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Construction equipment distributors continue to want to add versatility to their fleets with attachments that dig, crush, mulch, lift, demolish and more. The CEC Attachment Showcase is your best source that previews the most anticipated offerings to enhance your equipment!

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Good Company: Allied Construction Products

Allied Construction Products Returns to Its Roots While Taking Steps Toward a Stronger Future: Allied Construction Products is a company that was born to solve problems – literally. Back in 1942, when Allied was still a small steel business called Amalgamated Steel, its founder, H. S. Meshorer, pioneered a revolutionary method of mitigating the negative effects of the wartime steel shortage on the construction industry.



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CEED

July 2017

Construction Equipment Distribution

Published by AED: Business Fuel for a More Profitable Dealership

CED Magazine's 2017

Attachment Showcase

Featuring products that can boost sales and customer productivity

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■ A Closer Look

Point of Rental Software offers resources to AED members

MECO MIAMI Inc.'s VP Joins AED Board for Southeast

By Karen Algeo Krizman

In his new role as the Southeast regional director for the Associated Equipment Distributors' board, Michael Vazquez hopes to appeal to the smaller dealer.

"My biggest role is to get more people involved in AED," Vazquez said. "I really want to make an effort to attract more dealers on the smaller side, those who may be intimidated and think you have to be a large company to get involved."

As vice president at MECO MIAMI Inc., Vazquez personally knows the benefits of becoming an active member of AED.

"It has changed our organization tremendously in terms of structure and also regarding possibilities of different lines of equipment to sell," he said. "It's helped us grow our business in a positive direction.

"The tools AED gives you are really instrumental to the growth of the business. When you attend one of the workshops and come away with three or four good points, the implementation of those points may be pretty easy but in the long run the changes can be pivotal, especially when it comes to profitability of the company."

Vazquez' parents started MECO MIAMI Inc. in the early '70s, after fleeing Cuba when Fidel Castro overthrew the government. Working out of the family garage, they started with the concept of selling heavy equipment solely in Venezuela, where Vazquez' grandfather was a sugarcane farmer.

The company, which long ago relocated out of the family garage, has since expanded to 25 employees and is now selling heavy agricultural, construction and mining equipment around the world.

Vazquez was first introduced to the family business at 12 years of age, when he was responsible for cleaning up the shop and serving as an assistant mechanic.

"In my college days, I rowed at the University of Miami, so I had to wake up every day at 4:30," Vazquez recalled. "I'd go rowing from 5:30 to 7:30. Then I'd go to school from 9:00 to 12:00, then I'd go to work from 1:00 to 4:00 and then back to school to study. I did that for many, many years."

Even after earning his undergraduate degree, his father told him he would have to get his MBA if he wanted to work for MECO full time.

"When I started here, I was basically a commissioned salesman

for many years," Vazquez recalled. "My parents educated us the right way. I tell my employees and the people I work with that I started just like they did – I started at the bottom and had to work my way up."

Vazquez takes pride in the fact that the employee turnover rate at MECO MIAMI Inc. is minimal. One employee has worked there for 40 years, and others anywhere from 20 to 30 years.

"Our employees enjoy working here," he said. "It's a very comfortable family environment. People do work very hard, yet the environment is gratifying for everyone because we all get along so well."

Although the employee lineup hasn't changed much over the years at MECO MIAMI Inc., the products and how the company does business has, which Vazquez believes is due in large part to the company's involvement with AED.

"AED and The AED Foundation, and the backbone they give us, and the educational base, have really helped us speak to the

manufacturers and expand our business," he said.

AED has also helped MECO MIAMI Inc. adjust to promoting its business via social media, including Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram.

"For traditional businesses like ours, the process of change is very, very difficult," Vazquez said. "It's not like it was 20 years ago when you had a traditional print ad and you had inventory. We're

struggling to adapt to all the new social media tools out there, and AED has some really excellent courses that I think anyone who is not involved, especially the older generation, has to open their eyes to, because it's the future of the industry."

