

Northland Pioneer College Construction Advisory Committee
Wednesday, February 6, 2013
White Mountain Campus, Show Low, Aspen Center Room 111

Jason Carter, Whiteriver Construction; James Matteson (Jim), Civil Engineer and NPC District Governing Board; Steve Sims, Creative Green Homes; Bonnie Stallings, Apache County; Tamara Martin, NPC Apache County Coordinator; Ken Wilk, Newell Peterson, Jeremy Raisor, Ann Hilliard, Peggy Belknap (via conference phone), NPC Guests: Lisa Aragon, NAVIT

Peggy welcomed the group, thanked them for their time, and emphasized the importance of advisory committees to NPC.

Ken asked the community members to give the group an overview of their view of the state of the industry.

Lisa Aragon – NAVIT continues placing students from our participating high schools in NPC college programs; placement rates remain strong for our graduates.

Bonnie Stallings – Apache County. Working with WIA; Biggest thing we've been doing to do is work on training for potash. Seeing a little of interest in going back to school among younger citizens. Have a new supervisor; Barry Weller, District 3. He's working hard to learn the ins and outs.

Jason – things picking up for Whiteriver Construction with Federal spending, especially with tribes, from New Mexico pueblos to Colorado River; a little bit of private sector work. We hear that construction activity is increasing in the Phoenix area.

Steve – yes, we are also hearing good reports from that area. Navajo County tends to mirror what happens in Phoenix, with some lag time. Properties that have been on hold for a while, hurting the market, are being consumed. It's not what it was four years ago, but I'm seeing a modest upswing in the trend.

Jim – I'm a civil engineer; have been associated with city governments in this area, and with Phoenix years ago. One of the red flags I see is that there's very little hiring going on in the CE profession; design work for infrastructure not in demand. Heavy industry flat – bridges, ports, etc. Some potential for freeway work in Phoenix and Maricopa. Clifton/Morenci and Globe/Miami are seeing activity due to higher copper prices. Housing is flat in White Mountains area. Not much work going on in Apache or Navajo Counties right now. Apache Sunrise is in the process of a feasibility study to upgrade the resort and expand the hotel. White Mountain Apache Tribe is looking at building a new dam; heavy civil, 4 to 5 years out, on the White River. EPA has decided that we can no longer have coal-fired power plants, so jobs in Page are at risk.

Steve – I agree that hiring is not starting up yet. Next three months will show whether the recovery has strength.

Whiteriver Construction has a couple of openings. Project coordinator; project manager are now being recruited. Carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and equipment operators needed for new projects on the Navajo Reservation. A job fair is scheduled for Whiteriver Construction and our subcontractors in Fruitland, NM. Will be held March 14, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. County Rd 6675 and Navajo Rt. 365, Nenahnezad Chapter House, Fruitland, NM, east of Shiprock.

New Western/sporting goods store coming into Show Low: Cal Ranch – hiring 40 to 50 employees for a variety of retail positions. Based out of Wyoming.

Skill Center – looking at purchasing furniture for the skill center.

We just got the construction curriculum approved in January by the District Governing Board. For fall 2012 we will offer construction in Holbrook and expand to the southern end in subsequent years.

Construction Career Fair, March 1, Friday. We now have 11 exhibitors. Steve who is assisting with marketing the event, Steve talked to the manager of White Mountain Radio Renee Beebe; Barbara Bruce radio personality of White Mountain Radio is also very interested, Steve said NPC could look at virtual remote feed (interviews taped ahead of time and then released during the time the event is in progress: \$150/hr – live remote is \$400/hr. PSA's available also with the radio company.

Steve – we will be showing slides, talking through the steps of building the do-decagon – twenty-sided structure. Each side is just under 8 feet in length, so there was minimal waste. Unusual structure; draws lots of attention. Ron Gates (Navajo County inspector) actually used this project as a teaching tool for inspectors who work for him to learn how best to evaluate advanced building techniques.

