

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2023

For more information:

Robert Baylor, NUCA Director of Communications  
703-890-7807, [robert@nuca.com](mailto:robert@nuca.com)

**Lauren Atwell Wins Ditchdigger of the Year Award**  
***North Florida Construction Company Executive Honored With***  
***Top Industry Recognition***

(Fairfax, Va.) – The National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) proudly awarded former chairman Lauren Atwell the prestigious “Ditchdigger of the Year” Award, honoring his many years of service to the American underground utility industry and his years of support for NUCA’s membership programs.

“Lauren has served as a mentor to many at NUCA and his company,” said Doug Carlson, NUCA Chief Executive Officer. “Sharing what he has learned has helped many in our industry reach their goals. His steady voice as Chairman and in his Florida chapter always sought to ensure our association’s decisions were well-thought out and benefitted the industry and our membership. Lauren has enthusiastically merited this award and the recognition fitting a true champion of America’s infrastructure.”

Atwell is the chief operating officer at Petticoat-Schmitt Civil Contractors, Inc., located in Jacksonville, Florida. He has been part of the company’s executive team for this large Southeast regional construction company since 2014. Atwell has been part of the industry since as a young man, going to his grandfather’s jobsites in western New York and learning the industry from the ground up.

Atwell has been an outspoken advocate for the utility construction industry and NUCA for many years. Serving as NUCA’s Chairman in 2021, under his leadership the landmark infrastructure bill was lobbied for and ultimately signed into law, as well as personally testifying before Congress on the vaccine mandate and its effect on the nation’s construction industry.

Atwell’s years of service to the industry include experience both on the National and Chapter levels. He has served on the executive council of NUCA since 2018, first serving as Secretary and presently serving as Immediate Past Chairman. For over ten years, Atwell has held membership in NUCA of Florida, and continues to serve as a trusted member of the Construction Management Advisory Board for the University of North Florida.

Most recently, Atwell served as the past chairman of NUCA National in 2021-22. His knowledge of this industry and loyalty to NUCA is unmatched.

This national award is awarded to a NUCA contractor member who has made a significant contribution to NUCA and the underground utility construction and excavation industry. The 2022 “Ditchdigger of the Year” Award was presented to former Chairman Atwell at the association’s Annual Meeting held in March of this year at the MGM Grand Hotel located in Las Vegas, Nevada.

# # #

**About The National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA)**

Founded in 1964, the National Utility Contractors Association represents over 2,000 U.S. utility and excavation contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers who provide the materials and workforce to build and maintain our nation’s intricate network of water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, and electric infrastructure. NUCA is found online at [www.nuca.com](http://www.nuca.com), and can be followed on Twitter at **@NUCA\_National**. The association’s Twitter hashtags are #WeDigAmerica and #NUCADigs.