‘ALL IN THE FAMILY’

2015 OCA Chairman Talks of his immediate, Capitol Tunneling & OCA Families

2015 OCA Chairman Kyle Lucus
Capitol Tunneling
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“The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other’s life. Rarely do members of one family grow up under the same roof.”

– Richard Bach, author
“I have a big family,” said the president/CEO of Capitol Tunneling and 2015 OCA chairman. “I have my wife and kids, in-laws, outlaws, parents, sister, brother and great friends that are near and dear to our hearts. I have my Capitol Tunneling family, which are the men and women that have worked for us for years and I have worked side-by-side ... And then I have my OCA family.”

While he’ll joke about the single branches and nuts found on his inosculating family trees, Lucus is committed to a “family first” philosophy. Whether he’s talking about his wife, Jennifer, and their daughters, Ainsley Grace and Addison Faith; his mother, Deborah, sister, Heather, and brother, Noah, who all reside within 10 minutes of each other in metropolitan Columbus; Jennifer’s immediate family, who he collectively introduced at the 2015 Annual Convention as “Mimi, Pop Pop, Granddaddy, GeeGee, Caitlan and Lala;” his “team” at Capitol Tunneling; or the association he has felt connected to since he was 7, Lucus believes each extended family has helped shape his life.

Lucus was inducted as the association’s 80th chairman at OCA’s 94th Annual Convention in Los Cabos, Mexico, in February. If he wasn’t born into OCA like he said he was into the heavy-construction industry, Lucus certainly has many memories of growing up around the association.

Born to George and Deborah Lucus in 1973, Kyle grew up around the equipment of Capitol Tunneling, a company that initially began in the 1960s when Kyle’s grandfather, Paul Hansen, started Hansen Tunneling. Hansen Tunneling merged with Columbus Road Boring in 1971 to form Capitol Tunneling. Kyle’s father, George, joined Capitol Tunneling the year it was formed and took proprietorship in 1980.
Kyle laughs about his early days doing odd jobs around Capitol Tunneling and when he got older learning the trade “literally from the ground – 65 feet under – up.” Today, Capitol Tunneling is a specialty contractor performing trenchless excavation and conventional tunneling. “I was the first son, so I grew up around the (company’s) yard, shop and office,” he said. “I mowed grass, painted equipment, washed trucks and whatever else my dad and grandfather thought I could do. Once I was old enough, I spent my summers working on crews…”

When he talks about his Capitol Tunneling family, Lucas is truly talking about people he has grown up with, learned from, worked alongside, laughed and cried with. “I’ve grown up with these people,” he said, adding that one employee showed up at the hospital when he was born. “He had four or five daughters and didn’t know what a baby boy looked like,” Lucas laughed. “He’s a guy that has taught me as much as anyone else has about this business. A lot of these guys have known me forever; some since the time I was born; some of them since I was 10, 11 or 12 years old when I started working in the shop … Of all the older crew leaders that we have today, there’s only one that I haven’t worked with as a general laborer.”

While Lucas’ upbringing around the grounds, equipment yard and shop of his family’s construction company mirror those of others “born” into the industry, his first memories of the Ohio Contractors Association are also similar – his parents leaving for convention. “My first memory about OCA was my parents trying to get to the 1978 convention during the blizzard,” he said. “My dad went to pick up our sitter for the week and got stuck in a snow drift. One of the (Capitol Tunneling) crews had to come pick my parents up in the drill truck and take them to the airport,” he smiled. “I was 5, and from then on I remember knowing that my parents were leaving every February to some far off place to spend time with friends and customers.”
Other early memories Lucus has of the association he now serves as chairman are attending Columbus Chapter Ditch Diggers events, chapter golf outings, forecast nights and helping host an Australian-themed party at his parents’ home prior to a convention Down Under. That 1990 OCA Convention was the first he attended.

