

CONSTRUCTION TODAY

PUBLISHED BY THE GENERAL BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 1 | 2021

**BUILDING OUR FUTURE.
TOGETHER.**

**LOCAL CONSTRUCTION LEADERS HELP
STUDENTS BUILD REWARDING CAREERS**



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Construction Managers, Builders

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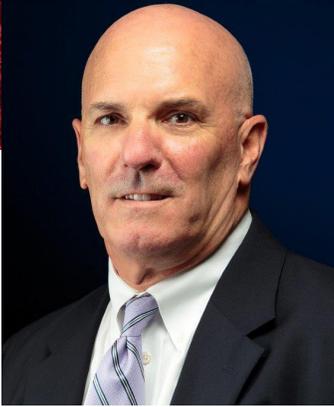


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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Building the future generations of leaders in the construction industry, who are more inclusive and ready to take on the challenges they will surely face must be one of our top priorities.

According to Deloitte, millennials will represent 75% of the national workforce by 2025... However, in the construction industry, data shows the percentage of younger workers has declined while the share of people over 55 continues to increase.

These statistics reinforce the need for urgency to ensure we infuse the GBCA – and the union construction industry as a whole - with young talent...securing a bright future for the organization in the decades ahead.

There's a great opportunity to change the perception that construction is only about skilled craft in the field – there are many career pathways, from technology to management, finance, design, operations and more. It is our duty to reach out and engage the up-and-coming generation to open their eyes to these possibilities.

We have already begun to make progress on this front and we will accelerate our efforts. Over the past several years, GBCA has worked together with the building trades to begin cultivating a more diverse, better trained, and fully equipped union construction workforce. These efforts are now beginning to pay dividends.

We are starting to build the talent pipeline early by working with middle and high school programs such as:

- ACE Mentor Program
- Mercy Career & Technical High School
- and YouthBuild Philly

We are working hand-in-hand with pre-apprenticeship training programs such as Construction Apprentice Preparatory Program (CAPP) and Carpenters Apprentice Ready Program (CARP) .

We are not only helping to educate talent in the field but also professionals in the office with tuition reimbursement programs for college students and training programs for young professionals working to climb the ranks at our member companies.

Taking these successful efforts to the next level will enable us to continue moving the needle in the right direction.

Of course, we can't talk about workforce development without highlighting our Construction Leadership Council (CLC). The CLC has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years and is a bright light within our organization. The group is also attracting attention nationally as they had the honor of hosting the National AGC Leadership Conference in 2019.

In 2020, they launched the all-new virtual CLC Coffee Chats to connect seasoned veterans with emerging leaders to further learning and casual networking opportunities in this COVID landscape.

Our CLC's energy, enthusiasm and initiative is impressive and certainly inspiring.

This is the power of workforce development in action. This is why we need to continue investing today to cultivate a well-educated and diverse workforce that will ensure our industry – and our association – thrives tomorrow.

Mike Armento

Senior Vice President, Torcon, Inc.,

Chairman of the Board
General Building Contractors Association



LETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

The pandemic turned our world upside down almost overnight, bringing us face to face with unprecedented challenges that threatened to bring our livelihood to a screeching halt. Despite the challenges presented to us, the construction industry's collaborative efforts have allowed us to successfully navigate these uncharted waters together.

On March 16, 2020, construction in Pennsylvania shut down and from that day forward we, as an industry and an organization, adapted. The efforts of our members, Board of Directors, staff, partnering associations and labor partners proved our industry's resilience.

While 2020 is a year that most people would like to soon forget, when we think about how far we have come, how much we have learned, and how much we have grown both professionally and personally, we can start to appreciate how strong our industry is when we work together. The adversity we faced in 2020 pales in comparison to the strength we displayed last year.

2020 reinforced an important lesson: Often it is only by forging through the obstacles in our way that we may begin to realize our true potential. Your association has worked harder than ever this past year to better the union construction industry as a whole; and our industry has a lot for which it should be proud. So, as GBCA turns to the work yet to be done, it is important that we reflect upon all that we have accomplished: Countless COVID-19

health and safety measures; a rapid expansion of online training; increased collaboration with other associations and trades; a continued commitment to quality; and a renewed commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Strengthened by the trials of 2020, this year your GBCA is more prepared than ever to help our members and our industry grow in 2021.

There is a reason why the GBCA is one of the oldest trade associations in the country. Through pandemics, depressions, world wars and recessions, GBCA grows. We are a powerful force and invaluable resource for our members. We have always had a great story to tell. Now, as we write this new chapter, there is a unique opportunity to ensure it is a story of how we banded together to meet the needs of our industry and ensured that future generations could thrive in the construction industry.

We are GBCA. We are resilient. And together, we are building our future.

Benjamin J. Connors, Esq.

President & CEO
General Building Contractors
Association

CONSTRUCTION TODAY

PUBLISHER/EDITOR Lauren Hanan

ADVERTISING/SALES Lauren Hanan

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Ernest J. Bernabei III, Esq., John Braun, Amanda DiCrescenzo, E. June Ellaway-Lunn, Lauren Hanan, Angela Hendrix, Byron Lee, Josh Litzman, Marty McCarthy, Kathleen Morley, Edward Seglias, Amanda Weko, and Paul Williamson

DESIGN Punch Garage

ACCOUNTING Kristin DeFrancisco

EDITORIAL OFFICE

General Building Contractors Assn., Inc.
36 South 18th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
P: 215-568-7015
F: 215-568-3115

PRINTER

A-Lex Print and Promotion
100 Porter Rd suite 202
Pottstown, PA 19464

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NOTES FROM THE PUBLISHER

On January 25, 2021, our members came together for our first-ever (and hopefully only) virtual Annual Meeting. As always, it was a time to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, to be inspired by legends and visionaries, and to look ahead to future progress. Only this year, there seems to be so much more to celebrate: Great strides were made in 2020 toward the collaboration of our industry, and GBCA and its members worked together to overcome one of the most challenging years in recent memories. And yet, the future seems very bright.

Last year at this time, our world had literally been turned upside down. We had no idea what the future would hold, or when we would ever return to “normal” again. Now, a year later, we are slowly getting back to public gatherings, social events, and maybe even shaking hands. But what we once knew to be “normal” may not fully return.

We’ve all learned a lot over the past year, we’ve grown together as an industry and individually as employees and employers. Things are looking slightly different than

they looked in the beginning of 2020 – but maybe that’s ok. Maybe that growth has evolved us as an industry and brought us closer together as a driving force.

The staff at GBCA is proud to represent the smartest, strongest, most forward-thinking representatives of the construction industry in the greater Philadelphia region and we look forward to working with you, and for you, as this brand-new “normal” is taking form.

Be sure to look for upcoming events with GBCA, as we are planning safe in-person events for our members: Micro Membership Dinners, TWO Golf Outings, an outdoor networking event for CLC in June, GBCA Down the Shore in July, and socially distanced OSHA 30 courses, to name a few. Keep an eye on our Monday News At a Glance newsletter for exciting offerings from GBCA. 2020 gave us some time to be innovative and work toward a whole new design for our association’s training offerings.

We can’t wait to see what this year will bring and to offer our members a new GBCA experience.

Lauren Hanan

Director, Marketing & Communications
General Building Contractors Association



General Building Contractors Association



theGBCA



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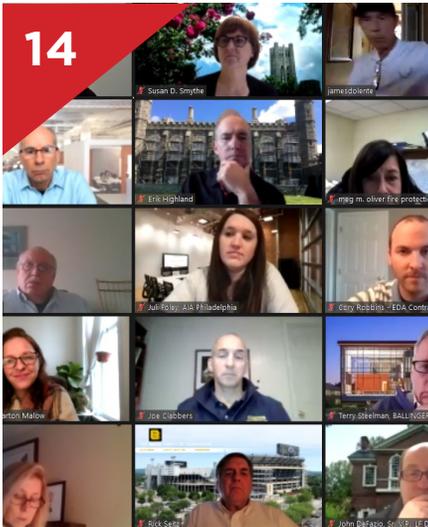


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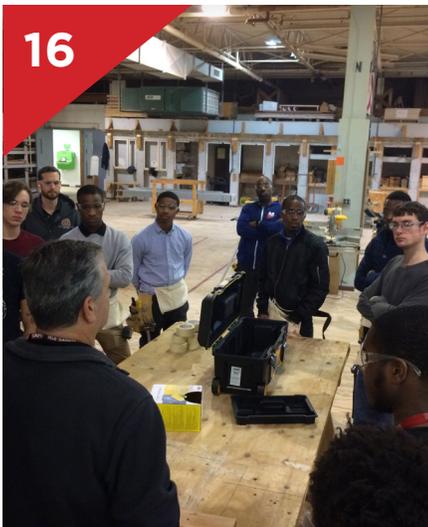
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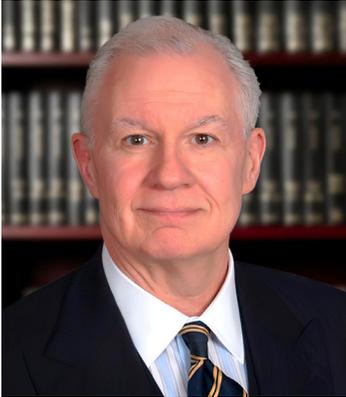
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CONTRIBUTORS



ERNEST J. BERNABEI III, ESQ.

Partner, Pillinger Miller Tarallo LLP



JOHN BRAUN, CSP, CHST

CEO, Signature Safety



AMANDA DiCRESCENZO

Director of Marketing & Business Development, Eureka Metal & Glass Services



E. JUNE ELLAWAY-LUNN

Director of Marketing + Design, HazTek Inc.



LAUREN HANAN

Director, Marketing & Communications
General Building Contractors Association



ANGELA HENDRIX

Director of Training & Workforce Development, GBCA

Would you like to be a contributor to the next issue of Construction Today?
Contact Lauren Hanan at lhnanan@gbca.com or 215-568-7015.



BYRON LEE

Manager, Marketing & Communications, GBCA



JOSH LITZMAN

Steven Kempf Building Materials



MARTY MCCARTHY

CPA, CCIFP, Managing Partner, McCarthy & Company



KATHLEEN MORLEY

Partner, Cohen Seglias



EDWARD SEGLIAS

Vice President & Partner, Cohen Seglias



AMANDA WEKO

Founder & Principal, AGW Communications



PAUL WILLIAMSON

Associate, Cohen Seglias



MADISON RISK GROUP
 LLC
 INSURANCE BROKERS, CONSULTANTS AND RISK MANAGERS



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



Q / A

Name: Ray Prince

Title: Insurance Producer

Age: 31

Company, City:

MRG – Madison Risk Group, LLC
 King of Prussia, PA

Years in field: 4

Education: Penn State University

Birthplace: West Chester, PA

City of Residence: King of Prussia, PA

Family: Fiancé (Leanna)
 & daughter (Myla)

What is your business motto?

