

New Jersey Construction

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Construction
Contractors
of New Jersey

FEATURE

New Jersey's Utility Providers and Those Behind Life's Daily Necessities

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In Memoriam ... John Epifano

On June 29, 2024, John Epifano passed peacefully, surrounded by family. John was a loving husband to his wife Dawn and father to their four children, Joseph, Madeline, Robert, and Michael. John also left behind three loving siblings, Christine, Lisa, and his brother Robert Epifano, Jr. He was a wonderful son to his father Robert Epifano, Sr., John's role model and mentor. John also is survived by many extended family members, friends, and business colleagues whose hearts are filled with sadness from the tremendous loss of John.

John was raised in Piscataway, New Jersey and graduated from St. Frances Cabrini elementary school and St. Joseph's High School in Metuchen. John attended Tulane University until he decided he would much prefer to construct buildings. So, for more than 30 years, John managed, owned, and grew the Epic group of construction companies, with his brother Robert. John was passionate about work. He especially enjoyed the pressure and adrenaline of "bid day." He loved, respected, and appreciated all his co-workers. Epic was a second home and family to him. In fact, it was at an Epic company picnic where John met Dawn, his future wife!

For many years, John served on the Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey's Board of Trustees and was active in collective bargaining negotiations with the construction trades. John also served as a Management Trustee on the New Jersey Carpenters Funds. John was highly respected by his colleagues and labor leaders.

John had many other joys outside of construction: He loved coaching his kids as well as other children throughout Warren Township. As a past president of the Warren Baseball & Softball Inc. (now the WHBSA), John spent many years dedicated to coaching others and sharing the joy of team sports like baseball, softball, and basketball.

John loved his annual family trips to Disney World and Universal Studios. He loved the thrill of the rides and embraced the joy like a little kid. He also loved visiting their home in the Florida Keys where John would fish and relax in the pool with family and

friends. John was an avid Yankees fan since he was a child. John also loved cheering for and attending Rutgers Basketball games. John also enjoyed golfing and "game night" with his children. Those who knew John well will fondly recall his love of Broadway Musicals – a joy he inherited from his mother.



Whether at home or in the Keys, John was passionate about cooking and grilling. The family loved all his preparations - from homemade sauces to pulled pork on his outside fire pit. John also loved to make homemade sausage with the entire extended family – a tradition he inherited from his father.

ACCNJ's Chief Operating Officer, Jack Kocsis, Jr., states "our heartfelt condolences go out to John's family and friends. The loss we experience with John's passing is difficult to quantify. His family, friends and co-workers lost a best friend, mentor, and wonderful, loving, and caring human being." Jack continues, "The construction industry lost, way too soon, a leader, someone who loved the construction industry and had insight and vision of the challenges it confronts. Over the years we all learned a great

deal from John for which we are extremely grateful. He will be deeply missed." ■

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A photograph of a construction site. In the foreground, four workers wearing hard hats and high-visibility safety vests are seen from behind, looking towards a large building under construction. A red crane arm is visible on the left side of the frame. The sky is clear and blue.

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In This Issue...

BY | MIKE DEVITO, EDITOR



Since its founding in 2013, Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey has ably represented contractors in the building, heavy, highway, utility and environmental construction arenas. Currently, ACCNJ is prioritizing services for those members who specialize in utility construction. In this issue of New Jersey Construction, we look at the roles of utility companies in New Jersey and their impact on our quality of life and the state's economy.

We proudly feature highlights from ACCNJ's Annual Safety Day. In addition, we are pleased to include an article contributed by Chris Laveve and Cal Beyer on the opioid crisis in New Jersey, an important issue that impacts not only safety but one's mental health and wellbeing.

Proper training is vital in keeping craftworkers safe. Our organization prides itself on getting the next generation ready for the challenges of the construction industry. Our Chair's Message looks at the different programs ACCNJ offers to help attract, train and assist our future workforce, from educational scholarships to internship programs. Separate articles on many of ACCNJ's educational initiatives are also part of this issue.

You can view a two-page pictorial of this year's Construction Industry Career Day, which welcomed approximately 3,000 people to the two-day event. This annual activity offers hands-on displays and many exhibits for those considering a career in construction.

In the CEO Message, Jack Kocsis provides a snapshot of a Management Trustee's responsibilities. Several ACCNJ members volunteer their time and expertise to serve as a Trustee on union benefit funds. In this role, they must uphold their fiduciary responsibility by ensuring fund participants receive both health and retirement benefits in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

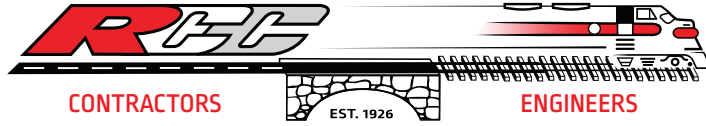
The Member Profile features Schnell Contracting Limited, a commercial waterproofing and restoration contractor who specializes in concrete, natural stone, and masonry projects. The Eatontown-based firm was established in 1999 by John Slazyk and Stephen Gattoni.

In our staff columns, Abby Adams, ACCNJ's Government Affairs Director, provides an in-depth look into Governor Murphy's \$56.6 billion state budget for fiscal year 2025. The Legal and Insurance Affairs column by Jon Slater, Esq., reviews the Wage Theft Act, which significantly expands the liability employers will face for state wage law violations.

The Summer issue is packed with many other informative articles and information. We hope you enjoy reading through the publication and welcome your feedback. ■

YOU CAN VIEW A TWO-PAGE PICTORIAL OF THIS YEAR'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CAREER DAY, WHICH WELCOMED APPROXIMATELY 3,000 PEOPLE TO THE TWO-DAY EVENT. THIS ANNUAL ACTIVITY OFFERS HANDS-ON DISPLAYS AND MANY EXHIBITS FOR THOSE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN CONSTRUCTION.

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Developing Our Future Workforce is a Must!

BY | JEFF WATERS, CHAIRMAN



When construction companies plan their future, they usually look to the number of projects forecasted in the upcoming years. Whether through the capital programs of public agencies, private developments, the housing market or green energy initiatives, contractors are always looking for opportunities to continue their growth. Each year, the Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey has a construction forecast session at our annual convention to give our members a snapshot of future construction investments.

And while future construction projects are imperative, we must also plan for a robust workforce to meet the challenges of performing this construction work. Investing in people is vital to our future success. One of ACCNJ's major initiatives for attracting future workers is the annual Construction Industry Career Day (CICD), held this year on May 28 & 29, 2024. This event attracts thousands of individuals who want to learn more about the construction industry and what careers it offers.

Another facet in the development of future construction employees is our Summer Internship Program through CIAP. On January 10, 2024, a career fair was held in which eighty-six students from many different colleges and universities were invited to interview with participating companies, most of whom received offers of summer employment. CIAP also began hosting Engagement Events for the interns last July. The evening allows current and former interns to network at a casual dinner

and share their thoughts and experiences as they pursue their careers in construction.

ACCNJ also offers a robust scholarship program each year where we provide more than \$100,000 in scholarships to dependents of our members' employees to assist with their higher education expenses. In addition, a Tuition Reimbursement Program is available to our members' employees for their continuing education or to assist them grow their skill sets.

In 2024, ACCNJ saw a growth spurt in its educational programs. The Association hosted a series of educational workshops on topics such as Time Management and Organizational Skills, Holding Difficult Conversations and Email Etiquette, with more to come. Blueprint reading classes were also added to the calendar and filled quickly.

But we don't do it alone. We rely on our labor partners to attract young men and women into their respective apprenticeship training programs. Through apprenticeships, individuals are trained properly and safely in different facets of construction. These comprehensive programs are funded by management contributions and held in state-of-the-art facilities.

You can read more about many of the above programs and events in separate articles in this publication. One thing for sure, ACCNJ is leaving no stone unturned in making sure our members can fulfill their future employment needs. ■

WE RELY ON OUR LABOR PARTNERS TO ATTRACT YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAMS. THROUGH APPRENTICESHIPS, INDIVIDUALS ARE TRAINED PROPERLY AND SAFELY IN DIFFERENT FACETS OF CONSTRUCTION.

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The Role of a Fund Trustee

BY | JACK KOCSIS, JR., CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey (ACCNJ) appoints management trustees to many different jointly administered Fringe Benefit Funds governed by the Employee Income Retirement Security Act (ERISA). These Funds provide craftworkers with retirement, health, and other benefits, with contributions made by signatory contractors for the craftworkers they employ. Among other things, ERISA protects participants and beneficiaries in these benefits plans.

Both Labor and Management Trustees appointed to the funds must uphold their ERISA fiduciary responsibilities. In addition to programs continually offered through the International Foundation of Employee Benefits Plan, to which trustees belong through the respective fund(s) on which they serve, ACCNJ provides educational sessions for the members they appoint.

The most recent program was held on June 18, 2024, and presented by Daniel Brennan, Mark Levengood, Elizabeth Schlax, and Jennifer Abrams, of Susanin, Widman & Brennan, P.C., who serve as Management Co-Counsel on most funds to which ACCNJ is party. As would be expected, each program begins by reminding trustees of their fiduciary responsibility, which is to always act in the best interest of the participants, avoiding conflicts of interest or party in interest transactions.

Trustees must follow the terms of the plan documents, policies, trust agreements and resolutions. These documents, among many things, guide them to prudently manage the assets of the funds by diversifying investments

to minimize the risk of large losses. Good returns on investments are critical not only to defined pension plans that have a built-in assumption rate, but to the other funds as well.

However, to have the assets to make investments, the Funds must make every effort to collect contributions. Trustees adopt collection policies which dictate the terms upon which benefit payments must be made, including due dates, procedures for pursuing delinquent contributions, interest and penalties for late payments, bonding requirements, payroll audit policies and much more. And while fund audits can be time consuming and burdensome for signatory employers, they are required to comply with ERISA and a necessary part of an effective collection policy.

Plan assets are used to provide healthcare benefits to plan participants and their dependents. Trustees are charged with plan design, as well as selecting and overseeing service providers which include healthcare provider networks, third-party claims administrators, stop loss carriers, and pharmacy benefit managers.

In addition to defined pension plans and healthcare benefits, trustees must also oversee annuity funds, which can either be trustee or participant directed. While trustees take on the responsibility of overseeing investments with trustee-directed plans, in all cases they must pay close attention to the fees charged to plans for investment or administrative services related to investment fund options.

Trustees also have oversight of Apprenticeship Programs and Labor/Management Funds, which also come with the responsibility to act solely in the interest of participants and beneficiaries.

While it may seem overwhelming for trustees who volunteer their time and expertise to serve in this capacity, they can and do rely on a team of experienced professionals. Legal counsel, actuaries, accountants, investment advisers, and health care consultants are deeply involved in the day-to-day operation of the fund's activities. They are there to support and guide the administrative personnel and provide recommendations for trustees to consider.

As you can see, serving as a Trustee is a big commitment. ACCNJ thanks and appreciates those members and our labor partners who serve in this role, as well as the respected professionals and administrative staff who play an integral role in the delivery of benefits to the hard-working craftworker participants. ■

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FEATURE

New Jersey's Utility Providers and Those Behind Life's Daily Necessities

BY | JACK KOCSIS, JR., CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



UTILITY COMPANIES PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE ECONOMY AND SAFETY OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

When was the last time you stopped to assess the role your utility companies play in providing a quality life for you and your family? We get up each day, turn on the lights, raise or lower the temperature in our homes, make our coffee, cook our breakfast, take our showers and not once reflect on what's behind having access to these essential services. In fact, one may only think of their utilities when something goes wrong or while paying their bills.

But the importance of utility companies goes far beyond providing a quality of life for their customers to whom they deliver electric, gas or water. They are also vital and essential for economic development. Every business relies on utilities to operate effectively each day; from hospitals to shopping malls to power plants and office buildings. The list goes on and on.

And their value doesn't end there. There's the public health and safety aspect. Today, many choose to drink bottled and/or filtered water. But that doesn't stop utility companies from making sure water is treated to meet safety standards. At the same time, they make sure sewage is disposed of properly, avoiding environmental concerns. And let's not forget about those natural disasters. Utility companies are often the most relied upon to restore essential services and help things return to some sense of normalcy.

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("NJBP" or "Board") is the State agency with authority to oversee regulated utilities. Their role is to ensure safe, adequate and proper utility services at reasonable rates for customers in New Jersey.

Utility Contractors Face Unique Challenges
Many ACCNJ members specializing in utility con-

struction face difficult challenges and obstacles every day. As with most types of construction projects, utility construction doesn't start from the ground up. Rather, underground utility infrastructure is the norm. With this comes a host of complex issues to navigate.

