

## NECA Innovation Institute's Second Program Review – Hosted in Milwaukee, WI

The NECA Innovation Institute is well underway for 2022 and we are very excited to have two cohorts running concurrently, the Edison and Clarke Cohorts. As part of their yearlong experience, each cohort member will engage in a customized Capstone Project that draws on their existing skills and expertise, while challenging them to drive their organization towards their strong future resilience. The Capstone Project is defined during the early stages of the Institute and are chosen and signed off by the individual candidate and their executive sponsor. It is then up to the candidate to plan, implement and drive their capstone within their organization.

About twice a year, each cohort comes together for a Program Review, planned with group activities, educational sessions, social events, and presentations providing a capstone update to the rest of the cohort and their executive sponsor. Our most recent Program Review took place this April in Milwaukee, WI. For more information on NECA's Innovation Institute and how to nominate your innovative pioneers to join, please reach out to [innovation@necanet.org](mailto:innovation@necanet.org).

### Program Review Day 1

We started off Day 1 of our Program Review with the Clarke Cohort participating in a collaborative building activity led by Tauhira Ali. As part of the activity, cohort members organized into groups of two – one acting as an electrical contractor, the other acting as a general contractor. The teams were then given two items: a bag filled with Legos, and instructions on how to build a specific design with the legos; the “subcontractors” were given the supplies (Legos) and the “contractors” were given the plans.

Once they got their materials, they were given 15 minutes to work with one another to build the design, but with their backs turned towards one another; a clear challenge which led them to need to communicate clearly and efficiently to build their design.



We continued Day 1 with our Capstone Presentations where each cohort member presented their 4 month update on their Capstone to the other cohort members and their executive sponsors. Once the presentations were over, our event sponsors, Milwaukee Tool, provided an in-depth tour of their headquarters in Brookfield, WI. Here, we learned the history of Milwaukee Tool and were given a glimpse into the future.



## Program Review Day 2

Day 2 started off with a presentation on Lean Principles, led by Carrie Struss, Milwaukee Tool's Group Continuous Improvement Manager. During her presentation, she provided 6 tennis balls to the group, giving them instructions to place the tennis balls in a nearby basket as quickly as possible, and each ball needed to touch both hands of everyone on the team. After the first attempt, Carrie then prompted a discussion where members reflected on potential waste involved during the first attempt and worked together to develop a better process for a second attempt, which resulted in a total time savings of 91%.

Following Carrie's presentation, Josh Bone, Executive Director of ELECTRI International, joined the group to present on Design Thinking. During his presentation, he challenged the group to "Think Wrong" not only in their business, but in everyday life. He pushed the group to break the status quo and think and do differently than what we are typically used to through curiosity, collaboration, confidence and much more.



Day 2 continued down the street at Lemberg Electric where we were joined by the Edison Cohort. Lemberg's previous President and CEO and NECA's District IV VP, Dave Washebek, greeted the group with welcome remarks and turned it over to Lemberg's current President, Mark Chappel, who led a

discussion on the importance of Agile in Construction. From there, Lemberg provided a tour of their facilities and additional insights into how they apply Agile methodologies in real-world projects.



After the tour, we were joined by NECA's Vice President of Labor Relations, Kevin Tighe, who presented to the group on the Basics of Labor Relations, providing insight into the structure of the industry, important labor laws, and more.

From there, we said goodbye to our Clarke Cohort as they returned to their hometowns and continued back to the Milwaukee Tool offices with the Edison Cohort, where they provided an eight-month update of their Capstone Projects to the group and their Executive Sponsors, which led us to the end of Day 2.

### **Program Review Day 3**

The Edison Cohort closed off the Program Review on Day 3 with Josh Bone and Carrie Struss returning for a second round of Design Thinking and Lean Principles. We finished the day with a final tour of Milwaukee Tool and a lunch where we reflected on the people we met, things we learned and things we are eager to bring back and implement in our own lives, both personal and professional. With another Program Review down, we are more than excited for Institute plans moving forward. We are looking forward to the Edison Commencement in August, followed by Clarke's second Program Review in St. Louis and are eager to join our newest Cohort, The Westinghouse Cohort, in August.

Are you interested in learning more about the NECA Innovation Institute or want to nominate your innovative pioneers to join the Institute? Reach out to [innovation@necanet.org](mailto:innovation@necanet.org) or use the QR code to express your interest! We are currently taking applications for The Westinghouse Cohort.



## Meet the Innovators of the Clarke Cohort



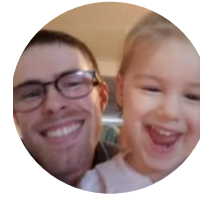
**Brian Swiatek**  
Continental Electrical  
Construction  
Company



**Dennis Harter**  
Kaiser Electric



**Diya Peter**  
Rosendin



**Eric Hintze**  
Quality Electric



**Jack Stefanek**  
Shambaugh and  
Son



**Jarret Bergkamp**  
Decker Electric



**Jeremy Spaulding**  
PAR Electrical  
Contractors



**Kevin Moses**  
Big State Electric



**Lance Beck**  
Chapel Electric Co.



**Phillip Matthews**  
O'Connell Electric

## Meet the Innovators of the Edison Cohort



**Brian Russ**  
Allison-Smith  
Company



**Denise Devine**  
Pro Cal Lighting



**Jeffrey Fuentes**  
Aurora Electric



**Joe Aikens**  
Cannon & Wendt  
Electric



**Kirk Wahlstrom**  
Egan Company



**Kyle Witte**  
Lemberg Electric



**Mark Lotspeich**  
Dynalectric Oregon



**Nick Rol**  
Thompson Electric



**Paul Mendoza**  
Alterman, Inc.



**Zack Scott**  
Christenson Electric