I have two quotes I live by in business:

“Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not.. Genius will not.. Education will not.. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan Press On! Has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race” – Calvin Coolidge

“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take” – Wayne Gretzky.

When did you first become interested in your career path?

I began my career as a payroll consultant selling worker’s compensation coverage as an added service. A client who fought me on purchasing worker’s compensation insurance coverage for their one employee ended up having a worker’s comp claim two weeks after I signed him up. The appreciation he gave me for forcing him to purchase the policy made me instantly see the need for insurance. Why construction? My grandfather and uncles owned a union concrete business for over 35 years. My entire family worked there, including my father and I. I grew up in this industry, which heavily depends on risk management.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? Least rewarding?

I know this sounds cheesy, but it’s true. Clients call us in distress all the time. It may be a rushed certificate request or a significant claim. Hearing the sigh of relief from a customer knowing they are in good hands is the most rewarding part. Also, being in sales is like sports for business. I love competition and the feeling of bringing on a new client is like winning a big game. The least rewarding part is losing a client. It happens in insurance and sometimes there is nothing you can do about it.

What is your biggest daily challenge?

My biggest daily challenge is being patient. Kobe Bryant mentioned several times during his retirement season, “The Dream is the journey, not the destination.” I am naturally an impatient person because I want to succeed so badly (as most young professionals are). I keep reminding myself that my daily efforts will eventually lead to long term success.

How do you inspire your colleagues?

I try to stay as positive, energetic, and engaged as I can when I am with colleagues. That type of energy will rub off on others and makes a positive impact on everyone.

What goal are you currently striving to achieve?

I’m trying to be the best that I can be in every aspect of my life. My family and my career are most important to me. If I can be a great father, a great husband, and sustain a successful career, I have achieved my goal.

Do you have a life motto? If so, what is it?

I try to treat everyone the way I would like to be treated. Nothing bothers me more than the table next to me at a restaurant who talks down to their waiter. Everyone deserves respect in this world, and the more you give it the more you are likely to receive.

What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned in your career?

I have learned to never be afraid to make a mistake or not know the answer to something. The best thing to do if you do make a mistake is to own it and make sure to learn from it for next time. I have found that if you own your mistakes and learn from them, people will forgive you. No one is perfect.

What was your favorite CLC event?

Due to the pandemic, I haven’t had the chance to experience the infamous Phillies Opening Day. As of now, I would have to say the CLC Coffee Chats. It is very inspiring to hear the stories and advice of some of our top construction leaders in Philadelphia. It also gives us the opportunity to still network during the pandemic.

How do you find that participating in CLC activities benefits you?

The CLC events are instantly expanding my network as well as providing an educational piece in constructing my career. The GBCA has so many events for young professionals. Each event that I attend, there is a new person I meet and something new I can learn. I personally try to attend every CLC event because there is always something good that comes of them.

Do you have any advice for other CLC members/ young professionals who are looking to advance their career?

Although I am still figuring this out for myself, one thing I am sure of is to keep networking. Successful businesses are built on great relationships. We are the future of this industry. It is important for all of us to build relationships with each other – both at our level and above. Some day we will be the ones who will be leading the companies that are building the City of Philadelphia and its suburbs today. Those relationships begin now.

What is your favorite thing about being a member of GBCA?

The people and the events. From the GBCA staff to its members, I enjoy seeing everyone I have developed a close relationship with when I attend the GBCA events.

CHRIST CHURCH STEEPLE RESTORATION

PROJECT NAME

Christ Church Steeple Restoration

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Haverstick-Borthwick Company

CONSTRUCTION START

May 2019

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

March 2020

PROJECT COST

\$2.5 million

OWNER

- Christ Church and the Christ Church Preservation Trust

ARCHITECT

- John Milner Architects

ENGINEER

- Keast & Hood Structural Engineers

PROJECT SUBCONTRACTORS

- Apache Industrial United*
- Belcher Roofing Corporation*
- Buttonwood Company, Inc.
- Knapp Masonry
- Lititz Planing Mill
- Materials Conservation
- Rhoads Metalworks Inc.
- Window Repairs & Restoration*

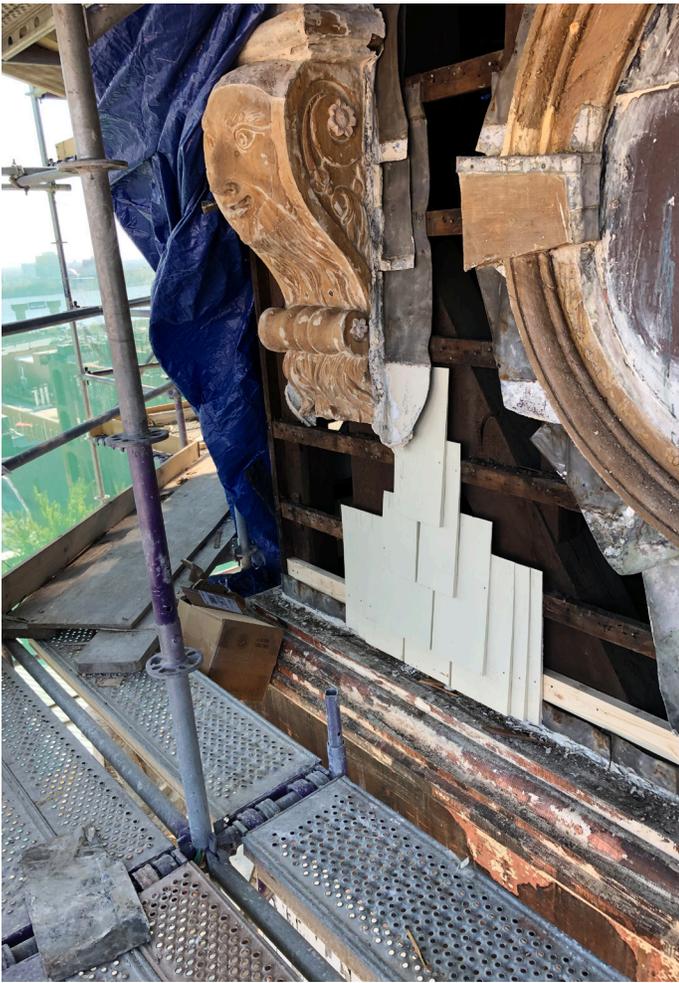
*GBCA Member





PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Haverstick-Borthwick Company proudly worked with Christ Church and the Christ Church Preservation Trust to preserve the steeple of Christ Church, the birthplace of the American Episcopal Church. This project honors a significant part of the National Historic Landmark building, a part of Philadelphia's heritage that dates back to the founding of the United States of America. The tower and steeple stand 196 feet tall, with the wooden steeple rising 116 feet from the brick tower to the top of the bishop's mitre weathervane.



THE CHRIST CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA'S STEEPLE

The building of the brick tower was completed in 1750. Construction of the wooden steeple began in 1751 and was completed in 1754. The classical Georgian style design of the tower and steeple are attributed to Robert Smith, a carpenter-architect in Philadelphia active in the mid-18th century. Smith is also credited with designing two significant Georgian buildings in Philadelphia: the Powel House and Carpenters' Hall. In *The Young Carpenter's Assistant* (1805), Owen Biddle notes that "the justness of its proportions, simplicity and symmetry of its parts is allowed by good judges to be equal if not superior in beauty to any Steeple of the spire kind, either in Europe or America."

The golden bishop's mitre weathervane commemorates the consecration of the Reverend William White, the first American-born bishop of the Episcopal Church. White went on to aid the revolution and serve a new nation as chaplain for the Continental Congress from 1777-89. Since its initial completion, the steeple has remained mostly unchanged, even after Robert Smith's own renovations completed in 1777, and even though Thomas U. Walter made significant and controversial alterations to the church in the 1830's.

Christ Church became a National Historic Landmark in 1975 and is currently listed on the Philadelphia Register. The interior and exterior have conservation easements with the Philadelphia Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC), dating to 2008, which mandate that additional work will not affect the property's historical or architectural characteristics, especially the building's 18th century fabric.

THE 2019 RESTORATION

The project completed by Haverstick-Borthwick Company restored the 1750 brick tower and the 1754 wooden steeple on top of the tower. Elements restored included: the exterior walls of Flemish bond brick; the broad wood cornices with modillions; the four flaming urns that decorate the top of the brick tower; the haunting carved wood faces; the wood steeple that is sheathed in wood T&G boards, wood shingles, and lead and copper flashing; and the gilded bishop's mitre weathervane at the top. All changes were made without impacting the exterior appearance or sight lines.

A laser scan of the church provided precise measurements of the tower and steeple to the very top of the bishop's mitre weathervane, and confirmed that the steeple had a list of 22 inches to the northeast.



To counter any additional listing, Keast & Hood threaded a new structural system from the masonry tower and up to the spire, which protects the wooden steeple and spire from uplift and lateral wind forces.

Haverstick-Borthwick Company also reinforced the 18th century heavy timbers. Sections of wooden diagonal bracing throughout the center section of the steeple were replaced and reinforced with steel. The “X” bracing and “V” bracing, dating back to 1754 the 1771 building campaigns by Robert Smith, were also repaired.

A BEACON OF HOPE FOR PHILADELPHIA

The steeple represents the optimism felt by the colonists in Philadelphia during uncertain times prior to the founding of the nation. Since then, the steeple has served as a beacon of hope through wars, financial hardships, political turmoil, and epidemics. At a recent Christ Historic Preservation Trust event, Charles Moleski, chair of the Building committee at Christ Church, stated that “the Beacon remains and we were proud to play a small part in its preservation for future generations.”



GBCA EVENTS RECAP

Over 200 GBCA members signed in for this live virtual event, which reviewed and celebrated GBCA's achievements in 2020.



WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? Looking Towards the Future!

