

4th Qtr  
2025

# INDIANA LICA NEWS

**DON'T MISS THIS YEARS CONVENTION ENTERTAINMENT!**

## 2025 INLICA Officers

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219-204-2572

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47957  
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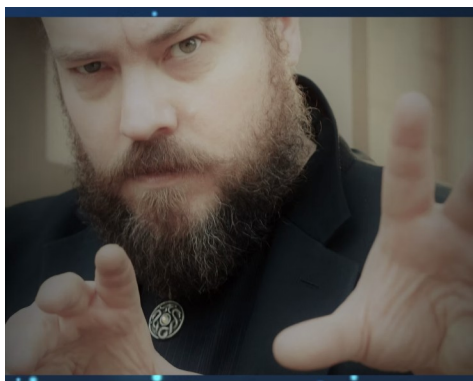
### Executive Director

Nanci Gutwein  
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For more than 20 years, the award-winning mentalism of Jym Elders has been amazing corporate and college audiences from New York to Los Angeles to Calgary and everywhere in between. Having a life-long fascination with the paranormal and all things mysterious, Jym Elders utilizes his background in psychology, theater and magic to create a show that is both mesmerizing and memorable.

Considered to be one of the more comedic mentalists working today, clients often remark of Jym that it was like having both a mentalist AND a comedian all in one!



This years Awards Banquet, Entertainment and Auction will be on Friday evening. The perfect opportunity for a date night! Bring your significant other and plan for a delicious meal and great entertainment!

## A Word from our President

Hello Fellow INLICA Contractors,

Winter is here in full swing! Mother Nature is definitely letting us know who is in charge. I hope everyone is doing well and staying warm in these frigid temperatures. Our OSHA training has been re-scheduled for Jan 6 th & 7 th . We hope to see as many of you at this training as possible. Please bring your employees to get certified and receive a 10-hour OSHA training card. Please plan on attending our winter convention in Carmel at the Renaissance Marriott, Jan 28-30th. Wednesday's agenda is a QuickBooks Workshop. Bring your wife, secretary or employee for some good training and discussions. We can all share our experiences with others. On Thursday, we will be learning about several of the LICA benefits. First up, there will be a CDL Training program discussion. Come learn how to train your own employees at a much lower cost. Following that, will be how to create your own safety manual. Come learn all about the many benefits the Zywave Portal has to offer. You will be amazed at all it has to offer; I know I was! Bring your wife or significant other. Ladies will be pampered this year with a Salt Cave Experience! There will be free hearing tests for all in attendance. 811 Online Ticketing tutorial by some of our tech-savvy members. There will also be a session about the Best Business Practices program. Also, please come prepared to fill out the NRCS pricing survey. There will be a drawing for a \$100 gift card to be taken home by one lucky contractor who takes the time to fill out the survey at the convention. There will be a trade show, dart tournament, awards, banquet, and of course world-class entertainment by Jym Elders - Mentalist. An auction will be held to raise money for the Ladies Scholarship program. I promise you won't be disappointed. I was honored to help Mike Frey and several other INLICA members present a check to Indiana Donor Network for \$22,000. The donation was able to be made with the proceeds we raised from last year's awesome auction. We're so proud of what Mike and Becky do for the Indiana Donor Network and many other charities they are involved in. Summer INLICA Field Day/National Summer Meeting is scheduled for the week of July 20th . I hope to see all of our great members get involved in this spectacular educational event. I hope to see you all in Carmel at the Convention. Merry Christmas! Remember Jesus is The Reason for the Season!