Following high school, where he was on the football, basketball and summer swimming teams, Lucus attended the University of Kentucky. However, it wasn’t the Civil Engineering Department that attracted him to the Lexington campus; it was the pizza. Following visits to Georgia Tech, Clemson, Auburn and other universities, the family was headed back to Ohio. “We stayed the night in Lexington and we wanted some good pizza,” he said, mentioning Joe Bologna’s Pizza, a business now in its 42nd year and known for its good pie and large breadsticks. “We drove around campus and I liked it,” he added. “It gave you that Southern feel and you were only three hours from home.”

Graduating from college in 1996, Lucus began working full-time at Capitol Tunneling as a project engineer and estimator. His start in the industry provided opportunity for his participation in OCA. In his first years of involvement in OCA, Lucus began serving on the Columbus Chapter Executive Committee, co-founded the COSI-Columbus Big Machines event with Joe Igel, of George J. Igel & Co. and started his service on the Convention Committee.

About the time Lucus began acclimating himself to his profession and participating in the association, tragedy struck with the death of his father. The passing in 2000 of the Lucus patriarch, company owner/president and then-current OCA Executive Board member – who was set serve as the association’s 2002 chairman – collectively impacted the Lucus, Capitol Tunneling and OCA families. This sorrow has made Kyle Lucus’ year as OCA chairman all the more special. In her introduction of Kyle as the association’s new leader, 2014 OCA Chairman Ann Nerone said, “While George did not have the chance to fulfill this role, I am certain he is aware of this moment and of Kyle’s accomplishments, and would want him to know how proud he is,” she said.

“OCA has been a part of my life since I was little,” said Kyle, who in 2001 purchased the company from his father’s estate and became CEO of Capitol Tunneling at the age of 27. “Early on, as I learned the business, it was important for me to meet other owners and operators to create a presence for Capitol Tunneling and build relationships. Over the years that has evolved into friendships that are irreplaceable, both among my parents’ generation and my generation. When my dad passed away, so many of his – and now my – friends stepped forward to support and guide me through those tough times.”
Today, Capitol Tunneling provides tunneling, pipe hammering, design/build, vertical shaft, cellular grouting, culvert rehabilitation, pipe jacking, auger boring and equipment rental services. It touts itself as a leader and one of the most experienced trenchless contracting firms in the Midwest. “We’re a specialty contractor, so we have to go where the work is,” Lucus said. “Over the years we have developed fantastic relationships with contractors that work in multiple states. So when there is a job in North Carolina, or if there is a job in Conroe, Texas, if that customer is going down to look at a project they’ll call us and say, ‘Hey we want you to look at this thing.’”

Because of the large geographical area it works in, Capitol Tunneling is prequalified with many state DOTs. “We have a large clientele of people that know our reputation and know that we do good work,” Lucus said. “We operate nine crews over a 16-state area, and we’re able to do that by keeping the family feel. My philosophy is that we’re all team members, we’re also all family people too. When it comes time to be where you need to be, whether it’s on the job or with your family, I make sure that you’re there.”

Of the Capitol Tunneling family’s nearly 45 employees – which includes the office’s project managers, accounting and support staff, shop manager and field crews – many have been a part of the company for some time. The company’s 16-member management team – which includes Lucus’ brother, Noah, who serves as an estimator, project engineer and safety coordinator – boasts more than 250 years of combined experience, as well as second- and third-generation employees. “I went to a funeral back in January for a guy that worked for my grandfather since he was 16 years old,” Kyle said. “He basically dedicated his life working for my grandfather. He retired from us back in 1991 ... It was neat to talk to his sons who work for us, and now his grandsons are getting to the age of coming in and working for Capitol. Just the other day, I was talking to a foreman for us. He

**Congratulations Kyle!**

**2015**  
**OCA Chairman of the Board**  

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Lucas added that his employees’ support comes in many forms. “I don’t like to use the word ‘employees,’” he said. “I prefer the term ‘team members.’” I can’t do my job without them or in the field doing theirs. And they can’t do their job without me doing mine. Instead of being a drill down organization (pun not intended), everyone here in my opinion is on equal footing; you have to earn that footing, but everybody here is on equal footing.”