Having underground lines located prior to digging or starting a project is a must. Improper mark-outs of underground utilities can lead to catastrophic outcomes, with injury or death topping the list, as well as service interruptions or damage to the environment. Even though the One-Call program designed in 2005 to prevent these accidents was put in place, there is still risk. Outdated or inaccurate utility maps can make this task difficult, leading to delays and potential unintended utility strikes.

While all types of construction face layers of regulations, the utility sector ranks toward the top. Contractors must navigate these regulations to ensure compliance, which can be time-consuming and costly. Utility projects involve securing permits at the local, state and sometimes federal levels. These regulations can often become burdensome and make it difficult to advance projects in a timely and cost-effective manner.

All contractors must keep projects on schedule and within budget to comply with contract terms while keeping the owners for whom they work satisfied. But utility projects, which typically have tight budgets and strict deadlines, require coordination with multiple stakeholders, including property owners, government agencies, and utility companies. Weather also impacts utility construction since most work is outdoors.

In urban areas, where a good amount of utility projects occur, contractors contend with limited space and



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traffic control to avoid road closures. Aside from the additional cost factor, this affects scheduling and making sure projects are completed on time and within budget.

While all may not agree, utility companies focus on reducing their environmental footprint every day by investing in renewable energy and infrastructure projects that conserve and transition to cleaner energy. Nonetheless, utility construction can have significant environmental impacts, including habitat disruption, soil erosion, and water pollution. As a result, contractors must implement measures to mitigate these impacts and comply with environmental regulations.

And last, but certainly not least, utility contractors must constantly be aware of technological advancements. State-of-the-art equipment and tools are a must with utility installation.

Keeping Craftworkers Safe

Working with utilities often involves hazardous conditions such as high voltage electricity, pressurized gas lines, and deep excavations. Safety protocols and training are essential to prevent accidents and injuries. Excavation and trenching are one of the most dangerous of all construction operations. The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) cited that in 2022 within the first six months, 22 workers fell victim to the deadly hazards present in trenching and excavation work – surpassing 15 in all of 2021. Since then, OSHA has launched enhanced enforcement initiatives to protect workers from these known industry hazards.

Craftworkers on utility projects need a range of certifications and qualifications to ensure safety, compliance, and competency to perform their tasks. These certifications may vary depending on the specific work they perform and the regulations in their region.

Here is where contractors and the unions work together to ensure craftworkers receive unparalleled training and education and have access to the proper certifica-

tions required. OSHA 30 Hour, Confined Space Entry, First Aid CPR, Trenching and Excavation Safety, Traffic Control, Electrical Safety, Heavy Equipment, and Hazardous Materials Handling are some of the certifications commonly required on utility construction projects.

Advocating for Proper Funding of Utility Infrastructure

There's no disputing that utilities enhance the quality of life for everyone and allow us to enjoy modern conveniences. Utilities are the backbone of our State's economy and vital to our continued growth, which is why proper funding is paramount.

A deteriorating infrastructure is a reality and why we need to be aggressive in making lawmakers, at both the state and federal level, aware of the economic benefits derived from funding and maintaining our utilities. Diversion of utility funding to other causes cannot happen.

Who are New Jersey's Major Electric and Gas Suppliers? PSE&G

PSE&G is one of the largest combined electric and gas companies in the United States and is New Jersey's oldest and largest publicly owned utility, serving approximately 2.6 million customers, nearly three-quarters of the State's population. PSE&G is the largest subsidiary of Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG).

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Atlantic City Electric, a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), delivers safe, reliable and affordable electric service to approximately 560,000 customers in southern New Jersey.

Jersey Central Power & Light

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Elizabethtown Gas

Elizabethtown Gas, a subsidiary of SJI, delivers natural gas to more than 300,000 customers in New Jersey, in parts of Union, Middlesex, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, Morris, and Mercer Counties.

Who are New Jersey's Water Utilities?

New Jersey has several privately owned and smaller regional and municipal public water utilities. However, communities with older or smaller public water systems are turning to private sector partners for varying reasons, mainly fiscal relief. Thus, many of the smaller regional and municipal public water utilities continue to be purchased by private water utilities.

The New Jersey Department of Public Advocate's Division of Rate Counsel lists the following as entities providing water and wastewater services to New Jersey citizens:

- American Water Works Company, Inc.
- Atlantic County Utilities Authority
- Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority
- Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority

- Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority
- Elizabethtown Water Company
- E'town Corporation
- Hackettstown Municipal Utilities Authority
- Mantua Township Municipal Utilities Authority
- Monroe Township Municipal Utilities Authority
- Montville Municipal Utilities Authority
- Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority
- New Jersey Water Supply Authority
- New Jersey-American Water Company
- Ocean County Utilities Authority
- Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners
- Pemberton Township Water Department
- Stony Brook Regional Sewerage Authority
- United Water
- United Water New Jersey
- Washington Township Municipal Utilities Authority

ACCNJ supports the efforts and actions taken by governmental leaders and our utility companies to make sure our State's utilities continue to provide the services all New Jerseyans enjoy and our economy needs. We continue to actively monitor any and all legislation that will impact delivering utility services in New Jersey or compromise necessary funding.

Our thanks go out to the State's Utility Providers, as well as the contractors and craftworkers with whom they work side-by-side. ACCNJ looks forward to working closely with all to streamline and advance much-needed projects and utility infrastructure enhancement. ■



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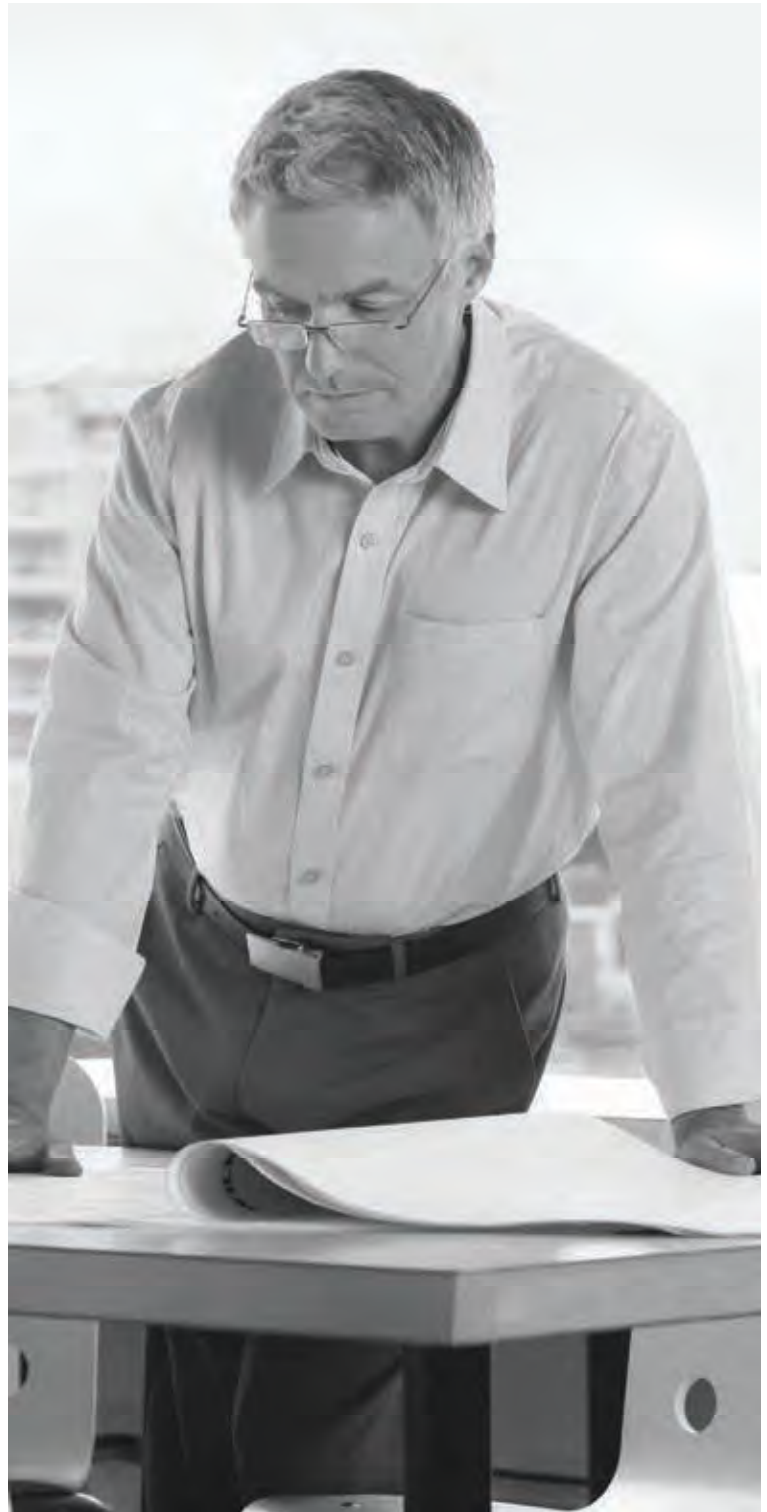
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Summer Legislative Update

BY | ABBY ADAMS, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DIRECTOR



New Jersey is setting its sights high with a staggering \$55.9 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025), marking the state's largest-ever fiscal plan. This ambitious budget is not merely about numbers but aims to tackle key challenges while fostering growth and financial stability across the state.

The primary focuses of FY2025's budget is enhancing affordability, spurring economic opportunities, and ensuring fiscal responsibility. Following the recent passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law, which promises substantial work opportunities for New Jersey, FY2025's budget isn't making the labor community jump up and down with potential for more work.

A notable initiative in FY2025, whether seen as good or bad, is the introduction of the "Corporate Transit Fee" aimed at revitalizing New Jersey Transit, which has long faced financial woes. This fee, a 2.5% surtax on businesses with a net taxable income exceeding \$10 million, will provide dedicated funding for NJ TRANSIT until 2029, offering crucial support at the cost of high-earning New Jersey businesses.

Despite reservations, several components of the budget hold significant promise for New Jerseyans. A standout feature is the proposed \$6.1 billion surplus, earmarked to cushion against future financial uncertainties. This surplus underscores the state's commitment to prudent financial management, complemented by a full payment into New Jersey's pension fund and strategic investments such as \$120 million for completing the State Police Training Center and enhancing State parks.

Affordability remains a cornerstone of FY2025's budget, with over \$200 million allocated to pre-fund the Stay NJ property tax relief program and ongoing support for Senior Freeze property tax relief. Notably, the budget earmarks more than \$3.6 billion for direct property tax relief, aimed at easing the burden on homeowners across the state.

Education emerges as another pivotal area of investment, with FY2025 marking the culmination of a seven-year phase-in of the school aid formula. This includes over \$900 million in direct K-12 aid, bringing the total to nearly \$12 billion. Additionally, there is \$124 million allocated for pre-K education, with \$20 million designated to expand into new districts, creating over 1,000 new seats. Community colleges are also set to receive over \$290 million in aid, underlining the budget's comprehensive approach to supporting education at all levels.

In essence, FY2025's budget for New Jersey represents a bold step towards addressing immediate needs while laying a robust foundation for future growth. By prioritizing affordability, bolstering critical transportation infrastructure like NJ Transit, and making substantial investments in education, the state aims to enhance quality of life, foster economic resilience, and ensure equitable opportunities for all residents. As the fiscal year unfolds, the effectiveness of these measures will be closely watched. ■

THE PRIMARY FOCUSES OF FY2025'S BUDGET IS ENHANCING AFFORDABILITY, SPURRING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENSURING FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Heavy and General Construction Laborers' Union

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ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

ACCNJ Awards \$75,000 in Scholarships in 2024

Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey was excited to present a handful of impressive students with scholarships in 2024. This year, ACCNJ awarded six students. The ceremony on June 11 at The Wilshire Grand Hotel in West Orange celebrated the achievements of each scholarship recipient as they continue with higher education. Each student has an exceptional repertoire of scholarly achievements and extracurricular activities that are leading them on different paths. These bright, young individuals have all expressed the impact their family has had on their successes. In fact, three of the recipients are siblings of past ACCNJ scholarship winners. The future is certainly bright!

The ACCNJ Foundation awarded five of the students with \$12,500 each - one of which is the Donald R. Waters Sr. Memorial Scholarship. These students are all highly achieving children or grandchildren of ACCNJ member employees. In addition, one college student was awarded the \$12,500 Civil Engineering Scholarship from the John F. Donohoe Foundation. All of these scholars should be proud of their many accomplishments.

We are delighted to introduce this year's scholarship recipients:

ACCNJ Foundation Scholarship - Matthew Barlow



Matthew Barlow, often called Matt, describes himself as having “an inherent curiosity for how things work.” This has led him to all A's in his advanced math and science classes at New Providence High School.

