



**“THE SHOW
IS A CRITICAL
PIECE TO OUR
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
EFFORTS.”**



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**NORTH AMERICA'S LARGEST
CONSTRUCTION TRADE SHOW**

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MARCH 10-14, 2020 | LAS VEGAS, USA

CPA Conference 2019

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CPA

This year's CPA Conference attracted over 100 attendees to hear presentations on issues such as mental health awareness, equipment theft and fraud, while several companies displayed their latest developments, such as a tower crane simulator from MPS Crane Operators, to health and safety virtual reality training from Pheonix International and Unic spider cranes from GGR.

CPA chief executive Kevin Minton opened the event, outlining some of the challenges that the sector is currently facing, such as attracting employees to the industry and the impact of business uncertainty that has hit the construction sector.

When it came to the presentations, a new format was adopted this year in order to encourage debate and audience interaction. Rather than PowerPoint presentations the conference adopted a series of panel discussions facilitated by Merryn Myatt with the Slido Questions & Answer platform used throughout the event.

The first panel session was entitled 'The Plant-Hire Industry in 2019 and Beyond' and involved three participants - crane operator Katie Kelleher, along with Ian Webster and Belinda Naylor of Webster Technologies. It included some a discussion on the difficulties associated with attracting females to the construction sector and the need to encourage diversity.

The next panel session was entitled 'Mental Health Toolkit for Construction', involving Bill Hill, of the Lighthouse Club charity, who also works with Building Mental Health, the construction industry's mental health awareness and support programme. Other participants were Merrill Lynch and Andy Burrows, of L Lynch Plant Hire and Haulage. Hill began by highlighting the fact that 20 percent of sick leave is attributed to mental ill health issues, such as stress, anxiety and depression, and that two construction workers take their own life every single day in the UK.

Burrows talked about some of

the initiatives that Lynch has introduced to help improve mental health, such as 'Time to Talk Day', family days and workshops which encourage staff to talk about any issue affecting them, the company also has five trained Mental Health First Aiders. He cited some real life examples, including how a remote worker who attempted suicide had been found by a colleague and survived and is now in good shape and back at work.

Following lunch Merryn Myatt led a session on how companies can develop risk management strategies and cope with unexpected issues such as cyber-attacks, data breaches, acts of terrorism and product recalls. All of which can prove damaging to brands, a company's reputation and affect the bottom line, as well as attracting attention from the media.

Another panel session involved Iain Anderson of rental company GAP, Kevin Howells of Datatag, Michael Gregory of JCB Insurance and detective inspector Ernie Locke of West Mercia Police, speaking on what can be done to prevent equipment theft. Anderson spoke of the need for staff awareness of the more sophisticated tactics, that criminals are using, such as identity fraud and arriving at depots with vans sign written with fake company details. Thieves are also using bogus e-mail addresses which closely mirror genuine company e-mail addresses. He also shared information of an 'inside job' where an employee was caught on CCTV putting company equipment into his car.

Howells spoke of Datatag's CESAR



security and registration theft deterrent system, while Gregory spoke of how effective the CESAR scheme is and confirmed that JCB Insurance, offers a discount on any equipment that is CESAR protected. Locke added a police perspective and his involvement in Operation Opal, a National Intelligence Unit for serious organised crime which is focusing on attacks on ATM cashpoints, for which construction equipment is often used.

The final session of the day concerned the CPA skills strategy with Paul Skitt of Business and Skills Support, CPA policy manager Chris Cassley, Paul Whitehead

of Highways England and Mark Warrilow of HS2. Skitt and Cassley spoke of the skills shortages along with recruitment and retention difficulties, particularly for operators, mechanics, hire controllers, managers and HGV drivers, highlighting how attraction into the industry remains an issue, and how the situation is set to become even more acute. Warrilow outlined HS2's skills strategy and the work it is doing. He referred to HS2's work with women in construction, with 17 females joining a four week work placement, with six of them offered permanent employment and seven others offered employment.

