



Lean Construction Institute

Building Knowledge in Design and Construction

Today is tax day for most of us (some of us call it “extension day”). It’s the time of the year we have the great privilege of contributing to greater good of the commonweal. At least that’s the concept. Most of us probably have one degree or more of disagreement with tax policy, government policy and we all have differing views on the benefits we receive for our tax dollars. At base, tax collection is the means by which the government is funded to do for us or to us the variety of things on its agenda.

It’s appropriate to reference tax policy as we send out our renewal notices to our members. You may have received a notice from Shannyn Heyer-Cardin, the cute, perky mother of three who is solely responsible for getting our financial house in order. She and Donna Pemberton have spent the last year implementing Salesforce.com, a customer relationship management data base that is powerful and is provided free to non-profits like ourselves. All of our membership records are now being managed on Salesforce.com. Our dedicated staff has incorporated all of the renewal dates and other information into the database so that it can automatically remind us when members should be billed. Because this process took us almost a year to complete, many of you may feel like you’re getting notices from the IRS when your email contains a request for payment of your annual dues for LCI.

In fact, our interim Chair of the Board, Victor Sanvido and his company Southland Industries, were caught in just such a snafu this week. Our traditional way of billing members for renewal was based on the anniversary date of their membership. If you originally paid your dues on April 17, 2003, your membership was good for one year and your renewal was due by April 18, 2004. Given that we had a coffee pot, a membership program that went bankrupt 7 years ago and the kind-hearted bookkeeping services of Mrs. Howell, we were not completely confident that our records were complete. We are now completely confident that everyone is entered into the records, we have information regarding last payments and we’re on track to get into a cycle of renewals that will better accommodate the way most Americans and their companies pay their bills.

But in the interim, like Victor, you may wonder why you are being billed 9 months into your membership cycle, only to be billed in another 3 months for next year? The basic explanation is that you’ve received the benefits for membership for this year and we were not in a position to create necessary invoices for renewal until the first of this year. If you are in the “S-s” your invoice would have been created later in this cycle. Alberici’s invoice was created very early in the new year; I don’t want Turner to be surprised if their invoice comes next week.

This effort is all part of our continuing efforts to raise the level of service, influence, professionalism and gravitas of LCI. We’ve done it so far with Shannyn, Donna and myself on the admin side and Greg continuing to forge new trails for us around the world. There may be some pain in all of this and doubtless, its more administrative angst than we would like to go



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through. But we are trying to lean the process up, we're trying to standardize our work rather than continue to use workarounds and we're pretty confident we're moving in the right direction.

In fact, our agreements with AGC and AIA this year, our continued strong partnership with CURT and other organizations, our discussions with SMACNA and DBIA in the next few weeks and the power and influence of our new board all indicate we are heading in the right direction. Please be patient with Shannyn as she seeks to collect our renewals, continues to drive our receivables down and funds the work that we're doing to make LCI the voice of lean in construction and design. Our mission is no less than to transform the industry—I hope you'll agree that we're doing better at accomplishing our mission than the government is at accomplishing theirs.