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President's message: ASM takes part in national debate

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There has been a great deal of "buzz" this fall around the new set of standard form contract documents, known as "ConsensusDOCS" that were released in September as an alternative to the AIA documents that have long been the industry standard. The new ConsensusDOCS are the result of a three year collaborative effort involving 23 national organizations representing owners, contractors, subcontractors and the surety industry. ASM is a member of two of the sponsoring organizations, the National Subcontractors Alliance (NSA) and American Specialty Contractors (ASC) and as such contributed to a unanimous vote of endorsement from the subcontracting community. While it may take a while for the new documents to catch on, they deserve consideration, as they are well-crafted documents with terms that are designed to be fair to all parties and in the best interest of a project.

The AIA, meanwhile, has just released major revisions to its own standard forms A201 and A401, which were last revised in 1997. The AIA forms were the focus of discussion at the NSA's recent conference in Philadelphia and ASC conference in Naples. ASC endorsed the AIA revisions, but ASM and NSA both took a more reserved view, recognizing their many improvements, while having concerns about new provisions that increase contractor liability for the negligence of other parties. This change runs contrary to trends around the country to limit liability to the extent of one's own negligence. We will hold a seminar for our members early in the new year to review both sets of new documents, and offer guidance on using them.

Scott Packard is the president of the Associated Subcontractors of Mass., Boston, and is vice president, Chapman Waterproofing Company, Boston.

Photo caption: General contractors and subcontractors get connected at ASM's GC Showcase.

Project Manager's Roundtable, photo caption:

ASM held a Project Manager's Roundtable on Oct. 3 to give experienced project managers from different trades and firms the opportunity to discuss the challenges they face every day on the job site and exchange tips on how to deal with them. As the photo shows, they really got into it, discussing issues around safety, technology, and the perennial favorite - change orders! As one attendee put it, there was a lot of griping, but it was "constructive griping." They learned a lot from each other and enjoyed a few laughs in the process as well.