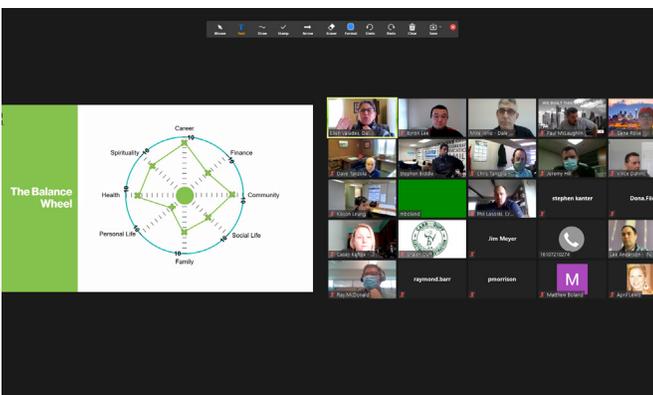
On January 26, the AIA/GBCA Joint Committee and COAA PA brought together over 90 architects, contractors, construction suppliers and service providers, and real estate owners and developers to contemplate the upcoming trends in the building industry for 2021. Read more about this event on page 24.

CLC VIRTUAL COFFEE CHAT: Todd Lofgren, Executive Vice President and General Manager, Skanska USA Building

On February 10, GBCA's CLC hosted a virtual Coffee Chat with Todd Lofgren, Executive Vice President and General Manager of Skanska USA Building. Todd discussed his path to a leadership role in one of the world's largest construction companies, and the value of building your network.

VIRTUAL EGGS WITH OSHA: FOCUS ON THE FOCUS FOUR

OSHA representatives, safety professionals from GBCA member companies, and union representatives from the Building Trades Council of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania & Vicinity met to develop safety training resources to help prevent the most common hazards causing fatalities in construction.



CLC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SERIES: TIME MANAGEMENT

Working in a virtual environment can mean challenges in time management. During this interactive online workshop led by Dale Carnegie, GBCA members learned strategies to be more productive at work and to make time for their families and personal priorities.



CLC VIRTUAL COFFEE CHAT: MACK STULB, PRESIDENT, LF DRISCOLL

On March 25, GBCA's CLC hosted a virtual Coffee Chat with Mack Stulb, President of LF Driscoll. Mack shared how he came to lead one of Philadelphia's largest commercial construction companies, and what it takes to be a successful leader in the construction industry.

Annual Meeting Recap

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2021 Annual Meeting on January 25, 2021! Over 200 GBCA members signed in live for the virtual event, which reviewed and celebrated GBCA's achievements in 2020. In addition to watching the program, members interacted with one another in a live chat.

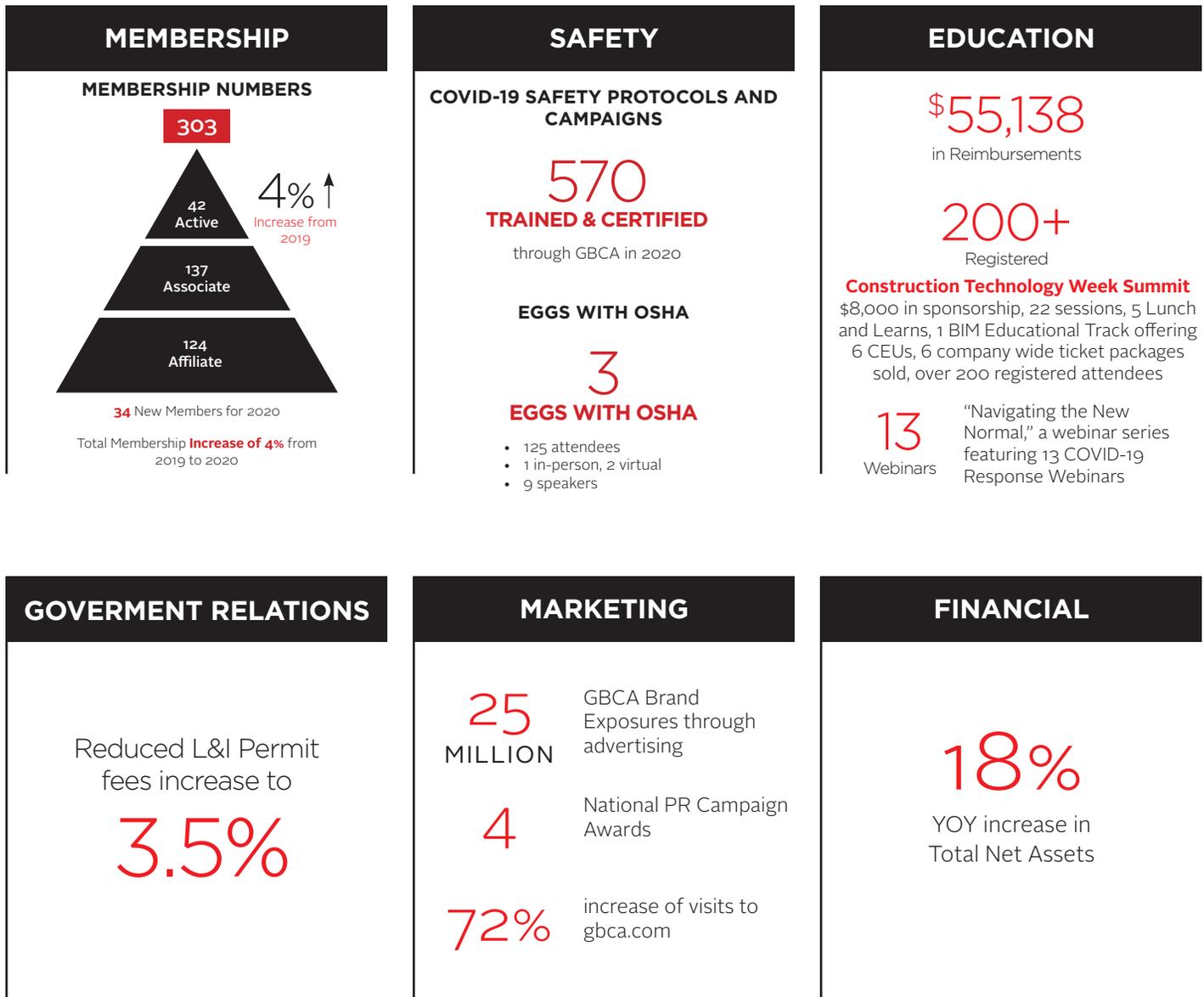
While 2020 was marked by obstacles set forth by the COVID-19 pandemic, GBCA and its members learned to face challenges head-on, and keep Philadelphia's union commercial construction industry running stronger than ever before.

Featured Speakers:

- Natalie Kostelni, Philadelphia Business Journal
- Benjamin Connors, GBCA
- Joseph Clearkin, James J. Clearkin, Inc.
- Michael Armento, Torcon, Inc.

Incoming Chairman of the Board, Michael Armento, SVP, Torcon, Inc., spoke about continuing the work of building up the industry with the next generation. Looking forward, GBCA will continue to encourage people to join the industry through workforce development programs, construction education programs, and tuition reimbursements for individuals in post-secondary construction programs. He also spotlighted GBCA's Construction Leadership Council, and the value of the group's support of emerging professionals in the construction industry.

2020 was a challenging year, but the 2021 Annual Meeting offered a glimpse into a brighter future and a year of new opportunities!



Local Commercial Construction Leaders Help Middle and High School Students Build Rewarding Careers

BY LAUREN HANAN, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS | GBCA

Walk or drive by the dozens of active construction worksites in the region and you'll see a range of professionals on the job. What you don't see are the countless experts working in offices behind the scenes to help transform renderings into reality. Career opportunities throughout the commercial construction industry are hiding in plain sight.

While construction fundamentally shapes our city and suburbs, careers in the industry often fly under the radar. The General Building Contractors Association (GBCA) – one of America's oldest trade associations – is on a mission to change that with workforce development efforts and an array of partnerships designed to raise awareness among middle and high school students about the real, rewarding career opportunities in construction.

BUILDING AWARENESS AMONG TEENAGERS

"It's our duty to focus on the generations behind us and educate them about the significant opportunities the construction industry offers," says Michael Armento, Vice President at Torcon, Inc. and GBCA's Board Chairman.

Angela Hendrix, Director of Training & Workforce Development at GBCA, echoes this.

"There are a lot of kids who don't know about the opportunities that are available to them in the world of construction," says Hendrix, who presents regularly at schools throughout the region. "Kids are usually familiar with carpenters, electricians and plumbers, but they don't realize there are almost 20 union building trades in Philadelphia. These are diverse, high paying, family sustaining careers – but they have to know these opportunities are both available and attainable."

With an aging workforce, much of which will retire in the next five to 10 years, there's even more opportunity for emerging professionals to set up and get involved.

"Beyond working with tools in the field, these jobs can also lead to positions as a foreperson, superintendent or project manager. Additionally, there's the office side of the business with roles in engineering, estimating, logistics, recruiting, management and more," Armento adds, stressing that middle and high schoolers need to be exposed to these career tracks as they start making decisions about their own paths after graduation.

While he first joined the industry by chance nearly 40 years ago, Armento's personal story is a testament to the upward mobility the industry offers. He started in the field out of high school when a friend running a sitework contracting business asked if he would be interested in a job running heavy equipment. With nothing else lined up at the time, he decided to give it a try.

That first job turned into an offer from a local general contractor in South Jersey to work as a clerk, assisting a site superintendent. When the clerk assignment finished, he was invited to go into the office to learn estimating.

"These first few experiences exposed me to so many different facets of building construction," Armento says. "Every day I saw something new, and every day I was more and more intrigued."

While working during the day, Armento went on to earn his degree in Construction Management from Drexel University at night. He continued to move up the ladder and today helps to lead one of the largest, most active builders in the mid-Atlantic states.

"My life-changing career all started with taking a one-off job because I had nothing better to do at the time. It's not good enough to leave these chances up to luck," he notes. "The opportunities are there. We just need more young people to know about them."



FUELING THE SPARK

Raising the profile of careers in construction has long been a priority for GBCA and its members, as is providing the tools and resources to support those who are interested in exploring the field. At the middle and high school level, this entails a collaborative and multi-faceted approach with partner organizations to support up-and-comers – bright young minds like Gabby Carruth.

Carruth, 19, knew since elementary school that she wanted to be in construction. Attending Russell Byers Charter School in Center City Philadelphia, she watched the construction of the Comcast Tower and a large condo building across the street from her school nearly every day, which sparked her interest.

“I would look out the window all day and watch the different trades working onsite,” Carruth says. “From that point forward, I knew I wanted to be in there. I wasn’t exactly sure what I wanted to do, but I knew I wanted to be part of the industry.”

