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For Immediate Release  
July 6, 2017

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## AGC HOUSTON MIDYEAR SAFETY MEETING RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY AND SAFETY STAND-DOWN PARTICIPANTS

AGC Houston members packed the Marriott Marquis Houston for the annual safety meeting on Thursday, June 29, 2017, which featured U.S. Hero Kris “Tanto” Paronto who was part of the CIA annex security team that responded to the attack on the U.S. Special Mission in Benghazi, Libya, in 2012. The also event served to recognize the Safety Excellence Awards and Ray Lambright Award recipients, the AGC Houston Safety Committee, U.S. veterans, and companies that took part in the annual Safety Stand-Down.

The Safety Excellence Awards recognize construction companies that demonstrate leadership in safety management. Nominated by industry peers, award recipients are recognized for promoting safety excellence within their companies and on their jobsites.

**Aggregate Technologies, Inc.** won in the Small Contractor Category; **Karsten Interior Services, LP** won in the Large Contractor Category; and **DeWalt Power Tools** received the Affiliate/Associate safety award for their service to the industry by providing tool safety instruction, tool support services, and stand down participation.

**Eddie Escamilla, Karsten Interior Services, LP**, received the Safety Director of the Year/Ray Lambright Award. The award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and a personal commitment in directing their company’s safety and health program in advancing the safety of all construction workers. For Escamilla, who volunteers his time on the AGC Houston Safety Committee and other trade safety groups, developing a safety program is a top priority.

“Through actions and awareness, our employees ensure their own personal safety, as well as the safety of others. As Karsten’s safety director, I feel responsible for our 300 employees for a safe working environment. Most are not just co-workers; they have become brothers, and we always want to protect our family,” he stated. Under his leadership, the company reduced its Experience Modification Rate (a number used by insurance companies to gauge both past cost of injuries and future chances of risk) from .80 in 2013 to a .62 in 2016. “More importantly, we recently completed 1.5 million man hours without a recordable incident,” he added.

Being safe to most construction workers means not only to have a plan and understand the risks of working on a jobsite, but to coming home safely every night. For more than a decade, AGC Houston contractor members have conducted annual safety stand-down demonstrations in the field to demonstrate hazards on the jobsites.

**From May 8 through May 19, 2017, more than 125 AGC Houston member companies—representing over 17,500 construction workers—took part in safety talks and demonstrations across the Houston footprint. The event aligned itself with the national Safety Stand-Down campaign led by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration during May 8-12, 2017, which focused on fall protection.**

As in the past two years, AGC Houston conducted its Safety Stand-Down two weeks to increase member participation. Companies of all sizes conducted toolbox talks (both in English and in Spanish) on a variety of topics such as identifying specific hazards, safety equipment inspections, accident prevention and conducting rescue plans. “Exposing construction workers to safety demonstrations throughout our members’ area jobsites is an effective way to demonstrate common hazards of a jobsite, particularly as they relate to falls and common accidents,” stated AGC Houston Director of Safety Services, Kim Mason.

Many safety talks also focused on heat prevention and the importance of hydration. AGC Houston members support OSHA’s “Water. Rest. Shade” campaign to keep workers safe in the heat. AGC Houston member safety consultants and vendors volunteered to conduct free safety stand-down events on jobsites across the city. The companies brought everything from fall protection trailers with drop demonstrations to rigging, scaffolds and even proper workwear designed for the construction industry.

“We brought safety consultant firms to construction sites, complete with a drop truck to demonstrate the differences in force reduction between different types of fall protection,” stated Arch-Con Construction’s Safety Director Robert Schindler. “We wanted to educate workers on how to reduce the risk of falls and ensure that our workers have a safe and productive work environment.”

AGC Houston members also invited OSHA Region 6 representatives, ER and Houston Fire Department representatives to discuss fall rescue procedures and trauma caused by jobsite accidents. “These safety demonstrations are about ensuring that each worker comes safely home every day. Our members have been key supporters of the Safety Stand-Down—leading safety performance at the city, state and national levels,” said Kim Mason. “We value this partnership and are proud of our members’ commitment to discussing best practices in developing safety and health programs.”

*The Associated General Contractors of America, Inc. Houston Chapter is a local construction trade association that represents and provides services to commercial building general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, manufacturers and service firms. Founded in 1923, Houston AGC is one of 96 chapters nationwide and represents more than 1,000 local members and industry partners.*

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