

Local women's construction association turns 50

By CARLOS RICO
The Daily Transcript

For the past 50 years in San Diego, a nonprofit, volunteer-based organization has helped advance women in the construction industry through education, networking and mentoring.

Now the San Diego Chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction will honor those who came before them, as well as future leaders, as the organization will be celebrating its 50th anniversary.

On Tuesday night, over 120 members, guest and sponsors will gather to celebrate the association's milestone at its annual awards dinner.

"I am humbled and honored to be apart of this association," said Anita Villani-Barnes, the chapter's current president. "It is an honor to be leading this (chapter) at this time. It's beyond my wildest dreams."

The national president of the association, Pat McDonald, will be on hand along with Oceanside Councilwoman Esther Sanchez and National City Councilwoman/Vice Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis.

In addition, 10 past chapter presidents will be on hand, including Patty Avallone, 1996-1997; Sallie Brannon, 1977-1978; Candace Friedman, 2000-2002; Rukhsana Hafeez, 2003-2005; Vera Howell, 2002-2003; Kris

Krosson, 1982-1983; Jan Parthemer, 1995-1996; Amber Schaefer-Smith, 2006-2007; Myrna Smith, 2007-2008; and Linda Young in 1989-1990, 1991-1992 and 2005-2006.

This year's special guest speaker will be Diane Keltner, founder and president of Synergy Electric of San Diego. She will also become the first female president of Associated General Contractors San Diego Chapter in the coming months.

This year's gala, which will be held at the Handlery Hotel, will also honor the NAWIC Member of the Year award and the Executive of the Year award.

These awards are given annually for

service in the local construction community.

The NAWIC Member of the Year award is based on the involvement in NAWIC functions and the nominee's overall level of participation, support of others and professionalism.

The Executive of the Year award is given to the nominee based on his or her involvement in the construction industry, advancement on construction quality and standards, involvement in legislative matters, education or scholarship, community involvement, fairness and equality in construction, support and professionalism.

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EcoBuild helps fire victims rebuild greener homes

By MONICA UNHOLD
The Daily Transcript

Fire victims shared lessons in rebuilding green with those gearing up to begin the process Saturday at EcoBuild, an event hosted by the California Center for Sustainable Energies.

Victims of the 2007 wildfires spoke about materials and design choices they employed to create more fire

process helped his family cope with the loss of their home.

"A lot of our healing process took place in getting started with the rebuilding process right away," Baker said.

When he began working on plans for his new home, Baker had no interest in green building.

"The only green I was interested in

and will often try to talk clients out of certain green building methods to cut costs. Homeowners have to remind contractors and themselves that a little extra time and money now will save a lot over the lifespan of the home, Lord said.

The panel discussion of fire survivors was part of a series of workshops held Saturday at the offices of the California

workshops for homeowners, approximately 50 materials suppliers, contractors and solar companies were present to meet with attendees.

The event was an opportunity to "reach out" to fire victims and help them through the green building process, said Lauri Walker, program manager of Rebuild San Diego for CCRSF.

NAWIC

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The event will also honor students that took place last month in educational competitions, including the Block Kids and CAD Drafting winners.

In addition, scholarship recipients will be announced for their work in the classroom pertaining to the construction industry.

The San Diego Chapter was chartered on April 30, 1959, and became the 21st chapter in the nation.

It is the oldest one in its region, which includes Southern California and Southern Nevada.

The longest member of the San Diego Chapter is Linda Young, who has been a part of the chapter for 24 years.

She has seen the chapter transform from one of mainly secretaries to members who are project managers, tradeswomen and professionals who are on the jobsite.

She said the chapter helped her learn skills such as teamwork, and allowed her to meet, network and make new friends from around the world, including England and South Africa, where NAWIC has international affiliates.

"NAWIC has helped me advance my

career in construction," said Young, who works for Countywide Metal & Fab and was the national president of NAWIC in 2002-2003. "I owe my career to NAWIC."

She also mentioned that, in her opinion, one of the most noteworthy projects that the San Diego Chapter has been a part of was about 20 years ago, when former President Jimmy Carter was in town with Habitat for Humanity and the association helped build over 100 homes in San Diego and Mexico.

Currently, the chapter has several committees geared toward the advancement of women in the industry and emphasizes heavily on education.

Throughout the year, the association holds various programs and competitions for students from elementary to high school, and also offers scholarships and job walks to give them an idea of what kinds of jobs await them in the industry.

Pat Brown, who is the chair of the anniversary/executive night committee, helped organize the annual dinner

along with seven other members. Brown said she was honored to be apart of this 50th anniversary celebration of the chapter.

"I feel very privileged to be a part of this celebration and this organization," the three-year member said. "I really feel like it's an organization that helps women in an industry who have been pigeon-holed ... it provides a service to young women coming into the industry to network, makes friends and mentor one another."

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