These include AP Biology, AP Statistics, AP Physics, Honors Principles of Engineering, Forensics and Neuroscience of Animal Behavior. He also participated as a Waksman Student Scholar where he worked to publish research in the National Center for Biotechnology Information with a team at Rutgers University. Matt is an all-around student of STEM. He is taking his passion for engineering, inherited from his father, to the Civil Engineering program at the University of Florida. Not only does Matt demonstrate prowess in the classroom, but he also excels on the field. Matt has played varsity football and varsity lacrosse for all four years of high school. This is an impressive feat considering he was also Student Council Secretary, a Peer Leader, volunteered with youth sports, and a member of three honor societies (National, Science, and Spanish). Matt's teachers believe he will make a real difference in the world through his service, diligence, and genuine intentions.

ACCNJ Foundation Scholarship - MaryGrace Craffey



Everyone describes MaryGrace Craffey as, above all else, kind. She demonstrates this by being a good student and teammate. MaryGrace balances an impressive course load and regimen of extracurriculars. She has maintained a place in the first decile of students at Park Ridge High School by excelling in classes such as AP Calculus, AP Computer Science, and AP Statistics. The most important course for MaryGrace has been AP Chemistry. This class and its teacher led her to enrollment in Clemson University's Chemistry Program. MaryGrace hopes to continue working hard so she can

become a scientist in the cosmetics industry one day. This work ethic has been instilled by her involvement in three varsity sports - tennis, lacrosse, and basketball. MaryGrace is a force to be reckoned with on and off the field. Her competitive nature coupled with her compassion and kindness for others, has turned MaryGrace into a natural leader. She is a team captain, drum major in marching band, and Student Council Secretary. MaryGrace also attributes a lot of her success and hard work to her father who has been in the Carpenters' Union for 40 years. MaryGrace says that when her dad asks her “Are you working hard or hardly working?”, she wants to always be able to answer that she is working hard!

John F. Donohoe Civil Engineering Scholarship - Daniel Olaya



Many people have great memories of living in their childhood homes, but not many people can say they helped build their childhood home - an exception to that is Daniel Olaya. He began his career in Civil Engineering at the age of five by helping his dad renovate their house. While this is the start of Danny's love of building and improving infrastructure, the story really begins before he was even born. In the more rural areas of Columbia, Danny's uncle devoted his career to civil engineering and improving the infrastructure of his impoverished community. Seeing this pushed Danny to follow in his uncle's footsteps. He sees the same need in his own community in the United States. With an impressive education from the Civil Engineering program at Rowan University and work experience at Turner Construction, Danny plans on using his

passions and knowledge to revitalize and rebuild the country. As described by his educators and employers, Danny is the perfect person for this job. He is a fast learner and easily adaptable. Most importantly, Danny is not afraid to ask the questions that lead to important answers. These are the qualities that have made him successful in his academic and extracurricular endeavors as well. He is a member of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers and the National Society of Professional Engineers. He manages to balance this with academic excellence in his Civil and Environmental Engineering Major and Geographic Information Systems minor. As someone who exudes integrity and compassion, Danny is certainly well suited to help build a better world.

ACCNJ Foundation Scholarship - Isabella Pope



Isabella Pope has been inspired by her mom to become a woman in construction. Growing up visiting job sites and playing with toy front loaders has led Isabella to attend the Civil Engineering program at Stevens Institute of Technology in the Fall. At Delaware Valley High School, she held a 3.89 GPA with seven AP classes including Calculus, Physics, Biology, and US History. Despite taking some of the hardest classes offered, Isabella makes time to engage outside of the classroom. She is a valued member of many clubs - Student Council, Best Buddies, National Honor Society, and JV Lacrosse to name a few. Most notably, Isabella is an integral part of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). Through this club, Isabella was able to write a script for a PSA video about safe driving that won her school \$20,000. Outside of school, Isabella is an active part of her community. She is a Sunday school leader for first and second

graders, a summer camp counselor, and a childcare attendant at HealthQuest Fitness. Isabella's involvement in her community is heavily influenced by her Hawaiian upbringing. She has learned that, as she puts it, "aloha spirit" is about helping others. Her teachers can see this as well. They describe her as kind-hearted, compassionate, and determined. All of this proves Isabella will go on to do amazing things in the construction industry that will shape the lives of all.

The Donald R. Waters Sr. Memorial Scholarship is presented to Will Petrie



Will Petrie has worked hard to receive the Donald R. Waters Sr. Memorial Scholarship and with hard work sometimes comes failures. While most would shy away from even the thought of failing, Will welcomes it with open arms. He believes the key to his many successes has been the opportunity to continually practice and improve. This concept, also known as kata, was delivered to him by way of his decade long karate practice. Will has applied his method of excellence to his many extracurriculars at Lenape Valley Regional High School. These include Robotics, Science and Engineering Club, Literary Magazine, Quiz Bowl, Dungeoneers Society, Philosophy Club, and French Honors Society. Being an active member of these many clubs is rounded out by Will's academic achievement - he has a 4.3 GPA, 1460 SAT score and has taken five AP classes and 12 Honors classes. Both Will's school counselor and English teacher have been honored to watch him grow. He is described as always having the answer and if not, he has the tenacity to find it. After school, Will is an active member of the community. Namely, he visits the residents of an assisted living community once a week to play chess. He is working to teach the residents kata

and enjoys watching them improve each week. Will is taking this work ethic to his freshman year of college at the University of King's College as an English Major.

ACCNJ Foundation Scholarship - Connor Schmit



As described by his teacher, through the words of Mark Twain, Connor Schmit has "as good a heart as any boy!" This is evidenced by his continued commitment to making others feel included, valued, and at-home around him. Connor spent a week last summer volunteering at Camp Sunshine - a place where children with life-threatening diseases can partake in a camp experience. It was here that Connor learned about Fanconi Anemia - a rare bone marrow disorder. Since then, Connor has dedicated his life to a path that will bring him to medical school and a career of helping others. To get there, Connor has undertaken a heavy course load of four AP classes, 20 Honors classes, and a college level class on the Writings of Mark Twain. In fact, a personal writing of his from this class is set to be published in a larger project by Yale University Press. Connor does not simply amble down this path to success - he runs. For the last four years, Connor has been training to become an accomplished runner on various school teams. As Senior Captain of the cross-country team at Seton Hall Prep, Connor has learned what it means to be a leader on and off the track. Connor will be bringing his leadership, open-mindedness, and academic strength to Loyola Marymount University in California as a Biology major. This track will likely bring him to medical school where he hopes to learn about cell biology and the various genetic disorders affecting people across the world. ■

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MEMBER PROFILE

Schnell Contracting: Approaching Three Decades of Expansion

BY | LEIGH-ANN BRANNIGAN, MEMBERSHIP SERVICES DIRECTOR

Schnell Contracting Limited LLC traces its roots back to its founding in 1999 by construction industry veterans, John Slazyk, Managing Member, Stephen Gattoni, Managing Member and Vice President of Operations, and Adam Newman, Vice President of Operations. With a vision to revolutionize the construction landscape by providing top-notch services combined with unmatched customer satisfaction, Schnell Contracting embarked on its journey in the highly competitive construction market.

Through the years, Schnell Contracting has undergone significant evolution and growth. From its humble beginnings as a local construction firm, it has steadily expanded its operations and capabilities, earning a reputation for its unwavering commitment to quality, innovation, reliability and professionalism.

“The company prides itself on delivering construction solutions tailored to meet the unique and specific needs of each client,” says John. By listening to client feedback, anticipating their needs and providing tailored solutions, Schnell Contracting has become a diversified firm offering a comprehensive suite of construction services.

Coating Job



▲ Prudential Gateway - Newark, NJ

“The backbone of Schnell Contracting’s operations is its team of highly skilled professionals,” notes John. “Through a culture of continuous learning, innovation and collaboration, we empower our employees to consistently achieve outstanding results.”

Proving the Power of Diversity

Initially focused on waterproofing and historical restoration, Schnell Contracting has leveraged its experience, expertise and adaptability to diversify its portfolio. Its services now include complete revitalization and rehabilitation for commercial structures and parking garages.

“This strategic diversification was supported by investments in talent, technology and innovation, enabling the company to proactively adapt to changing market dynamics,” explains Steve. Schnell takes pride in its diverse portfolio, each offering unique rewards, challenges and noteworthy aspects.

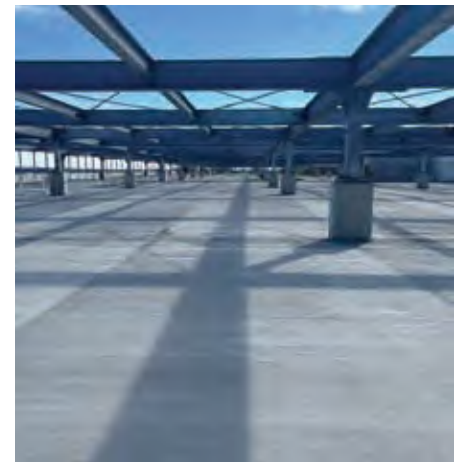
“Among the most rewarding projects are those where we’ve been able to make a positive impact on communities and stakeholders,” notes Steve. These projects often involve refreshing historical structures

or transforming neglected spaces into vibrant, functional assets. The restoration of a historic landmark at J&J’s Johnson Hall and the renovation of the Parking Garages at Newark Beth Israel are some of the projects that were particularly fulfilling to Schnell management and staff. “They contribute to preserving cultural heritage and enhancing the quality of life for employees,” adds Steve.

In the world of new construction, Schnell’s experience and expertise is valued by owners, construction managers and general contractors in the design and construction phases. Working together as a team, necessary steps are developed to ensure a successful, well executed project. Contractors who hire Schnell know they have support to tackle difficult situations, whether it be expansion joints, caulking, waterproofing, traffic coatings, or concrete sealers. This approach has developed a steady clientele filled with repeat business and a pool of growing relationships,” notes Adam.

The firm’s commitment to its client-centric approach plays a crucial role in its diversification. Schnell Contracting proudly serves both the private and public sectors. In the private sector, “we work

Conrac Garage - Newark, NJ





▲ Newark Airport EWR - TQ3 System Application

closely with developers, property owners and businesses to deliver results to adhere to their unique requests and requirements,” notes John.

In the public sector, “we collaborate with government agencies, municipalities and institutions to execute projects that benefit the community at large,” adds John. Whether it’s a high-profile commercial development such as MetLife Stadium, a cutting-edge sustainable stadium, or a landmark infrastructure project including the Newark Airport Concrac Center Garage, these endeavors demonstrate Schnell Contracting’s commitment to delivering quality in every project, regardless of size or complexity.

Expertise, Passion and Safety = Success and Unity

Schnell attributes its success to its team of skilled professionals and craftworkers who bring expertise, passion and dedication to every project. With support from office staff, Schnell’s union field labor includes masons, laborers, plus other building trades required on an as-needed basis.

Schnell is dedicated to cultivating a safety-first culture, empowering every team member to foster the same. “This commitment to safety not only protects our employees, subcontractors, clients and the public, it highlights our commitment to safety and integrity within the construction

industry,” says John. “We prioritize creating a safe and healthy work environment because safety is a core value that shapes our operations.”

Construction projects often present challenges and obstacles that require creativity, determination and collaboration. “It brings together a diverse range of talents and expertise all working toward a common goal,” adds Steve. “The sense of accomplishment that comes from successfully navigating a project from start to finish is truly unparalleled.”

Technology Brings Efficiency... and Challenges

Technology brings immense value to Schnell’s business, enhancing efficiency both in the office and on the jobsite. “Advanced project management software streamlines communication, facilitates collaboration and improves project tracking,” affirms Steve. “This allows us to manage multiple projects more effectively, optimize resource allocation and boost overall productivity.”

While enthusiastic about the benefits technology offers, Schnell admits embracing technology does come with challenges. “The initial investment in technology infrastructure and software can be substantial, and there’s often a learning curve as employees adapt to new tools,” notes John.

Despite these challenges, Schnell proactively addresses potential issues and embraces innovation, which positions the firm as a leader in delivering construction solutions while prioritizing safety, efficiency and client satisfaction.

▼ MetLife Stadium Expansion Joints - Rutherford, NJ



“The future of the construction industry is filled with opportunities for innovation, sustainability and growth,” notes John. “The industry will likely see a greater emphasis on collaboration and partnerships. By developing strong relationships with other stakeholders in the industry and working together, we can deliver more integrated and holistic solutions that meet the evolving needs of clients and communities.”

“In the meantime, we remain at the forefront of the construction industry driving positive change, embracing a culture of continuous improvement and delivering results for years to come.” Steve states firmly.