Keith Miller  
Indiana LICA President

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### 2025

**December 31—Due date for INLICA Memberships**

### 2026

**January 6 &7—OSHA 10 Hour Course, Lafayette IN**

**January 28-30th— INLICA Winter Convention Renaissance Marriott, Carmel IN**

**February 28-March 2nd- National Winter Convention –Harrah's Las Vegas**

**March 3-7—Con Expo— Las Vegas NV**

**Week of July 20th—INLICA Field Day/National LICA Summer Meeting**

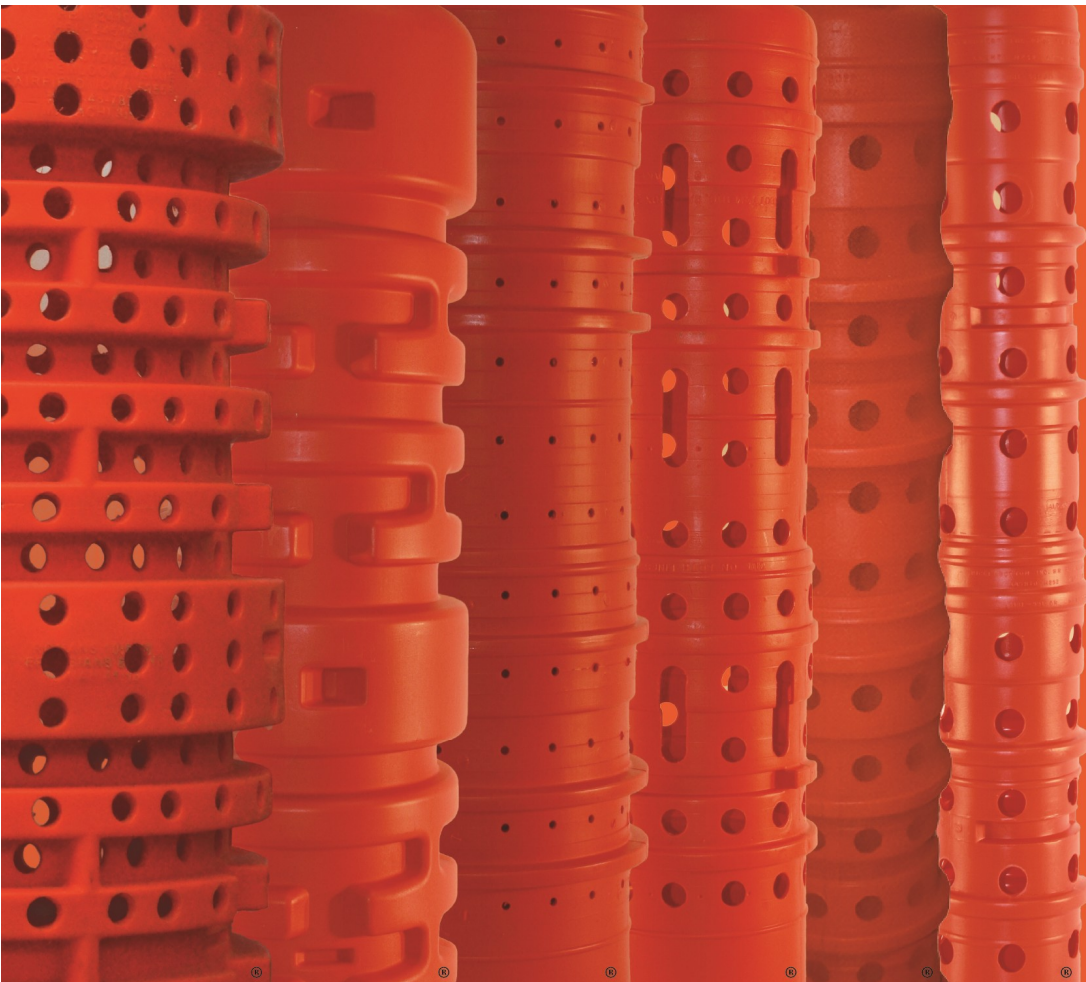
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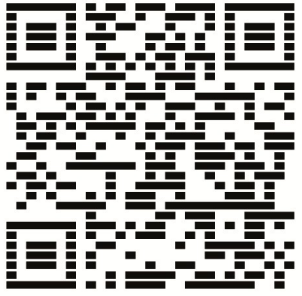


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## 2026 Indiana LICA State Convention Schedule

### **Wednesday, January 28th**

President, Keith Miller Presiding

8:00-9:00 AM Registration and  
Grab and Go Breakfast

9:00 AM Quickbooks Workshop  
(Ed Hensley, CPA)

12:00 Lunch

*Lunch Provided by Marathon Pipeline*

1:00-4:00 PM Quickbooks Workshop

5:00 PM Board of Directors Meeting

7:00-9:00 PM Vendor Set-Up

### **Thursday, January 29th**

Treasurer, Chris Smidler Presiding

8:00-9:00 AM Registration and  
Buffet Breakfast  
**TRADE SHOW**

9:00 AM 2026 Field Day Overview  
(All Associates wanting to participate  
please attend)

