

Technical Engineers deserve BIG recognition at Oroville Dam

By John Rector, special representative

For almost two years, we have all been hearing, watching or working on the repairs taking place at the Oroville Dam primary and emergency spillways. We praised Syblon & Reid, Teichert, Lund and the others for their swift and effective work on the emergency repairs, with Kiewit quickly stepping in to take over the rebuild. Kiewit dispatched hundreds of Operating Engineers, turning the devastated landscape into a machine of effectiveness, as the reconstruction began. However, did you know that since the early days of the emergency repair work and continuing throughout the entire project, there has been a community of Technical Engineers onsite providing the field surveying and special inspections needed?

Members with R.E.Y. Engineers, Inc. of Folsom, Calif., were some of the first onsite. R.E.Y.'s crewmembers assisted in the relocation of the high-tension power lines with Barnard and kept track of the massive stockpiles of materials for Syblon & Reid. During the same time, they had other crews helping develop the infrastructure needed to keep the project moving along safely, by building the roads still in use today. With R.E.Y.'s knowledge of the project, it was an easy choice for Kiewit to keep them on for the rebuilding phases of work. Crews have been providing Kiewit with the locations of every newly constructed item on the project and then verifying that everything is built in the correct locations, giving everyone downstream a better sense of hope that the events of 2017 will not occur again.

R.E.Y. Party Chief and second-generation Local 3 Surveyor John Gonzalez said, "It's not the beauty of the spillway you should look at; it's our brothers' and sisters' hard work and dedication that will stand the test of time."

He and many more feel the same way, like R.E.Y. Party Chief Joe Davi: "Watching a project like the Oroville spillway come together and knowing that you have been part of such a large endeavor that will last for years to come – quality leaves a lasting impression."



Special Inspector Kimberly Reed with Ninyo & Moore performs quality control in a lab onsite.



From left: Special Inspectors Abdul Fahim and Charlie Robinson work for Ninyo & Moore.



From left: Joe Davi, Luke Sekel, Cameron Orsi, John Gonzalez, Alex Whitten, Andrey Kim and Brock Adams work for R.E.Y. Engineers at the Oroville Dam. Not Pictured: Night crewmembers Hugh O'Neill and Chris Silva.

R.E.Y. Surveyor Luke Sekel stated, “I am a third-generation land surveyor and am proud to be a surveyor on a project of this size that created so many good union jobs. Being a team player and working alongside capable union members like the Kiewit staff has been a pleasurable experience, and I look forward to working together in the future to complete quality work, on time, safely.”

R.E.Y.’s crews aren’t the only surveyors who have been on the project. During the emergency cleanup, Foulk & Associates, Inc. had a crew onsite assisting Teichert, while Towill, Inc. has been onsite working directly for the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to perform quality control surveys throughout the construction phases.

Surveyors are just one portion of our Technical Engineers here at Local 3. The other sector includes special inspectors. RMA Group is currently employing about eight inspectors all over the project and has a contract with DWR for the quality assurance portion. Ninyo & Moore has around 15 inspectors performing the quality control portion directly contracted with Kiewit and is working under a Project Agreement. In the inspection world, it is not uncommon to find many inspectors working for

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- R.E.Y. Party Chief Joe Davi



Special Inspector Jeff Wilson works for RMA Group.



Special Inspector Josh Swain works for Ninyo & Moore.

Special Inspector John Bosco works for Ninyo & Moore.

multiple companies or entities on one site, but the sheer size of this project demands even more. Ninyo & Moore has multiple labs set up around the project in order to facilitate adequate and timely testing of the construction materials for the project, while RMA Group has utilized its own onsite lab, along with DWR’s lab.

Inspectors are an important part of modern construction and ensure that projects are built in accordance to the project designs and specifications. While inspectors may not always be the most visible people on the job, they play a key role in protecting the public from major infrastructure failures that have plagued our nation over the years.

Both branches of our Technical Engineers have apprenticeship programs. The Northern California Surveyors Joint Apprenticeship Committee (NCSJAC) has over 200 apprentices and journeymen currently active, and the inspectors’ program currently has over 150. These programs are managed by the Technical Engineers Apprenticeship located at the Operating Engineers Headquarters in Alameda, Calif. If you or someone you know would like more information on either of these programs, he or she can contact the apprenticeship office at (510) 748-7413 or visit their website at www.teapprenticeship.org.

