

# A tribute to Dave Diaz

Co-authored by Jaimie Angus and Megan Stone

On January 6th, many of us attended the celebration of life for our co-worker and friend, Dave Diaz. Dave passed away on December 15th, 2022, and is survived by his wife, Tammy,



continued that practice throughout his career. Dave was a problem solver because he understood how the process at one desk impacted the next. He was

connected to all areas of the company and served as a resource for employees in every function. For many, Dave was a guide through life's hardships as well. He was someone who could listen to a problem, dissect it, and make you feel like everything would work out just fine. It wasn't uncommon for him to stop by the office just to check in, see how everyone was doing, and then leave just as abruptly as he had arrived. Just as often as he was seen in business mode, he could also be seen engaging in playful pranks around the office. His playful presence was contagious, and work was just more fun when he was around.

Dave loved to tell stories of his early days with Griffith Company and how much the company had changed over the years. Dave joined Griffith Company in 1983 as an Estimator Trainee in the Long Beach office on Cherry Avenue. He eventually went out to the field and began running work but always ended the day in the office, spending time with different departments. He said spending that time in the office was important to his development and understanding how the business operated. He

As a Superintendent, he pushed the disciplines of planning, execution, and continuous improvement. As a General Superintendent, he focused on growing and shaping an efficient, experienced, and motivated workforce. He spent most of his career working for Jaimie and he referred to himself as Robin, and Jaimie, as Batman. He saw the vision, supported it, and embraced his role. Jaimie recalls Dave coming up with funny metaphors that helped him make a point. When stressing the importance of securing payment before performing extra work, he drew a comparison to his favorite

waitress at a local coffee shop he frequented. When she approached the table, she asked up front, "am I bringing you one check or splitting it?". He made the point that even though she wasn't dealing with big dollars, she made sure she knew how she was going to get paid before she performed the work, and he expected his team to adopt the same practice.

As a Field Operations Manager, he promoted collaboration, recruitment of talent, and mentorship of developing leaders. He was a fierce advocate for the field. Many of you have heard him talk about "the guy with the shovel". When discussing the importance of supporting the field, he would take a piece of notebook paper and draw a triangle in the middle of the page. On top of the triangle, he would draw a stick figure holding a shovel. He would explain that the employees in the field are the only reason why we are able to maintain business and we could not achieve success without them. Everything we do should be in support of "the guy with the shovel". He would use this illustration to stress the importance of teamwork, having patience for others, clearing the right of way, and putting yourself in the next person's shoes. It's lessons like this that we will carry with us to achieve success, while in honor of Dave.

We knew Dave as a man of integrity, an avid researcher, a life-long learner, a teacher, a coach, a storyteller, a family man, and a caring friend. His legacy will live on, and we will honor Dave by remembering him, continuing to talk to him and sharing stories about him. Dave's impact on who we are as people, parents, colleagues, partners, and friends, will be long-lasting.

## NAWIC Orange County

by Mercy Canul, Senior Project Engineer

Madame President is a term I am adapting to as I transition into my role as President of one of the oldest women associations in the nation, NAWIC Orange County. NAWIC was founded in 1953 by 16 women working in construction to create a support network for the small fraction of females in the industry. In 1955, the association gained its national charter and officially became



the National Association of Women in Construction. NAWIC today has over 115 chapters throughout the United States and continues to provide its members network support by offering professional development programs, industry education, networking events, leadership trainings, and public service opportunities. I have been participating in NAWIC since 2017 and have found women who were successful, who were proud of the work that they do, and who were hopeful about the future of women in the industry. As I move forward as President of the chapter, I hope to continue encouraging new members and help develop future Women in the industry.

## WTS: Alternative Delivery Projects

On February 14, 2023, Evelyn Yezpe, Stephanie Goad, Mercy Canul, Sophia Huynh, Carol Lee, Catalina Rivera, Christina Serrano and Dan Leeper attended a panel discussion on alternative delivery with speakers from Caltrans, LA Metro, and LAWA. The event was hosted by WTS Los Angeles which is an organization dedicated to building the future of global transportation through the advancement of women. The group enjoyed hearing the agency perspectives on how to be successful on alternative delivery projects. The need for soft skills to create a collaborative project environment was a key takeaway from the panel discussion.



