

WACE CODE WORD

Washington Association of Code Enforcement Newsletter

December 2019

President's Message December 2019

It's been said a time, or two, "Actions speak louder than words." But our words still matter, and we should choose them carefully.

Our actions reinforce what we say. Sometimes the words haven't yet formed, and our brains have transitioned from thought to action.

In the Fall of 2018, I transitioned from being the secretary of the WACE organization to the president. During that time all code enforcement officers struggled with the reality of the violence that was perpetrated on our colleagues. I responded with the WACE board's commitment to promote and provide officer safety training for our membership.

During 2019, your WACE board planned and provided officer safety training at both our spring conference, which had a record attendance, as well as our fall conference, again with record numbers of code enforcement officers attending. Your actions spoke volumes. WACE members asked for professional training in officer safety and wellness/resilience. The WACE board honored the request and will continue to honor the requests of our members to the best of our ability.

I am now asking for your actions. First, please practice what you learned from instructors Jesus Villahermosa and Seth Hanson. Second, if you need equipment that you believe would keep you safer, please ask for it. Appeal to your management or risk management. It is far more important that we go home at the end of our shifts and it is far less expensive for our employers to provide for tools for us to do our jobs safely than the alternative. Finally, I ask that you forward your training suggestions to Tammy Engel, 1st Vice President, tengel@co.pacific.wa.us especially if you have a resource for the training. I am encouraging each member to make it a personal priority to work safely. I am encouraged by our board leadership's dedication and all "those" members that contribute to our professional development. Yes, you know who "those people" are, their actions spoke volumes. Now it's your turn!!

Liz Krzyminski, WACE President.

Take care and be safe out there!

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2019 Election Results

President - Liz Krzyminski - City of Seattle

1st Vice President - Tammy Engel - Pacific County

2nd Vice President - Jerry Breazeal - King County

3rd Vice President - Bill Sidor - City of Aberdeen

Secretary - Luis Garcia - City of Spokane

Treasurer - John Fairbanks - City of Edgewood

Sergeant of Arms - Lance Merz - City of Wenatchee

2019 Board of Directors

Rosanna Johnson - City of Pasco

Stephen Mauer - Pierce County

Dalton Maurer - City of Olympia


As a reminder to all members of WACE, we are always looking for volunteers who can assist the board in future endeavors, continuing an increased benefit to all members through education, training, and networking.


If you would like to volunteer, please contact a board member. Please remember, the more volunteers we have, the better the event!

We are all in this together by Jerry Breazeal

I have reached the point in my career where I enjoy mentoring others in my field and others around me at work, but I also enjoy learning from others. This is part of what WACE is about. The training classes are awesome. However the added value of being able to interact with other code enforcement professionals is an invaluable part of belonging to WACE.

We learn how different jurisdictions approach code enforcement. We learn how, we as individuals, approach code enforcement and we learn what we can do to make each other better and therefore make our jobs and work environment better. I want to take this opportunity to thank those in WACE that have helped me in my career and offer my help in yours. WACE has worked at supporting you in obtaining and keeping your ICC certifications by becoming a preferred provider. If you have any specific questions regarding this process, don't hesitate to reach out.





Safety First by Stephen Mauer

At Septembers fall conference there were a couple of surveys put out for participants to fill out. One of the surveys was a repeat of a survey (**WACE Safety Committee Equipment Survey**) sent by email prior to the conference. The other was the **SAFETY SURVEY**. The responses were very informative and much appreciated since it will assist the WACE Board in establishing some priorities and getting legislation passed that will make assaulting a code enforcement officer a felony. While this short article will not allow for all the information collected to be put out for all to see, a format that allows for narrative responses will be put out shortly.

There were 23 new responses to the equipment survey as well as ten responses from agencies that had already sent in responses. Some jurisdictions had multiple responses because of multiple CEO's and that is great. That information is being compiled and added to the database that was put out at the conference.


The **Safety Survey** generated 50 responses. The message was very clear that WACE members want to pursue the legislation for 3rd degree assault on a code enforcement officer. All 50 surveys had a YES in this category. The next legislative session begins on January 13, 2020. I encourage all WACE members to contact local legislators and make them aware of the threats that code enforcement officers face daily and ask for their support and or even endorsement of this legislation.

The survey also showed that 41 out of 50 CEO's who responded to the survey have "been, or felt, threatened as you perform your code enforcement duties". There were numerous narratives describing incidents that CEO's faced as they performed those duties. Those will be put out in a future email.

The survey also showed that 8 CEO's have been assaulted while in the performance of their duties.

The passage of legislation making assault on a code enforcement officer a felony is by no means a slam dunk. I believe based on the first effort that it is still a long shot. I also believe it is a long shot that is worth taking and persisting.

