

Service

Safety

Quality

JANUARY, 2010

the **Block**

C O N N E C T I O N

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*“Remember
what you
do best,
and do it!
Bring it on!
Give them
“Customer Delight”
forever.”*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

Happy New Year! I believe it is always appropriate to look back at the prior year and evaluate its possible effects on the next year. We began 2009 in the midst of a perfect storm. Three things happened simultaneously; the financial markets came close to a complete meltdown, the housing market collapsed and the unemployment rate skyrocketed to double digits. These events had not happened together since the 1930's.

I am optimistic that we have seen the bottom in 2009. The economy is starting to show signs of life. Money is starting to be lent, but under much tougher standards. Housing may have hit bottom in many areas, and unemployment may not get any higher. At this point, I do feel that 2010 is completely unpredictable. It may be completely flat, or it may start to recover at a very slow pace. I don't think there are going to be any records set in 2010 and the recovery will continue to be slow.

There are many contractors out there with absolutely no work. We are very fortunate that we have some. What will make the difference in 2010 are the relationships we have built and developed in the past. There will always be owners who will build during downturns to take advantage of the situation. It is strictly a guess on my part, but I believe we will see some of this in 2010. If we have a relationship with that customer, we may have a better than average shot at doing the work. If we have proven **“Customer Delight”** the odds will go up even more. People are very cautious right now because there is a lot of uncertainty in the economy. I have a feeling things will start to get better. It may take two or three quarters, but it will happen.

We have a distinct advantage over our competition. First, we are in our 91st year of business. Second, we have done a great variety of complex projects over the years and have an extensive resume. Third, we have the greatest workforce around.

You are all professionals and a pleasure to work with. You have been practicing **“Customer Delight”** for quite some time now and it shows. The work we have on the books is a direct result of those efforts. Your positive attitudes and efficient methods of completing tasks do not go unnoticed. The ability to have and retain customers is the only thing we have to bring ourselves through this economy. Remember what you do best, and do it! Bring it on! Give them **“Customer Delight”** forever. It is our past and it will continue to be our future. It is what we do best! Let's go out and make 2010 a solid year and keep going forever.

IN OUR HANDS

- MIKE DEGER

I'm sure you have heard that there was an incident on one of our jobsites last week. The rumors fly around this industry quicker than the electricity flows. We were lucky and dodged a major bullet. No one was injured. No property was damaged. We have a black mark on our reputation with the customer and a lot of us lost sleep for the next few nights.

I am looking at this in a positive light. We are tightening our procedures and will go forward as a much safer company. We have had meetings with all the supervisors. We are taking suggestions and input to improve processes, equipment, and training. If you see things that need improvement speak up. We need to hear from you.

We chose to do the complicated and difficult work in hospitals. We have the lives of the patients and hospital personnel literally in our hands every day. We need to keep that foremost in our thoughts as we work in and around these facilities.

Have a Happy and Safe New Year.

OPEN UP YOUR HEART FOR MIKE

Mike DeStefano, nephew of Phil Casto, was in a tragic automobile accident this summer, leaving him with traumatic brain injuries. The Michael A. DeStefano Foundation was founded this year on behalf of the DeStefano family and their son, Michael, 19, who was in a tragic automobile accident, to provide advocacy and assistance to families whose loved ones have suffered from traumatic brain injuries.

Michael's accident on July 8th, was followed by over two months of intensive care at Loyola Hospital where he remained in a coma for most of his stay. He is now undergoing extensive therapy and working toward recovery. The road is a long one but we are hopeful that Mike's spirit, energy and love of life will ignite the fire that lights up miracles.

A fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, February 13, 2010 at The Pyramid Club 236 W. Lake Street Addison, IL. Visit their website for more details - www.michael-a-destefano-foundation.org. If you would like to make a donation here is the information.

Michael A. DeStefano Foundation
c/o Joy Isola
1722 Lake Cliffe Drive
#B
Wheaton, IL 60187

TAKE CHARGE

Because good health is so important to everyone, active, covered EIT participants and their spouses are eligible to participate in a wellness program called *Take Charge: It's Your Health*. This program provides participants with customized resources to help them improve or maintain their health. Plus, participants and their spouses can each earn \$150 in prepaid MasterCard cards for taking action (up to \$300 per household). EIT needs your help to make *Take Charge* a success. Read more about *Take Charge* on the ECA website at www.ecachicago.com.

Take a Health Assessment, a 15-minute confidential questionnaire that will provide you with immediate personalized feedback. If you take it **by January 31, 2010**, you will earn a \$100 prepaid MasterCard card. Your spouse is also eligible to participate and earn a \$100 prepaid MasterCard card.

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS—HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRICAL BURNS

- DREW BOYCE

HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRICAL BURNS

More than 1000 employees are killed and another 30,000 injured each year from electrical shock. Hands are frequently involved in an electrical injury since they are the most common source of contact with the electrical current. However, damage to other parts of the body may be more extensive and life threatening. Severe electric shock can result in cardiac arrest due to ventricular fibrillation, massive fluid loss into swollen tissues, and kidney failure caused by an overload of muscle protein from damaged muscle and infections.

