

Land Improvement Contractors of America

Virtual Board Meeting - July 20, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Schell.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Secretary Adam Cook called roll and declared a quorum present. A complete roll call is listed below.

Florida Absent	South Dakota Absent
Illinois President Jon Seevers	Virginia Absent
Indiana President Keith Miller	Wisconsin Absent
Iowa President Scott Bohle	Executive Committee Chairman Jeff Schell
Kansas President Steve Peter	President Steve Anderson
Michigan President David Kemp	Vice President Chris Wagner
Minnesota President Jesse James	Region I Ron Garofalo
Missouri President Andrew Ireland (proxy)	Region II David Gallahan
Nebraska President Jim Group	Region III Adam Cook
New Jersey Absent	Region IV Dallas Loken
New York President David Rule	Region VI Ted Lashley
Ohio President Paul Demuth	Past Presidents Tony Cain
Pennsylvania President Justin Hoover (proxy)	Ladies Chairperson Veronica Seevers
	Associates' Chairperson David Lee

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Paul Demuth, seconded by Ted Lashley, to approve the agenda. Passed.

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion by Chris Wagner, seconded by Dave Gallahan, to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2026 meeting. Passed.

REPORTS

Chairman of the Board - Jeff Schell

I worked the Con-Expo show for 3 days after the winter convention in Las Vegas. I have attended several of the virtual meetings over the past several months since the Winter Convention. I have been in contact with several Past Presidents concerning the Long Term Planning-Past Presidents Committee.

On the home front, we have had an extremely busy summer with both work and, most recently, our grandchildren. I also experienced something that I have never had to deal with before in rural Kansas, the theft of a piece of equipment off a job site about a month ago. We were able to recover it, although some components were stripped off. This is the second felony for this individual in as many years. I believe our court system is broken, as the criminals seem to have more rights than law abiding citizens. Enough of that rant! I hope everyone can participate in the virtual summer meeting, whether in person, or online. Have an enjoyable summer.

President - Steve Anderson

Haven't done much since the last meeting. Attended IL golf outing one in June which has a nice turnout. Have missed many of the online meetings mainly due to memory loss and some due to lack of internet connection while vacationing out west with my camper. RV parks have woeful wifi. Still looking for invitations to state events but other than NY's standing invitation to their September golf outing have not received any. Was unable to sign settlement agreement due to be on the road and not having equipment to do so. So Thanks Chris for stepping up for that. Looking to be more active so if you need me for anything Dennis, let me know.

Treasurer - Ted Lashley

National LICA continues to maintain a strong financial position through the first nine months of Fiscal Year 2026. As of June 30, 2026, the Association has generated \$442,422.73 in revenue, incurred \$391,309.53 in operating expenses, and realized a positive net operating surplus of \$51,113.20.

These results reflect prudent financial management, disciplined spending, and the continued strength of the Association's membership dues. While the organization remains financially stable, the analysis also identifies opportunities to diversify revenue streams, modernize financial reporting, and strategically invest in initiatives that support membership growth and long-term sustainability.

Before you are the financial statements for the nine months ending June 30, 2026. The checking account balance is \$146,175. There is also a \$200,000 CD as per the by-laws.

The accounts receivable are \$10,000 from AEM for the seminars at ConExpo. The Las Vegas meeting resulted in a net loss of \$9,000, primarily due to high operational costs associated with hosting events there. Associate Dues are \$4,000 over budget. Overall expenses are close to projection, totaling \$391,309 YTD.

Motion by Tony Cain, seconded by Adam Cook, to approve the Treasurer's Report. Passed.

Executive Committee - Adam Cook

The Executive Committee met Friday, July 17 via Google Meet. National LICA's officers and Regional Vice Presidents presented reports on their activities and current initiatives. The Executive Committee reviewed the association's financial statements and the proposed 2026–2027 budget, which had been approved by the Budget Committee. The Committee also discussed the annual audit process, with the next review expected to take place in October.

Dennis Mikula, CEO, presented a new marketing campaign developed by the Executive Directors to strengthen LICA's identity and better represent the full range of work performed by its members. The campaign was received favorably, and the Executive Directors were authorized to present it to their State Chapter Boards for further review and feedback.

Chief Executive Officer - Dennis Mikula, Jr.

Reflecting on Our First Six Months:
Building Our Future Together

"Leadership is not about one person having all the answers. It is about bringing people together around a shared purpose and leaving the organization stronger for the next generation."

Members of LICA,

Serving as the Chief Executive Officer of National LICA has been one of the greatest professional honors of my career. As I reflect on my first six months in this role, I am filled with gratitude, optimism, and an even deeper appreciation for the organization we have the privilege of leading together.

When I accepted this position on January 1, 2026, I did not see it as simply accepting a new title. I accepted a responsibility to honor the legacy of those who came before us, to serve our members with integrity, and to help position National LICA for continued success for generations to come.

Over these first several months, I have intentionally spent more time listening than leading. I wanted to understand our organization before trying to change it. I have listened to our Board members, State Chapter leaders, committee chairs, members, staff, and industry partners. Every conversation has reinforced what I have always believed about LICA: Our greatest strength has never been our programs or our events. It has always been our people.

This report is not intended to replace the five-year Strategic Planning process currently underway. That work belongs to all of us and will define the goals and priorities of National LICA moving forward.

Instead, this report shares my perspective as CEO on what I have observed, what I have learned, what I believe we have accomplished together, the opportunities that lie ahead, and the leadership philosophy that will guide me as we move forward together. I hope this report serves as an invitation not to adopt my vision, but to continue building our shared vision for National LICA.

Honoring Our Foundation

Before looking ahead, I believe it is important to recognize the foundation upon which we stand. National LICA did not become the organization it is today by accident. It was built by generations of volunteer leaders, past presidents, Board members, committee chairs, staff, State Chapters, and members who devoted their time and talents because they believed in something greater than themselves.

Every one of us has benefited from their dedication. We are not beginning a new story. We are writing the next chapter of one that has already been built on integrity, professionalism, hard work, and service. As CEO, I believe one of my greatest responsibilities is to honor that legacy while helping prepare National LICA for the future.

Reflecting on Our First Six Months

Although six months is only a brief chapter in the life of an organization with such a rich history, it has provided valuable opportunities to learn, build relationships, and begin laying the groundwork for what comes next.

During this time, I have seen firsthand the commitment of our volunteers, the professionalism of our staff, the strength of our State Chapters, and the passion our members have for this Association. Perhaps most encouraging has been the willingness of people throughout National LICA to engage in thoughtful conversations about our future.

That willingness gives me confidence. Because meaningful progress does not begin with major initiatives. It begins with trust. It begins with listening. It begins with people who care enough to have honest conversations about how we can become even better.

Celebrating Our Progress

As we look toward the future, it is equally important to recognize the progress we have already made together.

Over the past six months, we have continued strengthening relationships between National LICA and our State Chapters. Our volunteers have remained deeply engaged despite the

many demands placed upon them. Our committees have continued advancing initiatives that benefit our members and our industry. Our staff has worked diligently to support our daily operations, communications, educational programs, meetings, and member services.

Perhaps most importantly, we have begun fostering a culture that encourages thoughtful dialogue about National LICA's future. While many of these accomplishments may not generate headlines, they create the trust and collaboration upon which lasting success is built.

What I Have Learned

One of the greatest privileges of serving as CEO has been the opportunity to listen. Those conversations have reinforced several important lessons.

First, our State Chapters are the heart of National LICA. Each chapter brings its own history, strengths, and culture to our organization. My goal is not to make every chapter look alike, but to strengthen the partnership between National and the chapters while respecting each chapter's unique identity.

Second, volunteer leadership remains one of our greatest competitive advantages. People continue to give their time because they genuinely care about this Association and about helping others succeed. That commitment deserves our appreciation, our respect, and our support.

Finally, I have learned that our future will not be shaped by one CEO, one Board, or one Strategic Plan. It will be shaped by our ability to build relationships, communicate openly, embrace new ideas, and remain united around a shared purpose.

Opportunities Before Us

Every successful organization faces challenges. National LICA is no exception. Membership expectations continue to evolve. Technology continues to reshape how organizations engage their members. Volunteer recruitment and leadership development require ongoing attention. Financial stewardship must always remain a priority. And as an industry, we must continue preparing the next generation of leaders.

I do not view these realities as obstacles. I view them as opportunities. Opportunities to improve how we serve our members. Opportunities to strengthen our relationships. Opportunities to modernize where appropriate while preserving the traditions that have always defined National LICA.

My Vision for National LICA

When I think about our future, I don't begin by asking how large National LICA can become. I begin by asking what kind of organization we want to be.

I envision a National LICA recognized for excellence, not simply for what we accomplish, but for how we accomplish it.

An organization known for integrity. Professionalism. Transparency. Collaboration. Strong governance. Exceptional member value. Meaningful partnerships. And a culture where every State Chapter feels connected to a strong and supportive National Association.