## SAFETY CORNER By Randy E. Franklin, CSP, Corporate Safety Director

### Strong Safety Leadership Leads to Better Business Results

Strong safety leadership is essential for any organization that values the safety of its employees and stakeholders. Leaders play a critical role in setting the tone for a safety culture within an organization, creating an environment where safety is paramount, and providing the necessary resources to ensure that safety is upheld. Effective safety leadership involves creating a culture of safety where employees feel comfortable reporting safety concerns or incidents. Leaders who listen to and act upon safety concerns demonstrate to their employees that their safety is a top priority. This fosters trust and respect between employees and leaders, creating an atmosphere of accountability and responsibility for safety. Moreover, strong safety leadership can lead to increased employee morale, engagement, and productivity. When employees feel valued and protected, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work, resulting in higher productivity and performance levels.



Effective safety leadership also involves developing and implementing safety policies and procedures, regularly reviewing safety protocols, and providing ongoing safety training to employees. Leaders must prioritize safety in all aspects of the organization, from training and development to daily operations, and ensure that everyone is accountable for safety. Strong safety leadership also requires a focus on data and metrics. Leaders must track and analyze safety data to identify areas for improvement, monitor trends, and make data-driven decisions. This includes analyzing incident reports, conducting safety audits, and regularly reviewing safety policies and procedures. To foster strong safety leadership, organizations must shift their mindset from viewing safety as a cost center to understanding safety as a business driver, ensure that safety is integrated into all aspects of the organization, and focus on data and metrics to track and improve safety performance.

Finally, strong safety leadership requires a commitment to continuous improvement. Leaders must be willing to learn from mistakes and take action to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future. This includes implementing new safety protocols, investing in safety equipment and technology, and providing ongoing safety training to employees.

In conclusion, strong safety leadership is critical for the success of any organization that values the safety of its employees and stakeholders. It involves creating a culture of safety, developing and implementing safety policies and procedures, and providing ongoing safety training to employees. Strong safety leadership can lead to increased employee morale, engagement, and productivity, while reducing the risk of workplace accidents and injuries and the associated costs.

## Griffith Grapevine

### Birth Announcements

Please join us in Congratulating Structure Division's **Ben Walnum** and his wife, Jennifer in welcoming their first-born twins. Paisley Grace Walnum was born on 12/20/22 at 17.5" long and weighing 3lbs 7oz. Parker Taylor Walnum was also born on 12/20/22 at 14" long and weighing 1lb 14oz (that's not a typo, he was really that little!). Mom and both babies are doing well, they are small but mighty!



### GRIFFITH COMPANY

The Griffith Company News is published four times per year in order to keep our employees better informed of Griffith Company events and accomplishments.



For more information contact: **Flor Callahan** (714) 984-5500, ext. 5572 fcallahan@griffithcompany.net

# GRIFFITH COMPANY NEWS

VOLUME 42, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2023



GRIFFITH COMPANY

### Inside this Issue:

A Manager's Perspective  
A tribute to Dave Diaz  
CEO's Corner  
New Hires  
Kudos Korner  
Griffith Quarterly Photo Competition  
Hang Up Your Hard Hat!  
NAWIC Orange County  
WTS: Alternative Delivery Projects  
Griffith Grapevine  
Safety Corner

### Upcoming Events:

**Wednesday, April 26**  
Administrative Professionals' Day

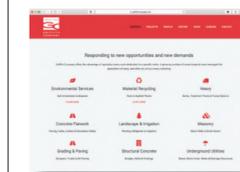
**Saturday, May 20**  
Mark your calendar for this year's annual Safety Picnic at Oak Canyon Park. Detailed invitations will be mailed in April to all current employees.

