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The pre-construction meeting — Why it's important to start out right

If you were planning to climb Mount Everest, you would probably want to meet as early as possible with everyone involved on the project to discuss a very long list of details.

In the same way, when a large project moves from the design phase to construction, it's critical to bring all the participants together to make sure that everyone is clear about who is doing what and when they're planning to do it.

"Once we have approved plans and a green light, we schedule a pre-construction meeting," said Jack Hanff, Director of Land Development with T.R. Hughes. "The time spent is well worth it."

"If you don't have [a pre-construction meeting], you're just asking for problems."

Most large construction projects, such as major subdivisions that involve streets, sewers and other infrastructure in addition to homes, require the services of many different firms at different times. At a typical pre-construction meeting, the owner's project manager would coordinate the event and include the grading contractor, the geotechnical engineer, the civil engineer, superintendents for grading and sewers, and anyone involved in the first stages of development.

Peter Arman, Director of Land Development with Kadean Construction, pointed out the need for sharing the Big Picture with everyone. "What you're doing with the meeting is communicating the expectations on the part of the owner and all the subcontractors," he said. "You're really setting the tone and direction for the whole project."

In addition to understanding the overall goal and objectives of the project owner, sometimes there are even more basic needs. For example, the meeting offers all parties the opportunity to exchange contact information and get to know everyone else on the team, which can be especially helpful if they haven't worked together before.

The schedule then becomes the focal point. "We use the construction timeline as our main document," said Hanff. "Everyone has a chance to talk about any concerns they might have about potential problems with the project, down to very specific activities — whether the stakes for surveying might be in the way of the graders at a particular time, that kind of thing."

Because any project in the region that disturbs more than one acre of land requires a special permit from either the Missouri DNR or the Illinois EPA, it's especially important to have a plan in place before any soil gets moved. Even though the two states have different names for the permit, to obtain one

requires the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). "Especially with the newer requirements, we need to know the grading schedule right away so we're ready to go with our SWPPP," Hanff said.

Both developers agreed on the necessity for holding a pre-construction meeting. "It's our company policy,"

said Hanff. "If you don't have one, you're just asking for problems."

Peter Arman underscored the importance of preparation. "It all boils down to one thing," he said. "If you start right, you finish right." ≡

MEETING REQUIREMENTS

At a minimum, the following should be part of a successful pre-construction meeting:

- ☑ All team members working on the project.
- ☑ Contact information for the team members.
- ☑ Construction timetable and schedule of major events.
- ☑ Discussion of project plans and specifications.
- ☑ Any available construction progress reports.
- ☑ Ideas for cost controls.

- Geotechnical
- Construction
- Environmental
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources



Creating the best team, for the project and the client



Why would SCI team with another firm or multiple firms? The answer is simple — we can't provide all of the services required on many projects.

The best way to submit a successful proposal or deliver a successful project has always been centered around *responding to what the client needs*. Therefore, it often becomes necessary to adjust the team to better align with the requirements of the project or client.

SCI prides itself on being a firm that is focused on a few core disciplines. The company has made a conscious effort to educate and train our staff to the highest levels of technical expertise in a few fields where these types of professionals are rare. For example, among the largest engineering firms that are headquartered locally, SCI is the only one that can provide services as diverse — but sometimes critical — as archaeological surveys and wetland delineations. Our in-house training and mentoring can be costly to the bottom line, but we believe it adds value to our clients and their projects.

Of course, there are many national and international firms that claim to offer everything, and that's probably true, but they may not have an office in the region or the familiarity with local conditions that is often important to the project. We find that putting together a team with a "best of breed" approach offers the best solution for serving the project and the client.

In some cases, for instance, the project requires WBE and/or DBE participation, and outside help is

needed. Or a project might require an even more specialized discipline (not many firms have a geomorphologist on staff).

SCI teams with many professional firms throughout the Midwest, and it varies whether one firm or the other takes the lead or support role. But the key

to that decision comes back to *responding to what the client needs*.

The most successful projects are served by a cohesive team made up of members who are the best at what they contribute individually and whose capabilities complement each other. We select our teaming partners carefully, as they are an extension of us.

After all, as professional consultants, our reputations at the end of any project will be strengthened or weakened depending on how well we have satisfied the client.

— Anthony J. Kreutz
Vice President

A "best of breed" approach offers the best solution for serving the project and the client.

- **Allen G. Minks, P.E.**, was elected President of the St. Louis Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and started serving his one-year term.
- Senior Archaeologist **Donald Booth** led a team that was successful in locating the foundation of the original cabin built by Capt. Joseph Naper, the founder of Naperville, Illinois. The dig last summer was the subject of close attention from local media outlets.
- **Scott D. Harding, CPSS/SC** has been elected to serve a one-year term as Vice President of Associates for the St. Louis HBA.

Cultural resource award presented to The DESCO Group and SCI

The American Cultural Resource Association (ACRA) presented The DESCO Group, along with SCI Engineering, with its 2007 ACRA Industry Award for the team's work on preservation of the Heet Family Farm in Belleville, Illinois.

The award to SCI was in recognition for "Supporting their client's challenge of moving the historic Heet Family Farm, and partnering with the family to ensure the farm's preservation."

