

In The Real World, The Picture Is A Little More Encouraging

According to the media, the economic forecast for the immediate future is unknown and somewhat foreboding. Fluctuations in the market have investors running scared as business owners and consumers brace themselves for a recession. But out in the real world, I have found a much more encouraging picture.

This summer I attended the PDCA-sponsored conference, The Design and Installation of Cost-Efficient Driven Piles. Between the highly informative seminars, I was able to spend some time talking with the contractors, suppliers and exhibitors who attend-



ed the Conference. I was curious to see how general economic conditions were affecting their businesses. The dark and gloomy picture we seem to get from the news each night was not what is actually happening in our industry.

Most of the people I spoke with were fairly optimistic about the state of our nation. Contractors said they were either busy or business was picking up. Exhibitors echoed these sentiments, and their strong showing at the Conference also drove this point home. Perhaps the stock market is riding on a roller coaster, but our industry is not. This is a trend I hope to see continue.

The national economy was not the only financial item on my agenda to discuss during the summer months. At our last meeting of the Board of Directors, we voted to increase membership dues. Next year, contractor/associate member dues will be \$650, and technical membership will be \$95. We have not raised dues since 1997, but I still want to relay the reason for our decision.

The PDCA now sponsors three major industry events each year: the DICEP Conference, the Winter Roundtable and now the Professors' Institute. The Board has committed to holding at least two more Professor's Institutes, with the possibility of five total. I applaud this decision and have stated many times that educating the educators is a key building block in our fight to solidify the driven pile in the deep foundation industry. But these events require an enormous amount of resources. Although we have many generous sponsors, we still need additional funds to cover expenses. The increase in membership dues will assuage some of these expenses.

I would like to thank you for your support and participation in this Association and look forward to another successful year.

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