**Monday, May 29**  
Memorial Day

**Monday, June 12**  
Board of Directors Meeting

**Friday, June 16**  
Summer BBQ

Visit us on the Web at: [www.griffithcompany.net](http://www.griffithcompany.net)



## A Manager's Perspective:

By Jesse Espinoza  
San Diego Area Manager, Southern Region

### One "G" in Griffith

I have been working on the Griffith team for two years now, and one of the biggest adjustments for me has been related to the inner-workings of the divisional structure and how each division is its own profit center. In San Diego, we have

San Diego (D20) worked with Concrete (D11) and Structure (D70) divisions to jointly achieve success on a very challenging operation on Route 67 in Lakeside, CA.

The Caltrans Route 67 project in San Diego mainly consisted



goals set around our financial business plan that we have to achieve, while simultaneously ensuring that we support all other divisions with their financial goals and growth into the market. What I've quickly come to realize is that at the end of the day, we are all one team, and we have the common goal of profitably growing the company, and ultimately increasing the value of our ESOP. There is only one "G" in Griffith, and I want to share a recent success story in which

of culvert rehabilitation, specifically concrete invert paving in the bottom of existing corrugated steel culverts. The process involves grinding off the galvanized coating from the pipe, and then tack welding thousands of metal studs to the pipe. From there, welded wire fabric is attached to the studs and concrete is placed / finished. This is a very unique operation in which Griffith previously had little to no experience with. Shahin Agahzadeh and I worked

together to bid this as 100% self-perform work, from buying the studs to renting welders and ultimately finishing concrete in a confined space.

The invert paving presented numerous challenges, including but not limited to:

1. Working safely in a confined space with proper ventilation.
2. Welding studs to a deteriorated steel pipe under tight working conditions.
3. Bending and shaping welded wire mesh in the field.
4. Backflow of storm water and debris into the pipe from the outlet due to sediment accumulation.
5. Securing a concrete supplier that would deliver a very challenging spec (large diameter aggregate pump mix) to this remote project location in a rural area of San Diego County.
6. Finding a partner willing to pump the large diameter aggregate mix with virtually no work access.

The team tried to address the first challenge (safety) by proposing an alternative method of rehabilitating the pipe to Caltrans called Cured in Place Pipe (CIPP) liner. This method is faster and avoids

Griffith Company is an equal opportunity employer and an employee-owned company.

continued

CEO'S CORNER



Jaimie Angus

# We Did it Again: Great Results for 2022!

By Jaimie Angus, President & CEO

Year-end results are in and I'm proud to announce that once again we are having a tremendous year. Construction is not an easy business, most projects come in as planned but one or two projects can define your results for the year. We hope the good jobs outweigh the bad! Doing the discipline of the business helps ensure the best results and our team has certainly upped its game, producing the second-best year-end results in my career. Our ESOP is strong, with over 20% stock growth and a return on investment of over 25%. While achieving our highest revenue year at \$420 million, we are continuing to shore up our working capital as well as pay down on future obligations of retirees and terminated employees. Our ESOP Certificates will be out late July and I can't wait to hand them out and see the excitement on all your faces. Thank you for a job well done, with big kudos to our field craft workers who always amaze me. We are building larger and more complicated projects and you all just keep performing at best-in-class levels.

Griffith Company landed three broad band projects this year and will start them in mid-June. Two are CMC and one is a JOC contract. We have partnered with Henkels & McCoy and HMS on these projects and look forward to working with them both. One of the most amazing things about our company is our diversity and ability to go where the opportunities are. We plan well and seek good partners to capitalize on opportunities while building lasting relationships. Funding and available projects will not be an issue for 2023 and there are still signs of future projects through 2028. Griffith Company is in a good place for the next few years with available work, but we must pay attention to our workforce development, if we are to capitalize and continue to grow.

continued from cover the need for workers to enter the pipe. We substantiated our proposal with a letter from an industry expert, and we identified a similar Caltrans project in District 11 where the same alternative was approved. Unfortunately, Caltrans rejected our proposal and we had to move forward with the invert paving. The project team worked closely with Regional Safety Manager, Danny Cortez, to develop a detailed confined space work plan that was eventually executed with zero incidents.