10:00AM Utilize your Benefits/CDL Training  
Course Information

(Allison Hack/Caroline Krug National LICA)

11:00 AM Creating Your Own Safety Manual  
(Allison Hack National LICA)

12:00 PM Lunch

Associate Introductions  
**TRADE SHOW**

### **Thursday Continued**

1:30 PM History & Development of Drainage  
Machinery

(Peter Darbashire, Drainage Contractor)

2:30 PM Annual Board Meeting –*Forsyth*

Associates Meeting –*Trade Show Hall*

3:30 **TRADE SHOW**

4:30 PM History of the Double Link Plow

(Peter Darbashire, Drainage Contractor)

Or

Drain Tile Coalition–IN811 Efforts

(Deanne Centurion, Drain Tile Coalition)

5:30 **TRADE SHOW**

6:00 PM Social/Heavy Appetizers

Registration for Darts Tournament

7:00 PM Darts Tournament

Hospitality

### **Friday, January 30th**

President, Keith Miller Presiding

HEARING TESTING WILL BE CONDUCTED  
THROUGHOUT THE DAY—Make sure you are  
registered with a time slot!

8:00 AM Breakfast Buffet

9:00 AM NRCS Updates

(Mike Cox, Scott Wagner NRCS)

9:30 AM Ladies Salt Cave Experience

(All ladies participating please meet in the hotel  
lobby)

### **Friday Continued**

President, Keith Miller Presiding

10:00 AM Best Business Practices

Creating Change Orders

Dealing with Slow Pay

Q & A Session

(Quint Schambaugh, Pinion Global)

11:00 AM **TRADE SHOW**

12:00 PM Lunch

*Lunch Provided by Baughman Tile*

1:00 Indiana 811 Online Ticketing  
Tutorial

2:00 PM Wealth Management

(Cully Day, Busey Bank)

3:00 PM **TRADE SHOW**

5:00PM Social

5:30 PM Awards Banquet

6:00PM Dinner

*Dinner Provided by FRATCO*

ENTERTAINMENT FOLLOWING DINNER

AUCTION FOLLOWING ENTERTAINMENT

Hospitality to End Evening

Hearing Tests located in \_\_\_\_\_  
Trade Show and Meals located in  
Carmel Ballroom.

As a reminder, convention isn't just for the contractor. Your employees need to be educated as well! Employees are welcome to attend convention at member pricing. Many of you have office staff, the QuickBooks seminar has been designed for them. You are welcome to send your office staff for even just the one-day session. Same goes for your wives. There is a Thursday activity planned JUST FOR THEM. Please feel free to contact Nanci if you will be bringing any children along. We have special pricing for the kids, and if enough are in attendance, we can plan special activities just for them! If you utilize a laptop, it would be helpful for you to bring it along to convention with you. Especially for the QuickBooks Seminar and to fill out the pricing survey (Your chance to win \$100 Cash!)



INLICA MEMBER/Spouse/Employee Convention Registration
Indiana LICA State Convention
Renaissance Marriott Indianapolis North, CARMEL IN
January 28th-30th

Name:
Address:
City, State, & Zip: Phone:

Table with 4 columns: ENTIRE CONVENTION, Postmarked January 10, Postmarked After January 10, Total Cost. Row 1: Per person, Includes All Meals, Sessions, Exhibit Hall, Awards banquet, Entertainment and Auction. Prices: \$250.00 and \$275.00.

Single Day Attendance: Per Person

Table with 3 columns: Activity Description, Price 1, Price 2. Rows include: Wednesday QuickBooks Seminar Only, Thursday Day Program Only, Thursday Evening Only, All Day Thursday, Friday Day Program, Friday Evening Only, All Day Friday.

Children 4 - 10 yrs. 1/2 price, 3 and under free

TOTAL COST:

List Name of Each Person Attending:

Three sets of horizontal lines for listing names.

