‘Construction Industry Coalition For The New Beginning’ Holds First Meeting

Representatives from some forty construction industry associations gathered at Washington’s Capitol Hilton Hotel to be briefed by representatives from the Reagan White House and Representative Stan Parris of Virginia on President Reagan’s economic program.

“Our industry represents a major share of the nation’s economy and we all have a stake in its future. Today could be the first step towards bringing about the changes we all realize are necessary.” Those were the words of AWCI President Ray Boyd as he called to order an organizational meeting of the “Construction Industry Coalition for a New Beginning.”

The meeting followed what started as a phone call from Ray Boyd following President Reagan’s speech in which the program was introduced. It was that phone call that led to the unanimous agreement of the AWCI Executive Committee to back the total package as set forth by the President in his message to the nation. (See President’s Comments, Construction Dimensions, April, 1981)

Following the backing given by the Executive Committee, Boyd called on some sixty-seven construction and related-industry associations to join with AWCI in forming the Coalition. The Coalition became a reality at this April 22 meeting.

Joe Baker, AWCI Executive Vice President, who was named Vice-Chairman of the Coalition, told those association officials gathered for the meeting that “partial support for the President will only frustrate success and deny his program a fair test.” Baker concluded: “I feel that we can honestly say that there is a definite consensus among the construction industry associations to use an informal coalition such as this to help President Reagan get his message across to the Congress.”

Special Assistant to the President Wayne Valis said that crucial votes in both the Senate and the House are approaching and urged the association officials to ask their respective memberships to carefully consider and support the President’s program. (See exclusive interview this issue.) As Construction Dimensions goes to press the program has passed the House and is awaiting Senate consideration.

Max Friedersdorf, Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, explained certain parts of the program as they would affect the construction industry, and traced the legislative
Coalition Chairman Thomas E. Daile, president, Associated General Contractors of America, discusses the future of the program with Vice Chairman Joe M. Baker, Jr., AWCI executive vice president.

Max Friedersdorf, assistant to the President for legislative affairs, told how the economic program would affect the construction industry.

AWCI's Joe M. Baker, Jr.: “Our industry, like so many others, depends upon increasing discretionary income, curbing inflation and decreasing the size of government.”

Secretary of Treasury Donald Regan: “What we need is sustained growth to raise productivity.”

procedures involved in gaining passage for the total package.

The President’s economic recovery program consists of four major sections, Secretary of the Treasury Donald Regan told the group.

First, the program calls for the largest budget cuts ever proposed in the history of the United States, and second, it contains the largest tax cuts ever proposed.

A third section, Secretary Regan said, is in the area of deregulation, and said that government over-regulation has long impeded the construction industry. The Treasury Department head also said that the President elevated deregulation to the office of the Vice President, and at that level over 104 rules and regulations have been changed or eliminated.

A fourth section is in the area of monetary policy. The package is designed, Regan said, to curb inflation by keeping the money supply down and by raising the rate of productivity in the United States. The U.S. has slipped to eighth in productivity rate as compared to other countries. “What we need is sustained growth to raise productivity,” the Secretary said.

The meeting, which received coverage from newspapers, television and major wire services, also featured Representative Stan Parris, Chairman of the House Task Force on Economic Policy. The Virginia Republican joined with White House officials in urging the representatives of the construction associations to ask their members to contact their Congressmen to urge passage of the total package.

Special Assistant to the President Wayne Valis called on association officials to contact their members to urge support for the total program.