

Front Page News – Now

The quotes below are from real newspapers and reflect many of the issues we face. There are so many collations between what we face as a nation and what we face as organized labor and management. If you read this entire article, you will see these things aren't entirely new by any means.

“GOVERNMENT STRUGGLES TO BALANCE BUDGET”

The battle continues to rage over increases in taxes and cuts in spending. Isn't this an issue we all face throughout our lives? When the out go exceeds the income there will be a problem if changes aren't made. For one thing, when I was brought up I was taught to never borrow more than you could afford. Borrowing has become a way of life and a bad habit. Just look at the crazy real estate market crash that is far from over; and there is plenty of blame to go around. The buyers wanted their dream home right now and the lenders were anxious to make bad loans for a quick buck. Instant gratification isn't a last-

ing thing and most of the anxious buyers' dreams went up in smoke.

Just like the government, both labor and management have to balance their budget. A contractor's fear is running out of money to pay his employees, buy materials, maintain equipment and keep their businesses running to win contracts and put people back to work. All the while your labor leaders and benefit fund trustees are working tirelessly to support your future and the future of your benefit plans. I hope everyone appreciates the enormous responsibility the trustees shoulder and the good work they do to protect your interests. It's not an easy job, and believe me, they take it very seriously.

“U.S. CONTINUES TO GO DEEPER IN DEBT”

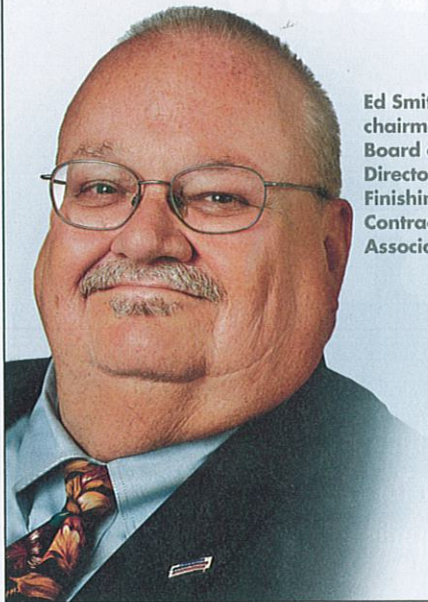
In order for the United States government to sustain its obligations, it is

borrowing at an alarming rate of \$3.5 billion a day. Like an out of control 18-wheeler, we can't stop the debt on a dime by slamming on the brakes. But we can take a sensible look at where we are spending, where we can save, and how we can generate more income. Measures must be taken and a well thought out plan put in place to assure we sustain our future for our children and future generations. It can be done, but compromises will have to be made.

This is true for both labor and management as well, but just like the government, there are ways to fix the problems we all face today. It isn't easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is and sometimes it requires thinking "out of the box." What worked 10, 20, 30 years ago doesn't necessarily work today. It is a global economy and what happens around the world has an impact on our economy, our future and the way we conduct business.

“POLITICIANS HOLD TO THEIR PARTY LINES”

The problem is universal; it is not republican or democrat. Although they may not admit it, the fact is that both parties need the other to make this country work. This country is split down the middle in how we think and what we do and when you look back, it has pretty much always been that



Ed Smith, chairman, Board of Directors, Finishing Contractors Association.

Ed Smith is chairman of the Finishing Contractors Association (FCA), the only international trade association devoted exclusively to serving the unique needs of U.S. and Canadian union contractors in the drywall finishing, glass and glazing, floor covering, painting and decorating, and signs and display trades. All FCA members are signatory to collective bargaining agreements with the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. To learn more about the FCA, go to www.finishingcontractors.org, or call 301-215-7026.

way. I think that is a good thing. Because of the liberal/conservative point/counterpoint processes, I think we get the best of both sides. Officials on both sides of the aisle have to table their personal agendas and temper their actions for the good of all.

Again, labor and management have common interests. Simply put: our best hope for a future as unionized labor and management is to work together for the common good – our collective industry. It always concerns me when politics get in the way of good, sound decisions. Both labor and management must put personal agendas aside and do the right thing for the industry and assure a bright future for our members and employees.

“BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FOREIGN AID WASTED”

This is an outrage and needs to be stopped. We work too hard to pay our taxes for them to be wasted on corrupt foreign countries. The truth is that there are no checks and balances and no one is “minding the store.” Sure, some good comes out of foreign aid and there are many starving people we have helped, but somehow we must put a stop to corruption and self serving officials that literally steal the food from their own people’s mouths.

Helping others is a wonderful thing. But doesn’t charity begin at home? We will always reach out to foreign, underdeveloped countries to provide aid and assistance. But you don’t have to look far to find families in need right here in our own backyard.

“UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG CONSTRUCTION WORKERS REACHES RECORD LEVELS”

I believe that most people want to work. I also know that there are some that would rather take advantage of the system and collect a subsidy from their peers. That is not fair to the workforce that believes in a “fair days work for a fair days pay.” Certainly there are some who need and

deserve assistance, but those who can and are able must learn to work, not to rely on assistance.

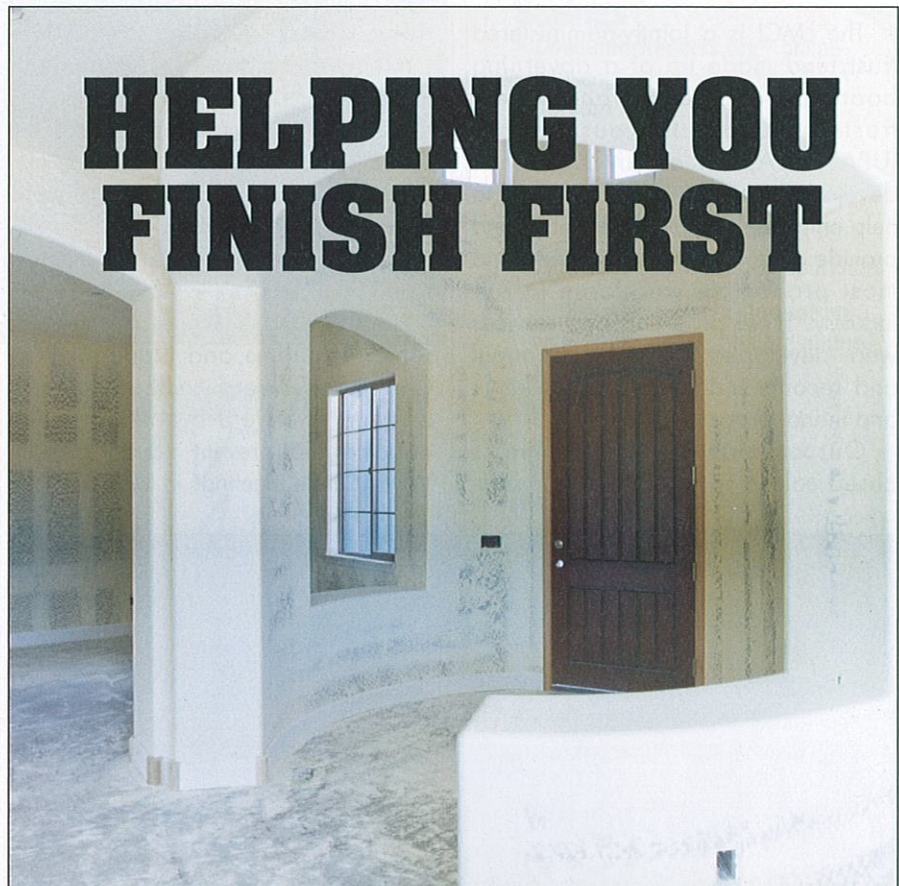
Our job as labor and management is to take steps to create opportunities for our union contractors to compete in the marketplace, win contracts, and provide employment to the highest skilled union workforce on the planet.

The following is a quote from a leader, statesman, lawyer and politician made over 2,000 years ago. If it sounds familiar, that’s because it parallels today’s ongoing debates.

People are always going to be people, but there is hope, people. Check this out:

FRONT PAGE NEWS THEN;

“The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance.” Cicero – 55 BC



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