Ron is too ill to be here, but he will be there to discuss the advanced building techniques from the standpoint of building codes.

Ken – we have been asked to consider how this advisory board should be constituted going forward. There are a couple of models; right now I'm taking a lead role in planning and facilitating meetings, but I am very willing to consider an alternate model. Some advisory committees are chaired by community/industry members instead of NPC faculty. What is your recommendation? After some discussion the community members present determined unanimously that the current structure is working well.

Jim made the suggestion that NPC construction should look at LEED credentialing and certification for students. Ken -- Do you see this as a valuable credential? Steve – A few years ago I was confident that this region was on the verge of having all residential construction use these methods and materials. I was going to become a LEED accredited professional (AP). However in the last four years it has received minimum interest. Jason – we saw the same thing in commercial; from 50% of our projects a few years ago to practically none at this time. I don't think it is gone at all; having an energy efficient place that is sustainable makes sense. Steve -- I have customers who can bring out utility bills to substantiate the cost-effectiveness of these methods. Ken – In Anchorage, Habitat for Humanity homes -- designers began to use heat recovery systems and create an envelope around the building to cut loss of heat. And I saw commercial builders begin to

use more energy efficient materials and methods even though they might not seek actual LEED certification.

Steve – I'm putting heat recovery ventilators in every building, increasing indoor air quality and energy efficiency, as well as advanced framing methods. Need to think about the best systems and incorporate them. Value engineering is a major element, reducing waste, as in the dodecahedron. It is also very wind resistant.

Jim – LEED is an overused term. But the exposure of students coming into this program has to include these principles. Sustainability is important. Phoenix has more miles of paved roads to maintain than ADOT has in the rest of Arizona. In 1988 we brought forth the idea of rubberized asphalt – the City of Phoenix developed it in its labs. We used it to replace the previous chip seal procedure. Using things over and over again instead of discarding them. This philosophy has to be part of the educational process. As a member of the board I am interested to see students are aware of the new trends and requirements so they are able to incorporate sustainability into their work. We have a new home in the Show Low Country Club area that has every conceivable element to retain heat energy and has an energy consumption of almost zero. Speaking as a member of the board the students need to understand cutting edge materials and processes. Should be part of every class. Steve – your present curriculum looks good. There tends to be some disagreement with proponents of more traditional methods; students need to understand both. Ken -- Several of our courses already have a sustainability component. For example, the Concrete course includes several topics around energy saving : mixed design for paving, aggregates, energy-efficient components. I think we can be most creative in choosing projects for practical training. This would allow students to be exposed to energy saving concepts as they work on a project for several classes. This is where the committee could be most helpful to me, in laying out a multi-course project for our classes.

Steve -- Now Navajo County is trying to get up to the 2012 Building Codes. Some of this information is incorporated. For example, ERVs (energy recovery ventilator) now required for all homes in Canada, and this is on the horizon for U.S. homes also.

Jim – What about preparing for potash mining? Ann – the college is working very closely with the county and the WIA; we are poised to offer training as needed. Our Industrial Maintenance and Operations program currently offers mechanical repair, electrical and instrumentation, and will be offering mechatronics. The potash mining will be performed mostly via automated machinery/robotics, so employees will be needed to operate, program, and troubleshoot programmable logic controllers, electronic gear, and machinery.

We are also looking at acquiring either a couple of basic heavy equipment pieces which are widely used in across several industries, for example a motor grader, on-road/off-road haul truck, front-end loader, backhoe. Or possibly look at simulators. Suggestion: partner with local industries.

Question – has NPC checked with labor or craft unions who could send people up to our area to provide local training? Ken – yes, Arizona Builders Alliance and the IBEW have been approached but to this point have not received much response from other groups.

Next meeting – Thursday, March 21, 11:30 – 1:00. Location: Show Low White Mountain Campus.

Ken closed the meeting with thanks to the committee members for their time and their contributions to NPC.