

# APCA Poised For Future

by Traci Read, Senior Editor



In his role as 2007 president of the American Pipeline Contractors Association (APCA), James Driver has helped guide the association through a strong construction year. APCA is a national association of merit shop

pipeline contractors, founded in 1971, as a regional alliance to promote the mutual interests and address industry concerns of its members and associates.

Looking back, Driver comments on the prosperous year the pipeline industry has experienced, but notes that it has not been without its shortcomings.

"The market has experienced the largest amount of pipeline construction ever," says Driver. "However, it's also resulted in a shortage of skilled personnel, with an equal shortage of equipment."

And according to Driver, all reports from members for 2008 indicate that it will be another busy year for pipeline construction. "In 2007, APCA members constructed hun-

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dreds of miles of 42-inch and 36-inch pipeline and we expect this increase in activity to continue in 2008," comments Driver.

Driver is a man who knows the business of the pipeline construction industry from the inside out and from the bottom to the top. He got an early start in the pipeline industry as a "poor East Texas farm boy looking to make a good living."

"I started as a pipeline laborer working in the dope gang, pouring hot dope and using a granny rag," says Driver.

After completing his studies at Tyler Jr.

College in Tyler, TX, in 1957, Driver would progress in his career from equipment operator to welder to superintendent, before starting his own company and founding Driver Pipeline Company in 1971, where he now serves as chief executive officer.

Driver Pipeline Company is an integrated oil and gas pipeline contractor effectively fulfilling the energy industries construction, maintenance and repair needs from the wellhead to the burner tip. They can perform work on two-inch through 48-inch pipelines, and can support pipeline spreads in excess of 200 miles in length. Driver Pipeline Co. has been a member of APCA for 25 years.

The association's aggressive focus on safety and its work with OSHA since 2004 has finally paid off. According to Driver, the alliance agreement was finalized and signed early in 2007. The APCA and OSHA Alliance Committee has already prepared several construction Best Practices, which will be posted in both English and Spanish on the APCA and OSHA websites. In particular, the Alliance will address reducing and preventing exposure to equipment operation, trenching and excavation and hydrostatic testing hazards. The Alliance's goals include: training and education, outreach and communication, and promoting the national dialogue on workplace safety and health.

"The APCA and OSHA Alliance will enable APCA to provide its members additional information and guidance to both our English and non-English speaking employees and will greatly increase awareness and reduce exposure to certain hazards within the pipeline construction industry," explains Driver. "APCA is excited that its outreach and communication goals will extend its efforts beyond strictly the trade association and member companies.

"Additional Best Practices will be prepared in 2008 along with additional training programs for the transient and seasonal work force," he adds.

Driver encourages members – active, honorary, and retirees – to attend the 37th annual convention to learn more about the status of the OSHA Alliance and to hear from three guest speakers – one who is an officer of a major pipeline company, another a consultant who will address risk management, and a third speaker who is an attorney that will present labor and employment issues.

For more information about APCA programs or the convention, contact J.D. Lormand, executive director at (337) 278-0056. ■