As for the second challenge (deteriorated steel pipe inverts), it was determined that the bottom of the existing pipes were far too damaged to weld the thousands of metal studs in their specified locations. The team was able to come up with

an innovative solution in which the studs were shop welded to a metal bar and then the entire bar was field welded to the pipe, allowing us to finish



this operation faster and under budget, with an overall better product.

The third challenge (bending

and shaping the wire mesh) was overcome by an innovative idea developed with help from Area Superintendent, Woody Daigle. Some outside the box

thinking led the team to place the mesh in a concrete gutter in the laydown yard and drive over it. They were able to shape the mesh perfectly and avoided a large expense of needing to have it rolled / bent in a shop.

Challenge four (storm water backflow) became apparent after getting some rain on the project. It was determined that years of sediment accumulation at the outlet of the pipes would not allow water to drain properly, and actually caused water to backflow into the pipe. The existing ground at the outlets, even when regraded, did not allow for enough flow for water to escape due to right-of-way constraints. To overcome these challenges during the winter, the work had to be scheduled in a strategic way to get in the pipes and complete the work in between storm events.

The two final challenges were related to the concrete material required for the invert paving.

The specifications called for a 1 1/2" mix which allowed aggregates upwards of 2 1/2"+ longitudinally and still meet spec. There was no such approved Caltrans mix in the market, so a trial batch had to be developed by one of our industry partners, requiring significant time and effort. Once a mix was approved, the next big issue was trying to pump the mix through hoses and down into the pipes. After calling many different concrete pumping companies, we finally got one service provider who was willing and able to pump this large aggregate mix. From there, a detailed staging and logistics plan was developed and executed, using a trailer pump and a very long hose that required a backhoe to help move due to the weight.

At the end of the day, the entire concrete invert paving operation was a huge success, and it was all thanks to the synergy between the San Diego Team, the Concrete Team, and the Structures Team who ultimately became one unified Project Team.

**Shoutout to the Invert Paving Leadership Team:** Shahin Agahzadeh (Estimator/ Project Manager), Jeff Damon (Foreman), Woody Daigle (Superintendent), Moises Valencia (Foreman), Jeff Zimmerman (Superintendent), and Buck Reel (Superintendent) To meet the schedule and budget safely, the three teams created a composite crew of tradespeople from each division with unique skillsets to execute this challenging and unique scope of work. Kudos to the entire team for an exemplary demonstration of unity to achieve common goals.

## Griffith Quarterly Photo Competition

By Ron Roberts, Recruitment & Public Relations Specialist

### 2022 Annual and 4th Quarter Winners:

I am announcing the 4th Quarter and Annual Winners of our 2022 Photo Competition for our Griffith's Project Managers, Estimators, Project Engineers, Superintendents and Foremen. I am pleased to share that we had our highest volume of photo submissions of any quarter this year - a whopping 25 (limit 2 per person). A BIG shout out to all of those who submitted photos! Once again, it was tough to decide on winners as there were several outstanding photos worth consideration. With that said, please see below winners and Runner-Ups.

### 4th Quarter Awardees (2022)



Winner: **Chris Martinson** - OCT: Goodyear Blimp

### Runners Up: **Stephen Baca** and **Tyler Carlson**



**Stephen** - Route 57 Improvements: "Diamond Bar Off-Ramp Paving".



**Tyler** - Metro Rail to Rail: "8th Ave Demo".

### 2022 Annual Winners



Winner: **Baktash Karimi** ("Annual Winner" - the best of photo from among our 4 Quarterly Winners) POLB Pier G Wharf Improvements Project Griffith Structures Division Placing and Finishing Concrete for the Pier G Berth G236 Extension



Runner Up: **Chris Ngo** ("Griffith Family Choice Award" - favorite photo from among all of the photos that were submitted last year). Northcoast Jellyfish Rest Area Honorable



Kudos to the following employees on their well-deserved promotions (January to Present).

