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Workforce Development is the Cornerstone of a Robust Aggregates Industry *Empowering Workers is Key Ingredient of Success*

AUSTIN, Texas [June 18, 2024] – The Texas Aggregates & Concrete Association (TACA) welcomed more than 600 attendees to its 70th Annual Meeting June 12 - 14 at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa. The theme this year was “Preserving a Strong Foundation” – to support an enduring commitment to the environment, as well as fostering a workforce that will carry the industry far into the future.

Outgoing TACA Chairman Kevin Kipp, Few Ready Mix Concrete Co., noted the thinking behind the theme. “‘Preserving a Strong Foundation’ pays homage to those who have committed to preserving the environment – well before conservation was in the spotlight,” said Kipp. “And it underscores one of our most important assets: our people, who will lay the foundation for the next 70 years.”

A highlight of the conference was the keynote from Aaron Witt, “Chief Dirt Nerd” of BuildWitt, a marketing, media and software business dedicated to helping the Dirt World overcome its workforce challenges, which are real, considering that 40 percent of the construction industry and 50 percent of the mining industry are now retiring.

“Rather than view this as a catastrophe, we can think of this as the biggest opportunity we’ve had in a long time,” said Witt. “By focusing on being a ‘Best in Class’ company that attracts the right workforce, we can perform better and serve humanity better. ‘Best in Class’ companies take an active role in their future. When needed, they are not reluctant to change course,” he said.

Witt outlined the characteristics of a winning company. 1) They train all day long. It is worked into their cultures...brick by brick by brick. They train their front-line leadership, and their front-line leadership has great attitudes. 2) They have non-stop communication. They talk to each other all day long, not just a 40-minute safety meeting in the morning. 3) They take pride in every single detail of their business – from how it looks to how it performs. 4) Their teams have a genuine sense of humility. They care about their workers and are not afraid to show it. But they can also say, “Maybe there’s a better way to do it. Let’s pivot.”

TACA President & CEO Josh Leftwich agreed that workforce development is essential to the industry’s success. “Workforce development is not just about individual skill-building; it is also about nurturing a resilient, adaptable and forward-thinking workforce that serves as the backbone of a thriving aggregates industry,” said Leftwich. “Robust workforce development is sculpting a future where every stone of potential is meticulously honed to ensure a strong, resilient workforce ever-ready to build a strong Texas.”

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TACA members also heard from Vance Ginn, Ph.D., Vance Ginn Economic Consulting, on how policy uncertainty drives economic volatility in an election year; Robert Mineo II, PE, LEED AP, Managing Director, FMI Capital Advisors, on the impact of economics and drivers for construction materials on the current market; Aaron Demerson, President & CEO, Texas Economic Development Corporation, on how Texas is an economic powerhouse; and Libby Pritchard, Director, Occupational Health, Safety and Sustainability, National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, on total worker health.

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About TACA

The Texas Aggregates & Concrete Association (TACA) is the main resource for the aggregate, concrete, cement and other associated industries in Texas. The association represents its member companies by providing industry information to the public, media, policymakers and regulators; advocating for industry issues; ensuring member companies commit to conducting business with integrity, respect, transparency and honest communication; and creating industry training courses and materials that help members effectively manage their businesses.