Mutual respect is what makes a contracting company successful, according to Lucas. “A lot of it is treating people with respect. Whether it is a customer, owner, team member, whoever it is, if they are out there working hard, that deserves respect. My dad always said to treat everyone with respect and do the business the right way the first time, so you are never looking over your shoulder. I think that right there is the key to success.”

As mentioned earlier, Lucas is a big proponent of living a well-rounded life – one that makes time for work, family and other interests (and not necessarily in that order). “I have an amazing, perfect, brilliant wife ... Jennifer, and two, outstanding, funny, patient and understanding girls, Ainsley and Addison,” he smiled. Talking about his life at home reminded you about the aforementioned employee that visited the hospital at Kyle’s birth so he could see what a baby boy looks like. “I’m the only male in the house,” Lucas laughed.
Among my wife, two daughters, my two female dogs, and my female cat, I’m the only male. And I’ll bet our goldfish are female too."

Kyle and Jennifer, a financial planner, met through mutual friends and knew each other nearly 10 years before marrying in 2003. While he keeps his family close to him at work with photos and their artwork adorning his office – not to mention company equipment bearing Ainsley’s and Addison’s names – Kyle enjoys nothing better than spending time with them. “Anything I can do with my wife and daughters is great with me,” he said. “Even if it is popcorn and movies on the couch I’m happy.” Lucus, a self-proclaimed “business golfer,” also enjoys motorcycling with friends, doing home remodeling and projects, scuba diving with Jennifer and boating with his family.

Enjoying the camaraderie of his OCA family – and working to strengthen the association – are also important to Lucus. His participation in OCA runs the gamut, as he has served the Columbus Chapter as chairman and vice chair, as well as on the Golf, Social, Membership and PAC committees. At OCA’s state level, along with his service on the Executive Committee, Lucus has served on the Convention, Municipal Specifications, Dues/Audit/Finance, LAEC and OCIA committees, chaired the Taskforce for Committee Restructuring and served as a trustee for the healthcare portion of the Ohio Labor Fringe Benefit Program.

Lucus speaks candidly about the benefits he receives from being an OCA member. “From a small contractor’s standpoint, OCA provides services that I can’t afford to have as a full-time staff person. We have Angela Van Fossen, who fights hard for us on the legislative front; Mark Potnick, if we have an issue with the union, I can call up Mark – he has a vast knowledge of how a union works. From an ownership standpoint, (OCA) creates a network of owners where – if you can get past the competition side of it – everybody is working toward the same goal; and a lot of us are facing the same issues. For someone that is looking to join OCA, it provides services that I otherwise wouldn’t have without being a member.”

Thanks to Lucus’ upbringing, the association’s 80th chair hopes to build on the relationships he has developed throughout his life being around his OCA family. “My goal is to be a bridge, as generations evolve and new leadership emerges. As with any company, the OCA is coming into a time where the needs of its members are changing. Leadership reigns are starting to be passed to the next generation … My goal is to be able to help OCA develop this transition to the next generation of leadership and make the needs of the association adapt to the needs of the next generation.

“I want to be able to help OCA with the transition that needs to happen. Because if not, we have an older generation that has a wealth of knowledge that our younger generation won’t be able to pull from.”
2015 Annual Convention

‘Our Love of all Things Cabo’

OCA Members Admire Beauty of Area, Resiliency of People
Looking beyond the surrounding beauty of the Fiesta Americana Grand Los Cabos Golf & Spa Resort, OCA members felt a kindred bond with their fellow construction workers that made the association’s 94th Annual Convention possible.

Nearly six months prior to the start of the 2015 Annual Convention, Hurricane Odile and its 125 mph winds severely damaged the area and OCA’s plans of visiting the southernmost portion of the Baja Peninsula. If it weren’t for the efforts of construction workers and the people of Mexico, many of the 180 people attending OCA’s Annual Convention, held February 11-18, would be looking at where the shovel meets the snow in Ohio instead of where the desert joins the sands of the Sea of Cortez.