YES, I will be attending the ladies activities (Name)

YES, I will be needing a child(s) meal for the Thursday evening meal (# of kids meals)

BE ON THE WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS REGARDING CONVENTION PROGRAMMING!



# 2026 National LICA



# Winter Convention

February 28 - March 2 | Harrah's Casino Hotel | Las Vegas

## Saturday, February 28

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm Executive Committee

## Sunday, March 1

7:00 am - 6:00 pm Committee Meetings

1:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm Executive Directors

6:00 pm DINNER ON YOUR OWN

8:00 pm - 10:00 pm Associates' Night

## Monday, March 2

8:00 am Breakfast

9:00 am - 10:00 am Delegates' Meeting

10:00 am - 12:00 pm Board Meeting

6:00 pm - 10:00 pm Reception & Awards Banquet

## Winter Convention Registration Includes

Registration provides access to all meal functions, Associates' Night, committee meetings, and the Board & Delegates' Meetings.

Upon check-in, each registered member will receive a name badge and program. The name badge serves as your official admission ticket and must be worn for entry into all convention events.

For a list of committees and their functions, please visit [LICANational.org](http://LICANational.org).

## Attire

The attire for our Winter Convention is mostly casual. Members do wear "dressier" attire for the Awards Banquet Monday evening. Slacks, dresses, and nice shoes are often worn, but not required.

## Associates' Night (Exhibition)

**Sunday, March 1st - 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm**

**Hosted bar service (no meal included)**

Join us for Associates Night, an exciting evening of networking and innovation! This event offers a perfect opportunity to connect and explore the latest products and technologies presented by our esteemed Associates.

While the event features a bar service only, you can enjoy a delightful dinner beforehand at one of the many nearby dining options.

Don't miss out on this unique chance to mingle and stay ahead with the latest industry trends!



Join us from March 3-7, 2026, at Conexpo Con/ Agg! Explore a vast array of equipment and services from 2,000 exhibitors across more than 2.9 million square feet of exhibit space.

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# 2026 National LICA



# Winter Convention

February 28 - March 2 | Harrah's Casino Hotel | Las Vegas

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

EARLY Bird Rate Postmarked by February 13, 2026	Price	# Attending	Total
Contractor Member, Spouse or Associate Member. Includes: Associates' Night, Sunday Lunch, Monday Breakfast, Reception & Awards Banquet	\$425.00		
Youth: 13 Years & Under	FREE		
Registration Postmarked After February 13, 2026			
Contractor Member, Spouse or Associate Member. Includes: Associates' Night, Sunday Lunch, Monday Breakfast, Reception & Awards Banquet	\$475.00		
Youth: 13 Years & Under	FREE		
Total:	\$		

### Hotel Information

#### Harrah's Las Vegas

3475 S Las Vegas Blvd; Las Vegas, NV 89109

\$171/night (plus taxes & resort fees)

**Reserve by: Wednesday, January 28th**

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Use group code: LICA-Winter 2026 OR SHLIC6

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **National LICA Welcomes Dennis Mikula, Jr. as New Chief Executive Officer**

*Seasoned industry leader and business executive to begin January 1, 2026*

**Lisle, Illinois** — November 18, 2025— The National Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dennis Mikula, Jr., as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective January 1, 2026.

Mikula joins National LICA with nearly three decades of leadership experience in the land improvement, construction, and business sectors. As President of Mikula Contracting, Inc., a third-generation, family-owned excavation, demolition, and environmental services company established in 1946, he has guided the organization through consistent growth while modernizing operations with technology and best practices. Mikula will assume the role of Chairman of Mikula Contracting as he commences his duties as CEO of National LICA.

Under his leadership, Mikula Contracting has earned multiple honors, including being named New Jersey Family Business of the Year (2020) by Fairleigh Dickinson University's Rothman Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The company has also received numerous NJLICA Safety Awards and Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ) "Companies That Care" Awards for community outreach.

Currently serving as President of the New Jersey Land Improvement Contractors of America (NJLICA), Mikula has been a vocal advocate for contractors and the broader construction industry. He also has an extensive history of civic and business leadership through his roles on the Executive Boards of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey, Meadowlands Chamber of Commerce, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center Foundation, and the New Jersey Policy Research Organization (NJPRO).

