



# Masonry Association of Florida, Inc.

## Engineering Elements

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November 2009

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We have always known that promoting masonry is a multi-faceted endeavor and I think this past month we have nicked about all of the facets.

Our best government relations meeting award goes to the SW region who set up a visit with Gary Aubuchon, an up and coming firebrand in the Florida House. Danielle Larson/GBL, Jeff Turley/Florida Rock/Vulcan, Shelly Honsberger/Tarmac, a Titan America Co., Bill Ryan/Florida Rock/Vulcan and I converged on his office. It took him a few minutes to settle in on what everyone in the room had in common – MASONRY. Once he got the picture he was extremely impressed at our united front. Rep. Aubuchon was a great contact because he is a residential builder who builds exclusively with masonry and really believes in the product. He had good insight on problems from apprenticeship to getting schools to spec the BEST product, not just the product they last used. Gary offered legislative help if we needed it. Special thanks to Falcon Contractors for setting up the meeting.

In the local schools category our meeting set up by Greg Strickland/CEMEX with Broward County definitely takes the biscuit. Justin Lord with Central Broward Construction, accompanied Greg and I to put on a presentation for about 20 people in the Broward County Construction Dept. Again, they really appreciated the broad range of experience and knowledge that Justin, Greg and I brought to the presentation. I originally made contact with their Senior Architect at the FEFPA trade show in July and she was very interested in masonry and stucco information. She indicated that Broward would be looking much more favorably on masonry because of the larger percentage of rebuild/remodels and the tight available construction space. The chief spec writer later sent me his stucco and masonry specs to critique. A good time was had by all!

My favorite of the month was our Construction Lab for Dr. Sullivan at U of F's Rinker School of Building Construction. About 80 students at all levels participated in (3) two hour labs where they actually got to wield mortar and trowel and lay up a masonry wall. Allan Spears/Allan Spears Masonry and Painter Masonry made it happen by donating two masons and three laborers to keep the students stocked with supplies and offer help in figuring out which end of the trowel to hold. The sage advice of the day came from Abe Painter (as in Jerry and Jim's father) who was there to make sure they "got it done right". He let them know in a hurry that if you didn't clean out the wheel barrow at the end of the day you might not have a job in the morning. Jerry assured me there were numerous unemployed masons in Gainesville who could testify to that. Special thanks to Chip Sykes of CEMEX and Joe Sanford of Cement Precast Products for donating all of the materials required in this project. Dr. Sullivan thinks that the College of Architecture might be interested in replicating this program for their students – we told him we are ready to go!



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Our Masonry Certification Workshop in Orlando was a little low on attendance (17 at last count) As usual our team of expert instructors (yep, that includes moi) got some great reviews. We have captured a few for your reading pleasure.

*“Best continuing ed class I have taken. Incredible technical information and knowledge of the presenters. Glad you guys are there for the masonry industry!” ~ Pensacola Area General Contractor*

*“All speakers are extremely knowledgeable and have good teaching skills – we need to make this class mandatory to the core of engineers.” – Pensacola Area Mason Contractor*

*“Great course – very informative – great instructors. I will recommend this to other building department officials.” ~ County Building Inspector*

The Architectural Lunch and Learn of the month goes to the Tampa team who got us into Fleischman and Garcia, one of the top 100 architects in Florida by volume of work (we like VOLUME!) Bob Dipetro of FSS Company and Lisa Pelham A-1 Block set up the meeting and we were accompanied by Dave Luebs of Overberg Masonry. They have several important masonry jobs coming up and hopefully we kept them on the masonry track. Again, the team approach (mason, engineer and material suppliers) really makes an impression and fosters discussions of problems.

Each of these events was set up locally and executed by local MAF members who first and most importantly succeeded in promoting masonry in Florida but also received recognition and influence with the companies and institutions targeted. Thank you one and all.