▲ Avenue E Underslab Waterproofing - Hoboken, NJ

Part of a Strong Partnership

Proud to be part of an industry that values hard work, perseverance and resilience, John notes “the construction industry plays a pivotal role in shaping the world around us, from the buildings we live and work in, to the roads we travel, and the utilities we rely on every day. Our industry builds the foundations of modern civilization, and that fills us with a sense of pride and purpose.”

Schnell sees ACCNJ as a vital resource. “Being a member of ACCNJ has provided Schnell Contracting with numerous opportunities to strengthen our business, expand our network, access valuable resources and stay ahead in a competitive market,” says John.

Looking ahead, Schnell Contracting remains committed to staying current with industry trends and consistently exceeding client expectations. “We will continue to position ourselves as a leading firm in the construction sector,” affirms Steve. Adam notes “Our organization’s drive, enthusiasm, and quality will continue to keep us at the forefront of the industry.”

“The construction industry offers opportunities for personal and professional growth, as well as the chance to leave a lasting legacy for future generations,” concludes John. ■



(Left) John Slazyk, Managing Member (Center) Adam Newman, VP of Operations (Right) Stephen Gattoni (Managing Member & VP of Operations)




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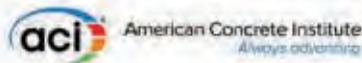
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SAFETY

Safety Day 2024

BY | JILL SCHIFF, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

In February when deciding on a topic for Safety Day, who knew ACCNJ's choice to focus on preventing heat illness would be so appropriate for this year's summer season? When ACCNJ's Safety Day finally arrived on May 8, 2024, we were enjoying an unseasonably warm day with temperatures in the mid-80s. And it was the beginning of what is trending to be the hottest year on record. So, as we write this article and finish up our third heat wave in the Northeast, we are confident ACCNJ members are well-equipped to provide their field personnel with the appropriate information, hydration, rest and shade required to keep everyone safe.

We would also like to thank the Labor/Management Cooperatives for their financial support: CCT, ELEC and LECET. Their commitment offset the cost of providing banners and cooling towels to ACCNJ members.

Here are a few photographs and write ups from ACCNJ's 2024 Safety Day along with a list of organizations that participated.



E.E. Cruz & Company Inc. focused on fall protection, rigging safety & inspections, alternative access and egress products, and a variety of toolbox talks including heat awareness. Demonstrations were provided

by DBI-SALA and Crosby. The photo provided was taken at their RBDH Project, which consists of constructing more than 9,000 linear feet of varying height reinforced concrete floodwalls; installing 28 various types of floodgates and barriers; and incorporating urban landscape adjacent to the floodwall.



On Wednesday, May 8, 2024, **IEW Construction Group** hosted the ACCNJ Safety Day at its NJ Turnpike Authority P100.476 project, Garden State Parkway over Passaic River Superstructure Replacement, located in Elmwood Park, NJ. IEW is happy to report this was their third consecutive year hosting this event at the same project, giving many repeat attendees the opportunity to see the extensive amount of progress on this critical infrastructure project! IEW site personnel, project and safety management teams, and subcontractors were present. Guests included representatives from OSHA, LIUNA Health & Safety Fund, and ACCNJ. Topics included Fall Prevention & Protection, Heat Illness, Mental Health Awareness, and General Workplace Safety. IEW looks forward to hosting again in 2025!



JPC Group held a standdown with their crew at the Ben Franklin Bridge, Camden, NJ, where they discussed signs and symptoms of heat-related illness on the job and best means of protection. They were joined by a representative of The Graham Company who discussed mental health concerns in the workplace, ways of breaking the stigma, and resources for support. A similar stand-down was held at their Pulaski Skyway project in Jersey City.

In addition to ACCNJ's giveaways and banners, **Petillo Companies** had MSA visit their projects to perform the ABCDs of Fall Protection and Gas Detection Seminar for their crews. To build on Petillo's goals for 2024 and the future, they hosted the Safety Stand Down topic "Strengthening Our Culture," which had multiple strong messages to help the company strive for continuous improvement. The most impactful was listening to learn from each other to be safe and successful together. During each standdown, the floor was opened to workers to discuss any topic of choice expressing themselves on mental health, suicide awareness, fall protection, confined space and PPE improvements. They were inspiring, candid and forthright. Petillo thanks ACCNJ for its support throughout the year and making Safety Day a success.





Northeast Remsko Construction held a safety standdown on suicide prevention and substance use disorder at their NJAW Canal Road Project in Somerset, NJ. They also welcomed Miller Fall Protection to provide a drop-test demonstration on forces associated with falls and how various shock absorbers and/or deceleration devices safely arrest a fall, how to calculate fall clearance and solutions for common fall protection problems. In addition, a Bosch representative joined them at their West Point Project to do a presentation on silica inhalation/exposure and controls. The team at the WPP also had a standdown on fall prevention through plan, provide, and train.

Simpson & Brown welcomed ACCNJ to its Buckeye Terminal project in Port Reading. Simpson & Brown's safety team of Rob Shaughnessy and Christian Dreyer discussed a variety of topics with their crew and the owner representatives affording an open and honest discussion. Thank you to Buckeye Safety Team for allowing Simpson & Brown the use of their facility and a special thank you to ACCNJ for taking the time to speak with workers about the seriousness of heat safety and pass out ACCNJ cooling towels, which have been in use non-stop with the summer heat.



While **Torcon** held activities across all sites on Safety Day, the standout moments were at their BMS project in New Brunswick. The morning welcomed Rob

Colman of OSHA who discussed Preventing Falls in Construction and Heat Illness Prevention, with Chris Lalevee of IUOE 825 filling the afternoon slot with a frank and relatable discussion on mental health awareness. Both sessions were attended by all construction management and trade personnel working on campus, as well as BMS engineering and facilities employees.



During this year's Safety Day, **VOLLERS** crews held a mental health awareness standdown at their RWJ project in Toms River with Chris Lalevee from 825 and Turner Construction representatives. Following the presentation, Turner led the stretch and flex program with all employees on site.



Down South, **Vericon Construction Company** held a safety standdown at their Clara Barton Service Area jobsite. With the Laborers, OSHA and ACCNJ making presentations, the more than 50 craftworkers engaged in conversation on heat illness prevention, mental health awareness, and preventing falls in construction. Vericon Safety Director Brian Besser reminded the team of the importance of speaking up and communicating for the sake of staying safe on the jobsite.

For **Waters & Bugbee**, they took the week to address a variety of topics, starting with Chris Lavee from Operating Engineers making a presentation on Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention at their Willingboro Laydown Yard. Chris's message continues to hit home for many and

opens the door for ongoing conversations. On Tuesday, W&B highlighted and learned from a past incident and reviewed Dingo Safety. During their visits throughout the day, crews received ACCNJ cooling towels and were reminded of the importance of staying hydrated. The week also included trench & excavation safety, along with protecting and proper support for existing underground utilities. W&B rounded out the week with their insurance agent and risk-prevention partner visiting their sites for a fresh perspective on where improvements could be made for worker safety. The week concluded with their bi-monthly safety committee meeting, addressing driver safety, and offering online training on a variety of topics. ■



2024 Safety Day Participants

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- Central Jersey Wrecking
- CJ Drilling Inc.
- J. Fletcher Creamer & Son, Inc.
- Crisdel Group
- E. E. Cruz & Co.
- DGI Menard
- Eii, Inc.
- Ferreira Construction Co., Inc.
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- HC Constructors
- IEW Construction Group
- IUOE Local 825 Training Center
- JPC Group, Inc.
- JRCRUZ Corp.
- Laborers 172 SET
- Laborers 472 SET
- Natoli Construction
- New Jersey Building Laborers Training Center
- Nordic Contracting Inc.
- Northeast Remsco Construction
- OSHA
- Petillo Inc.
- J. R. Prisco, Inc.
- Schiavone Construction Co., LLC
- Simpson & Brown
- Torcon, Inc.
- Vericon Construction Company
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PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Preview of the Newark Bay-Hudson County Extension Improvements Program

CONTRIBUTED BY | NJ TURNPIKE AUTHORITY

In April 1956 New Jersey Governors Robert B. Meyner and Alfred E. Driscoll; mayors from Jersey City, Bayonne, and Newark; and members of the state legislature representing Hudson and Essex Counties opened the Newark Bay-Hudson County Extension at a ceremony in Jersey City in front of a crowd of 1,500 onlookers. Encompassing 8.1-miles of roadway, ramps, and bridges, including the Newark Bay Bridge, this vital transportation infrastructure was the result of persistent advocacy from local and state officials from Hudson County, most notably Assemblyman and lifelong Bayonne resident Vincent Robert Casciano, for whom the bridge was later renamed. These state and local leaders understood the economic and mobility benefits that connecting Hudson County to the New Jersey Turnpike would bring to residents and businesses. For nearly 70 years, the Extension has served families and workers from Hudson and Essex Counties and

supported the growth of Bayonne, Jersey City, Newark, and the ports.

However, like most bridges and roadways built in the 1950s, the Extension has reached the end of its life and must be replaced to improve safety and address an aging and overburdened structure. Moreover, the Extension does not have the capacity to serve the increasing transportation needs of the surrounding communities and ports. Bayonne, Jersey City, and Newark are thriving. There is more housing and commercial development with parking and rapid expansion at the ports. Over the next decade, Hudson County is projected to add tens of millions of square feet of residential and office space. Additionally, sustained growth along with the pandemic have led to exponential increases in delivery service and ride sharing vehicles. Hudson and Essex Counties' economic success, along with the growing threat posed by

climate change, present both unprecedented obstacles and unique opportunity to rebuild for the future.

To meet the complex challenges, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority is embarking on the largest, most sophisticated, and exciting infrastructure Program since the NJ Turnpike was built: the Newark Bay-Hudson County Extension Improvements Program (Program). This modernization and safety Program will rebuild the entire Extension, an 8.1-mile critical regional transportation artery, consisting of complex interchanges, 29 bridges, as well as multiple ramps. Almost 80% of the Extension is on structure that is approximately 6.5 miles of bridge serving Hudson County. The Program consists of 4 independent projects to be staged to address their remaining service life and the urgency of the sections within the Extension.



The first and highest priority project, Project 1, is the reconstruction between Interchange 14 in Newark and Interchange 14A in Bayonne and Jersey City. This project will replace all 9 ramps and 16 bridges, including the Newark Bay Bridge with twin cable-stayed bridges. This important project will provide 4 lanes in each direction and meet current environmental and design standards. The reconstruction will provide a corridor with improved geometry and safety features that is designed for today's trucks, wind and earthquake forces, while also adapting to new and emerging challenges like increasing vehicle weight due to electric vehicle batteries, sea level rise and extreme weather. Another priority of the project is to minimize the frequency of disruptions caused by maintenance work. For the last 5 years there has not been a single month

without a lane or shoulder closure due to repair work. To this end, the first project as well as the entire Program includes the addition of standard shoulders to allow for maintenance activities and the passage of emergency vehicles. The remaining three projects will begin at later dates.

The Program is the ideal time to not only provide a modern, safer and more resilient and sustainable Extension, but also to enhance its economic and community opportunities. A significant goal of the Program is to benefit the surrounding communities and generate economic opportunities for residents, small business owners, and contractors. To this end, the first project alone is projected to create 25,000 jobs, \$2 billion in wages, and \$2.8 billion in economic activity. The Turnpike Authority is proud that the Program includes a 25% Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and 3%

Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses (DVOB) participation goal. As part of our efforts, we are prioritizing New Jersey labor and contractors along with small businesses from the surrounding communities.

Just as the opening of the Extension in 1956 ushered in new opportunities for communities and businesses, we hope to build on that legacy with a new modern, sustainable, and resilient Extension. While the challenges are greater this time around, we know that with organizations like Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey we can meet them. We look forward to partnering with you to build New Jersey's future together. To learn more about these future economic opportunities and the Program, visit the Program website: nbhce.njta.com. ■



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New Jersey Supreme Court Rules on Wage Theft Act Amendments

BY | JON SLATER, ESQ., LEGAL & INSURANCE AFFAIRS DIRECTOR



In recent years, wage theft has emerged as a national topic of concern, affecting countless workers struggling to receive fair compensation for their hard-earned labor. It has been estimated that reported and unreported wage theft amounts to as much as \$50 billion annually.¹ However, between 2017 and 2020, “only” \$3.24 billion in stolen wages was recovered on behalf of workers by the U.S. Department of Labor, state agencies, and class action litigation.²

Wage theft litigation filed in New Jersey makes up nearly 10% of civil cases filed under the Fair Labor Standards Act.³ In light of these alarming statistics, in 2019, New Jersey enacted the Wage Theft Act (WTA), which amended the State’s Wage and Hour Law and Wage Payment Law. Since then, proponents have touted it as the toughest wage theft statute in the country. Its sweeping measures not only enhanced employer penalties by adding liquidated damages but also provided extra protections for employee retaliation claims and made client-employers and labor contractors jointly and severally liable for violations of State wage and

hour laws. However, another provision of the Law, which updated the lookback period from two to six years, came into question recently, leaving the New Jersey Supreme Court to determine whether the updated lookback period and liquidated damages could be applied retroactively.