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mikula is deeply committed to community service and mentorship. He helps coordinate the Meadowlands Chamber Basket Brigade Program, providing Thanksgiving meals to over 300 families each year. He also continues to mentor young professionals, a passion shaped by more than 20 years of coaching high school and college football.

"I'm honored to serve as CEO of National LICA at such a pivotal moment for our industry and our association," said Mikula. "We have an opportunity to modernize our structure, strengthen national-state alignment, and deliver even greater value to our members nationwide. I'm committed to leading with transparency, collaboration, and a bold vision that positions LICA as the nation's top voice for land improvement and conservation."

National LICA President Jeff Schell said, "Dennis brings a rare blend of operational excellence, industry leadership, and community spirit. His experience leading a family-owned contracting business and his deep roots in the LICA network make him uniquely qualified to guide our organization into its next chapter."

Mikula lives in New Jersey with his wife, Diana, and their daughter, Lucy.

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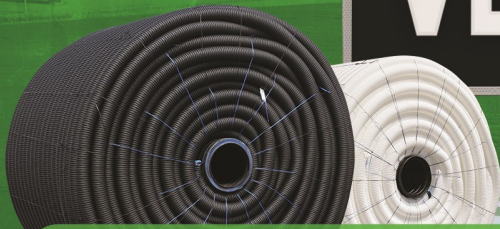
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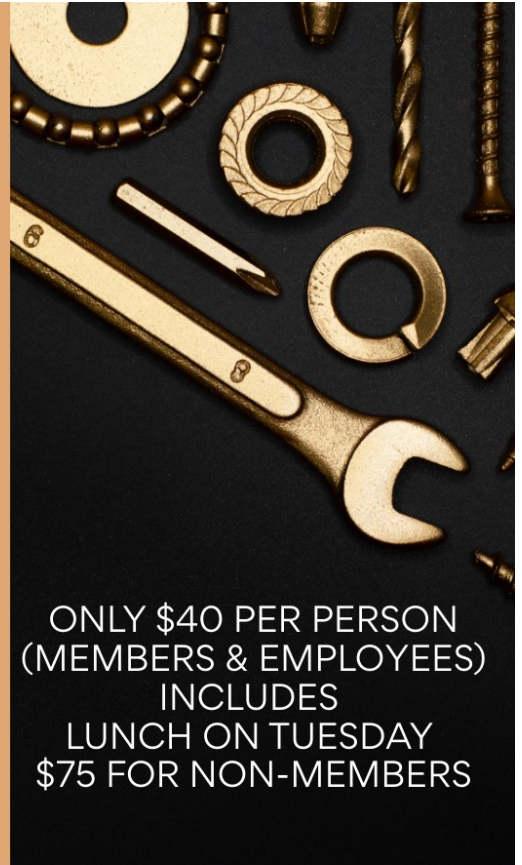
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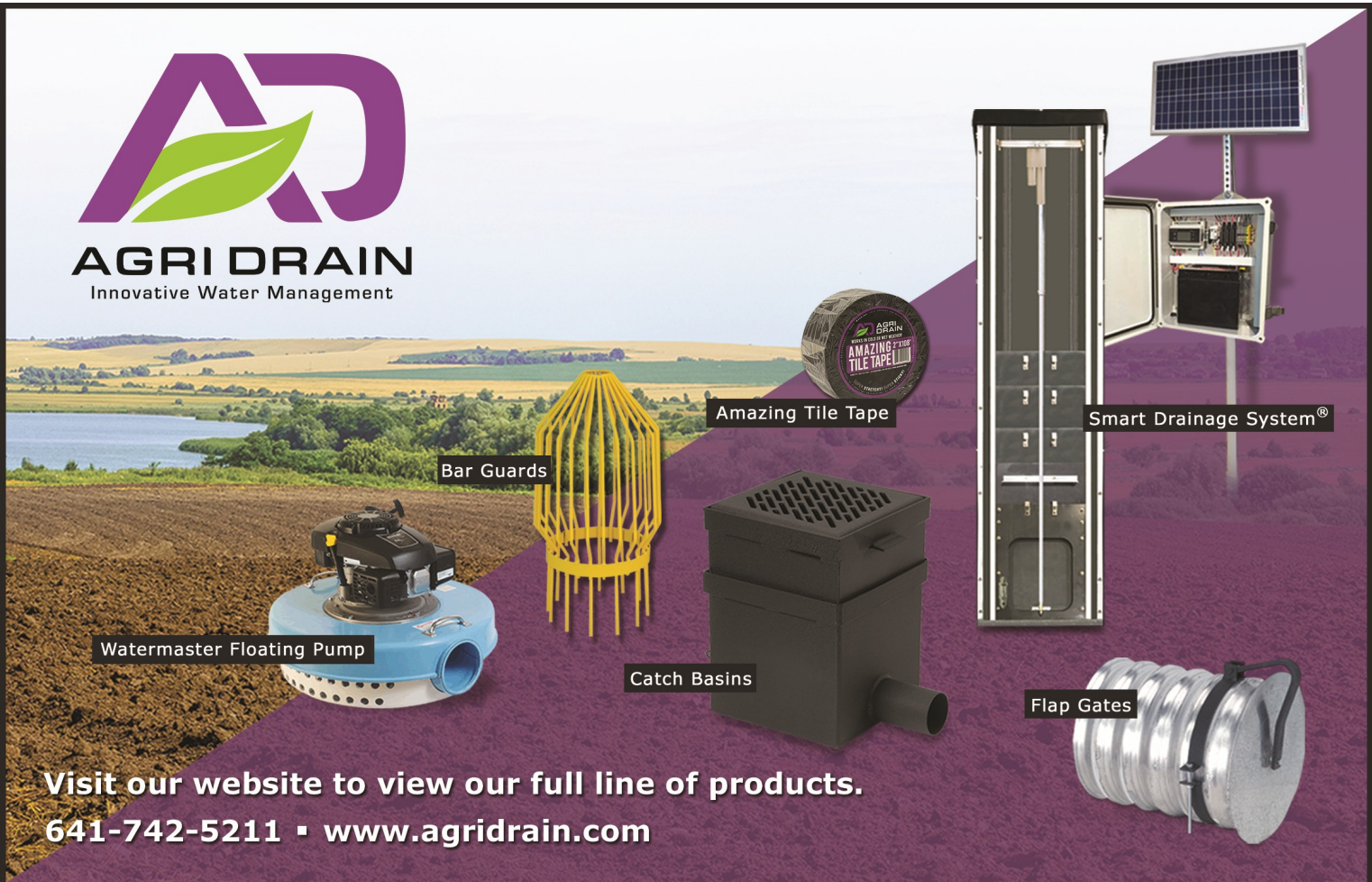
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# MAKING SENSE OF SOLAR REMEDIATION

