

McCormick Systems is contributing to the Mission of educating the marketplace and advancing technology

NECA has made a commitment to serve as the guiding force in preparing the electrical contracting industry for the challenges of the 21st Century. In December 1988, the Board of Governors of NECA established The Electrical Contracting Foundation, Inc. "ELECTRI'21" is the acronym/symbol for the Electrical Contracting Foundation. The Foundation promotes and advances the ability of electrical contractors to meet the demands of today and the challenges of the future. The Foundation is a national organization through which leaders of NECA and other segments of the electrical contracting industry work together to fund, conduct, and coordinate the industry's most critical research and education programs. The ELECTRI'21 COUNCIL of the Foundation, made up of major contributors, directs its fund-raising and project development mission. The foundation's long-term goals are to focus research on: career awareness, productivity enhancement, organizational development, and technology transfer. Currently, the foundation has five research projects in progress:

A study of productivity enhancement focusing on labor efficiency

Single and separate bids and economic analysis of bidding methods

A symposium to define the future of the electrical contracting industry

of the personality types of first and four year apprentices to help instructors better relate to apprentices

The development of a power quality reference guide.

Robert Pheil, ELECTRIC'21 Council vice chair for programs, commented, "The foundation's new industry presence has encouraged a high level of academic interest. We have received proposals for future projects that cover topics such as contractor competition, total quality management, material management, telecommunications, new market opportunities, technologies transfer, and various other critical project topics."

The ELECTRI'21 Council will be reviewing these projects and recommending project funding in the fall of 1992. Buck Autrey, chairman of the ELECTRIC'21 Council, says that by supporting the foundation, contractors and manufacturers are ensuring that the industry will continue to expand and to remain competitive as the industry moves into the future.

According to Jack McCormick, president of McCormick Systems, Inc, a company that has pledged \$250,000 to the the foundation, the need for information in the electrical contracting field is overwhelming. McCormick hopes the foundation will help promote the standardization of CAD interfaces to the various software programs that are in use today and to provide more education on the use of computers.

McCormick started in the industry 34 years ago, entering the field as an apprentice electrical wireman. After he became a journeyman, he opened his own contracting business in 1970. During the first 10 years of business, McCormick says he learned what computers could do for contractors. In 1980, he put together his first estimating software package and sold it to a St. Louis contractor. The rest, he says, is history.

As to the future, McCormick thinks computers will play an even bigger role. "I can see a time in the near future that the contractor will be sent the files for a job to be estimated via modem."

The contractor will then print out the job on a plotter, making his own blueprints, and, at the same time, generate a count of most of the material contained in the job. At this point, he could add the unique items and massage the numbers for the bid price." McCormick adds that in the near future, every job site with a field office will have a computer in it. "It is imperative that more people be educated in the use of computers and their related software, primarily in the estimating and job management areas," he says.

The foundation is important to the electrical contracting field, McCormick says. "By bringing together the leaders that provide the installation, materials, and management tools, the ensuing "brain" pool will, without a question, have an enormous positive impact on our industry."