



The Unified Connection

Join as a Member

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2025 Design Build Forum

Denver, CO – The Unified Group's first Design Build Forum was a great success with over 40 attendees. The group shared best practices on the selling process for design build work, preconstruction and RFPs, transitioning from design build to plan spec, benefits of design build, and more. The collaborative, forward-thinking energy sparked new ideas.

"What a fantastic group of professionals - all collaborating to help one another achieve success, growth and innovation. It was an incredible experience and I am looking forward to seeing the progressive growth and changes implemented after this forum in the near future," stated Chris Neffendorf of General Sheet Metal.

The meeting began with a Customer Presentation example from Chad Wiegmann and Craig Ross of Wiegmann Associates, offering insight into their approach to winning projects. Chris Neffendorf, Mark Montgomery of Freije Engineered Solutions, and Justin Gray of Mechanical Service and Systems then shared successful Design Build Projects, showcasing innovative approaches across the industry. A key panel discussion followed on the benefits of design build work, why these projects are more profitable, and advice for those new to the process.

"I really like the passion and innovative ideas around delivering value in the design environment that was evident in every presentation, breakout and panel," stated Pansy Romo of Intech Mechanical.

Attendees also compared completed RFPs—two office buildings and a medical facility—choosing one per company and submitting them as if to their own customers. Members reviewed and discussed these during the meeting. Another highlight of day two was presentations from Wiegmann Associates and Legacy Mechanical on budgeting, tracking change, and managing scope creep to assure full compensation.

"If I didn't attend this meeting, I would have missed the understanding of different ways companies do and handle HVAC that is sometimes completely different than what I experience in my day to day," stated Michael Blanchard of Battaglia Industries.

Overall, the forum was filled with fresh ideas and great discussions, closing with a lively bocce ball tournament that added fun and friendly competition.



the
Unified GroupSM

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512 WEST BURLINGTON AVE.
SUITE 108
LA GRANGE, IL 60525
888.714.5990
THEUNIFIEDGROUP.COM

2025 CONSTRUCTION FORUM

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"One of the highlights from this forum was the common theme of strong culture and team first mentality among all of the companies in The Unified Group!"
-Jimmy Roth, General Sheet Metal



GENERAL SHEET METAL
Building Success Together



Gary Myers of Intech Mechanical at SMACNA

We're proud to recognize our member Gary Myers of Intech Mechanical, who attended SMACNA's Annual Convention in Maui and is SMACNA's 2025-2026 Executive Committee Vice President. Congratulations, Gary! An amazing accomplishment and well deserved.

Become a Member of The Unified Group!



Contact Janet Kelleher,
Executive Director

at (708) 356-5087 or
kelleherj@theunifiedgroup.com
for details about membership!



2026 Professional Development

1

2026 Service Management Forum

January 21-24 | Fort Worth, TX
MC: Andy Gura, Blauch Brothers

2

2026 Annual Meeting & Owners' Forum

February 22-26 | Cancun, Mexico
MC: Jaime Quello, Peterson Sheet Metal

3

2026 Sales Forum

March 29- April 1 | Chicago, IL
MC: Grant Wiegmann, Wiegmann Associates

4

2026 Controls Forum

May 3-6 | Chicago, IL
MC: Mark Heikkila, Peterson Sheet Metal

5

2026 Financial Forum

August 9-12 | Denver, CO
MC: TBD

6

2026 Construction Forum

September 30- October 3 | Billings, MT
*Tour of Air Controls
MC: Mike Keenan, VHV Company

7

2026 Technicians Forum

November 1-4 | Fort Worth, TX
MC: Frank Quintanar, J&J Air Conditioning



VHV Company Receives Award



VHV Company's Safety Manager, Erica Peet, attended the Vermont Safety and Health Council's 29th Annual Safety Expo on 10/31/25 at the Killington Grand Hotel, where she accepted VHV's Silver Worksite Wellness Award! VHV is honored to be recognized for their commitment to safety and wellness in the workplace.



2025 Safety Forum Highlights



Denver, CO- Nearly 20 attendees came together to attend The Unified Group's 2025 Safety Forum at The Rally Hotel from October 19th to October 22nd. Members shared best practices on everything from fostering a genuine safety culture to defining and upholding non-negotiable standards, aligning service and construction safety expectations, and beyond.

"The highlight of this forum was reconnecting with this group and getting their unique insights as well as knowing we are not alone in our struggles and frustrations," said Melissa Melendez of Intech Mechanical.

On day one we had the pleasure of hearing from Becca Aven, a Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Clinical Anxiety Treatment Professional based in Aledo & Willow Park, TX. Becca led a powerful session on mental health in the workplace, focusing on how to handle distressing calls, keeping composure while deescalating tense situations,

having the right resources available to provide support, and taking the appropriate next steps when challenges arise. Her session sparked meaningful, open discussions among members about how to better recognize and respond to mental health challenges within their teams. Participants shared their own experiences, strategies, and ideas for creating safer, more supportive work environments, emphasizing that prioritizing mental health isn't just important, it's essential to strong leadership and company culture.

Attendees began Day 2 with small group discussions on managing distractions and their effects on focus, risk, and performance. We then moved into several panels, including One Safety Policy; Aligning Service and Construction Standards, EMR/Workers' Comp, and Establishing Disciplinary Pathways. A major highlight was Frank Quintanar, Chris Sandoval, and Alejandro Cortes of J&J Air Conditioning sharing how they identify and empower safety champions in both the field and office. We also heard impactful presentations from John Whitehurst of Cox-Powell and Ken McFadden of Legacy Mechanical on creating clear disciplinary pathways and implementing effective corrective action.

"Exchanging best ideas and what works for others is always super beneficial, gets me excited to go back to work and start using some of these suggestions," stated Erica Peet of VHV Company.



J&J Air Conditioning Member Spotlight



J&J Air Conditioning, founded in the late 1970s by Jerry Hurwitz and John Jones, has grown from a small residential and commercial business into a thriving company built on integrity, loyalty, and care for its team. Even as the company evolved, its core values remained the same, fostering a culture where about 50% of office staff have been with the company for over 25 years.

James Sandoval and Frank Quintanar, now President and VP/Service Manager, continue to carry forward this legacy.

The company culture emphasizes genuine care, respect, and loyalty, with a strong focus on growing from within. J&J invests in employees with little experience, helping them develop their strengths and advance in their careers. Integrity and honesty are at the heart of the organization, creating a workplace where support flows both ways and long-term relationships thrive.

Looking ahead, J&J is excited about completing its BuildOps implementation and staying ahead of rapidly changing technology. The company sees opportunities in negotiated work, long-term contracts, and continued growth in its niche. With a dedicated team and strong leadership, J&J is well-positioned to maintain its reputation for excellence while exploring new possibilities.

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DECEMBER 2025

Buildops
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