President’s Message

Commit to the Cause

Election campaigns expose us to non-stop media messages, slogans and rhetoric. Amidst all this noise, especially the negativity, distortion and misrepresentation common to many elections, it can be difficult to think or talk about anything else. So, I’d like to invite you to support and participate in some campaigns that are fueled by facts rather than rhetoric: the ASSE campaigns for 2012-13.

Workplace Fatalities

The facts: According to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, each day, more than 8,000 workers suffer a recordable injury and 13 lose their life. This is like saying that most of the 3 million people in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area suffered a reportable injury—or that all 4,600 residents of my town went to work one morning and never came home. Globally, International Labor Organization estimates that 2.3 million people succumb to work-related accidents or diseases every year, which equates to more than 6,000 deaths each day. These outcomes are unacceptable—made even more so because the downward trend in these statistics has stalled. This statistical plateau should be a call to action for us all.

The campaign: ASSE will develop a series of communications and events to keep workplace fatalities in the public eye and to encourage collaboration on the development of new approaches to preventing workplace fatalities. In addition, ASSE’s work with the Center for Safety and Health Sustainability will continue to position workplace safety as a major social issue that must be addressed.

Value of the SH&E Professional

The facts: ASSE’s study in 2008 revealed that the perceived performance of SH&E professionals falls below management’s stated expectations in several areas, including business and strategy, and organizational and management support.

The campaign: Through this campaign, the Society will focus on increasing employers’ and other stakeholders’ understanding of the competencies, capabilities and value of safety professionals. The business community must come to understand that SH&E professionals are much more than technicians who simply perform compliance-based activities. To achieve this, we must adopt the mindset that to thrive in our organizations and to “get a seat at the table,” we must articulate the value we deliver.

OSHA/NIOSH Fall Prevention

The facts: Falls are the leading cause of work-related deaths in construction and a leading cause of injuries.

The campaign: ASSE has signed on as an active participant in the OSHA/NIOSH fall prevention campaign.

Small Business

The facts: BLS has recently reported that the total OSHA recordable case rate in 2010 was highest among companies with 50 to 249 employees.

The campaign: Through this campaign, ASSE will develop electronic and traditional media resources to increase small business occupational safety and health awareness, and to improve small business capabilities in developing occupational safety and health programs, including increasing the availability of industry-specific tools and products. These employers must understand that the risks are real and that they can be mitigated in a cost-effective manner.

Be Committed & Get Involved

So how might you help?

• Share your ideas on strategies and tools that will increase public awareness of workplace fatalities and build the groundswell needed to effect lasting change.
• Develop new ways to articulate what your role is and what it means to your organization’s future.
• Improve your risk assessment competencies, provide cost-effective solutions as a business partner and take a leadership role in developing risk assessment policy.
• Volunteer tips, resources or even your time to a local small business to help it identify and correct hazards.
• Participate in and spread the word about the fall prevention campaign by visiting stopconstructionfalls.com and following the “Get Involved” link.

These are just a few suggestions. The facts are that too few people know about the work of safety professionals, and even fewer take note of the devastating number of people injured and killed at work each year. It’s time we deliver a message about occupational safety and our profession that is strong and clear. Will you join with me in committing to our cause?

“Commitment unlocks the doors of imagination, allows vision, and gives us the right stuff to turn our dream into reality.”

James Womack

Richard A. Pollock, CSP

Connect With Rick

Share your thoughts, ideas and comments on ASSE’s 2012-13 campaigns on Rick’s blog, found at www.asse.org/getconnected.