The job that CEO's do is important to the communities you work in and it does help to make the places we live better for all. It is a challenge to perform these duties, but more often than not, the result is worth the effort and the stress that goes along with this work. Please stay SAFE out there and have a great and productive new year.



2019 Fall Conference Photos



Photos Courtesy of Lance Merz

Help Me Help You by Dalton Maurer

It was a foggy midday in Federal Way... A council of eight uncloaked (but still rather shady) figures met around an awkwardly long table clearly not designed for group conversation alit by what can only be described as “industrial chic” lighting—lighting that offered so little that several people had their phones out with their flashlights on while the others held the numerous pages of graphs, text reviews, and budget items from this past year to see them by the precious daylight that barely made its way in through the front door of the establishment. This was Friday, November 22, 2019, and it was the end-of-year business review by the WACE Board of Directors.

I’m new to the board. So new, in fact, that the executive team was not even certain they’ll want me to stick around and have elected to label me as an “interim” board member in the event that someone with a more lively pulse (or maybe a sharp looking goat with glasses and a badge) wanders by. You’ll be lucky to read this at all if it isn’t censored and cut beyond recognition by the editor there are a few things I want to point out about this organization. New or not, I made the trip from Olympia *all the way* to Federal Way (forty miles, give or take) and found myself uncomfortably early to the meeting. With no tables to set up or WACE gift bags to ready for the members, I cracked open my laptop at a nearby coffee shop and made use of my workday before returning at a more reasonable time.

During the meeting, I’d have to say the nature of my trip is what surprised me the most. I was fortunate enough to be able to consider this a work related trip and could take my City vehicle to discuss, learn, and generally represent the interests of my City and those around me. Several members that were present had to take time off. To come read and debate surveys about the Fall conference. Some of our board members not only volunteer their time to serve WACE in the evening hours or on weekends, but have to take time off from what at that point becomes their “day job,” to serve us. I take pride in being a public servant and think hard about what it means to be of service during the moments when I’m gritting my teeth through a conversation and I hadn’t put a whole lot of thought into who serves the public servants until that Friday. Rosanna made the trip from Pasco (some two hundred thirty miles, absolutely demolishing my trip odometer). Tammy tolerated a car ride with an in-law from Pacific County until she couldn’t stand her anymore and dropped her off with “family” in Olympia (Tammy—we ask our homeless population where they came from so I’ll be looking for any that come from your jurisdiction who share your last name). Steve had to leave for a court hearing and had to navigate traffic on the way back to Pierce County on a Friday, quickly approaching rush hour. And still others couldn’t get away from their day-to-day duties to show up for a meeting that wasn’t *supposed* to last over a few hours.



Help Me Help You (continued)

Maybe it was the delicious burger that put me in a great mood, but just like our conferences: it's nice to be around people that understand the work we do. We disagree about plenty and everyone handles things differently, but one thing our board unanimously agrees on is the importance of diverse and innovative trainings. How do you balance the needs of over two hundred active members calling for opposites according to what they filled out on the survey? "Great question," you might (and should) say, unless you've got a solution in your pocket. And what's worse? The voting average for this Fall conference was worse than statewide averages during our last general election (45.19%, if you're to believe the Secretary of State). Survey fill rate for how awesome or abysmal your experience was at this last event was well under half of our membership, which means that you're trusting the goof next to you (or even worse the one next to them) with your needs and the needs of your community.

The good news is: the answer is in the works to do the best to meet the needs of your jurisdiction, mine, and everyone in between, but improving that beyond the collective brainpower of eight or so people (and maybe that goat I mentioned earlier goat), is going to require that you do your part. Consider it my performance review. Maybe you don't have anything constructive to offer and you throw me a thumbs up or write "is a pleasure to have in class" even that's better than a blank form. Someone once said, "help me help you" and repeated it a couple of times, so do that! Help me and our board understand why you did or didn't like something about a trainer or specific session. And if you just show up for the networking and food help me understand how to improve those parts as well because it's all important!



WACE Members Honored by Liz Krzyminski

Lance Merz and John Fairbanks were nominated for the Code Enforcement Community Service Award as well as the Code Department of the Year Award. Although Lance and John are no longer on the same code enforcement team, their quick action may have saved the lives of a family of five. While Lance and John were out doing inspection in an alley in Wenatchee, WA early one morning they observed smoke and then a house ablaze. The pair of City of Wenatchee code enforcement officers are credited with helping evacuate a family from a burning home said Chief Brian Brett with Chelan County Fire District 1.

Five members of the Reveles family were inside the home, and although the smoke detectors had sounded, they didn't know the home was on fire until they were alerted by Merz and Fairbanks.

