

North American Microtunneling Association Seeks to Improve the Industry

By Thomas L. Rosenberg



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Contractors have come together this year to create the North American Microtunneling Association to advance the interests of contractors heavily involved in microtunneling work in North America. Approximately 14 contractors, led by Executive Director Timothy J. Coss of Microtunneling Inc., have joined together to create the association. NAMA, as it is referred to, seeks to promote interaction, dialogue and education to its members and to the public on issues of importance to microtunneling contractors in North America.

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Any microtunneling contractor with offices in North America can apply for membership. Membership is limited to contractors with demonstrated microtunneling experience.

Among the key issues that NAMA is currently focused on include requirements for line and grade, creation of appropriate standards for jacking pipe, assisting with the development of appropriate contract specifications that are tailored to microtunneling as opposed to general tunnel specifications, reaching consensus with owners and engineers when NAMA contends that improper means, methods and machine requirements are being dictated by others, establishing reasonable requirements for obstruction removal and risk sharing on obstruction issues, qualifying engineering firms with experience to design and engineer microtunneling projects, addressing the continued use of contractor prequalification in order to make sure that appropriate and not onerous pre-qualification is utilized, and identifying procedures for establishing legitimate differing site conditions.

NAMA is also uniquely interested in working with the American Society of Civil Engineers on its creation of Standard Construction Guidelines for Microtunneling and has reached out to ASCE in order to provide input

and hopefully be a partner in the creation of its guidelines. Many NAMA members contend that a legitimate, reasonable and proper set of Standard Construction Guidelines for Microtunneling can be created if all representatives of the microtunneling industry work together in doing so. NAMA members often express concern when specifications are drafted without the input of the contractor industry because the contractors clearly have a lot to add on this subject. This is especially so as new methods of microtunneling enter the North American market such as curved drive and other methods of production.

Among the contractors involved in NAMA are Bradshaw Construction, BRH Garver, BT Trenchless, Frank Coluccio Construction Co., Cruz Construction, Huxted Tunneling, J.W. Fowler Co., Michels Corp., NADA Pacific, Northeast Remsco, Northwest Boring, Secac Tunnel Co., Super Excavators and Vandais Corp.

Coss has been selected to serve as executive director of NAMA. The association is governed by an Executive Board consisting of Ray Post of Michels Corp., Don Gonzales of Northwest Boring, Paul Vadnais of Vadnais Corp., Rich Palmer of Northeast Remsco and Larry Tomforde of NADA Pacific. Tom Rosenberg of the law firm of Roetzel & Andress LPA in Columbus, Ohio, is general counsel to NAMA. NAMA meets several times a year. In 2012, it has met in February in Golden, Colo., in March in Nashville, Tenn., and in June in Indianapolis, Ind. Additional meetings shall be scheduled by the Executive Board.

NAMA is currently working on its website and preparing for its next meeting scheduled to occur in September 2012, in Golden, Colo. Information regarding membership in NAMA can be obtained from Timothy Coss at timcoss@microtunneling.com.

Thomas L. Rosenberg serves as general counsel for the North American Microtunneling Association and is a partner in the national law firm of Roetzel & Andress LPA. He is resident in its Columbus, Ohio, office. He is ranked in many national publications as a leading construction lawyer and represents tunnel contractors throughout the United States. More information about Rosenberg can be found on his law firm's website located at www.ralaw.com.

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