Her interest stuck and in high school, her learning coach recommended she check out the National Association of Women in Construction’s MyWIC camp. Short for Mentoring Young Women in Construction, MyWIC is a free camp that educates girls in 7th through 12th grade about the fun and financially rewarding careers in the industry. It provides real hands-on experience with the building trades, including the cement masons, carpenters, insulators, drywall finishers, sprinkler fitters, pipefitters, electricians, and others.

Carruth participated in MyWIC the summer after she finished 11th grade, which she says solidified her decision to go into construction, specifically carpentry.

“The girls who participate in MyWIC get to learn firsthand about so many different parts of the industry. Through partnerships with the local trade unions and general contractors, MyWIC educates girls about what different careers look and feel like in real life so they can better understand the opportunities that are out there and which path they might want to pursue,” says Angelina Perryman, Vice President of Administration at Perryman Building and Construction Services, Inc. and MyWIC’s 2020 camp co-chair.

“MyWIC not only provides young women a vision,” continues Perryman, “the experience is transformative, enabling girls to build confidence and life skills that serve them well, regardless of what they ultimately decide to do.”

MyWIC and GBCA also help open the door to opportunities that can help them kick-start their careers.

Such was the case for Carruth, who passed her Carpenters Union entrance exam in March 2020 and needed to find a sponsor just as COVID-19 took hold. Perryman connected her with Hendrix at GBCA, who then put Carruth into contact with Mary Kate Radomski, Operations Manager at Frank V. Radomski & Sons. The next day, Carruth was hired.

“I’m so appreciative,” Carruth says. “This wouldn’t have been possible without MyWIC and GBCA.”





MAKING MENTORSHIP COUNT

When it comes to education and career planning, mentorship is a critical piece of the puzzle. That's why GBCA is a longstanding partner of ACE Mentor Program of Greater Philadelphia, a program that has been enabling local high school students to learn more about careers in architecture, construction and engineering through mentorship with industry professionals for the past 20 years.

"A big part of our program is working with kids who are interested in design and construction and helping them understand what it's actually like to work in the industry," says Melissa Raffel, Affiliate Director of ACE Mentor Program of Greater Philadelphia.

ACE Mentor organizations include INTECH Construction, Turner Construction, Gilbane Building Company, O'Donnell & Naccarato, Inc., Skanska USA Building, Torcon, Inc. and many others.

"By reaching these students in high school, we can work with them to plan ahead with a realistic view of what education and training is needed for various professions in the field. We also help them understand what these careers entail day to day so they're not surprised later down the line," Raffel adds. "There are so many great opportunities, and we want to ensure each student we work with has the best insight available to make a well-educated decision about what's best for them."

While ACE Mentor Program traditionally pairs students with mentors in a professional environment, the organization has brought its program online with ACE360 to continue serving students and deliver key programming.

CREATING PATHS FOR EVERYONE

Fundamental to helping the rising generations of talent build rewarding careers in construction is also acknowledging there's not just one path into the industry. To support aspiring professionals coming from all walks of life, GBCA and many of its individual members partner with educational institutions that share a common mission to open the doors of opportunity in the industry.

Among them are:

- **Mercy Career & Technical High School**, whose Building Trades CTE program is designed to meet the job needs of the Philadelphia area by providing skills needed for the building trades, property maintenance and construction;
- **YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School**, which gives high school dropouts a second chance. This includes the opportunity to earn a high school diploma, develop valuable job skills and transform abandoned properties into comfortable, affordable homes for first-time, low-income home buyers;
- **Williamson College of the Trades**, a junior college that provides young men education in the trades, including carpentry, masonry and more.

"The bottom line is this: Forget the tired old stereotypes about working in construction," says Hendrix. "The industry is rich with opportunities for anyone who is interested, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity – and we're on a mission to empower students to pursue them."

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about careers in construction, visit <https://gbca.com/services/workforce-development/>.

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9 CONSTRUCTION TRAININGS & CERTIFICATIONS THAT WILL “BUILD” YOUR CAREER

BY ANGELA HENDRIX, DIRECTOR OF TRAINING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | GBCA

On a regular basis I get tapped by individuals who are trying to figure out how to take the next step in their careers. Whether you started your career as an apprentice, an assistant project manager, or in a mid-level manager position, there are lots of opportunities to continue growing both personally and professionally. All you need is the right training and continued education opportunities.

At the very least, pursuing continued education options shows your employer your commitment to furthering your career. I often use the analogy that it provides “additional tools to your figurative toolbox.”

Below is a list of several construction certifications and continuing education opportunities that you can pursue, increasing your personal value to any firm.

SAFETY

OSHA training

Offered both in-person and online, OSHA training certifications like the OSHA 30 and the OSHA 10 are valuable for workers both in the field and the office. GBCA offers OSHA training in-person, which can be found on our website several times throughout the year, and members can obtain a discount in OSHA training virtually through GBCA's partnership with ClickSafety. Additional safety training, including OSHA classes,

are offered through several GBCA members: FDRsafety, LLC; HazTek, Inc.; Med-Tex Services, Inc.; and Signature Safety, LLC.

COSS/COSM

Certified Occupational Safety Specialist (COSS) and Certified Occupational Safety Manager (COSM) are two specialized certificates to pursue if safety is your forte. Offered by the University of Delaware through a partnership with the Delaware Valley Safety Council, GBCA members can apply for Tuition Reimbursement toward this class and receive a 15% discount.

Master's in Safety Management at WVU

GBCA offers Tuition Reimbursement at various schools throughout our region – and has even gone so far as to partner with schools outside of our region to offer programs virtually. WVU offers a Master's in Safety Management that is 100% online. Individuals working for GBCA members or contributors to the GBCA administered IAP can apply for reimbursement towards approved courses in this program.

EDUCATION

CM-BIM and CM-LEAN

The Certificate of Management in BIM and the Certificate of Management in LEAN are both offered nationally through AGC of America. The Building Information Modeling Education



construction firms and educational institutions in order to teach a new generation of project managers the essential skills to ensure project success.

Advanced Management Program (AMP)

For construction leaders on the rise, no program provides a more comprehensive, uniquely focused program than AGC's Advanced Management Program (AMP). Held just one time each year, this exclusive six-day program grounds construction industry executives in the essential skills and techniques required to successfully lead an organization.

Bachelor's or Master's Degrees in Construction Management

GBCA offers Tuition Reimbursement of up to \$4,000 per year for individuals working for member companies or contributors to the GBCA administered IAP. Partnering with Community College of Philadelphia, Drexel University, Jefferson University, Penn State Abington, Rowan University, Temple University, University of Delaware, Villanova University and West Virginia University, we offer reimbursements in construction management, project management and safety. Programs range from Bachelor's to Master's as well as both undergraduate and graduate certificates.

Journeyman Upgrade Courses

Are you a card-carrying member of your union? Most training facilities across our region offer various journeyman upgrade courses throughout the year. Take advantage of these courses, which are usually free to members in good standing. These can vary from certifications to seminars depending on the topic.



All of these trainings and certifications are skills that will make you more appealing to your employer and a greater asset to your team. Navigating the world of continuing education can be confusing – GBCA is happy to help. Reach out to us if we can help provide guidance or assistance with getting signed up for any of these courses or programs.

And as always, GBCA loves to hear from our members. If there are trainings, certifications, or workshops you or your team are interested in attending, reach out to me, Angela Hendrix, Director of Training & Workforce Development. We're here to help and are happy to create programs and offerings around industry needs. Whichever way you choose to continue your learning and career journey, know that we are a resource.

Program consists of 4 units, with 32 hours of instruction. The LEAN Construction Education Program consists of 7 , with 35 hours of instruction. Once you've finished either of these education programs you are eligible to sit for the CM-BIM or CM-LEAN Certification Exams, respectively, which upon successful completion would give you the credentials at the end of your name. You can find upcoming classes on our website at www.gbca.com/events, or visit AGC of America to see where classes are being held throughout the country.

10-week Fundamentals Trainings

Available four times per year, GBCA offers a variety of 10-week training courses online ranging from blueprint reading to estimating and more. Brush up on your skills, or perhaps pick up something new with methods and materials, estimating and bidding 1 or estimating and bidding 2, blueprint reading, or intro to estimating. It's always helpful to get back to the basics and brush up on fundamentals.

Project Management (PMDP and CPMC)

AGC offers two project manager trainings – Project Manager Development Program (PMDP) and Construction Project Manager Course (CPMC).

Take your project management skills to the next level with AGC's Construction Project Manager Course. This six-day course is for seasoned project managers looking to advance their leadership abilities, discover new strategies and learn tactics for handling short- and long-term job responsibilities, and network with industry peers and construction professionals.

The Project Manager Development Program (PMDP) for early-career project managers or those looking to move into such a role is a five-course program that covers the essentials of project management and provides a solid foundation for long-term career development. The curriculum is offered at many of AGC's chapters nationwide or can be brought in-house to

SAVE THE DATE

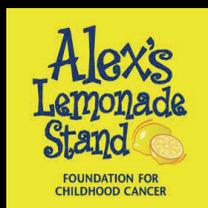


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LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE OF PHILADELPHIA'S BUILDING INDUSTRY

BY BYRON LEE, MANAGER, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS | GBCA

On January 26, 2021, the AIA/GBCA Joint Committee and COAA PA brought together over 90 architects, contractors, construction-related suppliers and service providers, and real estate owners and developers to discuss what processes and innovations developed during 2020 will continue even after in-person activities are once again permitted. Here are some of the ideas shared from that conversation:

SHIFTING WORK CULTURE

One of the most obvious changes from the past year has been the role of remote work. Virtual meetings can include more people: geography, time, and room size are lesser considerations. The pool of potential clients will grow – people can work from almost anywhere and anytime, but this means that the pool of competitors will also grow. For designers, graphic representations of buildings that can be shared online will become preferred over built models.

“When we go to a pre-proposal session that might have had 50 people, and now there are 400 people from every corner of the globe because they can be there and they can participate, that tells me that the competitive landscape has changed forever.”

-Terry Steelman, Senior Principal, Ballinger

Our offices may become less centralized. Employers can hire new talent without requiring them to relocate full-time if their positions can be fully remote. This provides firms with a larger

pool of candidates. Communication skills will be more valuable: workers will need to be effective both virtually and in-person.