Rapid growth in solar projects brings the potential for problems, but lessons learned from pipeline and wind energy projects can help head off those concerns. Written by Gail Keck



The [Ohio Power Siting Board](#) approved the state's first utility-scale solar development only five years ago, and since then dozens more projects have been approved, and staff has been added to help oversee those projects at the [Public Utilities Commission of Ohio](#).

Additional projects that fall below the siting board's 50-megawatt permit threshold are being installed as well. This rapid growth brings the potential for problems, but lessons learned from pipeline and wind energy projects can help head off those concerns, said Ken Niese, a farmer and drainage contractor turned energy project consultant. Landowners, neighbors and local officials all have a role to play, he explained. "We're all learning new tricks."

The PUCO has also been devoting more staff resources to solar projects as the number of projects grows. Matt Butler, a program administrator with PUCO, explained that investigative staff members have been added to help the Ohio Power Siting Board review applications as they're submitted. And, a new compliance department has been formed. The PUCO has always monitored projects during construction and operation but the new department will focus on nothing other than compliance, Butler said. "This is the first time we've had dedicated staff."

## Get involved in solar projects early, stay involved

Butler encourages local officials and landowners to get involved with the permitting process from the beginning. "Oftentimes the local landowners are going to know more about a particular farm than the developer." The siting board's review process offers multiple [opportunities for involvement](#), starting with public information meetings. Anyone can offer input by sending in comments on a project or speaking at a public hearing, he pointed out.