Ultimately, the Court was left to decide whether the six-year lookback period would apply to a lawsuit filed within six years after the Wage Theft Act amendments were enacted or, in other terms, whether a claim filed on August 7, 2019, could extend back to August 7, 2013. This past May, the Court returned the decision, ruling the six-year look-back period and liquidated damages provided by the WTA do not apply retroactively and will only apply to conduct occurring after the WTA’s August 6, 2019, effective date. As a result, if an employee files a lawsuit today, that employee would only be able to recover for conduct occurring on or after August 6, 2019 (a limitation period of fewer than five years), regardless of the six-year look-back period.

While some employers may welcome this ruling, its impact will be limited, as employees will be able to avail themselves of the full six-year limitations period as of August 6, 2025, which is a little over a year away. However, it is significant in that it provides a powerful precedent that future amendments to State wage and hour laws, especially those seeking to increase penalties and damages, should only apply prospectively unless the legislature states otherwise. So, while New Jersey continues to shine the spotlight on its efforts to combat wage theft, employers should remain diligent in maintaining and updating their timekeeping, payroll, and classification processes to stay compliant with State law and avoid potential penalties. ■

¹Hacker, Chris, et al. “Wage Theft Often Goes Unpunished despite State Systems Meant to Combat It.” CBS News, CBS Interactive, 30 June 2023, www.cbsnews.com/news/owed-employers-face-little-accountability-for-wage-theft/.

²Mangundayao, Ihna, et al. “More than \$3 Billion in Stolen Wages Recovered for Workers between 2017 and 2020.” Economic Policy Institute, 22 Dec. 2021, www.epi.org/publication/wage-theft-2021/.

³Broderick, Brandon J. “NJ Wage and Hour Complaint: What to Know about Wage Theft.” Brandon J. Broderick, 3 Nov. 2023, www.brandonjbroderick.com/new-jersey/nj-wage-and-hour-complaint-what-know-about-wage-theft/.

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On May 28 & 29, 2024, nearly 3,000 people occupied the New Jersey Convention & Expo Center in Edison, NJ to get their hands dirty and open their minds to a new career. Thank you to all the sponsors, without which none of this happens. ■





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SAFETY

ACCNJ Safety Awards

Safety Recognition Program: Mike Corbett Memorial Award

Mr. Israel “Izzy” Martinez has been a laborer and labor foreman with Walsh Construction since 2021 joining their team at the 207th St. Rail Yard Project and becoming a key member of the team. Izzy can always be counted on to greet you with a big smile and a positive attitude. He truly embodies the Walsh “Actively Caring” safety culture mentality which clearly extends beyond his work on the jobsite. Izzy is a dedicated labor foreman and makes it his objective to ensure his team prioritizes safety from planning to executing the daily tasks assigned. Izzy understands the value of safety and promotes Walsh’s safety culture among his fellow laborers and craftworkers on the project team. Izzy has been an active member on Walsh’s Craft Leadership in Safety Committee, which fosters continuous improvement in the safety program for all construction workers employed by Walsh Construction.

Will Stephan, Director HSE – Heavy Civil/Transportation Northeast Region for Walsh, relayed this story of Izzy’s commitment to Actively Caring, which was demonstrated by his brave and selfless action to help strangers:

On August 1st of last year, at approximately 11:00 AM, Walsh Laborer Foreman Israel “Izzy” Martinez, and Walsh Operating Engineer, Bobby Russo, were working near the site entrance adjacent to an exit ramp for Harlem River Drive. As they were working, an ambulance exited Harlem River Drive at a high speed, jumped the curb and flipped onto its side. The ambulance had three occupants: the driver, an EMT worker in the back and a patient who was being rushed to the hospital. When asked about the incident, Operating Engineer, Bobby Russo, stated, “Before I could even register what just happened, Izzy was on top of the ambulance pulling people out.” Bobby and another passerby assisted Izzy in removing all the occupants from the overturned ambulance and moving them to safety.

When asked about what happened, Izzy stated, “I heard a loud crash behind me, turned around and saw an ambulance had flipped onto its side. I ran over to the front windshield and looked inside to check on the passengers. The driver appeared to be in shock and was not responding.” Izzy continued, “I climbed up on top of the ambulance and got the driver out. The driver then told me that there were more people in the back of the ambulance. I climbed down and opened the back doors of ambulance and began removing the other occupants and moving them off the road.”

Izzy received the Mike Corbett Memorial Award because of his commitment to Actively Caring for his fellow construction workers as well as his brave and selfless actions beyond the construction fence line. Without hesitation, Izzy sprang into action to help strangers, making sure they were safe and receiving the proper care. Izzy brings this attitude and dedication to safety onto the project every day. ■

On July 12, 2024, ACCNJ presented its 2023 Annual Safety Awards in front of a packed house. Congratulations to the following association members for their achievements in safety.

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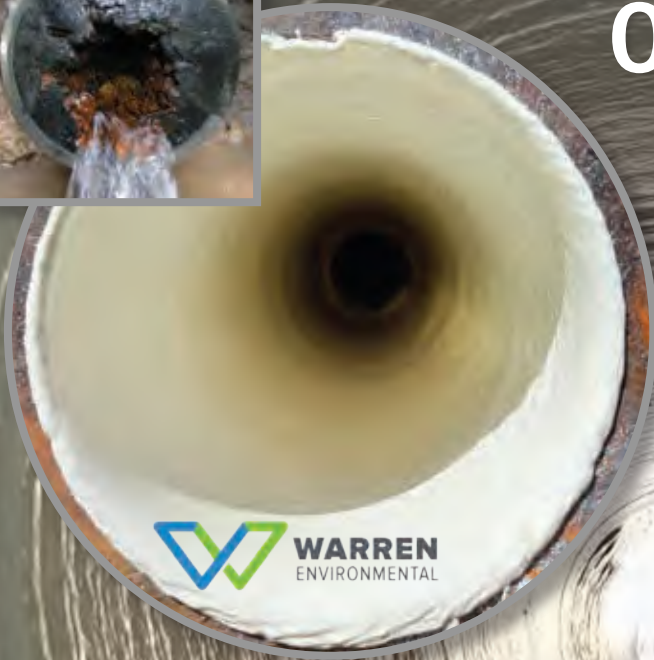
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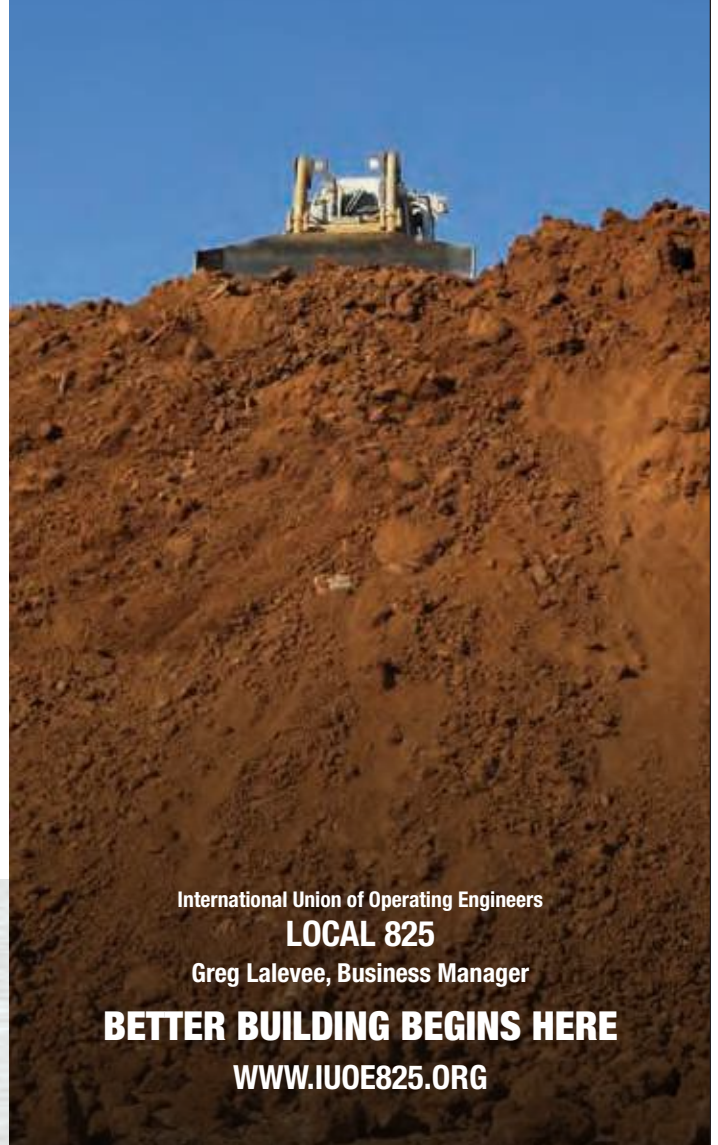


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Building the Future with the Next Generation of IUOE Local 825 Operating Engineers

BY | MARK LONGO

Innovative Earn and Learn Program from IUOE Local 825 and Hudson County Community College.

With state-of-the-art training facilities in New Jersey and New York, the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 825 is a leader in providing skilled training for the construction and heavy equipment operating industries. And as the technology and needs of the construction industry changes and evolves, so must the training and education of the next generation of operating engineers. The Local 825 Earn and Learn program, in partnership with Hudson Community College, offers an innovative and challenging path for individuals looking to enter this vital field. This program not only equips apprentices with the necessary skills but also emphasizes safety, teamwork, and professional growth.

Program Overview

The IUOE 825 Earn & Learn Program was designed to cultivate the next generation of skilled operators who will work with heavy machinery and construction equipment. Apprentices receive hands-on training, classroom instruction, and mentorship from experienced professionals, ensuring they are well-prepared for the demands of the job. The collaboration with Hudson Community College adds academic rigor to the training, providing apprentices with a solid educational foundation, increasingly needed as the technology of construction continues to evolve.

Curriculum and Training

The apprenticeship typically spans four years, during which participants engage in a structured curriculum that covers both theoretical and practical aspects of equipment operation. The program includes courses on heavy equipment operation, safety protocols, mechanical systems, and construction site management. Apprentices also gain real-world experience through on-the-job training, working alongside seasoned operators in various construction environments.

The partnership with Hudson Community College enhances the curriculum by integrating college-level courses, which may include mathematics, technical writing, and project management. Students graduate with an Associate of Applied Science in Technical Studies. This academic component not only bolsters the apprentices' skill set but also provides them with credits that can be applied toward further education if they choose to pursue advanced degrees in the future.

Benefits of the Program

One of the most significant advantages of the IUOE Local 825 Apprentice Program is the opportunity for apprentices to earn while they learn. Participants receive competitive wages from the outset of their apprenticeship, allowing them to earn money while gaining valuable skills. This model ensures that apprentices are motivated and engaged throughout their training.

Additionally, apprentices are exposed to a network of industry professionals and potential employers, significantly enhancing their job prospects upon completion of the program. IUOE Local 825 has established relationships with numerous contractors and companies in the region, facilitating job placements for graduates of the program.

Safety and Standards

Safety is a cornerstone of the IUOE Local 825 Apprentice Program. Apprentices are trained to adhere to stringent safety standards, ensuring that they understand the importance of a safe working environment. This focus on safety not only protects the apprentices themselves but also contributes to the overall well-being of their coworkers and the integrity of the job site.

The program aligns with industry standards and regulations, preparing apprentices to meet the expectations of employers and regulatory bodies alike. Graduates emerge from the program with a strong understanding of the importance of safety protocols and best

practices, which is crucial in the high-stakes environment of construction.

Community and Support

Being part of the IUOE Local 825 community means more than just receiving training; it fosters a sense of belonging and support among apprentices. The union provides ongoing assistance, mentorship, and access to resources that can help individuals navigate their careers successfully. Local 825 also hosts a number of social events throughout the year - golf and fishing outings, bike runs, and other activities. And with health fairs and the innovative Member Assistance Program, Local 825 promotes the physical and mental health of all of its members. This supportive network encourages apprentices to excel and promotes a culture of collaboration and mutual respect.

