

Put SEAA to Work for You

How members are making the most of their member benefits



In the last three years, SEAA has tripled its benefits programs and doubled in-person networking events. “By offering more opportunities for our members to connect and the chance to tap new hiring, training, and business resources, we are giving



Members and guests discuss issues facing their businesses in small group settings during Peer Groups.

contractors the tools they are seeking to better run their businesses,” said R. Pete Gum, Executive Director.

The average membership fee is \$1,640, while the value of services available to members is greater than \$30,000 annually. “Whether you are already a member, but not taking full advantage of the resources available to you, or you are not yet a member, this information is for you,” said Jack Nix, Chief Operations Officers for Shelby Erectors and Chairman of the Membership Committee.

Shared connections

Every association says the primary benefit of participation is the networking, but members of SEAA say it best themselves. SEAA holds an annual Convention & Trade Show that rotates between east and west locations. The 2024 event is April 2-5 in Glendale, Arizona.

Other opportunities to meet include regional Meet & Greet receptions and Peer Group discussions that take place in conjunction with summer, fall, and winter Board of Directors meetings held at various locations around the country. The Dave Schulz Memorial Golf

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The Trade Show is an opportunity to learn about new products and new applications.

Tournament is a fundraiser event held every fall. It also alternates between east and west.

“Our company is where it is today because of the networking through SEAA. For 25 years, SEAA has contributed to my personal growth as a business owner and the overall improvement of our company. Other members willingly answer questions pertaining to industry standards, OSHA regulations, subcontract language, and more,” said David Deem, President of Deem Structural Services and President of SEAA (2022-2024).

When it comes to sharing safety and training tips, Bryan McClure, Partner, Trivent Safety Consulting, and current Secretary of the SEAA Board of Directors, said during a recent panel discussion with several member company safety directors: “We’re all competitors, but we’re not competitors here at SEAA, and it’s a beautiful thing. I’ve been a part of a lot of associations and none of them do it as well as this group does.”

Jon Mosebach, Safety Director for L.R. Willson & Sons, admits that coming to in-person meetings is an investment in time and money for his company, but that the information gained is exceptional. “I have learned that the same struggles occur no matter how big or how small a company is—the issues are often industry-wide. Some of the best conversations spill over after a meeting is over. Even when not at meetings, I have found it easy to reach out to other members

of SEAA to ask a question or advice on a situation.”

Founded just six years ago, FM Steel Construction is one of those younger, growing organizations for which rationalizing membership absolutely has to make business sense. “Early on it was tough for us to justify joining and attending in-person meetings,” said Michael Mulsow, Director of Operations. “The first time I went to a meeting, I decided to roll the dice and take a chance. Without a doubt, going to my first convention was worth its weight in gold. From the beginning, I was greeted with amazing friendliness, and tips and lessons from some big-time erectors. Some of those tips have saved me enough headaches and costs to cover the expense of all of the meetings I’ve attended,” he said.

The same is true for suppliers, who get involved by exhibiting at the annual Trade Show and sponsoring various activities. “While we do not do business with all SEAA members, we find that relationships are built and grown within the organization. I cannot put a value on what we gain as it is really priceless,” said Kalvan Peeler, Senior Field Sales-Carolinas, for Nelson Stud Welding.

He adds: “I have made connections that have allowed me to help and support members in regions that I am not responsible for. I believe this is part of what SEAA is about, bringing people in the same industry together to help grow one another.” As an example, Peeler shared a story from the 2022 Convention. “I connected two of my customers and that introduction helped one of them gain yet another connection that helped the company grow,” said Peeler.

A priority on training

Training ironworkers and improving safe work practices has been a priority for the association for decades. It is not a coincidence that the association was founded in 1971, the same year OSHA was formed. Some 20 years later, members were involved in discussions closely tied to safety when OSHA formed the Steel Erection Negotiated Rulemaking Advisory Committee. Among the key contributions from SEAA members were related to using anchor bolts on columns,

Want to learn more or find out how to join?

- Explore Member Benefits and Member Tools at seaa.net.
- Check out our *Did You Know?* series of videos.
- Contact Pete Gum at executivedirector@seaa.net or Keri Goldstein, Director of Membership & Business Development, at keri@seaa.net.



requiring two holes in each column for safety cables, and utilization of a stabilizer clip. Then in 2000, SEAA provided funds and subject matter experts to help develop NCCER's Ironworker curriculum.

Today, SEAA members have access to premier **Craft Training**. As an NCCER sponsored organization, SEAA takes the administrative burden and expense off of member companies who are ready to establish formal training processes or even a **DOL-approved apprenticeship program**. The admin and implementation support SEAA provides would cost member companies close to \$12,000 to establish on their own.