I want contractors to be proud of their membership. I want partners to see National LICA as an organization worthy of investment. I want future leaders to view this Association as a place where they can grow, contribute, and make a lasting impact. Most importantly, I want every member to know that National LICA exists to serve them.

Building Our Future Together.

The Strategic Planning process currently underway represents an exciting opportunity for National LICA. That plan will help define where we are going.

My role as CEO is to help bring that vision to life. To build alignment. To encourage collaboration. To remove obstacles. To support our volunteers, committees, staff, and State Chapters. And to help ensure that the work we do today creates lasting value for the members we serve tomorrow.

I don't want this to become my vision. I want it to become our shared vision. Because the strongest organizations are built by people who trust and respect one another and are committed to something greater than themselves.

Closing Reflection

I accepted the opportunity to serve as CEO because I believe in National LICA. I believe in its mission. I believe in its people. And I believe our greatest days are still ahead of us.

The future of National LICA will not be determined by one CEO, one Board, or one Strategic Plan. It will be determined by the relationships we build, the trust we earn, and our willingness to work together in the service of something greater than ourselves.

That is the culture I hope to help foster. That is the leadership I will strive to provide. And that is the future I look forward to building with each of you.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. It is a privilege to serve alongside you, and I am excited for what we will accomplish together.

MOTIONS

Motion by Ryan Cronk, seconded by Chris Wagner, to approve the 2026–2027 National LICA budget. Passed.

Motion by Ted Lashley, seconded by David Rule, to approve Dallas, Texas, as the location for the 2028 National LICA Winter Convention, February 14–19, 2028. Passed.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Associates' Advisory Committee - July 8, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Lee.

In Attendance: John Freeman, OH; David Lee, ONT; Buddy Freund, NJ; Rick Blesi, IL; Rich Thompson, MN; Nate Cook, MI; Allison Hack, IL; Caroline Krug, IL; Rebecca Scott, IN; Amber Bosma, IA; Jon Ungerer, KS.

Motion for an open agenda by Amber Bosma, seconded by Nate Cook. Passed.

Motion to approve the previous minutes as printed in the newsletter by Nate Cook, seconded by Amber Bosma. Passed.

Old Business

David Lee reviewed the previous minutes and noted that the items discussed were straightforward, including hotel accommodations, requested changes, and testimonials. No additional items from the previous minutes were brought forward for Board consideration.

New Business

David Lee asked if there were any items the Associates' Advisory Committee wanted brought to the Board. No specific concerns were raised.

The committee briefly discussed the 2027 Winter Convention in Arizona. Amber Bosma stated that she is excited about the location and noted that it will be something different again.

Buddy Freund gave an update on the 2027 Summer Meeting in New Jersey. He stated that planning is moving forward and that the meeting is expected to be a strong event. Associates Night will be held on Thursday night. Buddy reported that the New Jersey committee has met with National staff and has outlined a strong agenda, including tours, education, and associate opportunities.

Buddy stated that the week will open with tours on Tuesday and Wednesday, followed by a welcome reception on Wednesday evening. Thursday will include a day of education followed by Associates Night. The New Jersey committee hopes to attract New Jersey members for the Thursday education program and Associates Night. Buddy asked associates to share any ideas that would provide greater exposure, face time, or value for associates during the 2027 Summer Meeting.

David Lee asked if any associates had upcoming events or items that should be brought to the Board's attention. Upcoming events discussed included Missouri LICA, an event in Sheffield, Iowa, Farm Progress Show, Farm Science Review, Indiana LICA Field Day, and Nebraska LICA Field Day. Amber Bosma noted that Indiana, Missouri, and Nebraska events all fall during the same week.

Amber Bosma complimented the increased communication from National LICA, including communication about committee meetings. David Lee agreed that there has been more communication.

Rick Blesi thanked the associates on the call for their support of The LICA Contractor magazine. Rich Thompson also thanked the committee for its support.

David Lee asked John Freeman if ADS had any events planned for the summer. John stated that ADS does not currently have any open field days or conferences planned, but appreciated the question.

Motion to adjourn by Amber Bosma, seconded by Nate Cook. Passed. The meeting adjourned.

Budget Committee - July 16, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ted Lashley.

In attendance: Adam Cook, MI; Steve Gerten, OH; Caroline Krug, IL; Chris Wagner, NJ; Dallas Loken, MN; David Gallahan, VA; Dennis Mikula, NJ; Jim Group, NE; Kelby Kiefer, IA; Kira Cooney, NE; Mark Erpelding, IA; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Pat McConnell, OH; Ray Cooney, NE; Rick Blesi, IL; Scott Bohle, IA; Ted Lashley, NE; Allison Hack, IL.

Motion for an open agenda by David Gallahan, seconded by Dallas Loken. Passed.

Motion to approve the previous minutes from March 1, 2026 by Adam Cook, seconded by David Gallahan. Passed.

Ted Lashley reported that the previous fiscal year's income and expenses were approximately \$483,000. The proposed 2026–2027 budget includes projected income and expenses of \$495,000.

Dennis Mikula reviewed National LICA's current financial position through June 30, 2026. National LICA had generated more than \$442,000 in revenue and incurred approximately \$391,000 in expenses, resulting in a current surplus of \$51,113 with three months remaining in the fiscal year.

Dennis reported that additional contractor dues and non-dues revenue are expected before the end of the fiscal year. National LICA also has \$200,000 held in a certificate of deposit.

National LICA received \$10,000 from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers in connection with its educational participation at CONEXPO. The Las Vegas Winter Convention and CONEXPO activities resulted in an approximate \$9,000 loss after hotel and convention expenses, but the AEM funding helped offset that loss.

Associate dues are approximately \$4,000 above the previous year. Dennis reported that National LICA has been actively recruiting additional Associate Members and developing new partnerships. The proposed budget increases projected Associate Member dues to \$20,000. Dennis stated that he believes this

is a realistic and conservative goal based on the current level of interest from potential Associates.

Contractor dues are projected at \$360,000. Dennis reported that membership is stabilizing and showing growth, and National LICA is expected to meet the contractor-dues projection by the end of the current fiscal year.

Convention registration revenue and sponsorship revenue have been separated within the proposed budget at the request of the Audit Committee. The 2027 Winter Convention in Chandler, Arizona, February 9–13, 2027, is projected to have approximately \$70,000 in expenses.

The 2027 Summer Meeting in New Jersey is budgeted with \$25,000 in income and \$25,000 in expenses.

No magazine advertising income was included in the proposed budget. Dennis clarified that the magazine is not being discontinued. The amount was left at zero as a conservative estimate while National LICA reviews its arrangement and advertising-income opportunities.

The membership directory costs approximately \$6,500 to produce. Advertising revenue offset the directory's production cost during the current year. National LICA will continue working to ensure advertising covers the directory's expenses.

Dennis reported that office expenses have been reduced through the downsizing of the National Office. Telephone expenses were reduced from approximately \$4,800 to \$1,000.

The proposed travel budget was increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Dennis explained that additional travel is needed to visit Associate Members, prospective partners, State Chapters, and industry organizations and to continue developing non-dues revenue.

Dennis stated that National LICA must continue diversifying its income so that the organization is not overly dependent upon contractor dues. Associate dues, sponsorships, partnerships, educational programs, and other non-dues revenue will remain priorities.

Steve Gerten asked where National LICA's annual Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition payment was included in the budget. Dennis explained that the \$5,000 ADMC payment is included under committee expenses.

Dennis reported that National LICA recently met with ADMC representatives. The organizations plan to strengthen their partnership by sharing educational information, supporting one another's programs, cross-promoting activities, and identifying a National LICA representative to serve on the ADMC Board.

Motion by Adam Cook, seconded by Dallas Loken, to approve the proposed 2026–2027 National LICA budget and forward it to the National Board of Directors for approval. Passed.

Chris Wagner asked whether advertising revenue covered the

cost of the membership directory. Dennis confirmed that advertising offset the directory's production cost during the current year.

Motion by David Gallahan, seconded by Adam Cook, to approve the Water Management & Quality Committee's request for National LICA to provide \$5,000 to the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition. Passed.

Motion to adjourn by David Gallahan, seconded by Adam Cook. Passed. Meeting adjourned.

By-Laws Committee - July 14, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Steve Gerten. In attendance: Steve Gerten, OH; Chris Wagner, NJ; Dallas Loken, MN; David Gallahan, VA; Debora Tjaden, IA; Jeff Schell, KS; Jim Group, NE; Jon Ungerer, KS; Kelby Kiefer, IA; Kira Cooney, NE; Maura Dibble, NY; Mike Cook, MI; Jenny Breberg, MN; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Ray Cooney, NE; Scott Bohle, IA; Tony Cain, IN; Jerry Eshelman, IA; Nordis Estrem, MN; and Allison Hack, IL.