- Randy Franklin** - Director of Risk Management and Safety
- Megan Stone** - Vice President, HR Director and EEO Officer
- Monique Gonzalez** - Office Manager, Equipment Division
- Piero Zafra** - Project Manager, Underground Division
- Kash Khan** - Director of Alternative Delivery Operations
- Barbara Newton** - Lead Project Accountant and Office Manager, Central Region
- John Gutierrez** - Director of Business Development and Project Pursuits
- Tracey Novak** - Lead Contract Administrator, Concrete Division
- Brandon Turner** - Assistant General Superintendent, Southern Region
- Jason Mora** - Project Manager, Concrete Division
- Erick Garcia** - Purchasing Manager, Landscape Division

## HANG UP YOUR HARD HAT

**Dan McGrew** - After almost 35 years with Griffith Company, Dan McGrew embarks on a new chapter in retirement. Dan joined Griffith Company as an Estimator out of Orange County in February of 1988. He worked his way up to Chief Estimator in 1992, District Manager in 2000, and Vice President/ District Manager of Orange County in 2004. After the closing of the Orange County office, he was brought over to be a part of the Executive Team as Vice President, Business Development where he oversaw Alternative Bid pursuits. Dan has overseen risk management with our insurance companies, managed the Human Resources and Safety departments, and has led efforts in training and process improvement during his tenure with the company. Dan is a second-generation Griffith Company leader and has always volunteered to do whatever he can to contribute to the success of the company. He has been a true champion within Griffith Company and has served as a mentor, a coach and a friend to many employees over the years. We are so happy for Dan and Dana and hope they have wonderful adventures in their new home state of Texas!



**Scott Trotter** - Scott Trotter hung up his hard hat and boots, and retired at the end of 2022. Scott came to work for Griffith Company in 1993 as a Carpenter Foreman with the Underground Division, then shortly thereafter, he transitioned over to our Structures Division. In 2008, Scott began working for the Concrete Division and worked alongside Mac Tarrosa, Chach Medina and Pete Jezowski. He spent the next 10 years helping the Concrete Division expand its concrete work, building minor structures and architectural concrete with their Commercial & Building clients. In 2018, he transitioned back to our Structures Division as a Superintendent doing what he loves best - building structures work. Over the years, Scott has been a reliable resource of information for many Project Managers and Project Engineers. Scott takes pride in having developed and mentored Griffith's field crews to be better carpenters and individuals. We wish Scott and Becky



## WELCOME, NEW HIRES!



**Stephen Baca**, Project Engineer



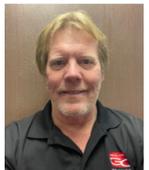
**Cynthia Barrios**, Dispatcher



**Juli Bowen**, Estimator Level II



**Theresa Brinkley**, AP Clerk



**Rick Corteyou**, Project Superintendent



**Jerred De Jong**, Estimator/Project Mgr



**Christina Duran**, Payroll Clerk



**Paola Fernandez Morales**, Project Administrator



**Ashley Gracia**, Administrative Assistant



**Stacey Jimenez**, Purchasing Assistant



**Kimberly Johnson**, AP Clerk



**Blake Loncar**, Project Engineer



**Michael Martin**, Senior Project Engineer



**Yessenia McPherson Campos**, Payroll Clerk



**Dylan Monteleone**, Estimator I



**Jorge Santiago**, Helpdesk App. Support I



**Michael Santiago**, Project Manager



**Maxwell Schroeder**, Project Engineer



**Christina Serrano**, Division Safety Manager



**Kenneth Taylor**, Design Manager



**Ada Torres**, Labor Compliance Administrator



**Nikki Tracy**, Labor Compliance Administrator



**Kylie Valdez**, Receptionist



**Marlene Vela**, AP Clerk



**Lisa Vessell**, Safety Coordinator



**Daniel Wackerman**, Site Safety Manager



**Michelle Walimaki-Talancon**, AP Clerk



**Simon Yoo**, Project Engineer