The IUOE 825 Apprentice Program in partnership with Hudson Community College represents an exceptional opportunity for those seeking a career in heavy equipment operation. With a comprehensive curriculum, hands-on training, and a strong emphasis on safety, the program prepares individuals for successful careers in the construction industry. By joining this program, apprentices not only invest in their future but also become part of a proud tradition of skilled labor that is essential to the growth and development of our communities. Whether you're just starting out or looking to enhance your skills, the IUOE 825 Apprentice Program is a valuable step towards a rewarding career.

Visit <https://825earnandlearn.com/> for more information about the Earn & Learn apprentice program. ■

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Latino Star Shines Bright with Perseverance and Determination

Every year, LATINO Magazine recognizes Latino veterans excelling in their field of work with the prestigious Estrella Award. There is no one more deserving of such an honor than the latest Estrella Award recipient, Michael Galvan. Michael is a U.S. Marine in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve serving as a foreign military advisor for the Marine Corps Advisor Company Bravo and Vice President of IMPACT's partner contractor Marvella Steel Placers based in California. He is also a union ironworker with Iron Workers Local 416 in Los Angeles. Michael leads a very busy and exemplary life wearing many hats, shouldering monumental responsibilities.

Michael began his career as a non-union ironworker in 2001 after graduating from high school. He wanted to pursue higher education but couldn't afford it. He joined the Marine Corps Reserve to help pay for

his education, only to realize the GI Bill didn't cover as much as he had hoped. He found his work as a non-union ironworker to be challenging and hard to manage while going to college.

Soon after completing his undergraduate education in management, Michael's Marine Corps Reserve unit was deployed to active duty in Djibouti, Africa, where Michael guarded a base in scorching 120-degree weather, meeting people with diverse perspectives. After returning from his deployment, Michael met his wife, Irene, and started a family. Soon after, Michael and his wife welcomed their son Daniel and daughter Maylin. With his military activation order coming to completion, Michael contacted Iron Workers Local 416 to begin a career as a union ironworker. Michael completed his apprenticeship and became a foreman. He found his career as a union ironworker

to not only be rewarding, but also lucrative with good pay, benefits and job security.

"The ironworking industry's growth potential inspired me to continue learning and advancing," said Michael. "Embracing uncertainty has been a significant aspect of my journey, teaching me that challenges are opportunities for growth. Despite initial uncertainties, I've learned, adapted, and grown, realizing that no obstacle is insurmountable."

The average person barely manages one career. Michael is managing two very demanding careers while balancing it all with family life and union membership as an ironworker at Iron Workers Local 416. "Balancing family, work, and military service can be incredibly challenging," said Michael. "Some days feel endless, and I often find solace in running to clear my

mind. Traveling overseas with the Marine Corps Advisor Company Bravo has doubled my workload, but somehow, I manage my duties as the Vice President of Marvella Steel Placers without a delay in production.”

Although working in different time zones from all over the world makes maintaining a regular sleep schedule difficult, Michael relies on serial-tasking, note taking and project management tools to stay on top of his busy schedule. He is an exceptional, determined, and adaptable individual with a thirst for learning. He has been creative in finding solutions to problems that life presents, which has served him well throughout his personal and professional life. “Rome wasn’t built in a day. Each task completed is a step forward. Despite these challenges, I remain dedicated to the growth and success of the Marvella Steel Placers. I believe that the effort I put in now will benefit me in the future, allowing for a more balanced and fulfilling life.”

Michael is grateful for his career as a union ironworker, which granted him much needed job security, fair wages, and excellent benefits at a time he needed it all the most.

Michael’s father, a retired ironworker, inspired him to start a career as a union ironworker. “My father, who was an ironworker, supported our family on a single income for many years,” said Michael. “He took me to his job site every now and then when I was a kid. I vividly remember the distinct smells of the job site, the joy of being outdoors, and the sense of satisfaction after completing a task at the end of the day. That early exposure stayed with me, and I love being able to point to a bridge or building and say I helped build that.”

As the Vice President at Marvella Steel Placers, Michael plays a key role in strengthening the company to be more self-reliant. Marvella Steel Placers had primarily collaborated with one or two general contractors. Under Michael’s leadership, the company has expanded partnerships to over 45 general contractors, establishing solid footing in the industry. The company is now capable of handling projects of all sizes. Through strategic initiatives, Michael helped double the company’s size year after year, with its most recent annual sales reaching \$10 to \$15 million.



LATINO Magazine’s Estrella Award honors his management skills, expertise, dedication, and service to his country through the Marine Corps Reserve. “While I am deeply grateful for any recognition I receive, I want to emphasize that my achievements are the result of a collaborative team effort,” said Michael. “Without the dedication and hard work of my partner, Jacquelin Pruitt, our staff, superintendents, foremen, journeymen, and all the apprentices in the field, none of this would have been possible.”

Running a business involves many facets, from contract negotiation to submissions, material ordering, on-site work, and billing. Michael believes each person at his company plays a crucial role in representing the company. Together, they ensure the company’s continued growth. Their commitment to Marvella Steel Placers has been instrumental in its success, and Michael is immensely grateful for everyone’s contributions.

Michael’s message to the next generation of Latinos is one of perseverance and determination. “As a first-generation Latino, I didn’t have access to the same resources as others, but I used my experiences to shape my career. Every experience, no matter how small, is valuable. Seek guidance from mentors and learn from their experiences. Use these lessons to save time and accelerate your personal and professional growth. Keep persevering and don’t be afraid to make changes. Failure is not something to fear. Treat it as a valuable learning experience. Don’t be daunted by the size of your goals. Progress is made one step at a time regardless of one’s background.”

Michael is an inspiration to the next generation of aspiring Latinos. There is no one more deserving of LATINO Magazine’s Estrella Award than Michael, for he is truly a shining star.

This year’s Estrella Awards ceremony was held at The Army and Navy Club in Washington, D.C., on February 27, 2024. Iron Workers General Secretary Kevin Bryenton, IMPACT’s CEO Kevin Hilton, and IMPACT’s Western Regional Director Johnny Cangey were in attendance to cheer on partner contractor Marvella Steel Placer’s valued Vice President Michael Galvan. ■

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Newark High School Student Thrives in Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship Program

BY | CYNDIE WILLIAMS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CARPENTER CONTRACTOR TRUST

This past June, Micah Charles graduated from Newark's Barringer High School, while simultaneously completing an eight-week pre-apprenticeship program in carpentry, also known as the Carpentry 3-1-1 Program, under the direction of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (EASRCC).

Micah's interest in carpentry was sparked by helping his family with house repairs and renovations back home in Trinidad and Tobago. His involvement in various activities showcases his dedication and leadership, serving as a SkillsUSA State Officer (2023/2024), winning SkillsUSA state championships in Safety Display (2023) and Finish Carpentry (2024), and earning accolades in basketball, earning a spot on the Second Team All-Conference (2024). He is also a Harbour Freight Fellow (2022-Present), has received Congressional Recognition (2022), and has been actively involved with the Newark Municipal Council (2023) and the National Honors Society (2024).

Through the 3-1-1 Carpentry Program at Barringer High School, Micah has learned fundamental skills that will help him succeed in a union apprenticeship and has gained a firsthand look at the industry by touring ACCNJ members' construction projects. The most essential skill Micah has learned through this program is communication, leveraging his athletic background to motivate others and be an effective team leader. Looking ahead, Micah aspires to become a Foreman and eventually hopes to become a Council Representative for EASRCC.

When reflecting on those who have impacted his life the most, Micah credits the entire Barringer Carpentry Department for their unwavering support. He specifically mentions Ms. Lucinda Eason and Dr. Annette Jones for assembling a dedicated team that supports all students. "It really takes a village to raise a child," Micah says. "Though I'm still growing, I know I can rely on all of them." His gratitude extends to Ben



Gualano, whom he considers the grandfather he never had, for countless hours of skill sharpening, and Joann Darpino, whom he affectionately calls his Italian mother, for her timely advice and support.

The 3-1-1 Program targets students who demonstrate an interest and aptitude in the trades, offering them an opportunity to develop these skills in a real-world setting complemented by classroom instruction. This innovative program provides students with a pathway to a carpentry career through job placements with union contractors and an advantageous entry into the official union apprenticeship program. "Our effort in this apprenticeship program is to provide students with a launch pad for a career by gaining specific skills the job market in Newark needs," said Tom Wyzga, Council Representative, EASRCC. "By offering skilled training, we invest in the future of the Newark workforce because union carpenters

generally work where they live. Our pre-apprenticeship program is ideal for Newark high school students to consider when thinking about a well-paying, secure career."

The program is a collaboration between the Newark Board of Education, Newark Workforce Development Board, Big Picture Learning, EASRCC, ACCNJ and union contractors. "We're fully committed to the city of Newark and its communities," Wyzga continued. "The carpenters are here to provide an opportunity to Newark residents who want to learn a skill, make a living wage with benefits, and give back to their neighborhoods." This pre-apprenticeship program not only equips students like Micah with essential skills but also strengthens the Newark workforce by nurturing the next generation of skilled union carpenters. ■



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LABOR MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE - LECET

LIUNA Training Uses Innovation, Accreditation, and Partnerships to Promote Excellence

BY | ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, NJ LECET

In a given year, LIUNA Training, the labor-management education fund of the Laborers' International Union of North America, will offer close to 160,000 hours of hands-on and classroom training to more than 10,000 New Jersey members. These enrollment figures are similar to that of a mid-sized college. But size alone is not the main driver of training for the Laborers Union. Creating opportunity—for construction workers and their employers—is.

Expanded and upgraded curriculum, nationally accredited, ANSI-certified instructor training, numerous certificate programs, and on-site training through its mobile training units are just some of the features, programs, and services available to signatory contractors and union members.

LIUNA Vice President and Eastern Regional Manager Michael E. Hellstrom explained the union's philosophy regarding

training: "In a competitive industry like construction, LIUNA Training's mission isn't merely to stay abreast with industry changes, it is to stay ahead of the trends and set the standard for workforce development, construction safety and productivity. We are not interested in merely offering the services our members and contractors want today. We are building the programs they will need—now and in the future."

Mobile Training Units Deliver Support When and Where You Need It

In addition to the traditional classroom and hands-on instruction offered at the Laborers' three training centers, each facility also offers on-site training using its mobile classrooms—climate controlled buses outfitted with teaching technology and delivered by the training funds' trained staff of instructors.

"Most of our on-site training is related to a specific contractor need," explained Donald Howard, Training Director at the Construction Craft Laborers Training facility in Jamesburg. "There may be a specific phase of construction they are preparing for, or sometimes, contractors just want to get all the workers on the same page."

Of particular value to contractors is the flexibility offered through the mobile training units. "We have scheduled training at the start of the day, around lunch, at the end of the day—whenever would best serve our contractors and their workers," Howard continued. He also pointed out that training is not limited to LIUNA members and is offered to all of a contractor's crew. Jurisdiction has little bearing when it comes to promoting safety and improving skills. Employers and employees alike are in it together.

ANSI-Accreditation Drives Instructor Performance

No doubt about it, construction is a competitive business, which is why LIUNA's Training Funds have pursued obtaining objective, verifiable quality through independent, third-party accreditation. By proudly securing the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) "seal" for two certification programs—Instructor Certification and Apprenticeship Coordinator—LIUNA ensures its instructors and apprenticeship coordinators are the best in the construction, environmental, and energy sectors.

ANAB Instructor Certification proves that our instructors have met strict eligibility requirements and demonstrate knowledge of the best practices of adult learning. Success is measured by a certified instructor's ability to execute student-centered, activity-based teaching techniques; convey

trade information professionally; and meet reading, math and computer proficiency standards. The result is a skilled, safe and productive worker who can critically think on the job.

Local 172 Safety Education and Training Director George Samuelson said that ten instructors in New Jersey have already received full ANAB Instructor Certification while several others are progressing through the multi-year process. He also described the importance of instructor and apprentice coordinator certifications. "Most industry professionals don't have the time to fully understand the nuance and details of LIUNA Training's Instruction Training and Certification Program," he explained. "But they do understand the role ANSI plays internationally in setting standards for industry excellence and then safeguarding those standards through continual evaluation and assessment."