"They were just getting ready for the day and were unaware the house was on fire," Brett said. Adding, "There was no smoke in the house yet, so they were just getting moving."

Merz and Fairbanks helped evacuate the family, which included a three month old baby, the mother and father, an elderly woman, an adult man with special needs and a poodle named Dash, Brett said.

Fire crews put the fire out in about three minutes. Damage was contained to the kitchen, attic and back porch. Brett said the home is "completely salvageable." The Reveles were temporarily housed by the Wenatchee chapter of the American Red Cross.

When I spoke with both Lance and John, they both shrugged and believed they were in the right place at the right time and helped provide for a good outcome! Truly heroes in our midst! You can read the entire story by clicking on this [link](#).

Lance Merz and John Fairbanks were honored at the 30th Annual American Association of Code Enforcement National Education Conference held in Bloomington, MN on October 23, 2019 receiving the Robert Klein Award. John Fairbanks attended and accepted the honors for both he and Lance. Congratulations, Lance and John, Your selflessness is extraordinary!

Also honored at the conference was Tami Griffey, Kitsap County Code Enforcement Officer who achieved the designation of AACE Master Code Enforcement Professional. Tami is now a member of a very small, exclusive group with this designation and is the only MCEP on the West Coast! Tami is force to be reckoned with. Congratulations on a job well done!



Photo courtesy of John Fairbanks






Master Code Enforcement Professional Requirements

1. Successfully complete the AACE/ICC Property Maintenance and Housing Inspector exam (ID 64) and the AACE/ICC Zoning Inspector exam (ID 75).
2. Successfully complete the ICC CBO Legal/Management exam (both the MM-Management Module and the MG-Legal Module).
3. Successfully complete the Residential Building Inspector exam (B1).
4. Successfully complete the following National Incident Management System (NIMS) courses:
 - ICS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)
 - ICS-200 ICS for Single Resource and Initial Action Incidents
 - ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
 - ICS-400 Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff
 - IS-700 An Introduction to the National Incident Management System
 - IS-800 An Introduction to the National Response Framework

Please note ICS-100, ICS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 are online courses offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). ICS-300 and ICS-400 are classroom courses offered by FEMA at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and by local emergency management agencies. An EMI course catalog is available at: www.training.fema.gov/emicourses.

Contact information for state and territorial emergency management agencies is available at: www.training.fema.gov/programs/aps/stolist.aspx.

5. Be an Active Member of AACE in good standing. An Associate Member of AACE is ineligible for MCEP certification.
 6. Be currently employed in the field of code enforcement and/or regulation of health or safety and have a minimum seven (7) consecutive or non-consecutive years of active employment in the field of code enforcement and/or regulation of health and safety. Years of service verification may include but not be limited to documentation from current and/or former employer(s), documentation from a public employee retirement system or similar verification.
 7. Complete the application that is found in the current AACE Certification Bulletin.
 8. To maintain this certification, all ICC certification categories must be renewed every three years. Information on the ICC renewals can be found in the current Renewal Bulletin and at www.iccsafe.org under the certification drop down menu. The MCEP certification, through AACE, is not listed on the ICC website.
 9. Master Code Enforcement Professionals may use the initials "MCEP" on business cards following their name.
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Professional and Personal Safety by Lance Merz

In my short tenor as a Code Enforcement Officer, I've had my eyes opened in regards to the jobs that we work on a daily basis. As this year winds down with WACE's emphasis of professional and personal safety, I'd like to express my own thoughts and opinions through not only my experience with Code Enforcement, but as a retired Police Officer as well and to possibly share some ideas of how we all can protect ourselves in and out of work.

In this line of work, I have met some hardcore, dedicated professionals who exemplify an undying loyalty for the betterment of the city or county of which they live. I honestly feel that everyone in this job has a passion for helping people and although it may seem, it never goes unnoticed. More often than not, we tend to deal with residents who feel that they are being targeted or just plain out, don't believe in the code that we enforce. We must always lead by example and take the proverbial "high road", as to not get sucked in to our personal thoughts, ideals, or beliefs. In Law Enforcement, there is what is called the Rules of Use of Force. Most of us however, don't always have the luxury of these tools, but I feel that our actions and how we talk to residents is the best tool we can provide.

