Words of Wisdom: Facing the Present Economic Condition

By Win Johnson, President, Win & Associates, Inc.

After over 50 years in the business, RCA Past President Win Johnson has experienced the effects of a variety of economic situations. In a recent white paper circulated to RCA members, Johnson reflected on making it through past recessions and gave advice to business owners who are experiencing their first substantial economic downturn.

In 2000, at the first RCA meeting I chaired as President, I made a statement at the opening about my vision for RCA in our next 10 years. What I said probably isn’t remembered by anyone at the meeting, including me. But the current business conditions we are facing cause me to once again consider the next 10 years in our business.

As one of the oldest RCA owners, my view is based on the economic reality of my past 53 years of business experience. I’ve been in 10 different businesses, and owned 8 of them during this time, including an employment agency, jewelry manufacturer, retail jewelry stores, retail bridal store, retail design firm, and general contractor. I have been affected by 10 growth periods and 11 recessions. Each time I had to adapt and change the way I did business. Each experience left me more prepared to handle the next.

I have talked to a number of RCA members who have never experienced an economic situation like the one we are now in. Some worry it will “last forever.” The reality is, there have been recessions and growth periods of various degrees in every 10-year period since 1950. I fully expect this trend will continue as long as we are in business and for the next generation who will take over our companies. The lessons we learn in every recession fade as the next growth period gets underway. The tendency to think the good times will continue is normal.

If I was 20- to 40-something in this business I would:

Scale my business back to the bare minimum to keep a viable operation.

Keep your best employees by your side as you wait out this recession and growth begins. These are the people that will grow your business and will be your future. I have seen so many businesses go by last hired, first fired. This policy is one of the worst mistakes that I still continually see.

Clean up my procedures in the office and in the field to maximize my effectiveness. Keep your best employees by your side as you wait out this recession and growth begins. These are the people that will grow your business and will be your future. I have seen so many businesses go by last hired, first fired. This policy is one of the worst mistakes that I still continually see.

Cut all costs that do not result in profit. Look at the small costs that add up: cell phones, inefficient printers, software purchases, credit card use.

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Past Presidents: Where are They Now?

David Weekes

By Jennifer Danquist, Director of Business Development, Flynn Construction Management

When it comes to the RCA, we could not be here without our Past Presidents, who have guided this association, built it up, and watched it continue to grow. For this we are all grateful. In an effort to recognize these “founding fathers,” remember our beginnings, and review our history, we have created a new feature in our newsletter: Past Presidents: Where Are They Now? Each edition will feature a RCA past president and give some insight into their time at the helm as well as talk about what they’re doing now.

There would be no RCA Past Presidents feature were it not for our first President and one of RCA’s Founders, David Weekes, Chairman of the Board of Wekees Construction, Inc. Wekees was President from 1990 to 1992. “The RCA came up in a discussion in 1990 at a CRAMM conference in New Orleans,” Larry Tureff, Director of Construction & Facilities for Borders stated. “I was going to do a discussion on how to qualify a contractor, and David approached me prior to my discussion. David asked what I would think and whether I would be supportive of an organization or national group of contractors that was formed so retailers would be able to reference it to create their bid lists.”

One of Weekes’ original goals was to build a list of qualified general contractors and provide the list to mall managers all over the country so that they could identify those GCs as preferred contractors for retailers in their malls to utilize.

“The RCA was a huge benefit to retailers. It was an avenue for us to find GCs to bid on our projects and know that the RCA’s pre-qualification process was equal to or better then the retailer’s own programs,” said Tureff. “The goal was to have very high standards and qualifications, to be self policed by the group so that they would be known for their integrity, high morals, quality, etc. It would also be beneficial for a retailer to know who had worked in a specific region or mall and be familiar with the rules and regulations of that area.”

When Weekes was asked who his mentor or hero was he cited RCA member and Past President, Bob Benda of Westwood Contractors. “I have watched Bob and the way he has handled difficult situations over the years; it’s admirable.”

In talking with Tureff, he explained he has certainly seen RCA grow. He has noticed the camaraderie among member contractors. He has also been encouraged by the sharing of information that was sometimes held as proprietary or secretive in the past.

