

This Month in Austin AGC History – Organizational Meeting Held in July 2013 to Launch the Construction Leadership Council (CLC)

On July 12, 2013, a small group of young construction professionals met over a phone call to discuss the formation of a new organization within the Austin AGC specifically designed for people in the early years of a construction career looking to grow their professional network and knowledge of the industry. This meeting did not happen by chance, rather it had been initiated several months prior by the Austin AGC Chairman at the time, Kenton Heinze with Braun and Butler Construction. In the early 2000s Kenton had been active in a previous group of emerging construction professionals at the Chapter (then known as the Young Constructors Forum, or YCF) and spoke about how it had been extremely valuable for him when he began his career many years ago.

“I remember attending those first YCF meetings with peers from other companies and thinking, wow, they have the same challenges I do,” recalls Heinze. “After all of these years I can still call on any of those YCF peers to candidly discuss a work situation, and they will help me if they can,” he added. In his current role as President of Braun & Butler, Heinze wanted to ensure that the next generation of local builders got the same opportunity he had in his 20s and 30s through the YCF to meet more industry professionals and learn from them how to be a successful contractor.

By 2013, the initial group of YCF leaders from the early 2000s had moved on to new places in their professional and personal lives, so the decision was made by the Austin AGC Board to identify and engage a new, small group of “Type A” folks who could successfully relaunch a similar entity. From that initial phone meeting held in July 2013, bylaws were established and leaders selected for the newly formed Construction Leadership



Council (CLC), an organization that has consistently grown in size to become the leading place where younger industry professionals in Austin gather to network, learn, have fun, and give back to the construction community. (Don't just take this writer's word for it, [here is a great video](#) with commentary direct from CLC leaders themselves!)

As noted in their Mission Statement -

The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) was established to fulfill the need to cultivate the next generation of leaders in the construction industry as well as the association both at the local and national levels.

The purpose of the CLC is to act as a conduit for participants to network, exchange ideas about work and the industry, serve local communities and continuing education which includes both professional development and leadership skills. Our goals:

- *Be an open forum to exchange ideas.*
- *Be an entry to AGC to promote new member involvement.*
- *Foster a strong network among peers.*
- *Create a foundation for future development of the construction industry.*
- *Discuss the most important industry-related issues and provide feedback to AGC leadership. (Act as a medium between AGC leadership and CLC professionals.)*
- *Help foster leadership skills among members.*
- *Provide a mentoring program between established officers and committee members.*
- *Structure AGC and the construction industries for the coming centuries.*
- *Network with similar organizations in the construction industry*

The first “official” gathering of the new CLC took place on February 27, 2014, at the Austin Ale House, and 40 people attended. Next, on June 6 of that year, about 30 people gathered at the Austin AGC office for a Leadership Forum featuring executives from general and specialty contractor firms sharing a little bit about their career path from junior to senior leadership roles.

From those modest beginnings, the CLC has now grown to include an elected Steering Committee of 8 and 160 dues paying members. At first the CLC was entirely dependent on seed monies from the Austin AGC and company sponsorships, but over the past 8 years the annual CLC budget



One of many CLC scholarship recipients

has swelled to roughly \$100,000 today. Much of that revenue is generated by two signature and well-attended CLC events each year, a Fishing Tournament in the Spring and a Skeet Shoot in the Fall. This income has allowed the CLC to provide \$17,000 in scholarship funds since 2016 to local students pursuing a construction career. In addition, the CLC funded an investment account with an initial amount of \$50,000 (currently balance over \$60K) to help consistently provide more and larger scholarship awards to the next generation of builders. Those are some very impressive accomplishments for the CLC in just 8 years!

Current CLC chair Roby Bennett, a Project Manager with Jay Reese Contractors, noted that “A leadership role on the CLC Steering Committee has become a coveted position in the Austin construction industry, and the strong interest overall in the group has allowed us to add more committees and subcommittees to guide annual programming. This year we have 5 networking and social hours, 4 professional development events, 2 community service events, 2 fundraising events and plan to award 7 scholarships to local students. As for my experience, the CLC has encouraged me to participate in the industry in ways I had not previously done so and along the way allowed me to develop not only great professional relationships, but personal relationships. I’m excited to see what the future holds for the CLC and look forward to continuing the relationships I’ve gained along the way!”

Ron Albee, the owner of Jay Reese Contractors where Roby works, has long been a strong champion of both the YCF and CLC. “No matter what you call the group, the importance of getting young professionals involved together is extremely important,” said Albee. “The stated goals of the CLC are spot on and will aid in them receiving the true rewards of meeting and participating together. I remember years ago travelling to AGC meetings to learn how to organize future construction leaders in Austin, and I’m proud today to see what a great organization the CLC has become and what a positive force it will be for the future of our industry.”

Over the past 75 years since our founding in 1946, the Austin AGC leadership has consistently paved the way for the next generation of contractors to succeed. Given the strength of the current CLC, we are well-poised to continue this tradition for many years and generations to come.



CLC's first happy hour was held in February 2014 downtown at the Austin Ale House



Scenes from the annual CLC Sporting Clays Classic



CLC Members touring the Texas Capitol in 2018