Vazquez said that for him personally, becoming involved with AED has been the best step he's ever taken. Now it's time to give back.

"The reason I want to get involved is because I think I can help and give some expertise when it comes to family business, when it comes to export business, when it comes to the rental business, when it comes to the parts business – all the things that we do very well," he said. "I want to try to pass on as much information as I can, because there's no school where you can go to learn how to be an equipment distributor. There's no class. But there's AED, and it gives people a stepping stone to further their companies."

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Michael Vazquez

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Sara Smith, Editor in Chief
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The results are in! You asked for it, and CED will deliver. Over the past couple of weeks, we conducted a survey of CED subscribers to gain insight on how our readers are viewing the magazine. With an overwhelming amount of responses, we would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete the 2017 readership survey.

CED will bring a bigger emphasis on topics such as; education & training, technology trends and leadership development, because that is what readers, like yourself, have told us in the results. We will continue to provide practical tips and resources that will help improve your day-to-day activities on the job, as well as strategies that you can adapt within your own organizations.

If you have an idea or topic that is not currently being covered in CED, please reach out to myself personally. I'd love to discuss any new innovative techniques you may have to improve your experience. Thank you for choosing CED as your go-to tool to enhance your dealership!

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Washington Needs to Come Together on Infrastructure Bill

What we need is a real infrastructure plan that makes a public investment in our transportation system.

This past November, Americans sent a clear message that they want Washington to do more to make the American economy work for the middle class.

Americans know that there is a lot of work to be done fixing our broken infrastructure, especially our transportation system. In northeastern Illinois we have some of the worst congestion in the country, which means lost time, wasted gas, and more pollution. It also means that conducting business is more expensive for local businesses that need to get products to customers quickly. Overall, it hurts our quality of life every day in many different ways.

President Trump has promised the American people a trillion-dollar infrastructure bill. He mentioned it the night of the election, during his Inaugural Address, and during his address to a Joint Session of Congress. But more than four months into Donald Trump's presidency we have yet to see any concrete ideas put forward, much less a piece of legislation.

Congress stepped forward two years ago with a five-year transportation infrastructure funding bill that I helped to write. As the only House Transportation Committee member from Illinois appointed to work out the final compromise on the bill known as the FAST Act, I helped make sure the bill increased funding for local road and transit projects by more than ten percent and addressed regional transportation priorities. While this bill has been helpful, we all know from our daily experience that more needs to be done. But will President Trump follow through on his promise, and will Congress come together to get it done?

First, we need a good plan. The only plan that President Trump has put forward so far relies on tax breaks to spur private building. To some, this looks more like a tax cut for big-money

developers than an infrastructure plan. The biggest problem is that it would only lead to the construction of toll roads and other projects that would produce a guaranteed return. This means that most of our infrastructure would continue to crumble, while those projects that did get done would cost more because they would include a profit for investors.

What we need is a real infrastructure plan that makes a public investment in our transportation system. It should include more than "shovel-ready projects" as has been suggested by the Trump administration; this lesson should have been learned from President Obama's stimulus bill. We need to make long-term investments that transform our transportation system. This investment will pay off for everyone with less time wasted on our roads, less fuel unnecessarily burned, a better public transit system, the direct creation of jobs, and a long-term boost to our economy. These would be big payoffs for all Americans, especially the middle class.

I strongly disagree with many of the policies that President Trump is trying to implement, and I will continue to fight against them. But we should not let these disagreements stop us from working on issues that can help create jobs for middle-class families. Infrastructure investment should be an issue that we can all agree upon. Washington needs to remember the message Americans sent in November and come together on a real infrastructure bill that will boost the middle class.

I look forward to working with AED members from around the country to make rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure more than a campaign promise. The time is long overdue for a robust and long-term infrastructure package to be signed into law.

REP. DAN LIPINSKI is in his seventh term representing Illinois' third congressional district. He serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, including the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, and the House Science, Space and Technology Committee.

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