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So, what is Weekes up to these days? He enjoys his guilty pleasure of barbeque, and loves to exercise in his free time. He shared a little known fact: when he was in the Army, he got in trouble for making beer in the boiler room…that’s our guy!

We salute Weekes for his foresight and the efforts he put into establishing the RCA. His legacy continues: his sons Chandler and Hunter are active in the association, carrying on the traditions, qualities, and enthusiasm for which their father is so well regarded.

Next Issue:
Bill Winkel, President of Winkel Construction
RCA Annual Meeting

Save the Date for March 5-7, 2010 at the Gaylord Palms, Orlando, FL. RCA will once again hold its annual meeting prior to SPECS. The meeting is a combination of networking and professional development opportunities. Almost 100 attendees enjoyed the 2009 Annual Meeting in Orlando, as evidenced by the photos below.

Brad Bogart & Rachel Andrew of Bogart Construction

RCA Board Members Ken Sharkey, Commercial Contractors & Mike McBride, Westwood Contractors

Advisory Board member Scott Winstead of FMI Corporation was a featured speaker and moderated a retailers panel

Advisory Board member Jeff Michna, Fossil, Joe Schimenti, Schimenti Construction & Annual Meeting Chair Matt Pichette, Russco

Mike Wolff, Timberwolf Construction & Vinny Tiberia, Schimenti Construction

Second-generation RCA members: Secretary/Treasurer Dan De Jager, De Jager Construction, Hunter Weekes, Weekes Construction & Rick Winkel, Winkel Construction

Jennifer Danquist, Flynn Construction Management & Adam Timko, Jerry Rectenwald, and Art Rectenwald, Rectenwald Brothers Construction

George Gledson, GC Builders & Frank Trainor, Commonwealth Building

Chuck Barnes
G.C. Barnes Associates
2011

Ronald L. Braun
J.C. Penney
2012

Kim Klingler
Sephora USA LLC
2011

Tony Maldonado
Gap, Inc.
2011

Tom Meibermott
Limited Brands
2011

Jeff Michna
Fossil
2012

Jason Miller
Kohl’s
2011

Sam Pena, AIA
Jacob Carter Burgess
2009

Tony Poma
True Religion Brand Jeans
2011

Scott Winstead
FMI Corporation
2011

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Mike Wolff, Timberwolf Construction & Vinny Tiberia, Schimenti Construction

RCA President Matthew Schimenti, Schimenti Construction & Clint Rounsfull, Rectenwald Brothers Construction

Brian Shellogg, Lakeview Construction & RCA Sponsor Ben Mack, ARDEX Engineered Cements

George Gledson, GC Builders & Frank Trainor, Commonwealth Building
### RCA Membership Means Quality

RCA members must meet and maintain a series of qualifications and are approved by the Board of Directors for membership. They have been in the retail construction business as general contractors for at least five years; agree to comply with the Association’s Code of Ethics and Bylaws; are properly insured and bonded; are licensed in the states in which they do business; and have submitted letters of recommendation.