Remote work has also changed our employee expectations. Schedules may become more flexible and less dictated by the 8-5, Monday-Friday work week. This, however, means that we need to be sensitive to employees' work-life balance: working remotely should not mean that we expect employees to be working all the time. Remote work has hopefully helped us become more empathetic to one another: We cannot ignore that we are parents, caregivers, pet owners, or sick enough to be in quarantine. Some companies have supported employees by investing in technology solutions, such as paying for faster internet service at employees' homes.

INCREASED TECHNOLOGY ON JOB SITES

The job site today is more secure and safe. Technologies such as wearable devices or apps using QR codes on workers' phones now allow contractors better control over job sites. From a scheduling perspective, project managers can more easily see which trades and workers are on site. Workers can also be more easily accounted for in case of safety or security incidents.

Using technology also helps collaboration on projects. Mobile video conferencing can mean showing issues to people off-site more quickly. People on-site can also access more documents from their mobile devices. Increased use of technology on job sites, however, will require some site preparation: sites may need charging stations and WiFi, and mobile phones may need to be

seen as tools, not potential distractions and hazards.

Job sites are now more sanitary due to increased portable or temporary hand-washing stations and toilets. These benefit a job site's safety by improving health standards, such as making washing stations more available in case of incidents.

"Constructing portable toilet rooms actually in the building at the first possible opportunity provides many benefits. They're more sanitary than portable toilets, they're closer to the workforce – people are not having to wander outside of the project or onto another floor. That helps the project morale, which feeds into a safe project: People will feel like they're in a controlled, cleaner space."

-John DeFazio, Senior Vice President, LF Driscoll

COLLABORATING AND CONNECTING

Many meetings, such as pre-bid meetings, submittal reviews, or project check-ins will likely stay virtual. Virtual meetings have eliminated barriers such as travel and have increased communication between collaborators. Chat features have helped quiet or shy professionals to participate during meetings.

While in-person walk-throughs and meetings will still take place, they will require more purpose and possibly fewer people, making job sites safer and more secure. Virtual meetings also allow contractors, architects, and owners to respond to issues more quickly: Documents that used to be sent back and forth for activities such as design changes can now be shared, discussed, and annotated immediately in a virtual meeting.

"Ultimately, all of these methods really allow for greater participation. We've had a number of ways where we've gotten more members of the team—foremen, suppliers, it goes all the way down the line—than we would have otherwise. I think that's actually been really valuable."

-Susan Smythe, ADA Program Director and Senior Project Manager, Swarthmore College

Increased virtual activities will likely change client and colleague relationships. There may be fewer random and informal interactions, such as bumping into clients in the street, or meeting colleagues from different departments in office hallways. These interactions and relationships were often how we learned across departments, created conversations that taught us unexpected lessons or creative solutions, and introduced us to mentors and peer groups. We will need to continue innovating to connect and not completely lose these types of relationships.

Virtual collaborations are unlikely to fully replace in-person interactions. Development, design, and construction are industries that still rely heavily on strong relationships between many collaborators, and the personal touch is important. We may have been forced to interact mostly virtually in 2020, but we see that these processes and innovations will likely complement and enhance the building industry.



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THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF COVID-19 FORCE MAJEURE LITIGATION

BY EDWARD SEGLIAS, KATHLEEN M. MORLEY, AND PAUL F. WILLIAMSON | COHEN SEGLIAS

The coronavirus pandemic is giving rise to new legal issues across the country that courts are only just beginning to address. One of those unique issues is the application of *force majeure* clauses commonly found in construction contracts. In general terms, a *force majeure* clause acts to excuse a party from performing its contractual obligations due to an unforeseen disaster. Individual cases often depend on a specific clause and particular facts and circumstances. But whether the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions and shutdowns can constitute a *force majeure* clause triggering event is a new and recurring question before the nation's courts. A recent decision out of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York appears to be among the first reported decisions to address whether the pandemic constitutes a basis for excusing performance due to a "natural disaster" under a contractual *force majeure* clause.

New York Federal Court Concludes COVID-19 Pandemic Constitutes a "Natural Disaster" to Trigger Force Majeure

In *JN Contemporary Art LLC v. Phillips Auctioneers LLC*, a dispute among an art seller, the plaintiff, and an art auctioneer, the defendant, arose from the art auctioneer's refusal to hold an in-person auction to sell one of the art seller's paintings. The

parties had entered into two contracts in which the defendant agreed to auction particular paintings by two different artists for the plaintiff. While the defendant successfully completed its obligations under one of the contracts, restrictions on in-person gatherings and business operations and the ensuing state government orders presented challenges for the defendant to hold an in-person auction for the sale of the other painting under the second contract. The defendant ultimately terminated that contract, arguing that its performance should be excused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In so arguing, the defendant relied upon the contract's *force majeure* clause, which included things such as natural disasters, fires, floods, wars, and terrorist attacks as *force majeure* events. In upholding the application of the contract's *force majeure* clause to excuse the defendant's performance, the court found that the pandemic and related government shutdown orders constituted circumstance beyond the parties' control, and even a "natural disaster," as contemplated by the contract's clause *force majeure* clause.

The *JN Contemporary* decision is one of the first judicial opinions to explicitly hold that the COVID-19 pandemic qualifies as a "natural disaster" under a contractual provision excusing performance on that basis. In addition, the decision reflects a



majeure clauses to excuse contractual performance based on impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in other contexts and contracts, such as construction contracts. This could have significant implications for contractors and subcontractors who may be involved in ongoing or impending disputes over performance under contracts signed prior to the onset of the pandemic.

Regardless of how case law continues to evolve, contractors should evaluate delays and other impacts to performance from pandemic-related causes and restrictions on projects that are underway to ensure all rights and remedies are adequately preserved and pursued to best protect their businesses. Aside from excuse of performance clauses, it is important to seek extensions of time for delays caused by or related to the pandemic, and follow any and all claim notice provisions. In entering into new contracts, contractors should ensure they negotiate terms to appropriately account for any lingering effects of the pandemic impacting the construction industry. Ultimately, these issues are complex in nature and it is important to consult with experienced legal counsel for individual guidance in navigating contractual rights and protecting your business.

departure from the traditional, narrow interpretation of *force majeure* provisions, especially in New York. Traditionally, the term “natural disaster” is most commonly applied in the context of weather and environmental disasters, and courts strictly construe and interpret language in contractual *force majeure* provisions under New York law. The Southern District of New York’s more expansive view of the term “natural disaster” in the *JN Contemporary* decision may signal courts’ willingness to reconsider the traditional invocation and interpretation of *force majeure* clauses given the unprecedented impacts of the pandemic on businesses and individuals alike.

A few other reported decisions, including those issued by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Circuit Court of Virginia, likewise showcase the courts’ inclination to find the pandemic to constitute a natural disaster.

While courts have not directly addressed whether COVID-19 constitutes a natural disaster in the construction context, the growing acceptance of COVID-19 as a “natural disaster” may provide construction contractors facing delays or stoppages in work due to the pandemic the ability to excuse the delay or non-performance under an applicable *force majeure* clause.

Continued Evolution of COVID-19 Force Majeure Litigation and Takeaways for Contractors

COVID-19 *force majeure* litigation will continue to evolve as more courts render decisions. The past year has spawned a resurgence of questions surrounding the application of *force majeure* clauses in commercial contracts as a result of the ongoing pandemic. While case law will vary by jurisdiction, specific contractual language and the facts of each case, courts may find the *JN Contemporary* decision and others like it to be persuasive and follow suit. In doing so, courts may expand the traditional interpretation and application of *force*



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STOP LOSING TIME AND MONEY – SEEK THE INPUT OF YOUR SUBS

BY AMANDA DICRESCENZO AND AMANDA WEKO | EUREKA METAL & GLASS SERVICES

No one questions the notion that collaboration makes stronger projects, or the idea that open communication promotes transparency and minimizes construction risk. Yet the design-bid-build process often creates breakdowns in collaboration and communication. Except in cases of design-assist, subcontractors rarely have input in the design process, or any way to share their specialized expertise to support decision-making. In fact, some public bid scenarios prohibit communication between subs and the design team. General contractors and construction managers (GC/CMs) face the most risk, as they are left managing corrective work, change orders, or time delays. There should be a better way.

GC/CMs and owners could consider vendor pre-engagement without a contract prior to the bid process. Many subcontractors welcome the opportunity to join the conversation early because it gives them insight into the process and a voice to identify and address potential obstacles in advance. Outside the realm of a construction contract, architects and designers can engage with subcontractors for educational purposes. Organizations and individual companies offer lunch-and-learn sessions and hands-on training, such as the Architectural Glass Institute's (AGI) glazing boot camps.

Architectural glass and metal, in particular, encompass some of the most challenging interior and exterior building materials. In fact, a 2020 Insurance Business magazine cited water infiltration and losses related to water damage and design-related changes as top construction insurance risks. The following two scenarios illustrate common problems with interior and exterior glazing – that could be overcome with early collaboration and communication with glazing subcontractors.

SCENARIO 1: INTERIOR GLASS PARTITIONS

Already popular in commercial fitouts, glass partitions will see their popularity continue to grow as businesses and designers reimagine interiors for the post-Covid-19 landscape. Glass provides physical separation along with visual connectivity and acoustic privacy along with transparency. Once a product exclusively installed by glazing contractors, interior glass panels can now be found in packages from systems furniture vendors. These unitized products often have extremely long (20-week+) lead times and typically cannot be field modified to accommodate inconsistencies in floor or wall conditions. Due to the long lead time, systems furniture products are often ordered before field measurements are available – in some cases when a previous tenant still occupies a space. The furniture vendor falls outside the auspices of the GC/CM or the project schedule, as simply another “product” to be installed.

The major problem occurs when the product arrives on site. The GC/CM will undoubtedly experience issues during installation as existing conditions have irregularities that were not anticipated or accommodated when the product was ordered. For example, poured-in-place concrete floors may have subtle high and low spots that impact horizontal alignment. Out-of-plumb walls or uneven floors may subject the partitions to positional shifts that affect appearance. Unitized glass partitions may offer slight adjustability but cannot be fully field modified. Big trim pieces, large caulk joints, and schedule delays to order custom replacement pieces are a few of the issues the GC/CM will need to resolve.

By contrast, interior glass partitions installed by a glazing subcontractor meet all of the same requirements – aesthetics, per-

formance, demountability, and tax credit eligibility – yet without the excessive lead times and with the ability for customization. A glazing subcontractor can fabricate and install a demountable glass system and can develop, document, and fabricate custom or hybrid stick-built glazing systems to meet a client's specific functional and aesthetic goals. Some glazing contractors also offer products and systems that rival a furniture vendor's, with the added benefit of being installed by professional glaziers trained in safe glass handling. For example, Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc., is the regional distributor of Holoform®, an interior demountable wall brand manufactured in the U.S. The system was designed with the input of glaziers and GCs to overcome many common installation issues.