“Our hotel and the area took a dead hit,” said OCA Director of Member Services & Education Rachel Sirca of Odile, a Category 3 hurricane that matched the strongest storm to make landfall on the Baja Peninsula in more than 45 years. The Sept. 14, 2014 storm, which stranded nearly 30,000 tourists at the time and greatly affected the area’s more than 140,000 residents, closed many of the southern peninsula’s resorts – including the OCA contingent’s initial destination, the Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort.

“It would be like a tornado went right through the place. (The Hilton) was not going to open in time. At first, we weren’t able to go anywhere else in the area because everywhere was damaged and everybody else was wondering the same thing we were: ‘Where can we go?’”

Fiesta Americana, an all-inclusive resort within 10 minutes of the Hilton, came to the rescue and notified OCA that it was re-opened and could handle the OCA group. “Waiters became construction workers,” Sirca said. “Everyone had to pitch in ... It was amazing how fast they could get the Fiesta Americana Grand Los Cabos re-opened.”

As a result of the more than 1,100 people on the resort’s service staff who went to work restoring Fiesta Americana, it opened two months after the storm. As of mid-February, the resort was one of only about 30 percent of the area’s hotels that had re-opened since Hurricane Odile. This southern region of the Baja Peninsula, which includes Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo, is dependent on tourism as it welcomes nearly a million guests annually. Kyle Lucus, who was inducted as 2015 OCA chairman at the annual convention, said that following the hurricane he was talking with a friend who lives in Los Cabos and when he asked what OCA could do to help, he was told, “Bring your people.’ The people down there rely on tourism for their economy,” said the president/CEO of Capitol Tunneling. “That is what is going to get these people back on their feet. So that’s why we stayed in Cabos.”

“It was just amazing how quickly they repaired the hotel,” added Sirca, who reported seeing a painter held with a rope by a fellow worker so he could touch-up paint by hanging over the tile roof. “People were saying, ‘I’m
glad our hotel didn’t have that much damage.’ Well, it did. They were just able to fix it so quickly.”

OCA members quickly fell in love with the area and its people, as they enjoyed seven days of scheduled meetings and events, excursions and self-imposed downtime. “We were handed more than a few small challenges ...” Lucus said of the convention site. “... The local people’s lives were ravaged, but their extraordinary efforts to restore and improve the area only enhanced our love of all things Cabo.”

Attendees traveling to Los Cabos arrived mid-week and were submerged into the sounds and flavor of Baja California Sur – the southern half of the Baja Peninsula – at Wednesday evening’s reception, which featured a traditional full meal and guitarist. Along with getting reacquainted with fellow OCA members, the night provided a time for people to take in the character of the Fiesta Americana. “It is a big resort,” Sirca said, “but it is built in the side of a small mountain. There were all these pockets of areas where members could meet up, which was nice.”

Thursday provided members an opportunity to learn about and truly

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to have an appreciation for their home for the next week, as the first full-day of the convention was highlighted by the Prayer Breakfast and Los Cabos Theme Day. Along with comments and devotionals by Lucus, 2015 OCA Treasurer Dave Guzzo of Double Z Construction Co., 2015 OCA Vice Chair Parr Peterson of Paul Peterson Co., OCA President Chris Runyan and Sirca at Thursday’s breakfast, the event featured a touching seven-minute video of the hardships endured by area residents in the aftermath of Hurricane Odile, and speaker Maria Elena Muriel’s discussion on the area’s geography, flora and fauna.

Sirca said it was not difficult to see what Muriel was describing, as the resort views took in both the Sea of Cortez and desert mountains. It was not hard to look out and see whales,” she said. “We found out that about five hours north of Los Cabos was a whale birthing area, and what would happen is that they would have their babies and then head down our way as they taught them how to live. You would see the babies swimming with the mothers.” During their stay, OCA members also had an opportunity to see and enjoy dolphins, sea turtles and other sporting fish and also hitch a ride on camel.