Motion for an open agenda by Jeff Schell, seconded by Tony Cain. Passed.

Steve Gerten reviewed the minutes from the June 11, 2026 virtual meeting, which included discussion of the National LICA dues structure.

Motion to approve the previous minutes by Chris Wagner, seconded by David Gallahan. Passed.

Old Business

Steve Gerten thanked Nanci Gutwein for contacting State Chapter Executive Directors and requesting feedback from their boards regarding a possible change to the National LICA dues structure.

The majority of the feedback indicated that State Chapters do not support raising dues at this time. Members expressed concern that a dues increase could negatively affect membership retention and make it more difficult to recruit new members. Some also felt that an increase would be premature following the recent hiring of a new Chief Executive Officer.

Chris Wagner stated that National LICA should focus on increasing membership rather than raising dues. He noted that a \$25 increase in dues for the current membership would produce approximately \$6,000, while adding 100 new members would generate approximately \$16,000. Tony Cain and Nordis Estrem agreed that membership growth should be prioritized. Steve Gerten agreed that National LICA should focus on strengthening membership and retaining current members rather than increasing dues.

Scott Bohle asked about the current dues charged by State Chapters. Members reported the following dues amounts:

Iowa: \$300
Indiana: \$275
Ohio: \$300
Kansas: \$325
Michigan: \$325
New York: \$300
New Jersey: approximately \$325 to \$350
Virginia: \$275
Minnesota: approximately \$400 to \$450

The committee discussed the value members receive from National and State Chapter membership. Chris Wagner stated that LICA membership remains inexpensive compared to many other organizations and that members should be encouraged to use the benefits already available to them.

Jeff Schell discussed the personal and professional value of the relationships and network developed through LICA membership.

Mike Cook asked whether Associate Members could be encouraged to promote LICA membership and its benefits to their customers.

Steve Gerten reported that Ohio LICA has provided Associate Members with informational packets and membership materials to share with nonmember customers. He stated that Ohio LICA gained several new members through the efforts of its Associate Members.

The committee discussed whether the By-Laws should require the dues structure to be reviewed at regular intervals. Steve Gerten stated that a formal By-Laws amendment is not necessary. The By-Laws Committee will retain the dues structure as a future agenda item and review it every two to three years.

Motion to adjourn the By-Laws Committee meeting by Mike Cook, seconded by Nordis Estrem. Passed. Meeting adjourned.

Conservation, Excavating & Earthmoving Committee July 7, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ted Lashley. In attendance: Chris Wagner, NJ; Dallas Loken, MN; David Gallahan, VA; Jeff Schell, KS; Jim Group, NE; Kelby Kiefer, IA; Kira Cooney, NE; LaVerne Weber, IL; Scott Bohle, IA; Ted Lashley, NE; Ray Cooney, NE; John Freeman, OH; Nanci Gutwein, IN; and Allison Hack, IL.

Motion to approve the previous minutes as printed by Chris Wagner, seconded by Jim Group. Passed.

Old Business

The committee discussed the virtual committee meeting format. Ted Lashley stated that he has attended several virtual committee meetings and felt they have been beneficial. He noted that virtual meetings allow members to participate in more committee discussions than they are usually able to attend

during in-person meetings, where committees often overlap. Dallas Loken agreed and stated that, as someone new to National LICA, the virtual format has been helpful for learning what is happening in each committee.

The committee discussed current industry conditions, including delays and staffing issues with NRCS and FSA offices. Ted Lashley stated that his local FSA office is overwhelmed and struggling to administer programs. Members reported similar issues in other states, including office closures, lack of staff, retirements, and difficulty retaining engineers and technicians. The committee expressed concern that additional funding cuts or staff reductions would further affect contractors and conservation programs.

The committee discussed One Call and utility locate issues. Ted Lashley stated that, overall, utilities in his area have been active and locates have generally been completed, though concerns remain about inexperienced locators.

Scott Bohle shared a safety concern from Iowa regarding buried electric lines. He reported that a primary three-phase power line ran through a right-of-way where work was being performed and was not located because it was considered a private line. Scott stated that, in his opinion, utilities should locate from the pole to the meter, with private locating beginning after the meter. Members from Nebraska, Virginia, and New Jersey stated that in their areas utilities typically locate to the meter. The committee agreed that this is a serious safety concern.

David Gallahan suggested that LICA consider preparing a letter stating that failure to locate these lines creates a serious safety risk for members. Scott stated that Iowa LICA is working on the issue and that a member of Iowa LICA serves on the Iowa One Call Board. Ted asked Scott to keep him updated on whether support is needed from National LICA or surrounding states. Chris Wagner suggested that the issue may be appropriate to bring up at the Executive Committee meeting for possible National support.

The committee briefly discussed QR codes. Ted Lashley stated that he had not had time to do additional research since the previous meeting. He noted that some new equipment is now using QR codes for owner's manuals.

The committee discussed legislative issues, including H-2B workers and DEF. Ted Lashley referenced Brian Deery's article regarding efforts with Associated General Contractors related to the H-2B program. Ted stated that labor shortages continue to be a serious issue and that H-2B delays have affected his company. He reported that his H-2B workers arrived July 1, approximately two months later than usual. The committee discussed proposed changes that may allow returning H-2B workers to be exempt from the quota.

Ted also stated that he does not expect major changes regarding DEF at this time.

Nanci Gutwein provided an update on the Indiana LICA Field

Day scheduled for July 21 and 22 in West Lafayette. She stated that the event will include educational programming on both days, including a live trench rescue demonstration, a drainage water recycling program at the Acre Farm, and information on drainage repairs and maintenance on solar farms. Nanci reported strong vendor support and said Indiana LICA hopes this will be its largest field day yet.

Ted Lashley provided an update on the Nebraska LICA Field Day scheduled for July 24 near Elmwood, east of Lincoln. The one-day field day will include vendors and equipment demonstrations. Kira noted that Port Industries will be attending.
New Business

Ted Lashley asked if the committee had any items to bring forward to the Summer Board Meeting. Chris Wagner stated that he did not believe the committee had any formal motions or recommendations to bring forward at that time.

The committee discussed concerns regarding potential NRCS and FSA funding cuts. Ted stated that, as an organization, LICA should be concerned about cuts that affect conservation work and program delivery.

Scott Bohle asked whether contractor-performed design or contractor layout could be part of the solution to NRCS staffing shortages. Ted stated that the Technical Service Provider program exists but has not developed into a practical solution for many contractors. Members discussed how contractors, engineers, and NRCS staff currently interact on design, layout, and inspection work. Ray Cooney stated that in his area terraces are not being built as often as in the past, and that NRCS work is more focused on items such as fencing and water lines.

The committee discussed environmental regulations and delays affecting contractors. Members shared examples involving archaeological surveys, endangered species, burrowing beetles, minnows, bird-related tree clearing deadlines, and other environmental concerns. The committee noted that these requirements can significantly delay projects and increase costs.

John Freeman raised concerns about the political and public perception of drainage, agricultural water management, and conservation practices. He stated that anti-drainage and anti-agriculture messaging is gaining attention in some areas and that the industry needs to do a better job educating legislators and the public about the benefits of its work.

Scott Bohle discussed Iowa LICA's farm and classroom project, located northeast of Des Moines. He stated that Iowa LICA recently held a grand opening for the new classroom addition and is using the site to educate contractors, public officials, NRCS, USDA, and others. The site includes conservation practices such as a wetland, pond, terraces, waterways, bioreactor, and saturated buffers.

The committee discussed the need for a stronger legislative strategy at both the state and national levels. John Freeman suggested that LICA consider education on how members and

chapters can build relationships with legislators before issues arise. Chris Wagner stated that this could be a good topic for future National Convention programming, especially as National works to reduce committee meeting conflicts and create more time for education and broader discussions.

LaVerne Weber agreed and stated that members may need practical action steps they can take back to their own areas, such as inviting local legislators to educational events and demonstrations. He noted that a recent workshop in northern Illinois focused on contractors and landowners but did not include legislators, and that may be something to consider in the future. David Gallahan stated that the virtual meeting format has been valuable because it allows members to discuss issues more often instead of waiting six months between in-person meetings. He suggested that committees may benefit from meeting virtually more often so issues can be discussed and developed before conventions.

The committee discussed Farm Bureau as a possible partner or legislative resource. Jim Group stated that Nebraska LICA has had success working with Farm Bureau because of its strong state and national outreach. Ted Lashley agreed and stated that the Farm Bureau has provided Nebraska with better information and representation on legislative issues.

Motion to adjourn by Chris Wagner, seconded by Ray Cooney. Passed. Meeting adjourned.