The project involved moving a house and other buildings about 400 yards to a site at the edge of the property to allow expansion of the Belleville Crossing retail development.



Left to right: Steve Dasovich, Ph.D., Head of SCI Cultural Resources; Karen Hartgen, RPA, President of ACRA; Tim Williams, Vice President, The DESCO Group; Karl Ruhmann, P.E., R.G., SCI Vice President

Federal Energy Act affects requirements for underground storage tanks

by Jeffrey M. Langston, R.G., Senior Project Scientist

The Federal Energy Policy Act (EPACT) was enacted by Congress in 2005. The act contained provisions that affect state underground storage tank (UST) programs. This federal law does not directly impose new requirements on UST owners. However, the law requires states to conduct additional activities to continue to receive federal funding for their UST programs. The purpose of these activities is to prevent petroleum releases. The main activities outlined in this law are:

1. Financial Responsibility –

Tank manufacturers and installation contractors must demonstrate financial responsibility to address corrective action costs related to releases caused by improper manufacture, installation, or repair of tanks.

2. Inspections – As of August 2007, states were to have inspected any UST that was not inspected since upgrade requirements in 1998. States must also continue to inspect the UST at least once every three years.

3. UST Operator Training – By August 8, 2012, the UST owner must ensure that personnel who

operate, maintain, or respond to releases from USTs are properly trained. The USEPA is preparing guidelines that specify the training requirements. Once provided, states will have to address the requirements.

4. Public Record – By September 2008, states must make available a report that summarizes the number, source, and cause of releases; compliance record; and number of UST equipment failures. The report is to be updated annually by the states.

5. Delivery Prohibition – The state is to publish guidelines detailing specific processes and procedures they will use to determine which UST facilities are ineligible for delivery or deposit of fuel. This allows states a method to “lock out” a UST or facility and prevent further delivery of fuel. In many instances, the guidance on what constitutes “lock out” has yet to be determined.

As states work to address the requirements of the Federal Energy Act, look for new state bills to be enacted. SCI has volunteered on various stakeholder groups regarding these issues and will continue to follow the details as they unfold. ≡

Wetland regulations continue to evolve

by Michael R. Hartoin,
Senior Project Scientist

In our Summer 2006 issue of HORIZONS, the cover story outlined recent Supreme Court rulings and federal guidance that led to some confusing times for those in need of permits to impact wetlands and other waterbodies.

As a brief review: the Supreme Court was split on the decision in the case of Rapanos v. United States. The decision sent the case back to the lower courts for further review, while at the same time brought about changes in the way regulatory jurisdiction is defined. The most apparent change to come from the ruling is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's (USACE) implementation of Jurisdictional Determination (JD) Forms.

A seven-page JD Form must be completed for nearly every wetland and waterbody that is proposed for impact. The form requires detailed information about various physical characteristics of the wetland or waterbody, and helps the USACE determine if a significant nexus exists between a navigable waterway and the wetland or waterbody in question. If this nexus exists, the wetland or waterbody falls under the jurisdiction of the USACE, and permits will be required prior to initiating any impact.

The implementation of the Missouri Stream Mitigation Method is another recent change to come from the USACE. This new method is used to determine the amount of mitigation that is required to compensate for proposed waterbody impacts within the State of Missouri. For more detailed information about the MSMM, refer to the article in the HORIZONS Spring 2007 issue.

It has certainly been a dynamic few months for wetland regulations, and more changes are anticipated. SCI will, of course, continue to monitor the situation closely. Stay tuned for updates. ≡

SCI FYI.....

Changes coming to Historic Tax Credits?

At the Missouri Preservation Annual Conference held in Jefferson City in October, representatives from the Department of Economic Development (DED) provided an update on changes being proposed to the state's Historic Tax Credit program.

These proposed changes from the DED could affect several administrative issues centered around fees from developers and contrac-

tors and how they are calculated. It is also being proposed that developers will be required to get a CPA compilation on projects valued at under \$250,000.

Any changes being proposed will be published on the website at www.missouridevelopment.org and be available for a 10-day comment period in early November. The resulting rules will go into effect on January 1, 2008. ≡



**NEW LUNCH
& LEARNS
Nov./Dec.**

NOON - 1:00 PM — St. Charles, MO
Wed., Nov. 28 Due Diligence
Wed., Dec. 12 Brownfield Tax Credits

Interest in SCI's *Lunch & Learn* presentations continues to grow. We were over capacity for our St. Charles presentation on "**Due Diligence in New Construction,**" so we're adding another session on November 28.

Also, we're adding a new topic based on popular demand. Our *Lunch & Learn* for December 12 is on "**Brownfield Tax Credits.**" The presentation is a natural outgrowth of the environmental services we have provided on many brownfield projects, including Gaslight Square. Questions have been raised by developers about these tax credits that are often overlooked. Find out how they can work for you.

Both presentations will be held in our St. Charles office at 130 Point West Blvd. Lunch starts at 11:45 and the presentations begin at noon and typically run about an hour.

You will be receiving an **SCI FYI** email reminder a little closer to the dates. (If you want to be sure you're on the list to receive future emails, sign up at www.sciengineering.com.)

We offer these as a value-added service to our clients. There is no charge, but seating is limited. To make a reservation, please email info@sciengineering.com or call 636-949-8200. ☰

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