Looking Ahead, Working Together

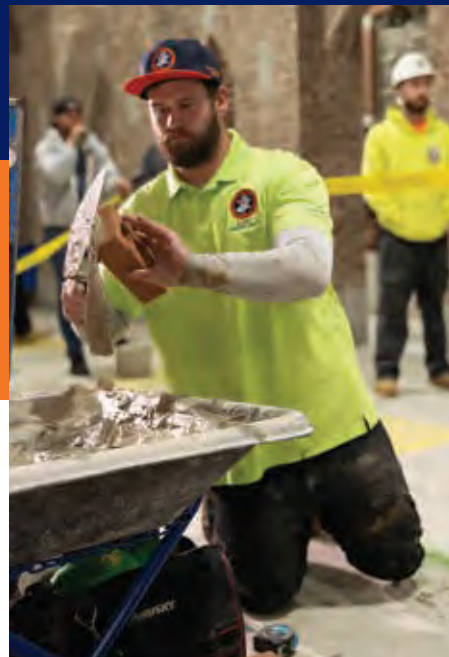
Adaptability is a key requirement for industry competitiveness and LIUNA Training is using its willingness and ability to change to better serve its members and contractors. Whether it is through strategic partnerships with urban communities for pre-apprenticeship and workforce development programs; special emphasis programs that encourage or mandate training such as OSHA-30 or ICRA; or targeted recruitment programs like Helmets-to-Hardhats and Women in Construction, LIUNA is using its commitment to worker training as a key driver of industry excellence and as an effective way to differentiate the union construction industry from competitors. It is a formula that works to serve employers and employees alike, exactly as it should. ■



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Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Administrative District Council of New Jersey – Locals No. 4 and 5



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LABOR MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE - BRICKLAYERS

Grand Opening Of Bricklayers Training Center And Statewide Apprentice Contest

BY | DAN SITEMAN, EIT – INTERNATIONAL MASONRY INSTITUTE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH JOHN CAPO, DIRECTOR – BRICKLAYERS & ALLIED CRAFTWORKERS ADCNJ

On Saturday, May 11, 2024, the Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Union's newly renovated space in Bordentown, NJ was officially opened in the most fitting of ways – hosting the NJ Administrative District Council's Statewide Apprentice Contest. Apprentices from both Locals 4 & 5 competed in front of a host of local and international union leaders, signatory contractors, political leaders, and design professionals, as well as family and friends.

That can sound intimidating to a group of apprentices with only a few years of experience at best. NJ ADC Director John Capó reminded them of how far they've come during his morning address. "Put all this aside. You've been trained. You've earned

your spot here. You know what you're doing. Don't get nervous. Compete. Do the best you can, and good luck to all of you."

When asked about the day's significance, Capó explained, "Today is not only our apprentice contest, but also the grand opening of our training center here in Local 5 of South Jersey. This facility will really benefit the unionized masonry industry here in New Jersey and leave a legacy for future generations."

Thirty apprentices worked on mockups based on their craft of expertise and experience. "Here's the opportunity for them to show what they've learned at different levels: first year, second year, third year, fourth year," explains Jim Prisco, Jr., CEO of J.R. Prisco

Inc. and Co-Chair of the BAC ADC NJ Apprentice Training and Educational Fund. "And as you can see as you walk around, the level of quality, the level of involvement is higher as you advance through the apprenticeship program."

There were six apprentices who competed in PCC (pointing, caulking, cleaning), with the remaining 24 working on brick and concrete block designs.

"I'm feeling very encouraged about the future watching these young apprentices compete," said President of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, Timothy J. Driscoll. "Skilled hands are what separate us from the competition, but

what's just as important is the young men and women who have trained in order to compete here today will be able to live the American Dream. That is what BAC provides: a pathway to the middle class."

National Training Director of the International Masonry Training Education Foundation (IMTEF), Tony DiPerna, echoed how these apprentices' lives are impacted by the available career pathways our training

provides. "We offer lifelong learning opportunities, and it starts with the apprentices. They earn while they learn and become the best hands in the business at their craft."

The day was capped off with awards and a ribbon-cutting ceremony which included architect Brooks Garrison, IUBAC Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Sullivan, NJ ADC Director John Capo, President of Back Brook Masonry and IMI Co-Chair Mike

Schmerbeck, IMI President Caryn Halifax, NJ ADC Secretary-Treasurer Leon Jones Jr., and IUBAC President Timothy J. Driscoll.

A special thank you to sponsors Masonry Contractors Association of NJ for breakfast and Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey for lunch. ■



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PCC (Restoration)

1st Place: Jonathon Calle
 2nd Place: Axel DeLeon
 3rd Place: Alex D'Autrechy

1st Year

1st Place: Zach Merritt
 2nd Place: Mathew Spoto
 3rd Place: Johnny Carpio

2nd Year

1st Place: Nick Kirch
 2nd Place: Michael Benitez-Santos
 3rd Place: Arturo Xique

3rd Year

1st Place: Robert Fugel
 2nd Place: Pablo Zambrano
 3rd Place: Stewart Turner

4th Year

1st Place: John Baumstark
 2nd Place: Douglas Bruckler
 3rd Place: Michael Araujo



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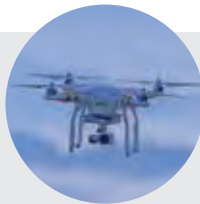
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SAFETY

Why the Opioid Crisis Matters to Contractors (and your families) in New Jersey

BY | CAL BEYER AND CHRIS LALEVEE



The opioid crisis has plagued the nation since the late 1990's. Overdose deaths have been rising year after year. Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 107,699 overdose deaths in 2022 (KFF).

State	2022 All Drug Overdoses	2022 All Opioid Overdoses	2022 All-Drug Overdose Rate (age-adjusted) – per 100,000	2022 Opioid Overdose Rate (age-adjusted) – per 100,000
US Overall	107,699	81,051	32.5	24.8
New Jersey	3,054	2,651	33.0	30.0

Sources: US data: KFF 2022 provisional data. NJ data: CDC's State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS).

75% of all overdose deaths nationally are attributable to opioids. The figure is higher in New Jersey at 88%. Nationally in 2021, approximately 72.7% of all overdose deaths were attributable to the lethal synthetic opioid fentanyl. The concentration of fentanyl-related deaths was higher in New Jersey at 94% of all opioid-related overdose deaths.

ACCNJ Supports Opioid Awareness Education

ACCNJ supports opioid education for construction leaders and craftworkers. CEO Jack Kocsis states, “our job is to keep craftworkers safe; keep them healthy mentally and physically. Providing education beyond basics of fall prevention and PPE is something we’ve seen ramp up in the past few years, which directly correlates to the unfortunate rise in opioid misuse.” Kocsis continues, “Yet, we need do better. As an industry, we must

go beyond awareness and act.” Kocsis encourages all construction stakeholders to go deeper by offering more resources, having open conversations, and sometimes just saying “hey, you okay?,” which will go a long way in giving craftworkers the tools and confidence they need to avoid opioid misuse.

How Construction Is Impacted Hard by Opioids and Overdose Deaths

On August 22, 2023, the CDC in National Vital Statistics Report showing overdose deaths by industry or occupation for 2020. This data was not broken down by state. Construction and Extraction was shown to have the highest rate with 162.6 deaths per 100,000 workers. For the construction industry alone, the rate was 130.9 per 100,000 workers. For extraction, which includes surface mining, the rate was 60.9.

Age Group	< 24 years	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Percent in US	8%	25%	26%	19%	21%
Percent in NJ	3.6%	19%	23.4%	23.9%	29.9%

Source: US Data: KFF; NJ data: NJ SUDORS

NATIONALLY, THE AGE GROUP MOST AFFECTED BY OVERDOSES IS THOSE AGED BETWEEN 25-44 YEARS OLD.

Here is why this matters:

1. Overdose deaths inflict a toll on families, workplaces, communities, and the state economies. Parents, grandparents and every person connected to children and young adults must learn the risks of fentanyl and the meaning of “One Pill Can Kill”.
2. Year after year, a portion of working aged adults and youth are lost to overdoses. The opioid crisis has shrunk the possible workforce candidate pool for industries like construction, manufacturing and agriculture. For the US, males account for 71% and females comprise 29% of the overdose deaths. In New Jersey the ratio is skewed toward male at almost 75% to 25% female.
3. Nationally, the age group most affected by overdoses is those aged between 25-44 years. Overdose deaths in New Jersey are more concentrated in the age ranges over 45 years than nationally. In New Jersey, 53.8% of overdose deaths are over 45 years of age compared to approximately 40% nationally.
4. “In Waging a Counterattack Against Opioids in the Workplace and at Home”, eight First-Dose Prevention Strategies are highlighted to decrease the risk of opioids at home and in the workplace. Three examples include:
 - a. Prescription medications for both on- and off-the job injuries are a potential source of new persistent opioid use in construction, especially relating to musculoskeletal injuries. An area of good news is that New Jersey is one of the five states with the lowest opioid prescribing rate in the nation. This is significantly below the average for the US. Nevertheless, with the high frequency and severity of sprain and strain injury rates it is important to educate employees about alternatives to opioid pain management and the dangers of purchasing illicit medications for pain relief.
 - b. Surgery is a leading gateway to new persistent opioid use. An article posted by the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans (IFEBC) titled “Optimizing Outcomes

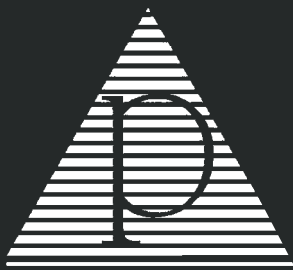
and Containing the Costs of Surgery” highlighted that between 8-18% of patients are affected depending on the type of surgery. Opioid-sparing Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocols use up to 90% less opioids than conventional surgical methods.

- It is imperative for employees and dependents enrolled in union- or employer-sponsored health benefit programs to know non-opioid medications exist
 - Multi-modal pain relief can be more effective at controlling post-surgical pain than opioids and without the risk of addiction
 - Become informed and be an advocate for yourself or any other family member scheduled for any medical, surgical, or dental procedures
- c. Drug deactivation and at home disposal products help properly dispose of leftover opioid pills after prescriptions for on- and off-the-job injuries and surgeries. Research shows 90% of patients receiving pain medication do not properly dispose of the leftover pills. This increases the household risk of overdose deaths due to the diversion of the leftover pills.

Conclusion

Opioids impact every socioeconomic class and demographic status. Opioids are an equal opportunity destroyer of hope and lives. The construction and aggregates industries have been hit hard by opioids due to the high frequency of musculoskeletal injuries. Employers are encouraged to teach employees about the risks of opioids and to share resources to help employees and families protect themselves from the risks of unnecessary opioids and the dangers of fentanyl in today’s illicit drugs. ■

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ACCNJ Welcomes Thirteen New Members in this Issue

BrandSafway Services LLC is a leading global provider of access, specialized services, and forming and shoring solutions to the industrial, commercial and infrastructure markets. Representing the company is Operations Analyst Christopher Sherwin. Chris can be reached by phone at 610-362-0302, by email at csherwin@brandsafway.com or by mail at 10 Industrial Highway, Building G, Lester PA 19029. Visit BrandSafway on the web at www.brandsafway.com.

Founded in 1991, **CAC Industries, Inc.** specializes in heavy civil construction, including sewer, water main, roadway and infrastructure projects. Oswald "Ozzie" Calderon, EVP/COO, represents the company and can be reached at 917-608-2368 or by email at omc@cacindinc.com. The company is located at 54-08 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City NY 11101. Visit CAC Industries online at www.cacindinc.com.

As a NJ WBE & SBE certified company, **Caterina Supply** is a stocking distributor of construction materials for water work, storm drainage, sanitary sewer and erosion control. They have a long-standing reputation for prompt delivery and excellent service. President Linda Gardner can be reached by phone at 856-728-0171 or by email at linda@caterinasupply.com. Their office is located at 1271 Glassboro Road, Williamstown NJ 08094, and can be visited online at www.caterinasupply.com.

Ranked among the top 50 general contractors in the country since 1997, **DPR Construction** is a global self-performing commercial contractor and construction manager. Scott Rowohlt, Project Executive, may be reached by email at scottro@dpr.com or by phone at 908-293-8699. Visit DPR online at www.dpr.com. Their New Jersey office is located at 1 Tower Center Blvd., Suite 1801, East Brunswick.

ECI Technologies LLC specializes in providing accurate data for GPS. The firm provides developers, road and site contractors with fast and detailed information in all phases of earth-moving construction through technology and experience. President Ray Antaya can be reached by phone at 877-572-3414, by email at ray@eci3d.com or by mail at 2341 Boston Road, Suite 201A, Wilbraham MA 01095. Visit ECI on the web at www.eci3d.com.

Halmar International LLC located at 421 E. Route 59, Nanuet NY 10954, is a general contractor performing work on large, critical and complex infrastructure projects. Chris Larsen, CEO, may be reached

by email at clarsen@halmarinternational.com or by phone at 845-735-3511. Visit Halmar International online at www.halmarinternational.com.