Convention Committee - July 8, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chris Wagner. In attendance: Allison Hack, IL; Amy Gerten, OH; Steve Gerten, OH; Sarah Cook, MI; Ted Lashley, NE; Nordis Estrem, MN; Chris Wagner, NJ; Buddy Freund, NJ; Veronica Seevers, IL; Dallas Loken, MN; David Gallahan, VA; Maura Dibble, NY; Adam Cook, MI; Pat McConnell, OH; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Ray Cooney, NE; Kira Cooney, NE; Jennifer Breberg, MN; Jim Group, NE; Paul Demuth, OH and Caroline Krug, IL.

Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 were represented.

Chris Wagner reminded the committee that only Regional Vice Presidents may make motions and vote during the Convention Committee meeting. Members were also reminded that the meeting was being recorded and asked to sign in through the meeting chat.

Motion for an open agenda by David Gallahan, seconded by Dallas Loken. Passed.

Motion to approve the previous minutes from the May 14, 2026 meeting by Ted Lashley, seconded by David Gallahan. Passed.

Old Business

Chris Wagner reviewed plans for the 2027 Winter Convention in Arizona, scheduled for February 9-13, 2027. The room rate is \$225. The committee discussed changes to the convention

schedule, including holding some committee and region meetings virtually before the convention. Education and Technology, On-Site Waste, Policy, and Region meetings are currently planned to take place virtually ahead of the convention.

The goal of the schedule changes is to reduce meeting conflicts during the convention and allow more time for seminars, roundtables, focus groups, tours, and other convention programming. Chris noted that some meetings may still overlap, including Water Management and Quality with Ladies/Devotions and Legislative with Conservation, Excavating and Earthmoving.

Ted Lashley noted that he is involved with both the Legislative and Conservation, Excavating and Earthmoving Committees, which are currently scheduled at the same time. He suggested that Conservation, Excavating and Earthmoving could possibly meet virtually prior to the Winter Convention.

Allison Hack stated that committees that feel they can meet virtually before the convention should contact her by email. Committees may also discuss the option during their upcoming meetings and determine whether they would prefer to meet virtually or in person. She noted that the purpose is to make more room during the convention schedule for education, focus groups, tours, and other member-value programming.

Sarah Cook asked about the overlap between Water Management and Quality and Ladies/Devotions because she has taken minutes for Water Management for several years. Allison noted that National is working with AI-assisted minutes and that National staff can help cover minutes if needed.

The committee discussed the virtual meeting format. Chris stated that the virtual meetings have helped keep conversations going between Winter Convention and Summer Meeting and have allowed more members to participate in committee discussions. It was noted that future virtual meetings should be spread out more when possible, rather than having several meetings on consecutive nights.

New Business

Chris Wagner reviewed Dallas, Texas as the proposed location for the 2028 Winter Convention, scheduled for February 14-19, 2028. The committee discussed two hotel options under consideration: the Dallas Marriott at Legacy Town Center and the Omni Las Colinas. The Marriott option was noted as being more walkable to restaurants, shopping, and other activities, while the Omni had a lower food and beverage minimum but was less walkable.

Allison Hack clarified that the committee only needed to vote on the city at this time, not the hotel. She stated that a site visit is expected and that selecting the city now will allow National to continue negotiating with the hotels.

The committee discussed Dallas as a strong option because of its connection to the industry, including Caterpillar, HOLT CAT, GM, Rubble Master, and other equipment manufacturers,

dealers, and technology companies. Possible tour options discussed included Caterpillar/HOLT CAT, GM, Rubble Master, Arlington Landfill, AT&T Stadium, and the Fort Worth Stockyards. It was also noted that Texas offers strong potential for future LICA membership growth.

Motion by David Gallahan to recommend Dallas, Texas for the 2028 Winter Convention, seconded by Dallas Loken. Passed.

The committee continued discussion on the future of virtual meetings. Members agreed that virtual meetings provide an opportunity to attend committee meetings that often overlap during in-person conventions. It was also noted that freeing up convention time should allow National LICA to offer more educational and informative sessions that may help encourage members to attend conventions.

Chris Wagner noted that he had received a limited number of responses from members and Executive Directors regarding suggested convention topics. He will compile the suggestions received and share them at a future meeting.

Ted Lashley asked about discussing future convention locations beyond 2028. Chris stated that those discussions can take place at the Arizona meeting.

Buddy Freund gave a brief update on the upcoming New Jersey meeting. He reported that a committee of 12 members from across the country has been working on the event and is planning strong educational programs, tours, guest speakers, and associate participation. He noted that the meeting will include a Wednesday welcome reception, a full day of education, national speakers, a keynote speaker, and an Associates Night. He encouraged members to make reservations early.

Motion to adjourn by David Gallahan, seconded by Dallas Loken. The meeting adjourned.

Education & Technology Committee - July 16, 2026

The meeting was called to order by acting Chairman Chris Wagner. In attendance: Buddy Freund, NJ; Caroline Krug, IL; Chris Wagner, NJ; Dave Gallahan, VA; Eric Layden, IL; Kelby Kiefer, IA; Maura Dibble, NY; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Pat McConnell, OH; Ted Lashley, NE.

Motion for an open agenda by David Gallahan, seconded by Ted Lashley. Passed.

Motion to approve the previous minutes from the June 10, 2026 meeting by Maura Dibble, seconded by David Gallahan. Passed.

Chris Wagner reported that the Executive Directors have developed a "What is LICA?" presentation to provide members with a consistent way to explain the association to contractors and potential members. The presentation includes an elevator speech, mission statement, promotional messaging, and possible rebranding elements. It will first be presented to the Ex-

ecutive Committee and then shared with State Chapter Boards before being presented to the National Board.

Buddy Freund provided an update on Hugo Castillo's podcast research. Hugo has met with two potential podcast developers and is gathering information regarding pricing and logistics. The concept could include State Chapter, regional, and eventually National podcasts. Spanish-language podcasts may also be considered.

Buddy reported that New Jersey LICA is exploring additional ways to communicate with its Spanish-speaking membership. Possible plans include printing materials in both English and Spanish and placing QR codes on English materials that link to Spanish translations. New Jersey is also considering English magazine articles with QR codes linking to Spanish versions and Spanish articles with QR codes linking to English versions.

The committee discussed continuing to explore online OSHA 10-hour and 30-hour training that could be made available through the National LICA website. No additional update was available.

Ted Lashley again recommended that National LICA offer a substantial artificial intelligence training program during the 2027 Winter Convention in Chandler, Arizona, February 9–13, 2027. Members agreed that the program should be more extensive than a short introductory seminar and should focus on practical ways contractors can use artificial intelligence in their businesses.

Nanci Gutwein stated that Purdue University plans to require students to complete and pass an artificial intelligence course before graduating beginning next year. The committee agreed that artificial intelligence will continue becoming more important within the construction industry and other professions.

Ted discussed artificial intelligence programs that can assist contractors with estimating by reviewing plans and blueprints. He suggested that a college estimating department or another knowledgeable presenter could demonstrate current tools being developed and explain how students and contractors may use them.

The committee also discussed artificial intelligence applications for advertising, business operations, estimating, and other contractor needs. Buddy reported that New Jersey has identified a presenter for a future National meeting who is expected to provide an hour-long artificial intelligence presentation and participate in a focus group or roundtable. Members agreed that a similar presenter should be considered for the Arizona convention.

Chris reminded the committee that its primary responsibility is to recommend educational and technology-related programming for National meetings. No additional seminar topics were presented.

Chris stated that virtual committee meetings are expected to

continue before the Arizona convention to create more time for education, seminars, focus groups, and roundtables during the in-person convention. He recommended scheduling the next round of virtual committee meetings in late October or November 2026, before Thanksgiving and the holiday season, and spacing the meetings farther apart.

Motion to adjourn by Buddy Freund, seconded by Eric Layden. Passed. The meeting adjourned.

Executive Directors Meeting - July 15, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sarah Cook. In attendance: Sarah Cook, MI; Hugo Castillo, NJ; Maura Dibble, NY; Amy Gerten, OH; Millie Gallahan, VA; Kira Cooney, NE; Pat McConnell, OH; Buddy Freund, NJ; Jenny Breberg, MN; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Joanie Micsky, PA; Ryan Arch, IL; Jon Ungerer, KS; Kelby Kiefer, IA; and Andrea Rice, MO. Motion for an open agenda by Buddy Freund, seconded by Nanci Gutwein. Passed.

Sarah Cook reviewed the previous Executive Directors' Meeting minutes from March 1, 2026, in Las Vegas.

Maura Dibble noted that she, Buddy Freund, and possibly other attendees had been omitted from the attendance list. National staff agreed to correct the previous minutes.

Motion to approve the previous minutes with the attendance corrections by Maura Dibble, seconded by Buddy Freund. Passed.

Sarah Cook invited the Executive Directors to highlight information from their submitted State Chapter reports.

Buddy Freund reported that New Jersey LICA held two informal networking events at a sports bar and a brewery. Approximately 45 contractors attended each event. The events did not include presentations or educational programming and were focused entirely on networking.

