. During the media event, Sandherr said that raising the gas tax was not as hard as some predict. He noted that 89 percent of legislators who voted to raise their state gas tax or equivalent user fee during the past two years were re-elected to office. And he added that once members of Congress begin to review their options, they are likely to have the same eureka moment that every bipartisan group has had — that raising the gas tax is the best possible option for addressing chronic funding shortfalls.

Sandherr was joined by former Kansas governor Bill Graves of the American Trucking Association. Graves noted since 1993, Congress has been “predicting the demise” of the fuel tax without advocating for an alternative funding source. He contended the fuel tax continues “to be the lesser of all infrastructure funding evils.” He stressed roads and bridges are not free but Congress has been operating on the assumption “pennies might fall from heaven.” He started Congress knew the fuel tax works and would continue to be viable if the tax were raised. He expressed concern for using general funds to support transportation projects. He disagreed with putting more financial responsibility on the states. He predicted toll systems will be a more expensive option than the current fuel tax.