



Prices will get better and those companies who have pulled back and prepared for a comeback will do well, however in past upturns in the industry many were ill-prepared, rushing to get back to work without proper plans and preparation. Operators must vet contractors and service companies, and those companies must in turn use the same care in bringing on their subs. The importance of having a mentoring program for short service employees is extremely important and that investment has been proven over and over to save money and increase efficiency in the long term.

May we make time to take a close look in the mirror now and as decisions are made. When we started STEPS 12 years ago this month, we asked ourselves a couple of simple questions. Would we be comfortable with the safety and health of our sons or daughters, nieces or nephews or Grandkids if they decided to work in this industry, and what would we expect from the company they worked for? Because of the incredible teamwork and leadership of all of you reading this note today, that question is much easier to answer. We have come a long way, ~~we now~~ we have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are certainly heading in the right direction, because we are working toward the same goal together.

Volunteering our time to this or any effort in addition to our already busy schedules is tough, and sometimes we wonder why we go on, especially seeing our friends and colleagues lose their jobs. We are all human. I know it is really easy to get discouraged, but when the flag is a worthy one to bear as ours is, we pick ourselves up, hold it high, keep marching on and we feel better for it. I want to encourage each of you to stay strong, stay diligent and explore new ways to help our industry improve.

We are currently working on the "2016 Step- Up for safety" that will be rolled out at the end of the year. Our idea is to put together information and training material that will be distributed to each STEPS Network then passed down to their membership at a STEPS meeting. Each meeting attendee will then be able to use the materials provided for a "step up for safety" with their employees at a time that is most convenient for them. More details will be coming soon but please leave some time in your December STEPS meeting to discuss the step up and the materials.

Please send Marianne McGee and ~~me-me~~ your recent success stories and initiatives. Our Executive committee will highlight them in our October note. As always, ~~n~~Never hesitate to call or write with your concerns, ideas or suggestions.

I would like to reiterate what Rick stated so well. There is one thing we can all be sure of, this market will turn around and our industry will be strong and healthy once more. What we do during this slow time will determine who we are as in industry when we get busy again. In the past, we assumed that when we called people back to work, they would be in the same place safety wise that they were when they left. As we all found out, this is not the case. We scrambled to put process in place to reduce the influx of injuries. Sustainable systems will insure our incident rates remain low no matter what the market is. As Rick stated, now is the time to ensure these systems are in place. It is much easier to roll out, tweak or perfect new items with a smaller work force compared to doing the same when we are all running at full speed. We need to evaluate our management systems, HSE polices, processes and training requirements and make necessary adjustments, additions or revisions as needed. We should review our safe systems of work such as permit (permission) to work, hazard assessment, management of change, etc. to ensure they~~at~~ are effective. The work and effort spent in preparation in a slow market, will ensure a safe work place now and in the future.

Jerry Jacobs

On behalf of the National STEPS Network Executive Committee,

Rick L. Ingram, Chairperson

Cell: 361.816.7217