Following the Prayer Breakfast, attendees had an opportunity to take in an artisan market and music, as several vendors displayed their handmade wares of hats, bowls, rock and wood carvings and more. The artisan market at the resort previewed the group’s Los Cabos Theme Day later in the day. Each Thursday, San Jose del Cabos, located about 20 minutes from the resort, organizes an art walk that features opened museums, galleries and artwork on the plaza. The evening capped off with a dinner at the noted Don Sanchez Restaurant. “For people that don’t get out and explore, the group event on Thursday night was great for people to experience a small Mexican town, the shopping side of it and then to go out and have a big dinner,” Lucus said. “There was a big appreciation for that event.”

Friday’s construction tour of a highway bypass project provided a different type of appreciation. OCA members learned how Mexico’s philosophy for heavy-highway construction differed than that of the United States. “In Mexico, there is an emphasis of putting people to work, not equipment to work,” said Lucus, as members observed an activity taking two days and six workers that in the U.S. would incorporate two workers, an excavator and 20 minutes. Association members also learned that Mexico’s highway departments serve as the project’s general contractor and oversees all the subcontractors instead of the U.S. practice of the DOT hiring a general contractor that oversees

**2015 OCA OFFICERS:**
Chairman of the Board: Kyle Lucus, Capitol Tunneling Inc.; Vice Chairman of the Board: Parr Peterson, Paul Peterson Co.; Treasurer: Dave Guzzo, Double Z Construction Co.; Exec. Committee Member: Mark Miller, P.S. Construction Fabrics Inc.; and Immediate Past Chair of the Board: Ann Nerone, Ballast Fence

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**
subcontractors. Lucus added that the tour, conducted by government officials, provided a glimpse at bridge, road and tollbooth construction. “What was interesting is that they had around 40 people working on the tollbooths,” Lucus added, “but they had only six working on the highway project.”

Saturday and Sunday provided excursions and relaxation, as attendees had an opportunity to go deep sea fishing, take part in a cooking school, swim with dolphins or play golf on the Jack Nicklaus-built Cabo Del Sol Ocean Course—which is said to have the three finest finishing holes in golf. “We received a lot of comments on how this was one of the most beautiful golf courses that our members had ever played, and that it was ‘very, very nice,’” Sirca said. (Editor’s note: to the delight of women attendees—and for the sake of the men—long-stem red roses were handed out on Saturday’s Valentine’s Day by resort staff.)

The two, final full-days of the convention included education seminars, the traditional induction dinner and excursions that featured modes of transportation that included an outback camel/safari tour and ATVs.

Mike Madigan, a director at Kegler Brown Hill + Ritter Co. LPA in Columbus, provided nearly seven hours of instruction over the course of Monday and Tuesday on the topics of “Collusion, Bid Shopping & the Ethics of Bidding,” and “Differing Site Conditions & Claims.” A construction law attorney, Madigan has been practicing law for 10 years, and prior to that served as a construction project manager.

Monday evening was highlighted by the induction dinner. Prior to introducing and inducting her successor, 2014 OCA Chairperson Ann Nerone, of Ballast Fence in Warrensville, provided highlights of her term in the Outgoing Chairman’s Address. In her address, Nerone talked about the accomplishment of her goals for increased membership and interest in OCA’s advocacy positions, as well as changing the perception of the heavy-construction industry. “While we have made some progress in this regard, it is my hope and challenge to our future leadership to keep this goal in mind as we move forward,” Nerone said. “I’d like to thank all of you for your incredible support throughout the year, especially my family and closest friends who are here tonight … I will truly cherish this experience for the rest of my life.”

Following his induction, Lucus, the association’s 2015 chairman, provided a message to members entitled “OCA Family.” In the Incoming Chairman’s Address,
What could have been literally swept away because of Hurricane Odile, Lucus hopes OCA members have an admiration for the people of Los Cabos. “For those who took the leap of faith and trusted our research and information (post hurricane), we hope it was as wonderful as we’d planned and we appreciate them joining us,” he said. “… The resort was beautiful, the hospitality that the Mexican people showed us was fantastic. They were stocked up with service staff and they were ready to go.”

Lucus symbolically tied the association members and industry into one family and asked how individually we can make the family stronger and keep it current for today.