



# MCA 2026 Winter Convention Beyond PPE: People, Purpose, Possibility



MONTANA CONTRACTORS ASSOC.  
THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

## Detailed Speaker Agenda: Thursday, January 22

**8:00-9:30am: Keynote Speaker – Allan Kehler, “Find Your Voice, Reclaim Your Power”:** For many individuals, silence has become a survival too. People hide their pain, fearing that expressing emotion might be seen as weakness. However, while silence might offer short-term protection, it also creates long-term barriers to personal healing, safety and connection. In this powerful and deeply personal keynote, Allan challenges the cultural myths around mental health, resilience, and emotional expression. Drawing from his own lived experience, Allan shares an unfiltered look at what it means to live behind a mask – and what it takes to finally remove it.

### **Breakouts: 10:00-11:00am**

- **Allan Kehler, “Self-Care Isn’t Selfish – It’s Essential”:** As contractors, you’re constantly showing up, stepping in, and offering support. But in the process of serving others, it’s easy to forget one critical truth: You matter too. This is your invitation to slow down, reconnect with yourself, and explore how caring for your own well-being makes you even more powerful in your work. Get ready to recharge with a mix of reflection, laughter, and connection – including an interactive quiz and creative hands-on activities.
- **Montana Registered Apprenticeship:** Mitchell Winter, Program Specialist with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry’s Registered Apprenticeship Program, and Courtney George, Career Development Specialist will provide a step-by-step guide on how to create a Registered Apprenticeship program.
- **Cyber Security & Fraud:** Contractors are increasingly being targeted for cyber theft and fraud. Barry Jeide, US Bank, gives real life examples of what’s happening, and how to gird your company against the increasingly sophisticated hackers and criminals.
- **Leadership Seminar:** Today’s workplace brings a wide variety of workers to the job site. How are leaders supposed to work with such a broad spectrum of workers? Craig Crawford, Training Director for MCA, will take participants through a variety of exercises to develop leadership skills to help manage and lead in the workforce of today. Participants will learn some skill sets to add to their toolbox and will be encouraged to share out best-practices that work for them in the workplace.

**11:30am: Brian Turmail, Vice President of Public Affairs & Workforce at AGC of America:** Learn what the AGC of America is working on in terms of Advocacy, Workforce Development, and Communications

**1:45-2:45pm: Keynote Speaker – Gene Marks, “Technology in Construction & Key Takeaways”:** This presentation covers AI risks, back-office applications and a bunch of real-life examples of AI in the field: drones, robotics, augmented reality, autonomous vehicles, etc. Gene will also share how to build your own AI systems taking data from existing systems and leave you with 5 takeaways to take into the year.

## **Breakouts: 3:00-4:00pm**

- **Associates Annual Meeting:** The MCA Associates Division represents the associate members of the MCA. Associate members include firms that supply materials, products, equipment or services to help sustain the construction industry. The Associates Division coordinates networking events like the MCA Summer Outing and delivering scholarships to the children of MCA member company employees. This meeting serves to elect officers and new board members, as well as an update on activities.
- **MCCF Annual Meeting:** The Montana Contractors Compensation Fund is a self-insured fund that provides workers compensation insurance coverage for many MCA members. MCCF also offers proactive programs designed to meet the unique challenges presented to the construction industry, including early-return-to-work and safety. Since the fund's establishment, \$30 million has been refunded to participating members. This meeting provides an update on the MCCF and an opportunity to learn more.

**Workforce — Recruitment & Retention:** Gain strategic ideas to transform your construction hiring process. Join Naomi Jackson, founder of Plumb HR, a consulting firm dedicated to helping small to midsize construction contractors modernize their people strategies and navigate the evolving workforce landscape. Brian Turmail, AGC of America, will also share national trends and tips that employers are using.

• **Contracts:** What do contractors need to make sure is in the fine print before the job starts? Learn how to resolve disputes arising from all sizes of commercial, residential and public projects. Brian Taylor and Ryan Browne from Hall & Evans present an overview of how to negotiate design and construction contracts; resolve disputes involving workmanship, delay and payment issues; analyze and assert coverage positions; handle product and general liability claims with injuries and property damage; defend malpractice claims against architects and engineers; work out mechanic's lien, collection and title disputes; and, assist on surety and bonding issues.

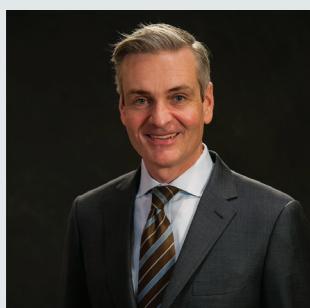
**4:15-5:00pm: 406 Jobs:** Montana Department of Labor and Industry Commissioner Sarah Swanson will present a comprehensive report prepared by DLI. MTDLI estimates over 3,700 annual job openings in construction over the next ten years in a variety of different roles, primarily to replace workers who leave the industry. This report outlines the needs and where to find resources.



**Allan Kehler:** Allan is a leading voice in mental health, resilience, and workplace wellness. Known for his powerful storytelling, Allan draws on his personal journey through mental illness, addiction, and suicide to deliver keynotes that are as impactful as they are relatable. His TEDx talk on men and mental health has gained global traction, and his five best-selling books have further positioned him as a thought leader in the field. A survivor of a suicide attempt, Allan brings a personal perspective into the struggles with mental health and wellness.



**Gene Marks:** As an author, business owner, and columnist for The Hill, The Guardian, Forbes, Entrepreneur, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Chicago Daily Herald, Gene has spent two decades running a successful business and interacting with influential leaders across industries. He appears often on Fox Business, MSNBC, SiriusXM's Wharton Business Daily, and CBS' Eye on the World discussing issues impacting U.S. businesses. Gene helps business leaders understand the political, economic, operational and technological issues and trends that will impact their companies.



**Brian Turmail:** Brian serves as the Vice President of Public Affairs & Workforce for the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC). In this role, he develops and oversees all public, member, and chapter communications activities for the 27,000 member construction trade association. Brian also helps oversee the implementation of the association's Centennial "Future Focus" plan designed to position the association to help member firms thrive amid significant technological, process, and labor transformations taking place within the industry, as well as enhance the workforce efforts within the chapters.