SCENARIO 2: EXTERIOR GLASS

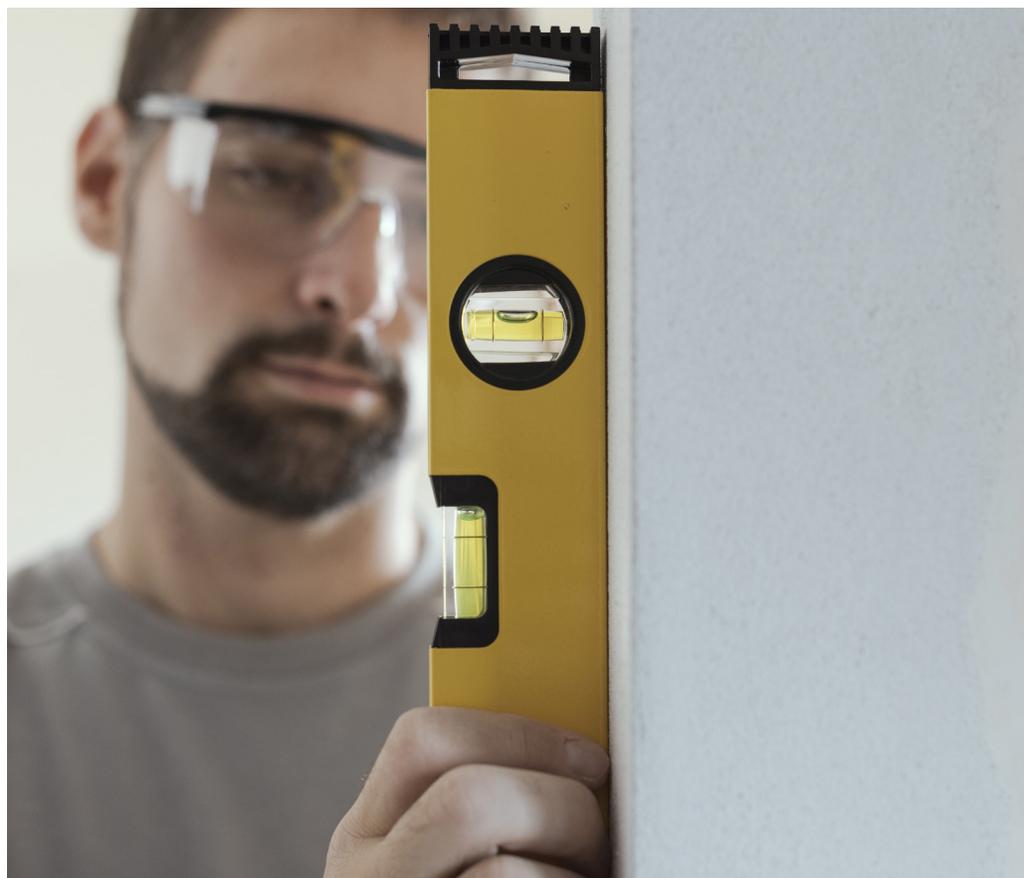
Numerous exterior glazing systems populate the market with myriad options for customization. From storefront and curtain wall options to glass patterns, coatings, and security features, the choices address performance, sustainability, safety, and appearance. System selection must factor in structural integrity, movement within and around the system, support attachment techniques, and system interfaces. Decisions impact weather-tightness, building envelope performance, and product lead times. Accurate specification can mean the difference between a project that stays on track or veers off schedule.

Often, when glazing subcontractors receive bid requests, their estimators notice that the system has not been fully detailed. The more subcontractors bidding the job, the more opportunities for a different solution to be identified. Plus, potential design solutions must be run by glazing product vendors, who then run the ideas through their engineering departments. This extends the bid process for longer than necessary. Instead, a conversation among the architect, GC/CM, and glazing contractors during the initial design phase – before the job goes out to bid – could put everyone on the same path early. This would result in more accurate bids, apples-to-apples comparison since all glazing subs are quoting on the same solution, and fewer change orders once the project begins.

INDUSTRY BENEFITS

Ordering products or systems before as-built conditions are understood (Scenario 1), or issuing bids without a sufficient level of detail (Scenario 2), creates risk. By engaging subcontractors early, projects benefit from their specialized expertise and minimize potential for delays and change orders.

Principal Darrell Kratzer, AIA, LEED AP, of BKP Architects – the firm responsible for GBCA's recent façade renovation – admits he enjoys working with subcontractors during design as long as it does not eliminate them from the opportunity to bid. "The sub



must be cooperative, maybe a little entrepreneurial," Kratzer says. "The architect can learn about the most up-to-date systems and focus on documenting a design that reduces the chance of change orders during shop drawings and makes the shop drawing process much smoother for all."

Architectural glass and metal contractors in particular can contribute nuanced expertise to support the design conversation. Whether dialogue focuses on a specific project or general education, the communication and collaboration can make a meaningful difference. Education and information in advance can save time and money in the future.



WE AREN'T THE SAME AS WE WERE A YEAR AGO

What does a safety management organization do when the whole world suddenly changes? They refocus and reconsider everything — from the ground up.

BY E. JUNE ELLAWAY-LUNN, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING + DESIGN | HAZTEK INC.

If we were to look back at 2020, we would see frustration, loss, and disappointment. But, at the same time, the team at HazTek Inc. would come to discover valuable lessons learned and new insights that would lead to changes in people's perception of both worker safety and personal safety. These new perceptions will significantly reduce accidents, injuries, and illnesses in the workplace and at home, long after the pandemic is over.

The mere presence of the invisible threat of COVID-19 — let alone its rapid ascent to the number one hazard on most job sites — has led to uncertainty, concern, confusion, and even fear among workers. Addressing biological hazards and preventing occupational illnesses is decidedly unfamiliar to most construction safety professionals, individuals who are highly skilled at preventing injuries but may be less experienced at preventing illnesses.



"We were as blindsided by the coronavirus as anyone, but we quickly realized that our experience with biological hazards on environmental remediation sites would be extremely helpful to our employees and clients," reflects HazTek Inc. Managing Partner Steve Jones. "We immediately developed protocols that are common to environmental work and applied them to our clients' clean construction environments."

PROTECTING OUR ESSENTIAL WORKERS

The team at HazTek gained an even greater appreciation of frontline personnel. "It's not just the doctors and nurses at risk — there are also the brave men and women who are maintaining and cleaning the facilities, bringing in deliveries, and taking materials away," notes Jones. "We were constantly amazed by the courage, leadership, and willingness of these individuals to step up when facing this unprecedented health crisis."

This was never more evident than when HazTek employees were stationed at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, providing respirator fit testing for essential healthcare workers. Among those they fit tested were hospital staff, first responders, nurses, and doctors. Ensuring their respirators fit properly before each shift allowed them to perform their lifesaving work and return home safely to their own families at the end of the day.

Even though the work at Mount Sinai took place as the coronavirus was first spreading across the world — and New York City was considered the epicenter of the outbreak in the United States — there was no hesitation from HazTek's safety professionals. "They literally packed their bags and asked 'what



DEVELOPING AND EMBRACING NEW PROTOCOLS

COVID-19 control measures, staggered shifts, and expanded work hours affected every industry as projects struggled to meet pre-existing deadlines. Safety professionals were tasked to support their teams and clients by assessing new information and communicating critical updates that would help maximize safety and facilitate production.

Pandemic-specific health and safety protocols had to be instituted for active construction sites and additional resources were needed. It was a rapidly changing situation that required vigilance, flexibility, and decisiveness.

HazTek's mission to enrich the health, safety, and well-being of their employees, their customers, and their communities suddenly took on a whole new meaning. Their internal biohazard safety experts designed customized solutions and continuous updates to comply with rapidly changing federal, state, and local mandates.

This led to on-site temperature screening, new safety measures, COVID-specific consulting, written programs, and online certification programs for both industry and communities. They leveraged their expertise, stepped into leadership roles, and increased their nationwide team of safety professionals to adapt to their clients' changing needs during this challenging time.

WHEN THIS IS OVER, HOW WILL THEY WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?

"I hope HazTek and our courageous team of safety professionals will be remembered as worthy representatives of the entire safety community," says Jones. "The safety community is comprised of some of the most dedicated and caring people you'll ever meet, and we're proud to do our part in making our workplaces and our communities safer for all of us. Despite the hardships, heartaches, and devastating personal losses as a result of the pandemic, we hope the silver lining will be a renewed and lasting appreciation of the health, safety, and well-being of ourselves, our coworkers, and our loved ones."

Jones adds, "The pandemic has affected everyone at HazTek differently. But when the game changed, we came together. The collective strength, resolve, and resilience of our team has allowed us to do more than just survive. We became stronger."

do they need and when do they need me?," recalls Jones. "We were blown away by our team's courage and willingness to help — to provide leadership and apply their own knowledge and experience during such an uncertain time."

SAFETY TRAINING BECOMES DANGEROUS

During the time that safety training became most critical, it also seemed to become an impossibility. Customers needed safety training to continue working, but they couldn't meet in person to receive the training. Struggling to get a live safety instructor — and wanting to follow COVID protocols — companies were left with few alternatives. A sense of desperation was building throughout many industries.

HazTek's solution was to build a state-of-the-art, live-stream safety training studio in-house, allowing for live, interactive classes that could be delivered remotely... anywhere or anytime.

"It was definitely a challenge to get everything up and running in such a short period of time, but we kept coming back to our belief that the best training is presented live and in person, so we needed to provide that same level of instruction from a distance," says HazTek Inc. Managing Partner Bruce Henderson. "It was just a matter of developing the best technology for the information."

HazTek also installed a Learning Management System (LMS) that allows Q&A, test taking, surveys, content and video, and secure student identification while students are learning online, at a project site or workplace, in a classroom, or at home. Their client-centric course content is tailored to each customer and can be extended globally without language or currency barriers.

In addition, HazTek was able to establish safe protocols for in-person training once the quarantine allowed for it, and they developed virtual and in-person hybrid courses when student demonstration or operator certification was required.

They are the new HazTek. Bigger. Stronger. Safer.



