

## The ETCP Council leads with laser-focused vision

Dedicated, selfless volunteers grow ETCP Certification to strengthen our industry.



New hotel opening gala which utilized over 4,000' of truss and 205 hoists to support.

MAYA ANGELOU FAMOUSLY SAID, “You can only become truly accomplished at something you love.”

For many of us, a love for the industry is something that runs deep. Perhaps it was the first time you sat in a theatre and were bursting with anticipation of what was about to be revealed from behind the curtain when the lights faded up. Maybe it was the moment when you saw art and

technology coming together to create a show that was unforgettable. For most in our industry, this moment of first intrigue was indelible.

Like many, I too have had those moments of wonder and pride in what our industry does.

In June of this year, I was afforded one of those moments when I joined a family of diverse and dedicated professionals who

serve together on the ETCP Council. For many years, I have watched and appreciated the hard work of those members and am pleased to share in the vision and passion of all that ETCP embodies.

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In my own career, attaining the ETCP certification not only represented a personal development step for me, but it also came to symbolize something greater as the years went on. I realized that it was one of the very few credentials that had been created by some of the industry’s most recognized and accomplished subject matter experts. In a pure act of volunteerism, they came together over a period of years to share best practices and ideas across all boundaries. They set aside all personal and business motivations and instead chose to create programs that supported the health of our industry. From that, the ETCP Council was born and continues to thrive.

The ETCP Council of today has come to symbolize a collective of professionals who care deeply about sharing their knowledge and time so that others may succeed. I have had the good fortune of working with an employer who saw the value in the ETCP Certification program from the very start and, as time has gone on, it has been my



**An exhibition space was transformed to a dinner and entertainment theatre for an international client.**

pleasure to carry the torch and foster an environment where many others could succeed in attaining their certifications as well. In the changing landscape of today's event technology, I believe it is incumbent upon all of us to embrace that change and ask ourselves what we can do to support or mentor those around us who may be looking to expand their expertise and take that next step. Although the certification aspect is highly important in the way that it quantifies skills, for me it has had far greater meaning. On a personal basis, it has exemplified the passion that each member of the ETCP Council has to build our industry and it is an honor to be able to share in that community.

I also believe that visionary leadership is a vital component in today's development of standards and certifications and the ETCP Council is at the forefront of that effort. For the industry, the work of the ETCP Council has never been more important. In our world of growing safety regulations and ever-higher expectations of technical expertise, the Council plays a very important role to identify what skills will be needed to safely facilitate and expertly handle the situations that technicians are facing every day. It has also become the gold standard within the industry for employers to ascertain the level of knowledge that a potential employee might possess. In my own experience, I have had numerous groups, and even insurance

## ETCP Council approves new Power Distribution Technician Certification

PLASA's ETCP Council has voted unanimously to offer a brand new certification focusing on Power Distribution Technicians (ETCP – PDT). The new program is in response to an increasing demand within the entertainment industry to establish benchmark standards and define the required knowledge and skillsets surrounding the assembly, use, and disassembly of power distribution systems for a wide variety of entertainment venues and markets. These include the corporate, trade show, outdoor event, theatrical, and motion picture/television segments of the industry. The development of the program has been fully funded by sponsorships.

For employers, this certification will provide documentation of knowledge and assist in determining a worker's status as a qualified entertainment power distribution technician, while also encouraging continuing education among their staff. The Entertainment Technician Certification Program currently has over 2,000 individuals certified as Rigger – Arena, Rigger – Theatre, or Entertainment Electrician.

"As ETCP develops the PDT certification program, we have made it a priority to join forces with the leaders in the power distribution industry," said Eddie Raymond, Chair of PLASA's North American Regional Board. "Incorporating

their expertise as our Subject Matter Experts ensures that the certification is as relevant and impactful as possible."

Chairing the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) will be Alan Rowe, Co-Chair of the ETCP Entertainment Electrician SMEs and Chair of the IATSE Crafts Advancement Program and Derek Coleman, Vice President of Power Distribution for PSAV. Joining them are: Rob Baxter, NBA Production Electrician and Owner, Baxter Controls; Pat Enos, Operations Manager Trade Show Electrical, GES; Kevin Felton, Director – Electrical Services, Freeman Electrical, Inc.; Lance Hughston Sr. and Lance Hughston Jr., Owners of Hughston Engineering, Inc.; John Lacy, Freelance Gaffer and Best Boy; Gregg Lirosi, Regional Power Distribution Manager, Eastern United States, PSAV; Billy Peacock, Owner, Eventpower; Phil Reilly, Lighting Director, WGBH-Television Group; Steve Terry, Vice President of Research & Development, ETC; and Christopher Wren, Owner, Keylight, Inc.

The SME group has already begun work on the content outline for the exam and will meet at ETCP's psychometric firm, Applied Measurement Professionals, in Kansas City in October to begin the item writing process. The certification will launch in the summer of 2016 following nine months of intensive work by the SMEs.

companies, ask me for a description of the ETCP Certification and what it meant and, universally, their response has been one of respect and appreciation for the quality of the ETCP program.

I would also say that having a shared industry vision is key. In most industries, it is the fragmentation of principles that causes stagnation in growth. We are very privileged to have the opportunity to join together under one banner with ETCP and have a clear focus in the rigging and electrical subject matter areas. This unified mission allows for the Council and certified technicians to move in unison and both implement and deploy a level of excellence in our service to others.

In our pursuit of that service excellence to others, we sometimes encounter

hurdles along the way that teach us some of our greatest lessons. To embrace those experiences, and allow ourselves to be open-minded and flexible in creating new solutions, is paramount to future successes in my mind.

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I had a recent conversation with a colleague who asked about some of the key lessons I have learned and, more importantly, what keeps me up at night. In the world of rigging, as you can imagine, that list could be lengthy. For me however,



A large event rig was installed to support numerous scenic and audiovisual elements for a multi-national company.

the thing that most steals my quiet hours is the thought of constant improvement. I find myself frequently pondering what the next evolution in event technology will look like and how we, as business leaders and subject matter experts, will support the right framework to meet that need. From a business perspective, we all share the goal of delivering successful customer interactions and a safe product. We all strive for perfection and flawlessness to demonstrate to our customers and our industry colleagues that we are unequivocally committed to safety and the latest industry standards. And yet one day, deep down, we know that we will inevitably awaken to find ourselves in need of new ideas, new best practices, and evolved technical standards that shape the future.

That one thing that keeps me up at night is also the reason why I believe in the ETCP Council and the value of their contribution to the industry. While certifications are able to reflect a level of skillsets that one may possess, there is an even greater need to ensure that the industry can remain healthy and vibrant. That health is directly tied to our ability to innovate, share ideas, and crossover company lines to establish the vision for what tomorrow's certified technicians will need to know. Like all change, that process isn't fast, but it is critical

to the health and expansion of our trade. For these reasons, the ETCP Council plays a key role in the next phase of our evolution and, I believe, the future-proofing of our industry.

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To all those who share this same love for our industry, my encouragement would be to take every day as a learning opportunity, get involved, let your new ideas be heard, and might we all endeavor to become truly accomplished together. ■



**Todd Spencer** is a seasoned business developer and executive leader within the event industry and currently oversees PSAV's Global Rigging Services operation, which encompasses over 1,000 office locations in 11 countries. He is an ETCP Certified Rigger – Theatre. Todd is the Vice Chair of the North American Regional Board and serves on the ETCP Council.

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