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<th>COMPANY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Allegheny Design Management, Inc.</td>
<td>John Kuruc</td>
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<td>1994</td>
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<td>All-Rite Construction Co., Inc.</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:warren@all-riteconstruction.com">warren@all-riteconstruction.com</a></td>
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<td>The Benmore Construction Group, Inc.</td>
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<td>(201) 489-4466</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:jlpbenmore@verizon.net">jlpbenmore@verizon.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>B.R. Fries &amp; Associates</td>
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<td>NY</td>
<td><a href="mailto:barryf@brfries.com">barryf@brfries.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chance Construction Co.</td>
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<td>(409) 787-2615</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Building, Inc.</td>
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<td>(617) 770-0050</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frankt@combuild.com">frankt@combuild.com</a></td>
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<td>Construction One, Inc.</td>
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<td>Corina/Kokosing Construction Company</td>
<td>James P. Negron</td>
<td>(614) 212-5594</td>
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<td>db Construction Group, Inc.</td>
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<td>(412) 464-4600</td>
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<td>De Jager Construction, Inc.</td>
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<td>Desco Professional Builders, Inc.</td>
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<td>DLP Construction</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:dpigg@dlpconstruction.com">dpigg@dlpconstruction.com</a></td>
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<td>Donnelly Construction</td>
<td>Frank Leone</td>
<td>(973) 672-1800</td>
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<td>E.C. Provini, Co., Inc.</td>
<td>Edmund Provini</td>
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<td>NJ</td>
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<td>Elder-Jones, Inc.</td>
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<td>Flynn Construction, Inc.</td>
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<td>Fred Olivieri Construction Company</td>
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<td>GC Builders, Inc.</td>
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<td>Greg Construction Company</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:spfent@gregconstruction.com">spfent@gregconstruction.com</a></td>
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<td>Hanlin Rainaldi Construction Corp.</td>
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<td>Hays Construction Co., Inc.</td>
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<td>Healy Construction Services, Inc.</td>
<td>James Healy</td>
<td>(708) 396-0440</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:jhealy@healyconstructionservices.com">jhealy@healyconstructionservices.com</a></td>
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<td>Herman/Stewart Construction</td>
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<td>I.C.E. Builders</td>
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<td>(714) 491-1317</td>
<td>CA</td>
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<td>International Contractors, Inc.</td>
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<td>J. G. Construction</td>
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<td>KBE Building Corporation</td>
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<td>Kent Moon</td>
<td>(262) 857-3336</td>
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<td>Marco Contractors, Inc.</td>
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<td>(724) 741-0300</td>
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<td>Metropolitan Contracting Co., Ltd.</td>
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<td>Montgomery Development Carolina Corp.</td>
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<td>Pinnacle Construction, Inc.</td>
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<td>PWI Construction, Inc.</td>
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<td>RCC Associates, Inc.</td>
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<td>Rectenwald Brothers Construction, Inc.</td>
<td>Art Rectenwald</td>
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<td>Retail Construction Services, Inc.</td>
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<td>Roche Construction, Inc.</td>
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<td>Royal Seal Construction, Inc.</td>
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<td>Schimenti Construction Company, Inc.</td>
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<td>Scorpio Construction, Inc.</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:gik@v1cinc.com">gik@v1cinc.com</a></td>
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<td>Warwick Construction, Inc.</td>
<td>Tony Annan</td>
<td>(832) 448-7000</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tannan@warwickconstruction.com">tannan@warwickconstruction.com</a></td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeekes Construction, Inc.</td>
<td>Chandler Weekes</td>
<td>(864) 233-0061</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cweekes@weeekesconstruction.com">cweekes@weeekesconstruction.com</a></td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westwood Contractors, Inc.</td>
<td>Bob Benda</td>
<td>(817) 302-2050</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bbenda@westwoodcontractors.com">bbenda@westwoodcontractors.com</a></td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win and Associates, Inc.</td>
<td>Win Johnson</td>
<td>(336) 337-3808</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:win@waawj.com">win@waawj.com</a></td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winkel Construction, Inc.</td>
<td>W.L. Winkel</td>
<td>(352) 860-0500</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wlw@winkel-construction.com">wlw@winkel-construction.com</a></td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woods Construction, Inc.</td>
<td>John Bodary</td>
<td>(586) 939-9991</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jbobary@woodsconstruction.com">jbobary@woodsconstruction.com</a></td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the most up-to-date information and to search by states members operate in and their participation in RCA programs, visit www.retailcontractors.org. The icons below are used in the online directory to provide additional information about our members.

- **Sent attendee(s) to most recent Annual Meeting**
- **Past or present RCA Board member**
- **Uses RCA’s Safety Materials**
- **Has made a contribution to the RCA Scholarship Program**
- **Has a Certified Development, Design & Construction Professional on staff**
- **Has sponsored a company presentation of RCA’s Education Program**
- **Has met the requirements of RCA’s Quality Assurance Program**
- **Uses RCA’s Safety Materials**
- **Has a LEED AP accredited professional on staff**

Please notify the RCA Office (800-847-5085 or info@retailcontractors.org) of any changes to your contact information.
Meet Your Board of Directors

D. Brian Perkkio
Elder Jones

Brian Perkkio is the Vice President of Operations and a principal at Elder-Jones, Inc. In his current role, Brian oversees project managers, manages vendor and subcontractor relations, and assists with corporate business development.

