


Safety & Success Team up at Ronsco, Inc.

Accidents take the lives of six construction workers every day in the United States, according to The Construction Safety Council. Even non-fatal injuries cost companies thousands of dollars in fines, lost time and productivity, increased insurance premiums and higher employee medical bills.



One firm talking the lead in improving workplace safety is Ronsco, Inc. The recipient of this year's AWCI Excellence in Construction Safety Award, Ronsco takes a proactive approach to managing safety that starts at the top. Lee Zaretsky is not only the company president, but also heads up his company's safety program.

"Safety on the job is everybody's responsibility," says Zaretsky. "I'm a passionate proponent of leading by example and I make sure everybody, including upper management, wears Personal Protective Equipment on the job."

**Ronsco president
Lee Zaretsky**

It's more than just equipment, though. Ronsco has implemented a comprehensive safety program that has resulted in an 80 percent decrease in accidents and savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Reflecting Lee's belief in zero tolerance for unsafe practices, the program includes weekly "Toolbox Talks" where employees review selected safety issues with their foreman. And before payroll is distributed, they are required to sign-off on the subject matter. Ongoing activities include Quarterly Foreman Safety Meetings and bi-annual, company-wide safety training sessions featuring guest speakers who focus on industry-related issues.

Anthony Berardo, Ronsco's Safety Coordinator and Director of Construction, suggests that maintaining safe workplace practices not only reduces accidents, but improves worker loyalty by showing that the company cares about their welfare, not just the bottom line.

This strong commitment to safety is one of the reasons Ronsco has been so successful. Another is consistently exceeding client expectations. As Lee points out, “It’s not just about the job, it’s about building relationships. It’s why we have a repeat customer rate of over 90 percent. Once a customer sees how proactive we are with our project management and how it makes their job easier, they usually become a customer for life.”

“This can be a very difficult market, he observes, “especially with union contracting experiencing a declining market share. But the fact is for us, business is very good and we’re achieving our goals.”

As a member of the Board of Directors of AWCi as well as WC&C, Lee is a fervent believer in the superiority of union contracting and a strong supporter of labor/management efforts to increase market share.

Ronsco is a full-service contractor specializing in drywall, acoustical and carpentry, and was founded in 1960 by Hyman Zaretsky. His son, Harvey followed in his father’s footsteps and is still active in the business. Today, Lee, along with his brother and vice president, Ron, are the third generation of Zaretsky’s to run the family firm. Ronsco serves the New York metropolitan area including Nassau and Westchester counties and has just opened a division in Northern New Jersey.

Ronsco’s reputation for quality and safety have made them the go-to guys on a diverse range of projects – from mission-critical interiors such as clean rooms, hospitals and acoustical isolation environments to high-end retail stores such as Versace and Chanel. Among the more notable recent projects is the recently completed work

on the 1.1 million square foot JP Morgan/Chase Building at 277 Park Avenue in Manhattan.

The last 35 years has seen a workplace related fatalities drop by more than 60%. Mandated training by government agencies such as OSHA have certainly helped. But it’s companies like Ronsco, by taking safety issues seriously, establishing structured programs and instituting written policies who are really raising the bar for the rest of the industry. They are helping to make union contractors the safest, most efficient choice in construction today.

WC&C congratulates Ronsco, Inc., winner of the AWCi 2006 Safety in Construction Award. •



Ronsco recently completed work at the 1.1 million sq. ft. JP Morgan/Chase Building at 270 Park Avenue.

Lee Zaretsky, center, accepts the 2006 Excellence in Construction Safety Award from AWCi Industry Awards Committee Chairman Ken Navratil (left) and Vice Chairman Tim Wies. Presentation was made at the AWCi 89th Annual Convention.



Anthony Berardo, Ronsco’s Director of Construction and the firm’s Safety Coordinator is largely responsible for implementation of the well-structured safety program and the resulting 80 percent decrease in reportable accidents.