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The pandemic hit us hard but the collective strength, resolve, and resilience of the HazTek Team has allowed us to do more than just survive. We became stronger. We expanded our team, stepped into leadership roles, developed virtual training capabilities, and instituted pandemic-specific health and safety protocols for our customers. We pulled together as one and embraced our mission to enrich the health, safety, and well-being of our employees, our customers, and our communities.

We aren't the same company we were in March. We are the new HazTek. Bigger | Stronger | Safer.

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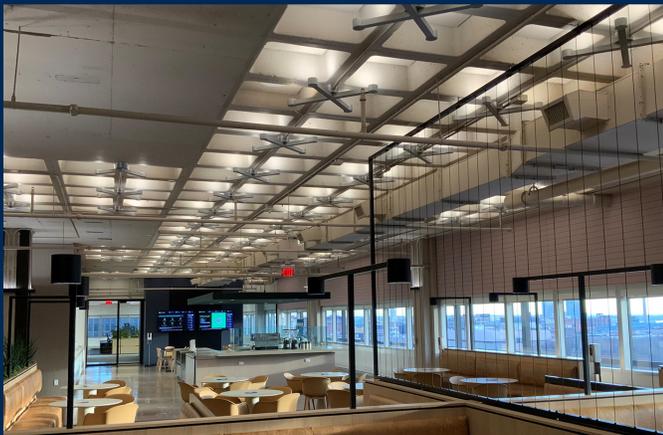
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IMPORTANT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO WATCH WHILE RECOVERING FROM THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

BY MARTY MCCARTHY, CPA, CCIFP | MCCARTHY & COMPANY

It is important for contractors to watch key performance indicators (KPIs) while recovering from the financial impact of COVID-19. KPIs are typically used by contractors to assess how well they did during a specific time-period compared to the same period in the prior quarter or year. Although this information is valuable, assessing predictive KPIs to look at what might happen in the future is even more helpful.

LAGGING VS. LEADING KPIs

Historical (lagging) KPIs are backward-looking financial measurements where predictive (leading) indicators measure progress along the way. Historical KPIs are important indicators on how well a company is being managed and producing results. Predictive KPIs are helpful because they can be used to manage future outcomes.

Leading indicators focus on the current situation. Different scenarios can be used to predict outcomes, like what will happen if contracts are cancelled or delayed, or how escalating lumber prices will impact profit margins. Examples of predictive KPIs are:

- Percentage of Predictability of Construction – the change between the actual time spent on construction towards the available for use stage and the estimated time projected as a percentage of the estimated time on the contract.
- Percentage of Projects Completed Early or On Time – the number of projects completed early or on time out of the total number of projects started.
- Percentage of Projects Delivered Late – the number of projects delayed compared to the total number of projects started.
- Cost of Labor – the sum of all wages paid to employees on the job including benefits and payroll taxes.
- Cost of Materials – the difference between the estimated and actual cost of materials.

- Bid Development – the number of bids needed to get the desired amount of work. Contractors should also look at the number of pending bids currently being prepared, business development meetings scheduled and completed, active prospects and probability of winning work and other metrics related to business development.
- Contract Pipeline – the number of leads and contracts pending.
- Subcontractor Inventory – how much cash is tied up in over-purchasing materials.

KPIs that look at the quality of the workmanship on a job are also important to watch. Management should establish controls to ensure that a high-quality project is constructed with minimal change orders, rework, and defects. These metrics can include the cost of work done incorrectly the first time and the number of construction quality issues still outstanding when the project is ready to be occupied. Analyzing data from change orders can help general contractors assess the performance of trade contractors.

KPIs TO WATCH

The most important indicators to watch when a company is under financial distress are the ones that will predict future inputs and outputs of cash, as well as the availability of working capital. Now that construction input costs are spiraling out of control, work in progress (WIP) is important to watch. WIP measures a contractor's investment in materials, labor, and overhead to complete a job. Since WIP is an indicator of job profit at a point in time, it can predict potential cash flow issues. Cash flow KPIs give contractors the means to evaluate income and performance. They include sales and contract income, outgoing costs and expenses, and payroll.

Contractors should always track profit analysis KPIs like revised margins, forecasting deviations, and subcontracting costs. The cost of safety and preventive measures such as supplying personnel protective equipment (PPE), is critical to watch during

the pandemic. Complying with CDC and OSHA guidance can cut into profit margins.

Construction project management and tracking KPIs identify what is happening on each job. These KPIs are based on timing, budget, quality, and effectiveness. They can help contractors identify cost variances (planned budget-actual cost) and if the project is being managed effectively. KPIs used to assess if a job is well-managed include planned hours vs. actual hours and percentage of labor downtime. Labor costs reduce profit margins if the actual hours are higher than anticipated. This is important to know to improve future job estimates. The percentage of labor downtime (downtime hours/total hours) is a productivity measurement. Zero percent means that field staff are working 100% of the time.

FINANCIAL KPIs

Financial KPIs gauge if the company is growing, shrinking, profitable, or maintaining its performance. Contractors can identify trends in expenses, cash flow, and revenue growth or decline. The four major categories of financial KPIs are:

- 1. Profitability** – Return on assets, return on equity, and times interest earned.
- 2. Liquidity** – Current ratio, quick ratio, days of cash, and working capital turnover.
- 3. Leverage** – Debt, under-billings, backlog and revenue to

equity, asset turnover, fixed asset ratio equity to selling, as well as general and administrative expenses.

- 4. Efficiency** – Backlog to working capital, months in backlog, days in accounts receivable, inventory, accounts payable, and operating cycle.

Contractors can benchmark their KPIs against similar companies in the same market or geographic region to determine how well they are doing compared to industry standards. This information will help identify areas that need improvement.

Focus on the KPIs that provide valuable information on company and job profit margins. By identifying and understanding internal and external challenges, improvements can be made to processes and operating procedures.

About the Author

Martin C. McCarthy, CPA, CCIFP, is the managing partner of McCarthy & Company, a leader in construction accounting. He can be contacted at 610.828.1900 or McCarthy.CPA.

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and it does not constitute professional advice. We strongly advise you to seek professional assistance with respect to your specific issue(s).

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NEW BIDEN ADMINISTRATION: OSHA TO REVIEW AND UPDATE EMPLOYERS' GUIDANCE ON WORKPLACE SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BY ERNEST J. BERNABEI III, ESQ., PARTNER | PILLINGER MILLER TARALLO LLP

Addressing workplace safety, one of the first executive orders issued by President Biden was signed on January 21, 2021, the day after his inauguration. This order mandates that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) revise and update employers' guidance on workplace safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also has to determine if temporary emergency standards are necessary.

On January 29, 2021, OSHA issued revised and updated guidelines to employers entitled "Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace." While the new guidelines have stronger language than the previous guidelines, unlike standards, employers are under no legal obligation to follow these specific guidelines. The recommendations are advisory in nature, informational in content, and intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to comply with safety and health standards and regulations promulgated by OSHA or by a state with an OSHA-approved state plan. The Act's General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), requires employers to provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

Originally, under the order, OSHA had until March 15, 2021, to determine if temporary emergency standards are necessary. As of this date, OSHA has not made any such determination. It is unknown whether or when they will release temporary emergency standards. If so, employers would legally need to adhere to these standards, unlike the guidelines.

Employers should not ignore these guidelines and should instead familiarize themselves with them as they could be at risk of violating current OSHA standards. For example, Section 5 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, also known as the "General Duty Clause," provides that employers "shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees..." Section 5(a)(1). OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards require the use of gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection when job hazards warrant it. 29 CFR 1910 Subpart I and 29 CFR 1926 Subpart E. These are just a few examples of standards that would apply to COVID-19 responses in the workplace.

OSHA Senior Advisor Ann Rosenthal stated that OSHA would also be working on "streamlining" the COVID-19-related citation process. Due to the many review levels set up by the last administration, many citations were barred by the 6-month statute of limitations or issued on the final day.

To reduce transmission of the virus, some of the current guidelines suggest that employers adopt policies that encourage potentially infected workers to stay home without facing negative repercussions and communicate COVID-19 policies and procedures in every language spoken in the workplace. Other suggestions include addressing and providing personal protective equipment (PPE), barriers for when it is not possible to maintain 6 feet of distance, handwashing, and routine cleaning and disinfecting. The guidelines also strongly suggest creating a policy of no retaliation for whistleblower complaints.

Most construction workers are unlikely to need PPE beyond what they use to protect themselves during routine job tasks. Such PPE includes equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, and face masks. With these guidelines, employers must make every effort to protect workers through measures other than PPE. It is

at this point, policies of sanitation, barriers, and personal hygiene come into play.

The takeaway is that employers should be aware of the current guidelines. While they are "strong" suggestions and not legally enforceable, employers, large and small, should try to adhere where possible to avoid risking OSHA violations. Employers should also consider adopting their own policies and guidelines in adherence to the OSHA guidelines. When required, respirators for protection from COVID-19 transmission, the employer must comply with OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard, which includes training. MY SUGGESTION: When respirators for protection from COVID-19 are required, the employer must comply with OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard, including training.

Further, as noted above, OSHA may be issuing Emergency Temporary Standards soon, which would be legally enforceable. Review the guidelines here: <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3990.pdf>



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¹Business Succession Planning, U.S. Small Business Administration website

²The Power of Planning, Wilmington Trust survey, 2017



PROACTIVE SAFETY – IF I ONLY KNEW THEN, WHAT I KNOW NOW

BY JOHN BRAUN, CEO | SIGNATURE SAFETY

“If I Could Turn Back Time.”

It's not often Cher can bring us a nugget of safety wisdom, but the preceding quote is a common lamentation, usually heard in the context of going back to one's youth and reliving it with the knowledge and wisdom that has been gained over a lifetime. However, the same concept also surfaces after tragedy, when people wish they could turn back the clock and use the knowledge of the tragedy itself to prevent it from ever occurring. Unfortunately, outside the realm of science fiction, this isn't possible.

Or is it?

Perhaps with a slight shift in thinking – with a change in perspective – we can prevent tragedy from happening. After all, isn't that exactly what a safety program is designed to do? We look at the potential outcomes of our actions to determine ways to prevent the negative ones from occurring. The difference is that we think of the outcomes in an abstract manner. We don't say, “Maryanne will break her leg.” Instead, we say, “Slips, trips and falls.” We don't say, “Stephen will never get to hear his daughter sing.” Instead, we say, “Noise hazards.” We don't say, “Jack's wife and children will have to learn how to live without a husband and father.” Instead, we say, “Electrical hazards.” Making a shift to proactive safety could be as simple as humanizing the hazards and acting like we have come back in time to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

Now, the time traveler would have some very important insight to share, apart from the details of the incident itself, that could help us prevent not only this incident but all similar incidents. Specifically, what were the questions being asked after this terrible tragedy occurred? You may be thinking that nobody actually travelled back through time, so how could we possibly know what questions were being asked? Simple. There are two

big questions that are always the same. Let's take a look at what they are and how we can prevent ourselves from ever having to ask them.