During construction and after a project goes into operation, community members can still offer input. A complaint resolution process is included as part of every project approved by the OPSB, Butler explained. The first step in resolving a complaint is to contact the company. Companies must file a report on complaint management to the OPSB every quarter, he said. Then, if complaints are not resolved by the company, they can be taken directly to the OPSB compliance staff.

Niese and his consulting business partner, Paul Pullins, have been working with companies, landowners and local officials to prevent and resolve issues with solar developments. Their consulting company, [Agricultural Environmental Drainage Services](#), has worked on pipeline, wind and solar developments. In addition to consulting work, Niese farms with his family and helps operate a drainage business based in Shelby, Ohio. Pullins works with his own family running a farming operation and drainage business near Quincy.

Some solar developers initially lacked understanding of the state's weather and soils, which contributed to problems with some projects, said Niese. For instance, one project currently has water pooling on the site. "They've got water boiling to the surface," he said. The site needs additional drainage work, but contractors are reluctant to take on the job because of the liability and complicated nature of working around solar panels.



Here's an example of a solar installation that has disrupted drain tile due to poor site preparation. The PUCO has devoted more resources to help the Ohio Power Siting Board's compliance section address complaints. *NOTE: This photo and the featured image for this story are taken from a project that falls below the 50 megawatt threshold where the OPSB would have jurisdiction.*

That example shows how important it is to protect existing drainage systems during installation or make improvements before installation. Paying for drainage from the beginning reduces costs in the long run, Pullins pointed out. "The more problems they can avoid now, the lower the bill will be in the end." Unfortunately, some solar projects have been sold and information about drainage needs wasn't passed on to the new owners, he added.

Lack of understanding on the part of landowners may also lead to problems, said Niese. In particular, landowners who are a generation or two removed from farming may not know what to ask for in solar leases to protect the land.

Often a project will raise concerns from people who are not directly involved with the project because their farmland drains through the site, added Niese. Residential properties adjacent to solar developments also can be affected.

Local government officials are facing a steep learning curve related to solar projects as well. Ohio Senate Bill 52, which was enacted in 2021, gives county and township officials greater control over the development of solar projects, but they may have little experience, Niese said.

Niese added he's especially concerned about how local officials will handle projects that aren't required to get OPSB approval because they're smaller than the siting board's 50-megawatt permit threshold. "Those projects I'm really worried about."

### **Heading off solar headaches**

As they've worked on solar development issues, Ken Niese and Paul Pullins, both with Agricultural Environmental Drainage Services, have seen what it takes to forge agreements that are fair to landowners as well as solar companies. The key is balancing the needs of everyone involved, said Pullins. "There's a fine line that still protects both sides."

For anyone involved with project negotiations, they offer this advice:

#### **Involve everyone**

Lack of communication between landowners, neighbors, community leaders and company officials can lead to hard feelings and misinformation. Social media rants can add to misunderstandings, Pullins said. Instead, open discussions with everyone affected can help resolve concerns at the beginning of the process. The permitting process for projects larger than 50 megawatts also provides multiple opportunities for people to offer input.

#### **Ask questions**

Pullins suggests writing out a list of concerns, setting the list aside, and then writing out a second list a few days later. After a few more days, write out your concerns yet again. Thinking over the situation over a period of time will help you compile a more complete list of concerns. And all of those concerns need to be addressed in whatever agreement you make.

#### **Consult independent experts**

Landowners and local officials may be faced with making decisions about solar projects without the experience to make informed decisions. Working with a consultant with specialized expertise can help, explained Niese. For instance, a drainage consultant can map out existing tile systems and work with solar company engineers on project designs. "The main goal is to make sure the area that's already tiled stays tiled with the existing system or gets a new system that's equivalent to what they already had."

#### **Get it in writing**

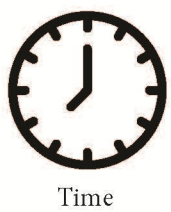
Don't rely on verbal agreements, Pullins warned. "Nothing is any good unless it's in writing." Having documentation can be particularly important if a solar project is sold.

#### **Hire an experienced attorney**

Not every attorney has the experience to deal with energy lease contracts, Niese stressed. Hiring an experienced attorney will be expensive, Pullins added, but the cost is worth it. "You'll think you're paying an arm and a leg, but it'll save that arm and leg from being amputated down the road."



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