With 50 plus years in business, 40 locations, and more than 100 awards, **Langan** provides an integrated mix of engineering and environmental consulting services in support of land development projects, corporate real estate portfolios, and the energy industry. Its clients include developers, property owners, public agencies, corporations, institutions, and energy companies around the world. Joseph Romano, Principal, represents the company and can be reached at the Parsippany, NJ office located at 300 Kimball Drive. Joseph can also be reached by email at jromano@langan.com or by phone at 973-560-4900. Visit Langan online at www.langan.com.

MAX USA is headquartered at 205 Express Street, Plainview, New York. Frank Hernandez, Senior Sales Executive represents the company and can be reached by phone at 516-741-3151 or by email at fhernandez@maxusacorp.com. Since 1942, MAX has been recognized as a leading manufacturer of high-end industrial tools and office products. Through the years MAX has provided the market with innovative tools for professionals in a variety of industries. Visit MAX USA online at www.maxusacorp.com.

Since the company began in 1924, **Milwaukee Tool** has led the industry in developing innovative solutions that deliver increased productivity and unmatched durability for professional construction users. Additionally, Milwaukee Tool is a world leader in jobsite solutions and has a long tradition of improving the safety of users through product innovation. Zachary Maggio, Territory Manager, represents the company and can be reached at the Flushing, NY office located at 3068 Whitestone Expressway. Zachary can also be reached by phone at 262-433-8606 or by email at zachary.maggio@milwaukeeetool.com. Visit Milwaukee Tool on the web at www.milwaukeeetool.com.

Saxe, Doernberger & Vita, P.C. is among the elite law firms in the country representing clients in insurance coverage disputes and claim recovery. With three locations in the Northeast, Bethany Barrese represents the firm in the Basking Ridge office located at 233 Mount Airy Road. Bethany can be reached by phone at 203-733-1752 or by email at bbarrese@sdvllaw.com. Visit SDV online at www.sdvllaw.com.

Serving the industry since 1954, **Scholes Electric** is experienced in performing and executing any type of electrical and/or communications project. Lawrence

Sigro, who spearheads Project Management and Business Development, represents the company and can be reached by phone at 732-529-9628 or by email at lsigro@scholesonline.com. The company is located at 1021 Centennial Avenue, Piscataway NJ 08854. Visit the company online at www.scholesonline.com.

TERCO Enterprises, LLC is a second-generation company specializing in earthwork construction. Beginning its career 35 years ago, TERCO is a full-service site work contractor covering the tri-state area. The company is located at 833 Limecrest Road, Lafayette NJ 07848. Project Manager Anthony Roessner represents the company. Anthony can be reached by phone at 973-862-5343 or by email at aroessner@tercollc.com. Visit TERCO online, www.tercollc.com.

Triumph Modular is a leader in the Northeast Region for leasing mobile offices, modular buildings, and storage containers. With more than 40 years of experience as an innovator in the modular industry, Triumph Modular serves a wide spectrum of industries and provides high-quality temporary and permanent buildings equipped with energy-efficient elements and options to make your space as turnkey as possible. Matt Manarino, Branch Sales Manager, represents the company and can be reached at 405 N. 37th Street, Pennsauken NJ 08110. He can also be reached by phone at 856-912-3239 and by email at mmanarino@triumphmodular.com. Visit Triumph Modular on the web at www.triumphmodular.com. ■



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Giving Back

Vericon to Conduct Event that Assists the Homeless

Vericon will host their semi-annual Vericon Foundation Golf Outing on Monday, October 7th at Echo Lake Country Club. The event supports The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless, an organization committed to helping the homeless and near homeless achieve healthy, self-sufficient lives through essential tools and support.

JK Crane Helps Habitat for Humanity

JK Crane donated its services to set a house which was built by Roxbury high school Seniors for Habitat for Humanity. This is the second house built by students for Habitat for Humanity (and the second house JK Crane helped set in place).

Railroad Holds Event for Hackensack Meridian Health

For Professional Admin Day, Railroad Construction celebrated with a Barbie-Q themed event and all co-workers were asked to donate a Barbie, Ken or Spiderman doll to the children of Hackensack Meridian Health. More than 100 dolls were delivered! ■



◀ Pablo Lemus (left) and Kate Bukmen (right) delivered 100+ dolls and actions figures to Hackensack Meridian Health.



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The Vital Role of Engineering Teams within Construction Subcontractors

BY | ADAM MORSE, COO, EDA CONTRACTORS



The construction industry is evolving and placing a greater emphasis on technology, sustainability, and innovation.

Yet many general contractors find that siloed teams of architects, engineers, and subcontractors lag behind the demand for clear and timely communication, flexibility, and innovation that leads to operational excellence.

In the dynamic and demanding field of construction, engineering teams within subcontractor organizations can be the backbone of successful project execution, bringing a wealth of expertise, innovation, and reliability to the table. They play a crucial role in driving project success, innovation, and client satisfaction. These teams bring specialized expertise, technical proficiency, and a collaborative approach that are essential for navigating the complexities of modern construction projects.

Expertise in Design and Planning

Engineering teams within construction subcontractor organizations are experts in design, constructability, and sequencing, which lays the groundwork for successful project execution. They possess deep technical knowledge of construction methodologies, allowing subcontractors to offer niche services and solutions that meet the unique needs of clients. This expertise

enables subcontractors the ability to fill the void often created by conceptual designs that lack detail and coordination between trades without the need of submitting excessive amounts of RFIs to the design team, restricting further collaboration with outside consultants.

Innovation and Technology Integration

Engineering teams are at the forefront of innovation, exploring and integrating new technologies, and best practices. They leverage Building Information Modeling (BIM), computer-aided design (CAD) software, simulation models, drone technology, and data analytics to optimize designs and reduce costs. They also identify sustainable building practices to improve efficiency, enhance productivity, and sustainability. Their ability to integrate cutting-edge technologies into project workflows leads to innovative solutions that drive high-quality results and value for clients while optimizing resources and minimizing waste.

Value Engineering and Cost Management

Value engineering is a critical aspect of construction projects, aiming to maximize value while minimizing costs. Engineering teams within subcontractor organizations excel in value engineering by identifying cost-saving opportunities, optimizing material usage, and proposing alternative solutions without compromising quality or safety. Their expertise in cost management ensures that projects stay on budget and meet financial objectives, contributing to client satisfaction and project success.

Compliance and Quality Assurance

Construction projects must adhere to regulatory requirements, building codes, and industry standards to ensure safety, durability, and compliance. Engineering teams within subcontractor organizations are well-versed in these regulations and

implement robust quality assurance processes throughout the project lifecycle. They often participate in conducting thorough inspections, testing, and documentation to verify compliance, mitigate risks, and deliver superior-quality outcomes that meet client expectations.

Collaboration and Project Consultation

Successful construction projects rely on effective collaboration and seamless project coordination among various stakeholders. Engineering teams within subcontractor organizations play a key role in understanding the needs of clients, designers, technicians, and project managers. Their focus involves understanding client needs, consulting on project requirements, resolving design conflicts and offering tailored solutions to improve the constructability and performance implied by the design intent.

Engineering teams within construction subcontractor organizations are indispensable assets that drive innovation, efficiency, and success in construction projects. Their expertise in design, constructability and sequencing, innovation and technology integration, value engineering, compliance and quality assurance, and collaboration and project coordination contribute significantly to project outcomes and client satisfaction. Recognizing the importance of these engineering teams and leveraging their capabilities can lead to improved project performance, reduced risks, stronger client relationships, and enhanced competitiveness for construction subcontractors in today's dynamic construction landscape. ■

At EDA, our newly created in-house Engineering Team will better address client pain points by assigning experts with technical knowledge of the scopes that we install to oversee all product submittals and shop drawings.

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Member News

Jim Bourke, Bill Hagaman and Pat Walsh Named to Forbes' Top 200 CPA's

Withum is proud to share that Jim Bourke, Bill Hagaman and Pat Walsh have all been named to the inaugural Top 200 CPA's List by Forbes magazine. The publication created this list to highlight the most exceptional, practicing CPA's throughout America.

Withum Merges with BBD LLP

On March 31, 2024, Withum joined forces with BBD LLP (BBD); a public accounting, tax and advisory firm dedicated to serving nonprofit and government organizations headquartered in Philadelphia. 5 partners and 40 team members were added to the Withum roster.

Heron Wolf Among Top Staffing Companies

Heron Wolf was recently recognized as one of the top 10 Construction Staffing Companies for 2024. The firm received the award from Construction Business Review, which provides industry news, best management practices and advances in the construction industry.



Heron Wolf Announces Civil Infrastructure Scholarship

In May, Heron Wolf presented its inaugural scholarship presentation to Karis Johnson. After screening more than 250 applicants, the company, Ms. Johnson was chosen after impressing the selection committee with

her inspiring essay on using her civil engineering degree to motivate other women and her innovative street drainage solutions for icy states.



A.F. Maldonado Joins J.R. Prisco

A.F. Maldonado has joined J.R. Prisco, Inc. He has over 30 years of accounting experience with more than 20 of those years in the construction industry. He earned Bachelors of Business Administration and Accounting, and MBIS & JD. Previously, he served as a Consulting Partner for multiple companies in charge of Accounting, Human

Resources and Legal. He has also been the Chief Financial for other large construction companies with presence in multiple states and overseas. He comes from a long line of Military Servicemen & Women and volunteers for assistance to Veterans, and Veteran services.

Vericon Hosts Safety Stand Down Also Recognized on Top Contractor Lists

Vericon hosted a Safety Stand Down event today as a part of Construction Safety Week at the NJ Turnpike Clara Barton Rest Stop, where they were joined by Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey (ACCNJ), Laborers Local 172, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Topics included Fall Prevention, Avoiding Heat Illness, and Mental Health Awareness from speakers Brian Besser, Vericon; Jill Schiff, ACCNJ; Joe Rath, OSHA; and George Samuelson, Laborers Local 172. Vericon's collective commitment to safety and well-being is one of the ways that the firm continues to build better.

The company has also been named as one of ENR's Top 400 General Contractors, coming in at number 364. Additionally, Vericon was ranked number 49 in Charlotte Business Journal's Top 50 General Contractors.





JK Crane Receives Safety Award

JK Crane is proud to receive the SC&RC Crane Safety and Zero Accidents award for 2023! Owner Jennifer Gabel accepted these awards in April at the annual conference in Austin, TX. Congratulations to all the winners!

Railroad Opens Pennsylvania Office

Railroad Construction Company recently opened a new office in Pennsylvania:

2080 Cabot Blvd. West
 Longhorne, PA 19047
 Phone 610-616-3447

This office is being managed by Vice President, Craig Kolbman.

Mike Regad Joins Railroad Construction

The firm also welcomed Mike Regad to RCC as Vice President of Electrical Design. Mike will lead the electrical design, development and implementation of electrical and mechanical work from the Manasquan Office.

Interns Join Railroad for Summer

RCC was joined by 11 interns this summer, from NJIT, Rutgers, University of Alabama, Stevens Institute of Technology, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Roger Williams University, American University and University of Maryland.

Floodwall Project Receives Award

The NJ Alliance for Action selected the Railroad/Posillico Joint Venture as a recipient of the 2024 Distinguished Engineering Awards for its Passaic Valley Sewer Commission Floodwall Construction Project. This award was presented on July 17, 2024.

- Manny Sousa – 29 years of service
- Gary Mustachio – 19 years of service
- Ernesto Casal – 11 years of service

The construction industry is evolving and placing a greater emphasis on technology, sustainability, and innovation. ■

RCC Announces Retirements

RCC offers congratulations to three recent retirees:

Pictured left to right are Gary Mustachio, Manny Sousa and Ernesto Casal.



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- 68 International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
- 10 Building and General Construction Laborers Local Union No. 77
- 62 Carpenter Contractor Trust
- 82 Central Salvage Co.
- 82 Churchill Associates LLC
- 39 Cohen Seglias Pallas Greenhall & Furman PC
- 84 Commerce Construction Corp.
- 80 Connell Foley LLP
- 47 Construction and General Laborers Union Local No. 172
- 69 Construction Risk Partners
- 72 County Concrete Corp.
- 55 J. Fletcher Creamer and Son, Inc.
- 73 ECI Technologies
- 54 Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters
- 38 Eastern Landscape Contractors
- 59 Engineers Labor-Employer Cooperative (ELEC)
- 67 Epic Management Inc.
- 13 Foley, Incorporated
- 20 Glenn Insurance, Inc.
- 12 H.C. Constructors
- Back Cover** Hall Construction Co., Inc.
- 3 HazTek Safety Management
- 22 Heavy and General Construction Laborers Local Union No. 472
- 58 Ironworkers Local Union No. 11
- 19 Komatsu North America
- 65 Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA)
- 50 Masonry Contractors of NJ
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