Knowledge is power and having the innate ability to cite your code is extremely important. The ability to talk to someone who may or may not know the code in a way they can understand it is beneficial for both parties involved. At times, situations can be stressful and turn to anger, and sometimes hostility among our residents. I try to use what I like to call "De-escalation of Force through Verbal Judo". We must have the innate ability to read people in a very short amount of time and figure out how best to talk to that particular person. What works for one however, might not work for the other. If you do find yourself not gaining ground in the conversation which will ultimately lead to compliance, take a step back and try to find a way that they can best understand. Sometimes, it is more beneficial if you know a resident is defensive or anti-government, to bring a second person. Whether it's someone in your own department or the local Police, sometimes it can help in a myriad of ways. First, a second set of ears is always good; that person can provide a sworn affidavit to the events that occurred. Second, this person if needed, can provide assistance in the event of leaving the area safely. The fact is, every encounter is different. If you have a gut feeling that the situation can escalate quickly, it's always better to have someone with you. Easier said than done though! In most circumstances, our conversations are relatively cordial in nature. I think that we tend to meet more good people than we do bad.

In the past few months, I have dealt with my fair share of less than stellar individuals, which have led to idol threats against me. In this job, we must have thick skin and not take things personal. What happens however, when it involves your family? Mostly everything we do is a matter of public record, so who's to say that these people can't look up our address and visit our homes? Just recently, this has happened to me. I received a threat while at work and didn't think much of it, until the person who threatened me drove right in front of my home! This has happened on more than one occasion at my home, which led me to installing cameras on my property so that if an incident does occur, I can provide the Police with the footage of what transcribed. To me, my number one priority is to my family, so the installation of camera's is more for a peace of mind. Leaving work can be a tactic that these individuals can use as well. They could potentially target your personally owned vehicle. Just be aware of your surroundings.

Our number one goal is to go home safely each night. Whether professionally or personally, we must always remain vigilant to ensure we are protecting our families and the community of which we work.



My Two Cents by John Fairbanks - WACE Treasurer

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership for electing me to serve as the Treasurer for WACE. Orlando Howell has filled this position for some time and has done an amazing job. I am very happy that I have his support.

As 2019 comes to a close, we begin to think about 2020. The major events that we provide to our membership is the one day Spring conference and our Fall Conference held in Leavenworth which will be September 16th-18th, 2020. My goal as WACE Treasurer is to make sure we can bring quality presenters to our membership so that we have the best Code Officer's representing their jurisdictions and our organization.

This past year we made a transition with our website www.wace1.com to a new platform. This gave the membership the ability to register for conferences, pay their dues, find resources and information, network with other members via the member map, and update their member information. The new platform also helps the board with the duties of tracking our membership roster, accounting for registration, the payment of dues, and providing information to our members.

Membership renewal notices as well as other communication are sent via the website. If you have not received an email from treasurer@wace1.com then please check with your junk folders and/or have your IT department add it to the safe sender list. If you have trouble logging in please contact me at the email listed above.

2020 will see an increase in our membership dues. Our dues have held at \$40 for approximately ten years. The board at the end of year meeting approved an increase to \$55 effective Jan 1, 2020. If you have not renewed your dues there is still time to beat the new amount.

We looking forward to seeing everyone in the New Year.

Happy Holidays.



A Letter From the AACE President

This year is coming to a close and I must say we have accomplished so many great things. As some of your executive board members are transitioning off the board and moving into other positions, we all will savor the good times and the difficult times while serving the membership. To be the best board we can be we need the input of the membership so that we can meet and exceed the needs of everyone. Continue to offer suggestions on how we can improve our processes and training. The conference was a rousing success! With an attendance over 310 code professionals, we continue to prove why AACE is the leader for code enforcement in the country. The Minnesota Association of Housing Code Officials did an exemplary job promoting and assisting in the facilitation of this year's 30th Anniversary Conference. Thanks to the President Greg Smith and his team for showing the membership an awesome time.

Many people and cities are inquiring about the Accreditation Program. I can announce that the relaunch of the AACE Accreditation Program will commence January 1, 2020. We needed to make some subtle changes to the program to make it unique, more comprehensive and ensure that the standards we expect from an accredited program is sufficient. Thank you all for your patience during this waiting period. I promise you that it will be worth the wait. As the outgoing President, I encourage those of you with a passion to serve, get on a committee and assist us in guiding our organization to new heights. We need fresh perspectives so that we can evolve as our profession evolves.

Finally I would like to thank all of you, especially my board members for your support during a very difficult year. Words cannot express how much you all mean to me. It has been an honor to serve with you, fight with you, disagree with you, and most of all share in all of the successes. Without you, this organization would have faltered. Continue to work together as a team, support one another and I have even higher expectations for the future. Special thanks to our management company, "The Solution" for your service to the organization. As a team we are all shining brighter. Dot Miller and her team worked feverishly to make sure the organization maintains top notch service for the members and the executive board. "To be a leader you must first learn how to follow and serve". I am proud to have lead this group for the past two years and believe me when I say, "AACE Every Year We Reach Higher and Higher".

Kelvin Beene - AACE President

