

# CERTIFICATION NEWS



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Industry Professionals Applauded for Contributions to Crane Safety

### *NCCCO's "Difference Makers" Take a Bow*

*Fairfax, VA, November 30, 2015*—Crane industry experts from across the country were recognized for their contributions to crane safety last month at the NCCCO 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recognition Gala hosted by the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators.

The event, held October 15, 2015, in Washington, DC, brought together for the first time many of those who had helped shape the nation's first-ever professionally developed crane operator certification program more than two decades ago, with those who had made their contributions to the maintenance and development of CCO certification programs more recently.

"From Day One you wanted to make a difference," said Kerry Hulse, Vice President of NCCCO and an early pioneer of the certification cause. "And I sincerely believe you have done that. You have changed the face of the industry. You are 'Difference Makers,'" he added, coining a term that was to become a major theme of the evening. Hulse was presented with a special recognition award for outstanding service and dedication to safe crane operations through commitment to crane operator certification, 1987–2015.



*NCCCO volunteers had changed the face of the industry, said Kerry Hulse, Vice President of NCCCO, who declared them all “Difference Makers.”*

NCCCO President, Thom Sicklesteel, also acknowledged the extraordinary contributions made by NCCCO’s volunteers. “The dedication and commitment from the people in this room has helped to make a difference in our industry, and that’s something we can all be proud of,” he said.

The Recognition Gala had been conceived, Sicklesteel noted, as a way of honoring those who had helped establish CCO certification as a primary means of mitigating risk in the industry and, as a result, to help save lives and reduce injury. “Tonight is about you. To honor those who gave their time, their efforts, their resources, their knowledge, their skills, to make NCCCO what it is today,” Sicklesteel said. “We thank you for your time and appreciate the impact that you’ve made on NCCCO as well as the industry.”

Among the groups of volunteers honored during the evening for their leadership roles were NCCCO’s Charter Board of Directors and Commissioners, past Presidents, former and current Committee Chairs, and past and current Board members and Commissioners. Also recognized were representatives from several industry associations and organizations that had forged industry partnerships with NCCCO over the years.



*NCCCO's Charter Commissioners were among the groups of volunteers honored for their leadership roles during the NCCCO 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recognition Gala.*

Special leadership awards were made to Charles Jeffress, former assistant secretary of labor for OSHA who approved the formal recognition of NCCCO in 1999; James Callahan, General President of the International Union of Operating Engineers for the IUOE's early adoption of CCO certification; and Dr. Anthony Mitchell who, until his retirement earlier this year, had provided invaluable psychometric support to the development of fair, valid and reliable CCO certification examinations.

Keynote speaker, Stewart Burkhammer, who retired after 40 years with global construction giant, Bechtel, responsible for environmental health and safety, and then spent five years as head of the Construction Services Division of OSHA's Directorate of Construction, noted that the path had not always been easy or clear as NCCCO embarked on its mission. "From the beginning of NCCCO in 1995, you envisioned that employers who use cranes on job sites would have CCO-certified operators for their cranes," he said. "That was grandiose thinking back then, and it seemed like an impossible dream."

"That dream has been realized," said Burkhammer, "and I am proud to say that Bechtel had some part of making that possible." Burkhammer was also honored for his services to crane safety over four decades with a special recognition award presented by NCCCO President, Thom Sickelsteel.

NCCCO Chief Executive Officer, Graham Brent, closed the evening with his own tribute to those who had selflessly contributed their time and expertise to improve their industry. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has", he said, quoting the famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead. "So, tonight, rejoice in the fact that you are truly all Difference Makers."

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The [National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators \(NCCCO\)](#) was formed in January 1995 as an independent, non-profit organization by industry to develop and administer a nationwide program for the certification of crane operators and related personnel. Since then, NCCCO has administered over 950,000 nationally accredited written and practical examinations and issued more than 280,000 nationally accredited and OSHA-compliant certifications in all 50 states. For the latest NCCCO news, follow [@NCCCOorg](#) on Twitter.