Question 1: “How did we miss this?”

In ways, this question is similar to “Why didn't we know?” It's possible we did. It's possible we'd had warnings, such as near-miss incidents, that we failed to acknowledge, track, or investigate. It's possible the hazard was listed on a JSA that wasn't shared with the crews or wasn't enforced by supervision. It's possible everybody involved knew it was dangerous, but the schedule encouraged cutting corners. All of these are inexcusable because now Maryanne's leg is broken or Stephen will never get to hear his daughter sing or Jack's wife and children will never see him again and we squandered the opportunity to prevent it all.

But, let's say we didn't realize this would happen. We have to ask ourselves why we didn't. Were the people involved in the task the proper people? Did they have the knowledge and experience to do what they were doing? Did we take the time to train them? Often, we assume, based on job title, what a person knows and doesn't know. This, as with most assumptions, is extremely dangerous. Know your personnel. Know their capabilities and knowledge base. If you're not sure, ask. Make sure they understand that “I don't know,” is an acceptable answer. Then, invest the time and money into improving that employee or shifting the right people into the right roles.

Still, we can take it back even further. Who was involved in planning? Was your safety director or safety consultant involved in pre-construction meetings? Did anybody review subcontractor's JSAs or health and safety plans? Did anybody



ensure that the subcontractors fully understood that safety rules and requirements would be enforced, so that they didn't begin their work under the assumption that they'd be able to get away with doing things in an unsafe manner? Or, did we just allow them to go to work with no planning whatsoever? Did they provide the best price and we just willfully ignored that the best price came at the expense of safety? From a safety standpoint, your subcontractors are almost as much your responsibility as your employees are. You may not agree, but OSHA and a court of law will tell you otherwise.

Question 2: "Why Didn't You Tell Me?"

It's not always going to be the person with the authority to make a change who discovers a problem. While a safety concern should be noticed well before the boots on the ground are ready to perform the task, I'd be lying if I said that it wasn't at that exact point that most safety concerns are realized. Your electrician realizes his ladder isn't tall enough, your laborer

realizes she doesn't have the necessary fall protection, or your pipefitter realizes he needs to enter a confined space but there's no tripod, 4-gas meter, or even another employee anywhere to be seen. And yet, realizing these things, in many instances the workers just continue on.

Why didn't they tell you there was a problem?

It's a good question to ask yourself. First, do you have an open door? I mean really have an open door. There's a big difference between telling everybody you have an open-door policy and then not making time for people or being dismissive of their concerns. People learn. If every time they approach your open door it gets shut in their face, they eventually stop approaching. If they get berated or belittled, they stop approaching. If they get listened to, but no action is ever taken, they stop approaching. Your open-door policy for safety concerns needs to be real.

Second, maybe the problem isn't you. There is a chain-of-command in every organization and it takes one poor attitude in that chain to have all safety communication stop. If your company policy is that anybody can raise a safety concern or stop work in a dangerous situation (as it should be), but you have a Superintendent who prioritizes schedule over safety, removes people who bring up legitimate safety concerns, or sends people back to work without hearing them out, your line of communication with the people who are your last line of defense will cease to exist. Make sure everybody in the chain-of-command buys into your open-door policy and behaves accordingly.

In the end, we, of course, cannot travel through time. If a severe injury or fatality occurs at one of our jobsites, it will be irreversible. That's why it is so important to make sure that the incident doesn't occur in the first place. Get safety involved in planning. Ensure that documents are read and enforced. Make sure information is disseminated to those who need it. Allow your people to communicate their concerns without fear of retaliation and then act on those concerns where legitimate. Never stop observing and analyzing safety practices. Track near-misses. Every last bit of this you do helps reduce the chance that one day you'll be saying, "If only I could go back and change this."



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MATERIAL PRICING IN THE CURRENT MARKET

BY JOSH LITZMAN | STEVEN KEMPF BUILDING MATERIALS

“The New Normal”, “In These Trying Times”, “Due to COVID...”

These newly hackneyed phrases have replaced “Every cloud has a silver lining” or “Get a taste of your own medicine”. As trite as those are, I think we wrinkle our noses more at “The New Normal”.

In our industry, we have seen our fair share of hardship including construction shutdowns, new protocols, but worst of all a material pricing run-up that rivals the Dutch Tulip crisis. With all the factors at play, expectations need to be adjusted in regard to material cost.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

At the beginning of the pandemic most businesses felt we would see a downturn of Biblical proportions. Capacity was shuttered and people were told to “shelter in place”. This was done in a frantic effort to control the pandemic before it started, but it was already too late. We all recall the construction shutdown which caused a ripple effect in our economy and is still impacting our lives.

Once these restrictions were lifted in May, an urban exodus started which triggered car purchases, new home purchases, and a need for warehousing and logistical capacity for in-home delivery of all consumer goods.

At the same time, the United States saw a period of civil unrest that rivaled our most tumultuous times. This led to riots and protests across our great land.

The confluence of events of last Spring created a tremendous demand for cars, appliances, lumber products, and new dwellings. At the same time, manufacturing was ratcheting down capacity. This has led to an unbelievable increase in pricing that is may be unrivaled.

LABOR

There is some validity to the commentary that the Government intervention may have created a short-term labor issue. In some cases where furloughs were needed, the additional funds on top of normal unemployment rates may have caused a disincentive to return to work. Couple that with pandemic protocols and potential positive tests, the labor force took a hit over the last 12 months.

LUMBER

In the wake of the urban exodus and the “stay at home” orders many people began purchasing material to create outdoor spaces to stretch their proverbial legs when they had no public place to go. This demand, coupled with raw material delays due to labor shortages among other things, created a tremendous price increase. The pressure looked to subside in the fall of

2020, but the composite index is now peaking beyond record levels due to supply constrictions. Much of this is opportunistic due to strong housing starts and availability constraints caused by labor issues and purposeful capacity reductions. Relief will only come if the price surpasses the tolerance level of those purchasing the material.

STEEL

The increase in need for cars and appliances coupled with a consolidation in raw material providers has created a real conundrum for purchasers of steel stud and track. The price of cold and hot rolled coil has consistently crested 10% per month for the last five months. Import will not be much help for a while as those factories are experiencing the same “pandemic” issues and the timeframe to bring these materials to our shores will not rescue current projects. This large jump is predicated on a supply issue as lead times continue to leak out and the price rises 10% every month.

GYPSUM WALLBOARD

Home-building, assisted living and multifamily projects outside of the urban areas are thriving. This leads to a high demand for drywall. Increased need and lowered output in plants due to the pandemic have led to allocation and price increases beyond forecasted levels. A reduction in coal burning power plants have also diminished the raw material sourcing options. Vermiculite and other inputs are also hard to obtain for many reasons.

TRUCKING

Throughout all of this, moving material from point A to point B has become increasingly difficult for a multitude of reasons. Skilled labor is being shifted from traditional outlets to businesses that service the consumer purchasing in their home, such as Amazon. Incentive to stay at home also plays a roll.

TAKE-AWAYS

Price increases are here to stay. Jobs that have already been priced out will need to go back out for bid. While some relief may come, it is not clear when it will arrive. Scrap material pricing is rising as well, therefore labor versus material paradigm may need to shift.

We all hope some semblance of normalcy returns, but until then, we're all in this together. It's up to us to keep jobs going. Budgets will be busted, costs will continue to rise, but efficiency will win the day!



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PIVOTING IN A PANDEMIC: BRINGING REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE TO A VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

BY MELISSA RAFFEL, AFFILIATE DIRECTOR | ACE MENTOR PROGRAM OF PHILADELPHIA

Over the past year, life had to adjust to a new normal, learning ways to work without social interaction. For high school students, the lack of socialization has been extremely stressful. The ACE Mentor Program of Greater Philadelphia took the opportunity to use this new challenge to create an even better, well-rounded program for its students.

For the past 20 years, ACE Mentor Program has provided students an opportunity for personal interaction with industry professionals. This year, we had to think outside the box to provide a whole new learning experience that would engage and inspire these students to continue their pursuit of careers in design and construction.

Looking at the needs of students, the organization pivoted to an all-virtual experience with the birth of its new program: ACE360 Online. Its goal is to enhance the overall learning experience by providing professional development skills in addition to industry knowledge and experiences to give the students a well-rounded experience that will prepare them for their next steps in life.

The core piece of the program surrounding membership has continued on. Teams meet virtually every week and engage in STEM activities from home, keeping students by creating problem-solving competitions with one another. Live virtual tours of construction sites, as well as walk-throughs of virtual plans and renderings connect students with real-life projects that allow them to see first-hand how the design and construction process works, and then monitor the progress.

In addition, the program has added a “Meet the Professional Live Virtual Series”. With the help of our partnering companies, industry leaders share their stories of success, answer questions, provide enrichment activities for the students, perform live demonstrations, and take the students on virtual tours. This new feature of the program has created an outlet for students to meet and engage with industry leaders.

The last piece of the puzzle is professional development. With most schools going virtual, life skills and college preparation courses became limited over the last year. This piece created a full circle experience for the students, filling the gap in the students’ education. Professional development courses include essay writing, resume composition, creation of LinkedIn profiles, and assistance with college applications and scholarship opportunities. Students also engage in mock interviews and receive guidance on building a professional network.

COVID-19 may have changed the way the world operates in 2020, but the ACE Mentor Program refused to allow the pandemic to affect the enrichment of students’ lives. In fact, the ACE360 program is now better preparing them for their futures and the road that lies ahead. ACE found an opportunity in the stay-at-home mandates and used it to expand the program beyond what has been done over the past 20 years. We are hopeful for the future, and the for the future of our students. We look forward to continuing to build upon the ACE360 program to continue to inspire our students to pursue careers in building and design.



ACE 360° ONLINE

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We have worked hard to make the pivot to a 100% virtual experience and are proud to launch ACE360 Online –

a comprehensive career exploration program designed specifically to meet the needs of our students in the Greater Philadelphia region. ACE360 Online provides impactful programming, mentor support, and scholarship opportunities for our students which enables them to become more confident, work toward personal and professional success, and pursue their career goals!



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