The craft training options extend beyond just Ironworker Levels 1, 2 and 3. It also includes access to Reinforcement Ironworker Levels 1 and 2, Rigger, Signal Person, Crane Operator, and a new SEAA custom Fabricator curriculum.

L&L Construction is an AISC-certified steel erector with a focus on Level 3 Ironworker Apprenticeship. The company was also able to use SEAA's Apprenticeship Standard to register their program with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. For L&L, becoming an accredited training unit is helping them solve their recruiting challenges.

"Currently, we have two apprentices enrolled in the program along with some other interested individuals from area high schools. We also have a student in a co-op program from a local vo-tech school that plans to stay in the program once he graduates this spring. I visit local high schools and tech schools in the early spring seeking individuals looking to learn more about the trade of ironworking," said Shane Hess, Operations Manager, who noted that having a formal apprenticeship in place is key to recruiting new workers.

In addition, because L&L is also established as an NCCER assessment site, they are able to help other trades who need employees to be trained and tested. "With that, we are able to provide this service to a lot of local contractors, which helps them advance in their trade," he said.

As a professional training company, Trivent Safety Consulting has developed many of its own OSHA, Crane and Rigging, Fall Prevention and related training courses. However, as an authorized Training Unit and Assessment Site through SEAA's sponsorship, the company makes use of the NCCER Crane Operator Certification program.

"We like the NCCER Crane Operator Certification program because it is a better user experience for crane operators than other certifications. After proctoring their written exams, we are able to give operators their results immediately. In addition, the results come with training recommendations if there are areas that the operator needs to work on, which refers back to the appropriate sections of the NCCER curriculum," said Bryan McClure, Partner.

For example, if an operator misses questions on pre-op inspection or setup, they will know as soon as they get their results, what areas to brush up on. Practical exams are also a better experience for operators because they are allowed to take their practical exam in the crane they are used to operating as long as the setup area meets prescribed requirements. In addition, they can get their results the same day.

"The cost savings to us is that SEAA essentially provides us with a personal NCCER consultant. Tim Eldridge, President Education Services Unlimited and SEAA Craft Training and Assessment Coordinator, fulfills all of the admin support and keeps us current with NCCER practices," added McClure.

Training on demand

In 2023, SEAA invested in offering an online Learning Management System (LMS) to members in partnership with Industrial Training International (ITI). Branded the **SteelPros Training Portal**, it provides members with access to custom ironworker training videos developed by SEAA's subject matter experts. More than 80 videos developed exclusively by SEAA cover topics that align with the NCCER ironworker curriculum.

Every SEAA member can request one free account and one license to access this member benefit. Additional licenses can be purchased for \$35 each per year. "This is a vital resource for your safety directors or training managers—a member benefit valued at more than \$10,000 per member," said Jack Nix, Membership Committee Chairman.

SEAA members also receive a 25% discount on ITI's custom content for Field Leadership, Mobile Crane Maintenance and Operations, Rigging, and Site Hazard Recognition. Hundreds more third-party training content from organizations such as Crosby, Liebherr, Manitowoc, and Vertron is free to access. In a separate agreement with The Crosby Group, SEAA members can purchase Crosby's "User's Guide for Lifting," at 20% off the regular price.

"The SteelPros Training Portal is very easy to use and SEAA members can use it to track training progress for their learners. Proper adoption of the Learning Management System can drastically improve, organize, and modernize a company's ironworker onboarding process," said John Hughes, Director of Business Development for ITI.

The training platform was a key reason LRS Construction Services, a structural steel erector and miscellaneous metals fabricator, recently joined the association. Melissa Chumley, President, attended a Meet & Greet reception in Dallas, Texas in July at the invitation of a colleague. She came to the meeting a bit jaded at what the association could actually do for her. "Lots of organizations talk about the training or education they have, when really it's just fluff. But I



The association promotes the annual Stand-Down to Prevent Falls.

was impressed with the level of knowledge the presenters had and found the board members to be approachable. But it was the benefit of accessing the SteelPros Training Portal videos that pushed me to pull the trigger on joining and not just leave it on my to-do list for later,” said Chumley.

After logging in the first time and previewing several videos, she decided to integrate them into the company’s weekly 30 minute safety meeting. She likes that the content is brief, serves as a reminder for things that should be re-addressed in the field, and leads them to find out more about safety practices that need greater exploration.


Discounts for business services



SEAA looks to put strategic relationships in place with organizations that have a mutual interest in serving steel erection contractors. One of those partnerships is with the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC).