Since joining the company in 1989, Brian spent 11 years as a project manager before moving into various roles in management. Brian has been in the retail construction industry for over twenty years and holds a degree from Macalester College in St. Paul (MN).

Brian currently resides in Mendota Heights (MN) with his wife Arlene and three children: Conor, Nina and Maria. In addition to spending time with his family, Brian likes coaching youth athletics, hunting and travel.

He currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Department of Construction Management at Minnesota State University/Mankato. He was elected to the RCA Board of Directors in 2007 and is serving a term through 2011. Brian serves on the Marketing & Communications Committee, with a focus on promoting RCA’s Annual Meeting and Education and Safety Programs.

RCA Sustaining Sponsors

Platinum

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- Plan Express
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- Zurich
Do not add costs to prepare for the growth to come.

Keep your name and company in front of all your previous customers. Just because your business is not growing in the economy does not mean your customers aren’t growing or finding opportunities.

Be visible in the business community: local, state and national Associations. Important connections are made through networking. The person you serve with on a Board or meet at a cocktail reception today could be tomorrow’s customer lead or reference.

Try to understand the economic changes that are affecting your customers. Meet with them to discuss how both of your businesses can survive this economy.

Try to understand how your customer’s business model is changing now and how it will change during the next growth period. This knowledge could put you ahead of the rest when the economy changes.

The next growth period will result in a very different customer. We must be ready to meet the demands of a customer with different goals and ideas than we have seen in the past. We will probably see a lot of renovations in existing stores and very slow movement in the growth of new stores. Many of our customers’ businesses are run by a generation that has not seen anything like the current situation. Their reaction may be very hard for us to adjust to, as we see their plans for the future.

This means that we, as general contractors, will have to reinvent the way we do business as our customers reinvent the way they do business. Do I know what we and our customers will look like in the future? No, but I DO know…

- The days of big “roll outs” of stores all built from the same plans are probably over.
- New malls will be few, but reinventing what malls are used for will change in the future.
- Empty strip centers will stay empty and turn into community problems.
- Customers are looking for low cost options, and we need to make sure that cost-cutting measures don’t cause problems in the future.
- City building departments have so little to do they are spending time training inspectors to do their jobs better.
- We have to be the “good guys” and offer our knowledge and expertise to help our customers create their new business model.
- A lot of very intelligent people have decided that they would rather be in business for themselves rather than work for big companies.
- Consumer buying patterns have and will continue to change and we may have a more conservative consumer, which will change the way our customers do business.

We must be ready and willing to change the way we operate our business to meet the needs of our customers and the consumer. Will we survive? Yes. Will we prosper? Yes. Will our business be like it was when we built our business over the last 40 years? No. Is that OK? Yes.

Your comments and thoughts are welcome. Tell us what you think and help us all meet the challenges we face together. Email info@retailcontractors.org.

Networking and information sharing is important to Johnson (at head of table): he leads RCA “Owners Only” breakfast discussions during RCA events.
Safety Materials Update

In response to new FMLA regulations that have affected the information on RCA’s Federal Safety Posters, the Safety Committee developed a sticker with the new information that can be affixed to existing posters.

If you would like to receive a FMLA sticker for your existing English or Spanish posters, contact the RCA office at 1-800-847-5085 or info@retailcontractors.org.

RCA Safety Materials are a member benefit. Go to www.retailcontractors.org and click on Make an RCA E-Store Purchase Today in the RCA News section of the home page.

Membership Application Deadlines

The RCA Board of Directors reviews and approves membership applications at its regular meetings. Applications for membership to be considered by the Board at its December 2009 meeting must be submitted to the RCA office by November 18. Applications to be considered in March 2010 are due by February 17.

RCA has recently updated its requirements for bonding letters that are submitted with membership applications and renewals. A sample letter can be downloaded from www.retailcontractors.org on the “Membership Information” page.

RCA Communications

RCA is continuously taking advantage of the electronic age by providing most of its administrative and member service functions online and via email.

In addition to this printed newsletter, RCA distributes a monthly email bulletin with news and items of interest to our members and the industry. Please make sure we have your current email address so we can keep you informed.

Contact us at info@retailcontractors.org or 800-847-5085.