

# RCI Meets With Arizona Contractors

BY ROBB SMITH, RRC, RRO

The Arizona Roofing Contractors Association (ARCA) invited Robb Smith, RCI President; Gene Lawrence, RCI Arizona member and former Region VI Director; and Craig Walling, an Arizona architect and roof consultant, to present the consultant's side of the business during December dinner meetings in Phoenix and Tucson.

Billed as "The Consultant vs. The Contractor," the sessions drew over 120 people. Smith began by presenting the lists (at the end of this article) of what a consultant does in his normal course of work. During the presentation, Walling and Lawrence contributed their perspectives and answered specific questions from the audience.

Of particular interest to the groups was the topic of roof consultant licensing. Many expressed the opinion that since architects, engineers and contractors must be licensed,

roof consultants should also be licensed. Smith stated that he was aware of the communications between the Arizona Registrar of Contractors' office and ARCA, and that RCI and a RCA were working together to find solutions to this situation.

Several comments were made about consultants providing lists of contractors to owners, and how that was restrictive of competition. The consultants explained that many owners view that function as a valuable service. Walling expanded the answer by explaining that his selection of roof systems was often determined by the manufacturer's list of certified or licensed contractors. He would select a roof system by reviewing the list of contractors approved to install the systems.

After complaints continued about the service of recommending contractors and thereby excluding others, Smith suggested that if contractors are interested in doing certain consultants' projects, they should make a sales call on consultants and offer to show them older work which they have completed. Smith added that this step should also be supported by offering a list of their customers' names and phone numbers for the consultant to contact. Through this process, the consultant could become more familiar with the contrac-

tor's work and be in a better position to recommend him for future work.

Another of the topics sparking heated discussion was that of writing tight specifications, which would restrict competition between roof systems. Several contractors saw this as illegal, and they were reminded of Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-1009, which states, "The school district shall not use specifications in any way proprietary to one supplier

unless the specification includes a statement of the reasons why no other specification is practicable, a description of the essential characteristics of the specified product and a statement specifically permitting an acceptable alternative product to be supplied."

Many of the contractors present were not familiar with the exact scope of consultant services, nor had they heard of RCI, so

the roof consultant do's and don'ts provided good background information.

Following the description of services, Smith offered the "Contractors' Top 10 Complaints of Consultants."

10. Consultants should not misrepresent their knowledge or credentials/experience.
9. Contractors should be paid in a timely manner.
8. Consultants should recognize there is usually more than one way to do anything.
7. Consultants should listen to see if there is a better way.
6. Contractors' "Requests for Information" should be handled promptly.
5. Consultants should not take the owner's position if it's unfair or a bad roofing practice.
4. Consultants should not place an inexperienced observer on a job.
3. Consultants should not wait until the end of the job to identify problems. Working together, there should never be a Punch List.
2. Consultants should not shop bids.
1. Consultants must acknowledge that contractors need to



Craig Walling, left, Gene Lawrence, center, and Robb Smith, right, speak to the Arizona Roofing Contractors Association.

make a fair profit.

The audience seemed satisfied that these pretty well covered the bulk of their criticisms.

This was followed with the "Consultants' Top 10 Complaints of Contractors."

10. Bidding un-approved alternate materials and expecting approval.

9. Inability to submit and follow a construction schedule.

8. Publicly arguing alternative specs during a pre-bid meeting.

7. Billing for work not completed.

6. Rotating the job foremen and workers.

5. Starting and stopping the job. Missing days.

4. Placing inexperienced workers on the job.

3. Contacting the owner without the consultant's knowledge.

2. Not acknowledging that job specs often exceed manufac-

turers' minimum standards.

1. Substituting *alternate materials or details* on the job without approval.

Comments from the contractors after the meeting reinforced the continued need for this type of dialogue. "Contractors need to know how roof consultants can make them money. More stringent specifications require more time and materials, and that means more money for contractors," said Mike Pera, Classic Roofing, Phoenix.

"If the consultant invites you to bid a job and you object to some fundamental conditions of the job or specifications, then you (as a contractor) must walk away. The contractor will always have much more liability for the finished roof than the consultant," said Bob Graham, Reliable Roofing, Glendale.

Smith was asked by some of the ARCA board members if RCI might participate in future training programs planned by ARCA, and Smith offered to discuss this topic further with the RCI Board.

## Roof Consultants DOs And DON'Ts

### WHAT A ROOF CONSULTANT DOES:

- ▼ Maintains expertise within the roofing industry.
  - \* Building Codes
  - \* Material composition, installation and performance
  - \* Relationships with manufacturers
- ▼ Evaluates existing roofs and the components associated with existing roofs.
- ▼ Conducts roof surveys to determine conditions.
- ▼ Performs destructive and non-destructive testing on roofs and related components.
- ▼ Provides and prepares recommendations for repair or replacement.
- ▼ Prepares budgets for approximate costs of repair and/or re-roofing.
- ▼ Assists architects in development of new roofing specifications.
- ▼ Prepares construction documents for roof repair and re-roofing.
- ▼ Assists owners with contractor qualifications.
- ▼ Provides lists of qualified contractors.
- ▼ Reviews construction correspondence (show drawings, change order requests, invoices, etc.).
- ▼ Observes roof repairs or re-roofing operations, including application procedures and makes report to owner.
- ▼ Acts as assistant or expert in roof-related litigation matters, arbitration, mediation and settlement conferences.
- ▼ Provides expert opinions as to the condition of roofs or the application of roofs based upon evaluation of the facts.

### WHAT A ROOF CONSULTANT DOES NOT DO:

- ▼ Rely on outdated materials, practices or beliefs.
- ▼ Contract for any construction services.
- ▼ Practice engineering if he or she is not licensed to do so.
- ▼ Practice architecture if he or she is not licensed to do so.
- ▼ Control means or methods of construction during a roof repair or re-roofing project.
- ▼ Manage or direct construction projects.
- ▼ Act as superintendent, foreman or act in other supervisory capacity during roof-related projects.
- ▼ Work outside his or her field of expertise.