Buddy stated that the events were intended to engage members who may not attend more formal meetings and to identify potential future committee and board members. Members exchanged information and discussed possible business opportunities. New Jersey plans to hold four networking events annually, with two in northern New Jersey and two in southern New Jersey.

The events begin at approximately 5:30 p.m. and are provided to members at no charge. New Jersey LICA covers the food and beverage costs. The chapter requests advance registration, although walk-ins have been accepted when space permits. Ryan Arch stated that informal networking events may attract members who do not participate in traditional chapter programs and could provide an effective way to increase member engagement.

Millie Gallahan reported that Virginia LICA has a new board

with several younger members who are actively working to revitalize the chapter. Virginia LICA also has a new website.

Virginia LICA is preparing for its second Construction Rodeo, which will be held over two days. The chapter will have a Virginia LICA tent, provide promotional materials and membership information, distribute gifts to contractors, and provide free hard hats to children.

The Construction Rodeo raises money for children with cancer. Millie reported that approximately \$35,000 was raised during the previous year's event.

Allison Hack reminded the Executive Directors to continue promoting National LICA's newest benefits, including DPA Auctions, ConEquip Parts, the Caterpillar Association Discount Program, and the GM Fleet Program.

Members must email benefits@licanational.org to request the required Caterpillar or GM certificate before making a purchase. The promotional flyers alone cannot be used to receive the discounts. The GM certificate includes the Fleet Account Number required by the dealer to access the program.

Sarah Cook asked whether the GM Fleet benefit is available to State Chapter Associate Members who are not National Associate Members. Allison stated that she would verify the eligibility requirements and report back to the Executive Directors.

Allison reported that the virtual committee meetings have been going well and that National staff continues to improve the process. The next round of virtual committee meetings will be held in November. The meetings will be spread out more than the spring and summer sessions, and Region meetings will not be required during the fall session.

Buddy Freund stated that the virtual format provides members with additional opportunities to participate and share information between in-person meetings. Maura Dibble agreed but encouraged the Executive Directors to continue promoting the meetings to members who do not normally participate.

Andrea Rice reported that she had not received some of the virtual meeting reminder emails. Allison explained that National is using a new email system and that messages may be filtered into promotions, spam, junk, or other folders. Executive Directors and members experiencing delivery problems should contact National so the issue can be reviewed individually.

Virtual meeting links will continue to be posted on LICANational.org so members can access the meetings even if they do not receive or locate the email.

Sarah Cook suggested including an "Add to Calendar" option in meeting emails or on the website. Allison stated that National will continue reviewing possible improvements but is currently focused on keeping the virtual meeting process simple and accessible.

Allison asked Executive Directors to submit State Chapter sto-

ries for The Dirt e-newsletter and The LICA Contractor magazine. The next issue of The Dirt will include the opening of the Iowa LICA classroom and the Indiana LICA Field Day.

Executive Directors may send National basic information about State Chapter events, attendance, programs, and activities. National staff can then develop the information into an article or short feature.

Allison also recognized the increased social media activity among the State Chapters. Chapters were encouraged to continue creating content and sharing posts from other LICA chapters to reinforce the message that the association operates as one LICA.

Sarah Cook raised concerns regarding the use of copyrighted images in State Chapter newsletters, websites, and social media.

Kira Cooney reported that Nebraska LICA received a copyright claim involving a photograph of Niagara Falls that had appeared in a 2021 newsletter and was later included in the archived newsletter section of the chapter's new website.

Kira explained that the photograph had originally been obtained from the National LICA Facebook page. The copyright owner's attorney used automated image-searching technology to locate the photograph online.

The original demand was approximately \$13,000. Nebraska LICA negotiated the settlement to \$10,000. Kira stated that nonprofit status did not protect the chapter from the copyright claim.

The settlement protected National LICA and other State Chapters from being sued over that specific image, but it did not give chapters permission to continue using the photograph. Chapters that have the image in newsletters, websites, or other public materials should remove it.

Sarah suggested holding a future training session on copyright law, image licensing, reverse image searching, and proper documentation of image-use permissions. Kira offered to provide the contact information for Nebraska LICA's attorney, Craig Martin, as a possible resource for the training.

Kelby Kiefer and Kira Cooney presented the work of the Executive Director marketing and rebranding group. The group also includes Andrea Rice and Jenny.

The group began by examining the question, "What is a LICA contractor?" Members discussed the need to broaden the public perception of LICA beyond conservation and drainage work.

The proposed new tagline is "If it touches dirt, it's LICA." The group stated that LICA should represent everyone connected to the work of shaping and improving land, including contractors, equipment operators, surveyors, truckers, suppliers, landscapers, utility contractors, site-development profession-

als, and companies that provide support services to jobsites.

The proposed mission statement is:

“LICA advances the businesses that shape America’s land: the contractors, suppliers, and operators who build, construct, drain, excavate, and restore through advocacy, education, and a lasting commitment to stewardship.”

The proposed vision statement is:

“To be the trusted voice, the recognized standard, and the professional home for everyone who shapes America’s land.”

The proposed organizational values are workmanship, stewardship, enterprise, network, and advancement.

The group also developed short and expanded elevator pitches that Executive Directors, board members, and members could use to consistently explain LICA and its purpose.

The proposed short elevator pitch is:

“The Land Improvement Contractors of America represents the industry experts who build the ground everything sits on, from site preparation and utilities to roads and trucking to land improvement and supplies. If it touches dirt, it’s LICA.”

The group presented a proposed public-awareness campaign based on the phrase “Before Everything.” The campaign would explain the work LICA contractors perform before roads, buildings, communities, utilities, and agricultural production can exist.

Possible campaign themes include Before the Road, Before the Building, Before the Harvest, Before the Community, and Before Everything.

The group plans to develop coordinated graphics, captions, hashtags, and customizable materials that National and State Chapters can use in their communications.

The group is also exploring an updated National LICA logo and corresponding State Chapter logos. The current logo and inconsistent shades of green were discussed as outdated and difficult to use consistently.

The proposed rebranding would retain green as a primary LICA color while establishing a specific shade, supporting colors, approved fonts, and a complete branding guide for National and State Chapter use.

The rebranding is intended to honor LICA’s history while positioning the organization for future growth. The phrase “Honoring the heritage. Building what’s next.” was discussed as an important part of the rollout.

Several Executive Directors expressed support for the proposal. Members acknowledged that some longtime members may resist changes to the logo, tagline, or traditional identity. The group emphasized that the new branding is intended to expand LICA’s reach without abandoning its history or its conservation and drainage foundation.

The goal is to have the project completed by November 1, 2026. Following leadership review, the Executive Directors will receive materials to present to their State Chapter boards. State Chapter rollout is expected to begin during winter meetings and conventions, with a broader National presentation anticipated at the 2027 Winter Convention in Arizona.

The Executive Committee will review the proposal during its July 17 meeting. The presentation is intended to receive approval to continue exploring and developing the rebranding rather than to obtain final approval of a completed logo or rollout package.

Buddy Freund reported that the benefits group is currently supporting and promoting the benefit development work being completed by National staff.

New Jersey LICA plans to use National and State Chapter benefits to contact approximately 300 former members who left after they no longer needed the chapter’s apprenticeship-related services. The campaign will explain the additional benefits and value now available through LICA membership.

Hugo Castillo described New Jersey LICA’s process for communicating benefits to new and renewing members. Members must participate in a phone call or meeting with Hugo before receiving a certificate required for Department of Labor compliance.

During the conversation, Hugo reviews available benefits and provides the member with printed or electronic benefit information. Members may then contact him with questions or for assistance using a benefit.

The committee discussed the importance of personal contact because many members may not understand or use their available benefits. The proposed rebranding, clearer membership messaging, and continued development of universal benefits are expected to strengthen the value of LICA membership.

Ryan Arch presented the work of the membership retention group, which also includes Nanci Gutwein, Pat McConnell, Amy Gerten, and Joanie.

The group identified the need for more regular communication with members throughout the entire membership experience. Suggested contact methods included onboarding messages, newsletters, text reminders, personal telephone calls, and follow-up communication.

The group recommended collecting better information regarding why members do not renew and using that information to improve retention efforts.

Other ideas included providing small incentives or promotional items to new and renewing members, contacting members who have not renewed during the previous two or three years, sending former members information about benefits developed since their membership ended, creating stronger communica-

tion regarding the value of membership, developing videos and webinars explaining complicated membership benefits, and helping State Chapters access shared administrative tools, including payment processing and other operational resources.

The group identified educational videos and webinars about National benefits as a priority. These resources could range from short promotional videos to full educational sessions explaining how a program works and how members can use it.

The Executive Director initiative groups will provide their materials following the Executive Committee's review. Sarah Cook may distribute the information together so Executive Directors can review the work of all groups.

Sarah Cook asked whether there were any additional items for discussion. No additional business was presented.

Motion to adjourn by Pat McConnell, seconded by Maura Dibble. Passed. Meeting adjourned.