Electrical injuries are often more severe than they appear to be from the outside. Injury occurs not only at the contact site, but also along the path the electricity takes, and at the exit location. Frequently, there is also extensive muscle damage that will not be evident from a visual examination of the skin. These deep tissue injuries cause severe swelling that requires a deep incision extending from the hand to the shoulder to relieve the pressure. If this is not done, the mounting pressure from the swelling will shut off the blood supply by compressing the arteries, rapidly destroying any remaining healthy tissue. Extensive dead skin removal is often necessary to prevent massive infection. Deep burns result in unsightly scars that will often continue to enlarge for 12-18 months after the burn occurs. These scars are not only a cosmetic problem, but may seriously interfere with joint function because motion increases the tension across the wound, which tends to produce even more scar tissue.

More than 90% of fatalities occur when contact is made with a "hot" wire, or energized equipment housing by a person who was well-grounded. Most of these injuries would probably have been prevented if a GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) had been installed on the circuit. A GFCI is not an overcurrent device, but is placed across the line to continuously monitor the current flowing from the source and compare it to the current returning to the source. If the difference is 6 milliamperes or more, it opens the circuit almost instantly. This is important because it has been determined that 100 milliamperes flowing through the body for only 2 seconds can cause death by electrocution. 100 milliamperes is not much current when you consider that a portable electric drill draws 30 times that much. Incidentally, the "let go" threshold that causes freezing to the circuit is about 20 milliamperes. Make sure that the equipment you are working with has a GFCI -- it could save your life.

To work on high voltage (over 600 volts) you must have a minimum of two years of training, experience with high voltage circuits, have demonstrated that you are familiar with the work to be performed and the hazards involved with high voltage work according to OSHA. The detailed standards for workers in power generation, transmission and distribution are in 29 CFR 1910.269 and 1926.950.

Other safety requirements that must be followed include using insulated gloves for current over 300 volts, eye protection, and lockout/tagout if working on energized parts of equipment or systems. Conductive measuring tapes, ropes, or similar devices obviously cannot be used around exposed conductors, and conductive fish tapes cannot be used if they will be entering enclosures with exposed conductors. As always, be vigilant to look out for the following:

EXAMPLES OF EQUIPMENT THAT CAN CONTACT POWER LINES

Aluminum paint rollers
Metal building materials
Metal ladders
Backhoes
Long handed cement finishing floats

Raised dump truck beds
Concrete pumps
Cranes and derricks
Scaffolds

Block Electric Company is an
Equal Opportunity Employer

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We're on the web!
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Food dangers even lurk when you eat right....

Even healthy foods can be dangerous if they're not handled properly. Don't stop eating your vegetables, but do take note of this list of the 10 riskiest foods, compiled by the Center for Science in the Public Interest using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Leafy greens**, 13,568 illnesses between 1990 and 2006
- **Eggs**, 11,163 illnesses
- **Tuna**, 2,341 illnesses
- **Oysters**, 3,409 illnesses
- **Potatoes**, 3,659 illnesses
- **Cheese**, 2,761 illnesses
- **Ice cream**, 2,594 illnesses
- **Tomatoes**, 3,292 illnesses
- **Sprouts**, 2,022 illnesses
- **Berries**, 3,397 illnesses

BIRTHDAYS

Lillian	Kirk	01/03
Tom	Hackett	01/06
Dave	Senko	01/06
Jeff	McDonald	01/10
Roxana	Hernandez	01/19
Andrew	Zastrow	01/23
Nick	Lenzion	01/24



NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the new kids on the Block team.

Eric Mathieu Laura Perkins Kristen Mendez

A RESOLUTION FOR FISCAL FITNESS IN 2010

Most New Year's resolutions revolve around getting fit. Although that frequently means losing weight, one area you want to fatten up is your money supply. Here are some simple resolutions for adding some healthy heft to your overall financial profile:

- **Pay down your mortgage.** You can save more than \$63,000 on a 30-year, \$200,000 mortgage by paying just \$100 more a month.
- **Save 10 percent.** Put aside 10 percent of your income for long-term investments and retirement savings before paying any bills.
- **Track your expenses.** Record every dollar you spend, for at least one week. You'll get a clearer idea of where the money goes and what you can cut back on.
- **Energize your house.** Look for ways to make your house more energy efficient. You'll save on heating and cooling costs and also help the environment.
- **Stay home.** Resist the temptation to eat out. Cook more meals at home. Instead of going to the movies, rent a video, read a book, or play a game with your whole family.
- **Don't rely on credit cards.** Credit card debt can eat up your savings and your future. Start reducing your debt, and don't buy anything on credit if you don't have the money to pay the bill off promptly.

Happy New Year !