“No one sees the big picture quite like a steel erector--and that gives erectors a unique perspective on connections between associations as well as steel. SEAA’s relationship with AISC allows both associations to better serve erectors because we can talk openly about important issues and learn from one another,” said Todd Alwood, Vice President, Membership & Certification, AISC. “After all, we share a common goal: to build great things in structural steel! AISC helps SEAA members realize that goal by offering a big discount on various resources,” he said.

Alwood adds: “AISC is laser-focused on increasing the use of structural steel--so much so that it has invested in dedicated staff on the ground in key markets across the country. These structural steel specialists are tasked with educating and building relationships with architects, engineers, and other decision-makers to show specifiers why structural steel is the best choice for a given project.” AISC also funds research on the latest innovations, leads legislation efforts, and develops the standards and specifications that guide steel design and construction around the world.

“SEAA erector members get 50% off AISC associate membership—and those savings add up fast. Associate members get 50% off



associate membership application	
dues schedule	
ERECTOR	
TAUC SEAA IMPACT Member Erector (proof of current membership required)	\$1,000 
Non-Member Erector 	\$2,000

some of AISC’s most valuable resources, like seminars, webinars, conference registration, and all publications, including the newly released 16th-edition Steel Construction Manual,” he explained.

Two other services worth mentioning are the CareerPlug applicant tracking system and the BBSI Work Comp insurance program.

More than just a job board, CareerPlug provides a branded careers web page and helps hiring managers with writing job descriptions, interviewing, and tips on hiring. SEAA members can upgrade to Pro or Premium levels at discounted rates. “For the money, the interactive dashboard includes automation features that make hiring way more efficient,” said Jack Nix. “I’ve used other similar platforms for my company and know that this is a good value for members.”

The BBSI Workers’ Comp Insurance Program provides SEAA members an immediate 10% discount on their work comp premium. There is also a chance to earn a 5% return on your premium based on injury performance, and for companies that are seeking to achieve and maintain AISC certification, reimbursements are available.

However, the new program SEAA has rolled out with BBSI is about more than discounted insurance. “There’s a popular misconception

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Basic Level Career Plug subscription is free to SEAA Members, and they can upgrade at deep discounts to the fuller-featured Pro and Premium Levels.

in the industry about experience modifier ratings (EMR, also known as “mods”). Many business leaders tend to view the EMR as something that’s beyond their control and unfairly penalizes their workers’ compensation insurance costs. They often believe it focuses on problematic situations and poor claims management,” explains Tucker Smith, BBSI Area Manager, Carolinas.

He explains: BBSI believes that the EMR is a direct reflection of a company’s day-to-day management, similar to how a credit score reflects finances. While some accidents are unavoidable, the data used in the EMR calculation (wages, claim count, and claim cost) is often a direct quantitative assessment of how well a business hires, manages, trains, and deals with employees.

“BBSI believes that any company has the ability to change its circumstances to the point where its EMR becomes a competitive advantage that helps them to win more bids and secure insurance at a lower cost than its competitors,” said Smith.

Flawless Steel Welding is one member who found that the Work Comp program not only addressed compliance and cost control needs, but also gave them guidance on implementing best practices to better manage their risks.

“This has been a game-changer for Flawless Steel Welding and holds significant potential for other SEAA members. Its ability to address compliance, control costs, enhance safety culture, and provide tailored solutions sets it apart in the industry. For Flawless Steel Welding, the program has not only improved our operations but has also played a crucial role in strengthening our position in the steel industry,” said Victor Garcia, President, Flawless Steel Welding.

Key to his experience is that BBSI tailored its solutions to the specific needs of a steel welding fabricator and erector. “This customized solution perfectly aligned with our business requirements,” he said.

“BBSI focuses on proactive risk management, helping us prevent accidents and claims. This approach is not only cost-effective but also helps us maintain a safer work environment,” said Garcia.

Upon partnering with BBSI, each client is assigned a dedicated team of subject matter experts in the areas of employee management, candidate recruiting, workplace safety (loss control), payroll administration, and business strategy. “The BBSI team serves as a business management consultant helping to facilitate strategic conversations inside your organization to find root causes to challenges and inspire innovative ways of thinking,” said Smith.

“These are just a few of the tangible and intangible benefits that come with SEAA membership,” said Pete Gum. Membership gives companies access to resources that would cost exponentially more if they were purchased outright. In some cases, discounts would not even be available to companies on their own.

“Don’t be fooled by the word ‘erector’ in the name of the association,” concludes Pat Dunn, Vice President L&D Steel USA. “There are way more than just structural steel erectors in this association—rebar placers, fabricators, decking contractors, suppliers, and more. For us SEAA is the best bang for our buck, but membership only has value if you participate and use the resources available.”