Insurance & Safety Committee - July 6, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairman Keith Miller. In attendance: Chris Wagner, NJ; Keith Miller, IN; Buddy Freund, NJ; Bruce Mosier, IA; John Tatum, IL; Mary Beth Schram, IL; David Gallahan, VA; Nordis Estrem, MN; Amy Gerten, OH; Charlie Page, GA; Dallas Loken, MN; Kelby Kiefer, IA; Kira Cooney, NE; Ray Cooney, NE; Maura Dibble, NY; Jenny Breberg, MN; Pat McConnell, OH; Scott Bohle, IA; Madison Walkowiak; Allison Hack, IL; Steve Gerten, OH; Amber Bosma, IA; Eric Layden, IL and Nanci Gutwein, IN.

Motion for an open agenda by David Gallahan, seconded by Chris Wagner. Passed.

Motion to approve the previous minutes by Chris Wagner, seconded by Nordis Estrem. Passed.

Old Business

Keith Miller asked Bruce Mosier for an update on the LICA Safety Portal document rollout. Bruce reported that the committee is moving away from using Google Drive, Dropbox, or other outside storage options. Instead, safety documents will be distributed by email with direct links to the documents. Members will be able to click the link, open the document, save it, and edit it as needed for their company.

Bruce stated that the documents will be sent as Word documents and are intended to provide contractors with a simple safety policy template to help them get started. The documents will include OSHA-authorized safety policy templates. He noted that there were some size-related technical issues with Zywave, but Zywave is working on a fix. Bruce expects the system to be available by the end of the month.

Scott Bohle asked how members would access the documents. Bruce explained that the information will be sent directly to

members through the National LICA email database. The committee discussed whether the documents should be sent once or twice per month.

MaryBeth Schram provided an update from Origin. She stated that the program is up and running and that Origin will quote any LICA member who requests a quote. She noted that environmental coverage is now being offered alongside general liability in one package, and that other lines of coverage can also be secured.

Bruce Mosier reported that the insurance market appears to be opening up again, with more companies showing interest in contractor coverage. He stated that this increased competition is good for contractors and may help control pricing. Bruce also reported that Grinnell remains a strong candidate for small to medium-sized contractors, but final legal and contract details are still being completed.

The committee discussed the fact that no single insurance company is likely to be a fit for every LICA contractor. Bruce, MaryBeth, Charlie Page, and John Tatum discussed the importance of having multiple insurance options available because LICA members vary widely by location, size, work type, and exposure.

Buddy Freund asked whether New Jersey may eventually have access to a program through Grinnell. Bruce stated that Grinnell is not expected to be the answer for New Jersey, but other options are being developed through different markets and managing general agents.

MaryBeth added that the insurance market is softening, which is positive for contractors. She explained that some exposures, such as blasting or demolition with wrecking balls, may require different markets than standard contractor accounts.

Charlie Page of Marsh stated that Marsh has markets available for a wide range of contracting exposures, from small contractors to large accounts. He noted that Marsh is working with MaryBeth on LICA-related opportunities and that there has been some carrier interest in possible program options and dividend opportunities if enough participation is developed.

Chris Wagner commented that LICA members may not fully understand how diverse the association's contractor base is or how valuable it is to have multiple insurance associates available. The committee discussed the importance of trusted insurance resources as a true member benefit.

New Business

Keith Miller reminded the committee that Indiana LICA will hold its field day on July 21 and 22. The field day will include a trench rescue demonstration by local fire departments on July 21 at 10:00 a.m. Members were encouraged to attend.

Keith asked whether any other states were offering safety demonstrations or safety-related programming. No additional

state safety demonstrations were reported.

Chris Wagner asked John Tatum for an update on UFG's involvement with LICA. John stated that UFG is looking for ways to participate in the industry and help contractors improve safety practices. He explained that UFG's focus is not necessarily on creating an insurance program, but on making safety information available to contractors, agents, and the broader construction industry.

Scott Bohle raised a safety concern regarding utility locates in Iowa. He explained that utility companies will locate gas lines but will not locate buried electric lines to a building, leaving that responsibility to private locators. The committee discussed how this issue is handled in different states, including Nebraska, New Jersey, Minnesota, Virginia, and Indiana.

Several members noted that in some states, utilities will locate to the meter, but not beyond the meter or onto private lines. Scott stated that Iowa LICA has been pushing legislators on the issue and noted that one Iowa LICA member serves on the Iowa One Call Board. Keith suggested continuing to work through legislators and 811 to address the concern.

Motion to adjourn by Chris Wagner, seconded by David Gallahan. Passed. The meeting adjourned.

Ladies | Devotions Committee - July 7, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Veronica Seevers. In attendance: Nordis Estrem, MN; Pat McConnell, OH; Amy Gerten, OH; Veronica Seevers, IL; Sarah Cook, MI; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Millie Gallahan, VA; Caroline Krug, IL.

Millie Gallahan made a motion to select a purse theme for the auction in Arizona. Nanci Gutwein seconded the motion. The minimum value for the purse auction was set at \$100.

Devotions material was discussed. Several members mentioned that they would prefer devotions not begin so early.

The committee also discussed devotions content for the New Jersey Summer Meeting.

The importance of sharing news about members who need prayer was also discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Legislative Committee - July 15, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bruce Barnhart. In Attendance: Brian Deery, VA; Bruce Barnhart, IA; Chris Wagner, NJ; Dallas Loken, MN; David Gallahan, VA; Jim Group, NE; Ray Cooney, NE; and Ted Lashley, NE.

Motion for an open agenda and to approve the previous meeting minutes by Chris Wagner, seconded by David Gallahan. Passed.

Brian Deery provided an update on efforts to organize a fourth White House Conference on Small Business. Coalition members have been visiting Senate offices to identify a sponsor and obtain support for the necessary legislation.

Brian reported that several offices have expressed general support, but no senator has agreed to sponsor the legislation. He stated that many congressional offices appear to be waiting for the Administration to indicate whether it supports holding the conference.

Brian does not expect significant progress before the midterm elections. The effort may be reconsidered during the next congressional session depending on the election results and other national priorities.

Brian provided an update on the Farm Bill. The House has passed legislation addressing programs that were not included in the One Big Beautiful Bill, while the Senate Agriculture Committee has released a discussion draft.

The Senate discussion draft is expected to be considered by the Agriculture Committee before the August recess. The legislation includes adjustments to conservation programs and additional support for technical assistance, water-quality testing, filtration, and access to safe drinking water in rural communities.

Brian stated that many conservation programs were authorized for five years through the One Big Beautiful Bill. The remaining Farm Bill programs are also expected to receive five-year authorization.

The committee discussed recent changes within the Senate and how vacancies, health concerns, committee assignments, and the upcoming elections may affect legislative activity.

Brian reported that the current federal highway authorization expires September 30, 2026. The existing authorization was included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and provided record funding for highway programs.

A highway bill has passed the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, but additional action is still required by the House Ways and Means Committee and the committee responsible for transit programs.

The current proposal provides only modest annual increases and may result in less highway funding than was provided under the previous authorization.

The proposal also includes possible annual registration fees of \$130 for electric vehicles and \$30 for hybrid vehicles. Brian stated that these provisions remain controversial and may not be included in the final legislation.

Brian noted that highway bills are rarely completed by the authorization deadline. Delays can affect State transportation

programs because some States are reluctant to approve projects without a confirmed federal authorization.

The committee discussed proposals for a federal gas-tax holiday. Brian stated that several States have temporarily suspended their fuel taxes, but Congress has generally been reluctant to suspend the federal gas tax because it may be politically difficult to reinstate.

Although the President previously expressed support for a federal gas-tax holiday, Brian has not seen continued efforts to move the proposal forward and does not expect it to be approved.

Brian provided an update on legislation allowing year-round sales of E15 fuel. The House approved the proposal as separate legislation rather than including it in the Farm Bill.

Senate leaders are working with agricultural organizations, fuel refiners, and other interested parties to develop a compromise. Brian stated that E15 legislation will not be included in the Farm Bill and may not be completed before the midterm elections.

Brian reported that National LICA joined a coalition led by the Associated General Contractors and other organizations seeking changes to the H-2B temporary-worker program.

The coalition was successful in including language in the Homeland Security appropriations legislation that would exempt certain returning H-2B workers from the annual cap. Workers who had previously participated in the H-2B program during the preceding five years could be rehired without counting against the existing cap.

Brian explained that the proposal would provide only a temporary solution because language included in an appropriations bill remains effective for one fiscal year. The coalition will continue working toward a permanent legislative increase in the H-2B cap.

Ted Lashley discussed the effect of H-2B delays on his company. His company has been authorized for approximately 18 workers during recent years but generally receives between 10 and 12.

Ted stated that the workers originally arrived in April, then May, and did not arrive until July 1 this year. The delay left his company without needed employees for a significant portion of its working season.

Ted reported that most of the employees return to his company each year and waited for the company's H-2B authorization rather than accepting work elsewhere.

Ted supported the proposed returning-worker exemption but stated that even doubling the current number of available visas may not be enough to meet industry demand.

Ted thanked Brian for joining the coalition and representing National LICA in the effort.

Brian and Ted discussed the H-2A agricultural-worker program. Ted explained that the program generally applies to farmers, ranchers, feedlots, and other agricultural employers rather than construction contractors.

Brian reported that legislation was recently introduced to expand and reform the H-2A program. He will review the proposal and provide Ted with additional information to determine whether any of the changes could apply to LICA contractors.

Brian reported that the President is seeking approximately \$85 billion in supplemental funding connected to the Iran conflict. The proposal also includes approximately \$12 billion in additional agricultural assistance.

The funding is expected to move through the budget reconciliation process, which allows certain budget-related legislation to pass the Senate with a majority vote rather than the 60 votes generally required to overcome a filibuster.

Brian stated that the proposal currently focuses on the military funding and farm assistance. Adding unrelated provisions could make the legislation more difficult to approve.

Bruce Barnhart asked about the National State Fair event held on the National Mall around the Fourth of July.

Brian stated that he did not attend but reported that local coverage indicated the event was well attended and generally well received. The event included State displays and activities and concluded with the Fourth of July celebration.

Brian noted that enhanced security required the event area to be fenced with limited entrances, which made access more difficult. Despite those restrictions, local reports indicated that attendees enjoyed the State exhibits and fair atmosphere.

Motion to adjourn by Chris Wagner, seconded by Jim Group. Passed.

The meeting adjourned.

Long-Term Planning/Past Presidents Committee July 14, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tony Cain. In attendance: Steve Gerten, OH; Chris Wagner, NJ; Dallas Loken, MN; David Gallahan, VA; Debora Tjaden, IA; Jeff Schell, KS; Jim Group, NE; Jon Ungerer, KS; Kelby Kiefer, IA; Kira Cooney, NE; Maura Dibble, NY; Mike Cook, MI; Jenny Breberg, MN; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Ray Cooney, NE; Scott Bohle, IA; Tony Cain, IN; Jerry Eshelman, IA; Nordis Estrem, MN and Allison Hack, IL.

Motion for an open agenda by David Gallahan, seconded by Steve Gerten. Passed.

Motion to approve the previous minutes by Jeff Schell, seconded by Steve Gerten. Passed.

Old Business

Tony Cain opened discussion regarding the proposed strategic plan document previously distributed by Steve and Amy Gerten.

Steve Gerten confirmed that the proposed strategic plan had been distributed to Past National Presidents, Regional Vice Presidents, Executive Directors, and National staff in advance of the meeting.

Tony reported that one member had commented that the document was lengthy and needed to be cleaned up. No specific revisions or recommended changes were provided.

The committee discussed whether the document should be revised before being presented to the National Board. Members stated that they did not know what should be removed and generally agreed that the proposal should be presented in its current form.

Mike Cook commended Steve and Amy Gerten for their work preparing the proposed strategic plan.

The committee discussed the process for presenting the proposal. Mike Cook clarified that the Past Presidents Committee serves in an advisory capacity and that the document would be presented as a recommendation for consideration by the National Board.

Mike Cook made a motion to present the proposed strategic plan to the National Board at the July 20, 2026 meeting. Nordis Estrem seconded the motion.

Discussion followed regarding whether the proposal should be presented to the Executive Committee or the National Board. The committee clarified that the proposal would be presented directly to the National Board as a recommendation from the Long-Term Planning/Past Presidents Committee. Motion Passed.

Steve Gerten reported that the feedback he received described the proposed strategic plan as well written and supported moving forward with it to strengthen the association.

Tony Cain encouraged members to attend the upcoming Indiana LICA Field Day and the July 20 National Board Meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Mike Cook, seconded by Chris Wagner. Passed. Meeting adjourned.

Membership Committee - July 9, 2026

The meeting was called to order by acting Chairman Chris Wagner. In attendance: Allison Hack, IL; Caroline Krug, IL; Maura Dibble, NY; Amy Gerten, OH; Buddy Freund, NJ; Sar-

ah Cook, MI; David Gallahan, VA; Chris Wagner, NJ; Paul Demuth, OH; Hugo Castillo, NJ; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Pat McConnell, OH; Joanie Micsky, PA; Ray Cooney, NE; Scott Bohle, IA; Ted Lashley, NE; Jim Group, NE; and Kira Cooney, NE.

Motion for an open agenda by David Gallahan, seconded by Amy Gerten. Passed.

Chris Wagner reviewed the previous minutes from the June 8, 2026 virtual meeting. He noted that Dennis Mikula thanked everyone for attending and reviewed the recent Executive Director workshops. The previous minutes also included discussion on the importance of retention beginning when someone joins, not after they leave. Allison Hack had reviewed newer membership benefits, including ConEquip Parts, the Caterpillar Association Discount Program, and the GM Fleet Program. The committee also discussed ways to better communicate benefits to members.

Motion to approve the previous minutes from the June 8, 2026 meeting by David Gallahan, seconded by Maura Dibble. Passed.

Old Business

Allison Hack asked whether members and state chapters are getting traction with the GM Fleet Program, Caterpillar Association Discount Program, and ConEquip Parts benefit. She noted that she has received a few requests for GM membership certificates from New Jersey, New York, and Nebraska, but would like to see more regular use of the program.

Maura Dibble asked whether National could share certificate requests with the state when they come from that state so the Executive Director can follow up with the member. Allison stated that she can share that information.

Buddy Freund reported that New Jersey had several immediate inquiries regarding the GM Fleet Program. He stated that New Jersey is preparing a summer mailing that will include individual flyers for Caterpillar, GM Fleet, ConEquip and ConX benefits. The mailing will also include a short letter explaining that the benefits are strong cost-saving opportunities for members. New Jersey plans to follow up with electronic communication. Allison stated that benefits such as GM, ConEquip, and possibly a future cell phone benefit are strong universal benefits because they apply broadly to contractors. She encouraged states to include benefit flyers in mailings, golf outing packets, events, and other member communications.

Amy Gerten stated that an Ohio dealer had not heard of the GM Fleet Program. Allison said she would send Amy the contact information for Ben Stein, LICA's GM Fleet account manager, so the dealer issue could be addressed. The committee discussed the need to help educate dealers about these programs. Joanie asked how dealers receive information about programs such as GM Fleet and Caterpillar. Allison explained that dealer awareness is handled by the companies, but dealers do not always know about every association program. She encouraged

members and Executive Directors to contact National when a dealer does not know about a benefit so the issue can be shared with the appropriate company contact.

Sarah Cook shared the GM fleet dealer locator link in the meeting chat.

Chris Wagner noted that issues with dealer awareness have happened before with national benefit programs. He stated that members and state chapters may need to bring the benefit information directly to local dealers and show that the program exists.

Allison clarified that for the GM Fleet Program, members do not need a separate membership certificate for each vehicle. The dealer mainly needs the number listed on the certificate. She also explained that certificates are useful for larger purchases such as vehicles or equipment, while some benefits, such as ConEquip, can be handled directly by the benefit provider.

The committee discussed whether benefit information should be mailed to members. Ray Cooney suggested that printed material may reach members who do not read newsletters or open emails. Allison agreed that paper still works for many LICA members and encouraged states to use the benefit flyers in mailings. Chris Wagner added that printed mailings may be more effective for many LICA contractors because members often keep printed materials on their desk or table and look at them multiple times.

New Business

Buddy Freund discussed New Jersey's membership retention strategy. He reported that New Jersey has lost approximately 300 members since the apprenticeship legislation took effect. New Jersey plans to target those former members through mail, email, and phone calls to explain that LICA now has additional benefits and value beyond the reason they originally joined.

Buddy stated that New Jersey is also changing how it handles required certificates for members. Members must now take a phone call or meeting before receiving their certificate. Hugo Castillo explained that he uses the call to explain the certificate process, review one or two member benefits, and send the National benefits list along with the certificate. He stated that he has received good traction from these conversations, including with office managers and HR staff who may not have known the benefits were available.

The committee discussed the importance of phone calls and personal contact for retention. Chris Wagner stated that retention has been discussed for years, but it is difficult to address without actually reaching the member and finding out why they left. Buddy stated that retention is key to growth because gaining new members will not help if the organization does not keep them.

Hugo Castillo stated that New Jersey is also making an effort to provide information to members in Spanish. Buddy noted

that New Jersey has a large Spanish-speaking population and is exploring printed materials, magazine articles, QR codes, podcasts, and possibly training in both English and Spanish. Nanci Gutwein stated that Indiana also has a growing Spanish-speaking contractor population, and several members agreed that this is an area worth exploring.

The committee discussed the importance of engaging new members immediately. Buddy stated that a first phone call, welcome email, or welcome packet can help new members feel connected. Chris Wagner agreed that a phone call is especially important because it is more personal than an email. Pat McConnell stated that when they joined, another member invited them to attend a convention and mentored them through the process. She suggested that LICA should do more of that with new members.

Maura Dibble stated that members should be encouraged to attend the 2027 Winter Convention in Chandler, Arizona.

David Gallahan reported that Virginia LICA is gaining new members through its construction rodeo fundraiser for children with cancer. He stated that contractors are interested in the event, especially because it involves heavy equipment and prize money. Virginia LICA is allowing members to participate for free, which has encouraged some nonmembers to join instead of paying the higher nonmember fee.

David stated that the construction rodeo will be held August 22 and 23 in Bluemont, Virginia at Great Country Farms. Virginia LICA is working on promotional materials, sponsorships, and ways to increase LICA visibility at the event. Ideas discussed included paper fans with the LICA logo, a tent display showing LICA state chapters across the country, and possible local media coverage.

Chris Wagner stated that local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations are often looking for community stories and that LICA chapters may be missing opportunities to promote field days, fundraisers, and other events through local media.

Maura Dibble asked whether other state chapters could support Virginia's event through sponsorships or by sharing state chapter logos for the display. David said he would share the event materials when they are ready and would welcome support.

Motion to adjourn by Amy Gerten, seconded by Nanci Gutwein. Passed. The meeting adjourned.

On-Site Waste Committee - July 10, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Micsky. In attendance: Dan Micsky, PA; Barry Mutzabaugh, PA; Jim Group, NE; David Gallahan, VA; Stu Frazeur, MN and Allison Hack, IL.

Dan asked members to suggest topics that could be developed into educational programs for future virtual committee meetings.

Discussion was held on differences in on-site wastewater practices and regulations across the country, including soil conditions, limiting zones, drip dispersal systems, daily flow requirements and the potential crossover between nutrient-management practices and on-site wastewater treatment.

Dan suggested septic system maintenance programs as a future meeting topic. Members discussed regularly scheduled inspections as a way to identify problems before system failure, protect the homeowner's investment and provide an additional service opportunity for contractors. It was noted that maintenance requirements would need to be specific to the type of system being used.

Tank insulation was suggested as another future topic. Discussion included insulation requirements in colder climates, proper materials for underground use and the need for additional manufacturer and distributor training on plastic tank installation. Stu Frazeur agreed to take the lead on gathering information for this topic.

Discussion also included plastic tank configurations, pump vaults, storage requirements and differences in system design standards among states.

Members discussed the need for homeowner education regarding how septic systems operate, proper maintenance, water usage and materials that should not be introduced into a system. Educational videos and other information that could be accessed by phone were suggested.

Dan reported on new wastewater monitoring technology that uses a sensor inside the septic tank to track liquid levels and potentially warn homeowners before a backup occurs. He will gather additional information and explore the possibility of a future presentation. Discussion was also held on developing artificial intelligence and robotic technology being tested for septic pumping.

A brief discussion was held regarding a possible National LICA dues increase. Dan noted that the On-Site Waste Committee was not the proper forum for the issue. No action was taken.

David Gallahan asked members for feedback on continuing virtual committee meetings. Members agreed that the virtual format allows greater participation, provides more frequent opportunities for discussion and could free additional time during National conventions for education and training.

Motion by Barry Mutzabaugh Jr. to adjourn, seconded by Jim Group. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:43 p.m. Central.

Policy Committee - July 10, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Steve Gerten. In attendance: Steve Gerten, OH; Chris Wagner, NJ; David Gallahan, VA; Ted Lashley, NE; and Allison Hack, IL.

A motion was made by Chris Wagner to approve an open agenda. David Gallahan seconded. Motion carried.

A motion was made by David Gallahan to approve the March 1, 2026, minutes. Chris Wagner seconded. Motion carried.

There was no old business.

Steve Gerten reported that he reviewed the Executive Committee, Board of Directors and Delegates Meeting minutes from the 2026 Winter Convention in Las Vegas. There had been no additional official Executive Committee meetings since the convention.

The committee recommended that the Policy Book be updated to include the bylaw changes approved at the 2026 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas. The changes included updates to the committee structure and committee names, the name change to the Water Management & Quality Committee, and eligibility requirements for National Vice President and President.

No other items were identified from the reviewed minutes for addition to the Policy Book.

Discussion was held regarding the purpose of the Policy Committee. The committee reviews Executive Committee, Board of Directors and Delegates Meeting minutes for governance decisions, financial requirements and other actions that should be recorded in the Policy Book.

Allison Hack reported that the historical Policy Book has been digitized and is being reorganized to make previous association decisions easier to locate. The Policy Book provides a record of what decisions were made, when they were made and the reason behind the action.

The committee discussed providing meeting materials in advance so participants can review the applicable minutes before the Policy Committee meeting. Future meeting notices will explain the purpose of the Policy Committee and provide links to the specific minutes being reviewed. PDF copies may also be sent directly to the committee chair and co-chair.

Discussion was held regarding the low attendance at previous Policy Committee meetings. Members noted that committee scheduling conflicts at in-person meetings have prevented interested members from participating. The virtual format allows members to participate in committees they previously could not attend.

Discussion was also held regarding the volunteer committee structure and the difficulty of maintaining formally assigned committee members. Members agreed that the Policy Committee serves an important role in monitoring association decisions and maintaining a record of policy changes.

A motion was made by Chris Wagner to adjourn. David Gallahan seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:02 p.m. Central.

Water Management & Quality Committee - July 13, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Adam Cook.

In attendance: Adam Cook, MI; Steve Gerten, OH; Paul Demuth, OH; Nate Cook, MI; Pat McConnell, OH; Sarah Cook, MI; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Chris Wagner, NJ; Dave Gallahan, VA; Kelby Kiefer, IA; Jenny Breberg, MN; Scott Bohle, IA; Caroline Krug, IL; LaVerne Weber, IL; James Ramsey, IN; Andrea Rice, MO; and Keegan Kult, MN.

Motion for an open agenda by Chris Wagner, seconded by Steve Gerten. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the previous minutes by Chris Wagner, seconded by David Gallahan. Motion carried.

Steve Gerten reported that Ohio had no changes from the information provided at the previous virtual meeting.

Nanci Gutwein reported that tile and equipment had been moved to the Indiana Field Day site and work had begun. The education schedule has been posted and preparations are on track.

Adam Cook reported that he has been working with Jane Frankenberger on a solar seminar for the Indiana Field Day. The seminar will be a roundtable discussion. John Severs and Chris Rudder may participate and share their experience working on solar farm projects.

Discussion followed regarding solar panels being placed on crop ground, pastures and parking lots.

The committee discussed the annual \$5,000 National LICA membership in the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition.

Motion by Steve Gerten to recommend that the Budget Committee include \$5,000 for National LICA's ADCMC membership, seconded by Nate Cook. Motion carried.

Discussion was held regarding National LICA's representative to the ADCMC Board. Bob Clark has served as the representative but has not recently participated or responded to communications. The committee agreed that Bob should be contacted to determine whether he wishes to continue. James Ramsey expressed interest in serving as the representative if a replacement is needed. No action was taken.

Keegan reported that the ADCMC website has been updated. The website includes an events calendar for field days and drainage-related events throughout the Midwest. Members may submit events and recommend additional resources for the website. Updated resources include drainage and tile-spacing tools.

Steve Gerten reported that the Ohio Field Day will be held Sep-

tember 22-24, 2026. A flyer is being prepared and will be distributed at the Indiana Field Day.

Discussion was held regarding the virtual committee meetings. Members agreed that the virtual format is working and allows committees to meet more often without travel. James Ramsey suggested considering Zoom because Google Meet can be difficult to use on a mobile device. Keegan suggested including the meeting link directly in the calendar invitation.

Adam Cook explained that the committees are intended to be member driven and member run. National Office staff attend the meetings to listen and provide support, while committee members conduct the meetings and make recommendations to National LICA.

Motion to adjourn by Chris Wagner, seconded by Steve Gerten. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 pm.

Motion by Chris Wagner, seconded by David Gallahan, to approve the committee reports. Passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Steve Gerten presented the proposed strategic plan developed with Amy Gerten and reviewed by the Long-Term Planning/Past Presidents Committee. The proposed plan had also been distributed to the Past Presidents, Region Vice Presidents, Executive Directors, National staff and officers for review and suggestions.

Discussion was held regarding establishing benchmarks and prioritizing the actions listed under each strategic goal. Sarah Cook suggested arranging the actions under each goal in order of priority. The Long-Term Planning/Past Presidents Committee will meet again before the 2027 Winter Convention to review the proposed plan and prioritize the actions. The proposed strategic plan will be presented to the Board for action at the 2027 Winter Convention in Arizona.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Tony Cain, seconded by Maura Dibble. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned.