

CE

CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVE

SIDE EFFECTS

How the pandemic is changing design
and construction across sectors

18

PLUS

BEYOND PHYSICAL
WELLNESS 14

CONSTRUCTION
WORKFORCE AWARDS 26

THE VETERAN'S HOUSE 62



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COVER STORY



“ *Classrooms were undoubtedly a higher-risk environment than a cafeteria.* ”

FEATURE



18

SIDE EFFECTS

The pandemic is changing the way spaces are designed and built across sectors—including offices, schools, multifamily housing and hospitals. And it’s probably permanent.

BY SAM BARNES

26

BEST AND BRIGHTEST

Honoring the Young Professional, Craft Professional and Craft Instructor of the Year, ABC’s Construction Workforce Awards recognize individuals who are helping shape the future of the industry at every level.

BY THE EDITORS OF *CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVE*

DEPARTMENTS

4 INDUSTRY INSIDER
The New Old New Normal
By Michael D. Bellaman

6 THE UPGRADE
Comply Right
By Keith Pelatowski

8 IN BRIEF
Daylight Saving Time, all the time; ABC goes to college; LEGO that bridge; and more.

10 WASHINGTON UPDATE
Supreme Addition
By Shreya Kanal

14 SAFETY
Well, Well, Well
By Paul Goren

16 BUSINESS
On the Road Again
By Greg Williams

58 WORKFORCE
Plugged In
By Rachel E. O'Connell



62 COMMUNITY
Women Warriors
By Maggie Murphy

64 VIEWPOINTS
McCownGordon
Construction's Amanda Tran

SPECIAL SECTION

37 Construction Law
39 The Top 50 Construction Law Firms
44 Executive Insights
46 Peckar & Abramson

48 Bradley Arant Boult Cummings
50 Smith Currie & Hancock
51 Cokinos | Young
52 Avoiding Pitfalls



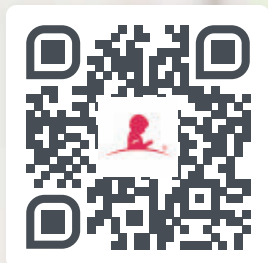
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The New Old New Normal

What's changed, what hasn't—and why I feel good about the future of the construction industry.

If you weren't with us at ABC Convention 2022 in San Antonio in March, you missed the event of the year. Yes, I'm biased, but I think seeing thousands of ABC members come together for a week of education, networking and celebration would inspire anyone who is a part of our community, especially after everything we've endured during the last two years.

As always, my favorite parts of the show were the competitions and other programs in which we recognized the future leaders of our great construction industry, including the Construction Workforce Awards (CWA). Read profiles of our 2022 CWA honorees—Craft Instructor of the Year, Craft Professional of the Year and Young Professional of the Year—on p. 26.

The future was also front-and-center at our National Craft Championships (NCC), which brought together more than 175 young trade professionals from across the country—including electricians, carpenters, pipefitters and welders—to face off in 15 competitions across 12 crafts. It was exciting to watch literal sparks fly on our show floor and to see some of the skilled trade workers who will shape tomorrow's construction industry. You can find a list of NCC winners on p. 34.

Also on the workforce front, this issue's Workforce column (p. 58) focuses on the growing field of construction technology—and the evolving makeup of the industry's talent pool—by talking with three female contech executives. One of their insights in particular struck me: "The construction industry is unique because it's one of the few industries where technology has a direct and visible impact on the physical world."

Speaking of the physical world, while it feels so good to get together for a convention just like we used, that doesn't mean business is totally back to normal. Our cover story (p. 18) looks at how the pandemic has changed construction and design for commercial and industrial projects. Our industry is highly adaptive and resilient, as you'll see from the projects we spotlight in multiple market segments.

We are halfway through the year, with lots to celebrate and much to learn. I hope this issue of *Construction Executive* helps you do both.



Michael D. Bellaman
Publisher



THE MAGAZINE FOR THE
BUSINESS OF CONSTRUCTION

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Comply Right

Construction technology has a big role to play when it comes to the new infrastructure law—starting with making it easy to comply with federal wage requirements.



The bipartisan infrastructure law, which was ratified in November 2021, invests hundreds of billions of dollars into rebuilding aging infrastructure throughout the nation. The law has been written to be consistent with and reinforce existing laws and regulations regarding pay for construction workers on projects being funded by the federal government, including the Davis-Bacon Act, which establishes a standard prevailing wage—based on the work performed as well as the location—for all workers on federally funded construction projects. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) requires employers to submit weekly payroll reports to prove that they are paying the prevailing wage to their employees.

The DOL states that the average time consumed by completing a single certified payroll report for a given project is 55 minutes due to the complexity introduced by variables such as the number of projects, the number of workers, multiple projects worked on by a given worker, the job classification of each worker and the variable hours worked per day. In addition to the time consumed and the financial resources devoted to that employee time, there are practical considerations of compliance with regulations. Delayed reports mean delayed payment, and any errors in a report lead to penalties—regardless of intent.

Construction technology that can aggregate disparate data sources and produce the required reports in a quick and efficient manner provides value in terms of time and money. The assurance that required reports are completed accurately and in a compliant manner ensures that businesses can be confident in their documentation. In addition, changes to forms or processes are made via the tech-enabled process.

In the process of capitalizing on the opportunities provided by rebuilding and modernizing U.S. infrastructure, construction business leaders can leverage technology to ensure they pay workers the appropriate wage and also verify those actions for the government. And by helping drive compliance, technology can play a key role in realizing the full potential of the bipartisan infrastructure law.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KEITH PELATOWSKI', written over a white background.

Keith Pelatowski
Chief Executive Officer
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INBRIEF



Congress Sees the Light

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME will be made permanent in the United States as of November 2023 if a proposal that passed the Senate in March, titled the Sunshine Protection Act, makes it through the House of Representatives. If signed and enacted, it would mean that Americans would never again lose an hour of afternoon daylight in the fall and winter, enabling children to play safely outdoors for longer and potentially reducing seasonal depression.

Construction Industry Experiences Growth

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY has been ranked third in volume of business applications and 10th overall in Swyft Filings' fourth annual "State of Swyft Industry Report," which analyzed data from more than 63,000 new business applications nationwide. Despite significant growth in 2021, construction ranked lower than in the prior year, which saw 96.28% year-over-year growth in business filings; however, 2021 was likely a slower year for the industry due to persistent labor shortages, high materials prices and supply-chain issues.

Back to School With ABC's Construction Management Competition

THE 2022 ABC Construction Management Competition took place at Associated Builders and Contractors' Convention 2022 in San Antonio in March. The overall winners were Colorado State University (first place), the University of Florida (second place) and Clemson University (third place). Student chapter of the year was awarded to the University of Cincinnati.

Here is the full list of winners:

ESTIMATING

1. Florida International University
2. Colorado State University
3. Clemson State University

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1. Colorado State University
2. Florida International University
3. University of Central Florida

QUALITY CONTROL

1. Clemson University
2. Colorado State University
3. University of Florida

SAFETY

1. Florida International University
2. University of Florida
3. Colorado State University



INDUSTRY EVENTS CALENDAR

June 13–15

ABC Legislative Week 2022

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legislative.abc.org

June 13–15

Advancing Preconstruction 2022

Las Vegas

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June 22–25

AIA Conference on Architecture 2022

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June 23

Offsite Construction Expo

Sacramento

offsiteconstructionexpo.com

July 13–14

BuiltWorlds 2022 Construction

Tech Conference

Chicago

builtworlds.com/event/2022-construction-tech-conference

Aug. 17–20

NAWIC 2022 Annual Conference

Minneapolis

nawic.org/annual_conference

Send event notices and national, state and local news to editor@constructionexec.com.

For a weekly analysis of news impacting the merit shop construction community, visit abc.org/newsline.



Bridging the Recognition Gap

“THE WORLD OF Civil Engineering: Types of Bridges” is a LEGO IDEAS fan design focusing on seven examples of bridges: tied-arch, cable-stayed, truss, cantilever, beam, suspension and arch. The builds can be disconnected from each other to be displayed separately, and two parts—both the cable-stayed bridge and a crane—can be rotated 360 degrees. The set includes a total of 1,602 pieces.

The models, created by German artist MOCingbird, are meant to recognize the contributions to society made by architecture, engineering and construction, and the kit also includes both male and female figures to demonstrate diversity in the field.

Visit tinyurl.com/bdvk9yt to support the initiative and help ensure the designs come to fruition. As of press time, “The World of Civil Engineering” is in first place in the “Most Popular” category, with 6,600 votes of the 10,000 necessary to be considered for production, and has been chosen as a staff pick.

Be on the Cutting Edge With Hiring Tech

ADDING TECHNOLOGY TO your hiring techniques can help your business, says an annual global trends report from HireVue. Based on a survey of 1,600 hiring leaders from a range of industries around the world, the report found that companies that adopted technical hiring solutions report:

- Greater flexibility (54%)
- Time-saving benefits (54%)
- Easier to identify the best candidates (43%)
- Significant cost savings (42%)

Further, those companies that experience hiring success are more likely to make other changes:

- 57% of respondents introduced job-matching technologies to recruit both externally and internally.
- 37% shifted to a combination of both in-person and virtual interviews.
- 24% implemented technologies such as AI, chatbots and skills assessments.

The report also found that technology encourages diverse hiring practices (rather than hiring based on biased, “gut” decisions). Some of the changes implemented include:

- Adopting a skills-first approach (45%).
- Replacing resumes with skills-based assessments (33%).
- Dropping college degree requirements (16%).
- Prioritizing certification, rather than excluding candidates without degrees (18%).
- Sourcing qualified candidates from marginalized and overlooked work groups, including mature-aged workers (47%), undergrad workers (44%) and junior workers (38%).

Access the full “2022 Global Trends Report” at tinyurl.com/2p8mpjrx. 



ERIK COX PHOTOGRAPHY / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Supreme Addition

Ketanji Brown Jackson's Supreme Court confirmation provides a historic win for Democrats—and foreshadows partisan stalemates for everyone.

BY SHREYA KANAL

On Feb. 25, 2022, President Joe Biden announced his nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to fill the Supreme Court seat of retiring Associate

Justice Stephen Breyer. Jackson, 51, who was confirmed by the Senate in a 53-47 vote on April 7, will be the sixth female justice in the court's history, the third

African-American and the first to have served as a federal public defender. Jackson's nomination and successful confirmation to the Supreme Court is historic in

“ *Jackson’s nomination and successful confirmation to the Supreme Court is historic in many ways, most notably that she will be the first Black woman to serve on the nation’s highest court.*”

many ways, most notably that she will be the first Black woman to serve on the nation’s highest court.

Jackson’s confirmation also serves as a much-needed win for the Biden administration and Democrats, who continue to face troubling poll numbers leading into the 2022 midterm elections. Prior to the confirmation victory, the Democratic legislative agenda was stalled after failing to pass Biden’s Build Back Better agenda. With Jackson’s confirmation, Democrats received welcome relief from congressional realities, while President Biden also delivered on a key 2020 campaign promise to place a Black woman on the Supreme Court.

Jackson’s ascension to the bench began in 2012, when she was nominated by then-President Barack Obama to join the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., and eventually confirmed by voice vote in March 2013. She was later nominated by President Biden to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, with Republican Senators Lisa Murkowski, Alaska; Susan Collins, Maine; and Lindsay Graham, S.C., supporting her confirmation in June 2021.

Similarly, three Republican senators voted in favor of Jackson’s Supreme Court confirmation: Collins, Murkowski and Mitt Romney, Utah. The vote provided the new justice with more bipartisan support than the previous two Republican-appointed justices received, with Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett being confirmed 50-48 and 52-48, respectively.

Unlike any previous Supreme Court justice, Jackson has a public-defense background, having served as assistant special counsel to the U.S. Sentencing

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Commission from 2003 to 2005 and as the commission's vice chair from 2010 to 2014. From 2005 to 2007, she worked as an assistant federal public defender in Washington, D.C.

While Jackson was able to again gain bipartisan support for her confirmation, the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings conducted during her nomination highlighted the ongoing partisan divide facing Supreme Court nominees in the future, as well as the challenges that presidents will face when a Supreme Court nominee again comes before a Senate controlled by an opposite party than the White House. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, Ky., has often been criticized for his handling of President Barack Obama's March 2016 nomination of Merrick Garland to fill the vacancy following the unexpected death of Antonin Scalia ahead of that November's presidential election. With Republicans then in control of

the Senate, McConnell argued that "the nomination should be made by the president the people elect in the election that's underway."

Some of those in Congress have argued that, while it is the Senate's responsibility to provide "advice and consent" as stated under the U.S. Constitution, ultimately they must give deference to the president, regardless of political party, when it comes to the nomination of otherwise qualified individuals to serve on the Supreme Court. However, in March of this year, McConnell expressed his view that a majority of the Senate on both sides of the aisle "believe it is a co-partner with the president in the business of confirming lifetime appointments," illustrating that ideological and political lines have been drawn by Republican leadership when it comes to the support for these nominations.

McConnell has also refrained from commenting on his strategy should another Supreme Court vacancy occur under President

Biden with Republicans having regained control of the Senate in 2023. To preempt this potential stalemate, Democrats have focused on Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, who was confirmed under President George H.W. Bush and is the longest-serving justice currently on the Supreme Court.

While McConnell has chosen to say silent on the matter for now, it should be little surprise following the polarization of Congress, the treatment of recent nominees to the court as well as the political and media frenzies that have surrounded Supreme Court nominees that without a Senate majority of the same party, presidents are set to face fervent opposition.

Unlike Barrett, a conservative who replaced liberal Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Jackson will replace the ideologically similar Breyer, which will not alter the spectrum of the court, maintaining a 6-3 split in favor of GOP-appointed justices. This will play an important role on the impact of President Biden's regulatory agenda over the next two-and-a-half years.

However, in an era of intense partisan divide, the fact remains that President Biden was able to replace the 83-year-old Breyer and gain support from both parties to confirm a Supreme Court Justice—one who is likely to serve decades on the bench while making history. **CE**

Shreya Kanal (kanal@abc.org) is legislative and political affairs assistant for Associated Builders and Contractors. For more information, visit abc.org/politics-policy.



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Well, Well, Well

Worker safety means expanding your focus from protecting your company from liability to addressing physical health, mental health and environmental wellness.

BY PAUL GOREN

Construction sites are inherently safety-sensitive work zones.

While the main concern for site managers traditionally has been worker safety from a liability standpoint, the most forward-looking managers are expanding that scope as part of a pandemic-inspired focus on overall employee wellness across industries.

For construction leaders and contractors looking to create safe and productive work environments, there

are three key factors of employee health and safety that must be addressed: physical health, mental health and environmental wellness.

PHYSICAL HEALTH: World-Class Athletes

Year after year, physical health remains the top priority for contractors and construction leaders. That's not surprising. Construction work requires a high level of skill, focus and strength/

flexibility—just like professional sports does. Indeed, those working in construction often are doing tasks that require as much or more physical strain than professional athletes, and they should have the same level of both physical and mental preparation.

Having a medical team dedicated to preventive care can be a game changer in limiting on-the-job injuries. Onsite providers can look at each project

“ Many workers are reluctant to report when they’re feeling pain or brush it off as insignificant.

phase and task every day to help workers physically prepare with tailored stretches and exercises.

Of course, many workers are reluctant to report when they’re feeling pain or brush it off as insignificant. As with professional athletes, ignoring the signs can be costly and lead to more substantial injuries; in 2020, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of injury or illness requiring time away from work for the construction industry was 1 per 100 full-time workers.

One way you can counteract these trends is through non-descriptive assessments. A medical provider can come onsite with a water/wellness cart and create a casual space to check in with workers about what’s hurting them and provide advice and health tips over water-cooler talk. This is a great way for medical providers to build relationships with workers while encouraging them to treat pain as it comes rather than waiting for a serious injury to strike, which will be more costly for everyone involved.

MENTAL HEALTH: Reducing the Stigma

Mental health remains a pervasive issue in construction and should be a top priority for all contractors and construction

leaders. Most alarmingly, there were 5,242 incidents of suicide among construction workers in 2018—45.3 per 100,000 compared to an average male suicide rate of 27.4, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is by far the highest rate of any other occupation or industry.

As all industries continue to grapple with the effects of the pandemic, including high rates of employee burnout, mental health can no longer be ignored or addressed through a “check-the-box” approach. If workers are experiencing mental-health challenges, it could hinder their performance and attention to detail. In a high-risk setting like construction, there’s plenty that can go wrong when someone isn’t focused or mentally healthy enough to perform a job at a safe level; workers who are struggling with their mental health can put not only themselves but also their coworkers and clients in harm’s way.


Reducing the stigma around mental health on construction sites is a crucial first step. Building a pro-mental-health culture begins with simply talking more about mental health onsite with workers and providing access to resources such as online mental-health providers that allow them to seek help on their own terms. You can easily implement recurring mind, body

and safety chats, introduce wellness events or host lunch-and-learns with experts who can start an open dialogue around mental health.

ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS: The Whole Picture

Just as mental health is increasingly important, environmental wellness is gaining popularity in construction. Creating a culture of wellbeing isn’t limited to providing access to mental-health resources; it also includes providing innovative services that bring convenience for workers and make them feel valued by their employer.

As defined by the National Institutes of Health, environmental wellness is about creating clean, safe and healthy surroundings. But cleanliness and nicer amenities are just the baselines. Take environmental wellness further by providing innovative services for workers on the jobsite, such as stretching stations to help prevent on-the-job injuries and water stations to promote hydration. Aside from project-related initiatives, you also can introduce lifestyle services like onsite haircuts, food trucks and smoothie stations.

Companies that promote environmental wellness are more likely to attract the best workers and keep them happy and motivated. For contractors and business leaders, this means that your projects will get done faster, there will be less risk of injury and you’ll see more proactive leadership from workers. 

Paul Goren is director of business development for Pivot Onsite Innovations. For more information, visit pivotonsiteinnovations.com.

On the Road Again

As essential workers, construction professionals never stopped traveling during the pandemic. Now they've come to expect the additional safety measures their companies put in place.

BY GREG WILLIAMS

More than one-quarter (26%) of the U.S. labor force worked onsite to keep the economy moving during the height of the pandemic, according to research from Stanford University. Consisting mainly of essential workers, this group included the construction workforce.

As employees in the infrastructure and construction industry continued to travel, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a guide for construction workers and their employers to know how they could maintain safe working conditions and protect against virus transmission. Throughout the past two years, many essential traveling workers have grown used to these and other additional safety measures that employers have provided during the pandemic.

Now, business travel managers and senior leadership in construction are recognizing the new expectations and needs of employees who continue to travel to complete projects. Here's how to incorporate them into your travel plans in a way that helps your construction business and employees thrive.

Plan ahead for travel and time on the job. Travel managers know the importance of planning in advance. For construction workers, they must also consider the physical



safety of the worksite as well as ongoing labor and materials shortages, which continue to challenge the industry and disrupt project timelines. Having a set schedule and clearly communicating expectations can help employees feel safe, minimize travel-related confusion and save money.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends that construction managers pose screening questions when scheduling jobs to gain a better understanding of the work

environment and any imposed risks to employee safety. OSHA also suggests that employees bring their own tools to the jobsite and that managers coordinate break and lunch schedules to ensure proper social distancing and other safety measures remain in place. But the reality is that it's easier to enforce safety protocols such as maintaining distances of six feet apart for outdoor construction projects than it is for indoor ones, especially when indoor jobs are in tight quarters. And speaking of tight quarters, traveling construction workers have

“ Having a set schedule and communicating expectations can help employees feel safe and minimize travel-related confusion.

grown used to going from sleeping two people per hotel room to single occupancy—a trend that’s expected to continue.

Additionally, 2022 hotel rates are expected to rise by 13% globally year over year, and by another 10% in 2023. This makes budgeting and planning ahead crucial, but travel managers will need to have some flexibility. For example, it may be smart to avoid practices like pre-paying room rates and agreeing to limited cancellations. Supply-chain issues make the time for project completions—and, as a result, the length of hotel stays—difficult to predict.

Provide resources to help eliminate obstacles. Travel managers should also continue to prioritize their travelers’ health and safety. Providing the resources that workers need and keeping track of their location throughout trips is key to that.

Business Travel News reported that, during the early part of the pandemic, a tightly managed travel program made it easier “to locate employees, assess their risk and steer them home through fast-changing health recommendations and border restrictions.” This statement remains true on the back end of the pandemic, too, as a tightly managed travel program promotes safety and ease.


While travel managers monitor the location of employees moving from one jobsite to the next, it’s important for employees to keep track of all necessary documents and trip-related information. With all-in-one apps, travelers can expect to have quick access to all the resources they need, including per diem and hotel information, along with transportation details and schedules, in one convenient, easily accessible location. Digital-first business travel plans also cut the time managers spend on manual labor such as printing schedules, allocating and distributing cash or checks for per diems and collecting receipts for expense reports once travelers return from a job.

Enable worker safety with touchless options. Contactless technology goes beyond QR codes for restaurant menus or temperature scans when entering buildings. To minimize potential exposures to COVID-19 and its variants, business travel managers can incorporate contactless options into their travel plans, such as virtual payment cards. Going the extra mile to provide flexible options for essential travelers allows them the freedom to operate how they are most comfortable to protect themselves,

their coworkers and their families at home.

Communicate clearly and regularly. To ensure that essential travelers are comfortable with and prepared for post-pandemic travel, employers should regularly communicate current safety protocols, updates and expectations. This includes local mask mandates and other health and safety guidelines around COVID-19.

Employers should make sure their team members have access to guidelines in a language they understand. ACTFL, an association for language teachers, found that, of all U.S. industries, construction has the widest language gap between employees—and it’s expected to grow. Putting all materials related to COVID-19, including safe travel guidelines and company expectations, in employees’ native languages helps ensure that they’re getting the information they need.

Give your employees confidence on the job. Ultimately, the most valuable strategy for travel managers is to directly ask employees how they can best support them during their travels. Construction workers—particularly those willing to travel for their job—are in short supply, and once hired, they can be hard to retain. Travel managers can do their part by understanding how these essential workers’ needs and expectations have changed since the start of the global pandemic and incorporating those changes into their travel plans. 

Greg Williams is senior vice president of operations for CLC Lodging. For more information, visit clclodging.com.

SIDE EFFECTS





INFANCE CONSTRUCTION



ROBINS & MORTON

The pandemic is changing the way spaces are designed and built across sectors—including offices, schools, multifamily housing and hospitals. And it's probably permanent.

BY SAM BARNES

It's hard to remember now, but prior to March 2020, “co-location” and “collaborative space” were the gold standards of office design. Throughout the 2010s, spurred on by high-profile tech companies such as Google, Yahoo and Facebook, organizations embraced open floor plans as a way of fostering face-to-face interaction, stimulating creativity and building community.

That's all gone now, as employers seek to create work environments that alleviate their employees' pandemic fears and allow for greater flexibility. The future of work is about providing a workplace experience that supports flexibility, reduces friction for employees, fuels engagement and ultimately drives business performance. Rather than being forced to interact, people are now coming together for a purpose.



BREATHING EASY: The pandemic has led organizations to prioritize indoor air quality in offices and other commercial spaces. According to Unispace's Tom Prasky, "Sometimes it's as simple as changing to a higher-quality air filter."

But offices and other worksites are the least of it. The pandemic has irrevocably changed the nature of design and construction in the United States, and no market has been untouched. In health care, there's a desire for more adaptive, flexible spaces, a renewed importance on staff work and respite areas and growing use of touchless technologies and automation at nearly every level. Likewise, higher education is seeing an intensified need for healthier spaces, including patterns of nature, lighting and other elements that can positively affect a building's users, as well as an emphasis on air filtration and meeting the needs of the whole student.

The pandemic has affected not just how projects are designed but how they're being built. Jeff Butler, senior preconstruction manager in Robins & Morton's Orlando office, says modular construction is becoming increasingly popular in the health-care market because it reduces the number of workers on a jobsite at one time, which in turn reduces infection risk. "In the past, you'd have six different trades working in an operating room, for example—mechanical, electrical, plumbing, etc.," Butler says. "Now, it's like an erector set, and what typically took a month to install takes only a week."

Here are snapshots of four different projects showing how the pandemic is changing design and construction across sectors.

COMMERCIAL: BALANCING WORK AND WFH

Organizations today are fundamentally rethinking the purpose of office space, with designs that seek to ease the transition between working from home and working in the office. "[Employees] feel safer when they have the option to work together or remotely...and that's what we're seeing across the board right now," says Tom Prasky, head of delivery for Unispace's Americas work, who is based in Minnesota. "Owners are giving employees options in how they work, whether from home or in an office space. Forcing people to be in a certain environment is almost nonexistent today."

About 95% of Unispace's work volume relates to tenant improvement, including a wide variety of life sciences, data center and commercial improvement projects. "Pre-COVID-19, the design was about head counts and synergy between departments and making sure that groups working together were in the same area," Prasky says. "They're now focusing on employee

wellness, flexibility of working and inclusion. I honestly think that trend is here to stay.”

Perhaps most significantly, the pandemic has raised awareness of indoor air quality (IAQ) and how effective ventilation, improved filtration and the reduction of indoor pollutants can decrease pathogen transmission risk. Owners are increasingly proactive about IAQ; Prasky estimates that it’s part of early discussions on nearly three-quarters of Unispace projects. “Sometimes it’s as simple as changing to a higher-quality air filter,” Prasky. “And in high-rise construction, where you might be sharing HVAC with multiple different office spaces, they’re incorporating bipolar ionization into the air-supply ductwork to retrofit an existing system.”

EDUCATION: **ENSURING INDOOR AIR QUALITY**

Perhaps nowhere is public awareness of IAQ—and how effective ventilation, improved filtration and the elimination of pollutant sources can reduce pathogen transmission risk and enhance overall health and wellness—more acute than as relates to the nation’s classrooms. Seattle Public Schools took a practical approach to ensuring the health and safety of its more than 50,000 students in 100 schools by asking the Portland, Oregon–based team of global quality assurance firm Intertek along with Lakewood, Colorado–based facility consulting firm Engineering Economics Inc. (EEI) to perform a comprehensive evaluation of its ventilation systems. Alan Scott, who leads Intertek’s efforts in sustainability, health and wellness and resilience, worked with the team from July to October 2020 to interpret guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State of Washington’s Department of Health, then turn them into specific actions.

In the process, EEI used science-based modeling to develop customized approaches for different types of spaces in schools with varying mechanical systems—with the goal of implementing strategies that were most effective in reducing pathogen transmission risks in each individual space. It was a challenging project. Some of the schools were 80 to 100 years old while others were less than a decade old, with many buildings designed to minimal ventilation standards. Ultimately, the team recommended cost-efficient strategies to guide the appropriate mix of engineering controls for classrooms, cafeterias and other key spaces in each school.

Part of the exercise was to determine where they needed to concentrate their efforts. “The stakes were high,” Scott says. “One of the areas of greatest concern



HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE: Employers are becoming increasingly flexible about letting people work where they want, when they want. “I honestly think that trend is here to stay,” Prasky says.

was over cafeterias, because it brought together a lot of kids in one space without face coverings. However, through risk modeling, it was determined that there is a higher dilution of pollutants in such a large space. While the intensity of exposure was there, the duration was short, so the risk was low.”

Conversely, the team found that classrooms posed a bigger threat due to their diminutive size and the duration of exposure that happens there. Scott says: “Classrooms were undoubtedly a higher-risk environment than a cafeteria.”

They then analyzed how different scenarios could affect ventilation in each environment. Ultimately, the solutions revolved around increased filtration in the mechanical systems, the optimization of ventilation available within those systems and the addition of portable air cleaners. In the process, the team tested IAQ parameters for carbon dioxide and particulate matter—both indicators of adequate ventilation and filtration. “Even though the schools were occupied, we were able to identify that the interventions were working as intended,” Scott says. “CO2 and particulate concentrations were well below standards of optimal indoor air quality. And when we discovered higher concentrations in a



LESSONS LEARNED: Analyzing air quality in schools led Intertek's Alan Scott to realize that cafeterias are less of a concern than classrooms, which are smaller and lead to longer exposure times.

particular location, we looked at those spaces to find opportunities for improvements.”

Many HVAC units were converted to 100-percent outside air. “Some of them had the ability to ramp up ventilation rates and others had limitations,” Scott says. “While there wasn’t time to analyze every single room at every single school, EEI came up with a model that looked at the different types and ages of systems and evaluated that risk profile for different types of spaces.”

While the team leaned heavily on additional filtering, there was a recognition that portable air cleaners wouldn’t be sustainable in the long term, “so one of the things this pandemic has brought forward is an awareness about the importance of high-quality ventilation and how poor ventilation is in many of our buildings,” Scott says. Looking ahead, he expects discussions to focus on long-term design changes, especially with regard to mechanical systems. “The most universal impact will be on the mechanical side of things,” he says, “but one of the other key things will be the thermal and moisture performance of the envelope.”

MULTIFAMILY HOUSING: FOCUSING ON PRIVACY AND LIFESTYLE

Multifamily developers in Los Angeles are balancing the need for COVID-19-safe spaces with a persistent





THE NEEDS OF THE MANY: One trend in post-pandemic design and construction is the retrofitting of existing single-family dwellings with smaller, multifamily units.

housing shortage. The end result, according to Brandon Hance, owner of design-build firm Inhance Construction in Los Angeles, has been a boom in smaller multifamily units in the city's suburban areas, many of which have been retrofitted from existing single-family dwellings.

The trend, which began a few years back, has only accelerated during the pandemic. Hance's company currently has more than 30 multifamily developments in the pipeline. "In the past, a majority of the institutional capital was going to large, Class A buildings," he says. "That trendline has reversed itself. Today's renter is more focused on privacy, security and lifestyle. It's conducive for that young professional looking for that safe, clean place to live, but they're traveling, working and socializing, so they're looking for a more affordable option while not sacrificing privacy and security."

The pandemic has also affected the design of those spaces, chiefly through the addition of enhanced ventilation and air-quality systems, digital points of entry and greater access to outdoor spaces. They also come with private garages and rooftop decks. "We've done quite a bit with our HVAC systems to ensure higher quality of air," Hance says. "All of the buildings are also now wired for solar power and electric car vehicles."





While these buildings have been popular with renters, Hance faces some inherent regional challenges. Banks and private investors, for example, “are naturally conservative and much more inclined to invest in ‘traditional’ properties rather than new, innovative concepts, even if a project is truly viable and there’s proof of concept.”

Additionally, the permitting process is excruciatingly slow in Los Angeles, Hance says, and many existing residents aren’t keen on having multifamily dwellings in their neighborhood. “We all understand that there’s a housing crisis, and we love the idea of transforming homes into apartment buildings,” he says, “but it still has to be approved by a

INSIDE OUT: “Today’s renter is more focused on privacy, security and lifestyle,” says Inhance Construction’s Brandon Hance—including rooftop decks and outdoor spaces.

discretionary board on a neighborhood council, and that can be difficult to overcome.”

HEALTH CARE: **GETTING INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN**

Infectious disease control has always been critically important in the health-care construction market. But some owners in Florida are going a step further—particularly during renovation or expansion projects—by requiring dedicated exterior elevators and material hoists to avoid any interaction between construction crews and the existing hospital. That can result in significant additional job costs, Robins & Morton’s Butler says, “because you’re now quoting them for the material hoist or exterior elevator, along with the creation of an exterior opening into the building.”


Owners are also requiring that many systems be assembled using offsite modular construction to further reduce crew sizes, which requires contractors to get involved earlier in the design process, so that can more easily incorporate modularization into their project planning. “That’s becoming more of the norm these days,” Butler says. “We’re actually being integrated into the design process, where it’s more of



HEALING PROCESS: With owners demanding construction methods that reflect post-pandemic protocols for health-care projects of all sizes, “We’re actually being integrated into the design process,” says Robins & Morton’s Jeff Butler.

a continuing process from the start to the end. We’re pricing options, looking at different ways to get the project into budget, looking at different options to do things differently. We’re actually sitting in the room with the user group and answering questions.”

When contractors are involved earlier, they can provide real-time information about materials pricing and availability, which is important during the current supply-chain disruptions. “Without us being on board earlier, they wouldn’t know that a generator is a year out, for example,” Butler says. “At some point, you have to order the generator, and without that knowledge, they wouldn’t have that figured into their deadline.”

Even permitting and inspection processes have changed. At a Robins & Morton jobsite at Marathon Key in Florida, the state’s Agency for Health Care Administration went to all-virtual inspections during a hospital replacement. “One of our project engineers would walk around with an iPad, and the inspectors would say, ‘Go here and here, open up this electrical panel etc.’” Butler says. “I could see more inspections utilizing the virtual option or some aspects of that.” 

Sam Barnes is a freelance writer based in Baton Rouge.





YEARLY BELOVED: From the left—Craft Instructor of the Year Larry Harris, Young Professional of the Year Luke Perry and Craft Professional of the Year Adam Haywood.

BEST — AND — BRIGHTEST

Honoring the Young Professional, Craft Professional and Craft Instructor of the Year, ABC's Construction Workforce Awards recognize individuals who are helping shape the future of the industry at every level.

BY THE EDITORS OF *CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVE*

"See one, do one, teach one" is often used in medical training to describe how learning happens—the idea being that a medical student watches a procedure get performed, later becomes an intern or resident who performs the procedure and finally teaches the procedure as a physician. ABC's Construction Workforce Awards (CWAs) are based on a similar educational cycle, honoring construction professionals as they experience, practice and teach the trades:

- **Young Professional of the Year**—Presented to an individual under the age of 40 who is dedicated to the merit shop and is a natural leader and top performer in their field based on career achievement, leadership and vision for the future of the commercial and industrial construction industry.
- **Craft Professional of the Year**—Presented to a construction craft professional who excels in their

field, demonstrates a passion for the trade, exhibits outstanding leadership qualities and demonstrates a commitment to safety, education and the merit shop philosophy.

- **Craft Instructor of the Year**—Presented to an instructor who possesses outstanding creativity, a positive attitude and the ability to transfer knowledge through communications skills and innovative teaching to promote lifelong learning to the future construction workforce.

Sponsored by NCCER and Tradesmen International (Craft Professional and Craft Instructor) and Autodesk Construction Cloud (Young Professional), the 2022 CWAs were presented at ABC Convention in San Antonio this past March. *CE* took the opportunity to sit down with all three recipients to talk about their careers in construction, including how they got into the industry, why they stayed—and where they think it's headed.



FAMILY MAN

Young Professional of the Year
Luke Perry: ‘Being in the trades can give you a sense of independence and accomplishment, and the more people that understand that, the more people we’ll bring into the trades.’

BY CHRISTOPHER DURSO

When Luke Perry graduated from Penn State University with a degree in civil engineering 13 years ago, the last place he was going to go to work was his father Jim’s contracting company. Not because he didn’t want to—the plan was that someday he’d take over the business—but because he wasn’t allowed to. Not yet.

“That was a requirement,” Perry says. “The idea behind that is, you go and cut your teeth somewhere else, you bring back the good ideas you can, you get your experience and then you can come back to work for the family business. We’re a small company, but that’s the rule.”

Sooner rather than later, Perry found his way to Perry Contracting, joining the Cincinnati-based company as a project manager in 2013. Today, he's vice president of Perry, which specializes in medical construction, but still new enough to the industry to be named ABC's 2022 Young Professional of the Year, an honor he describes as "the pinnacle of my professional career so far." And he knows exactly how he wants to use whatever platform it affords him.

"I've always been really excited about the opportunity to talk to kids in high school and invite them to explore the trades as a career," Perry says. "My wife is a high-school teacher, and I hear her talk about how some people need a different avenue. It's not college for everybody, and I think that we really need to change that mindset, because you can be quite successful with a career in the trades."

A VERY PARTICULAR SET OF SKILLS

Perry's own avenue took him right down the middle, between college and the trades. He grew up around construction and "spent a lot of weekends sweeping up construction sites when I was a kid," he says. During high school, he spent summers "doing demolition and cleaning up and learning the ropes." Throughout, he was deeply impressed watching his father single-parent him and his two siblings while growing the company he started in 1989. "It was inspiring to see the journey that he went through," Perry says.

After high school, Perry knew he wanted to be part of the family business, but first decided to study civil engineering, "because that married well with the construction field I was intending to go into," he says. With Perry Contracting off the table until he'd accumulated more professional experience, Perry came out of Penn State in 2009—during the Great Recession—looking for anyone in the industry who would hire him. He ended up with a large construction company based near Washington, D.C., and stayed with them for about five years before finally joining his father.

"I learned that I like working for a smaller company a lot better than working for a bigger company," Perry says. "I remember that it was hard to get simple things done when I worked for this really big general contractor. It wasn't easy to call somebody and get them onsite when you needed them; whereas, when you work for a smaller company, you have a little bit more freedom. It's just easier to get things done."


With Perry Contracting, he's exactly where he wants to be—doing the work he wants to do. "Working in construction gives people a set of skills that many other folks don't have," Perry says. "If you're a general contractor, you learn a little bit about plumbing, about electrical, about HVAC, and you become independent in your own right—in the sense that you can get stuff done. And that's a cool skillset to have. That should be a source of pride for everybody in the trades."

INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

Getting people to that point is something Perry thinks about a lot, personally and professionally—as the son of a contractor and someone who eventually will take over the company. His father wants to start slowing down and transition the business to Perry, "and that means that my responsibilities are going to grow significantly and in short order," he says. "So for the next year, my focus is really on getting my hands around the business and being able to just run it well."

In part, that means figuring out where to find his workforce. Perry has been around construction his entire life, but he needs to reach people who, in many cases, have never been exposed to the industry, let alone thought about it as a viable career. "There's definitely a labor shortage in the industry; that's well-known," Perry says. "For me, it's about bringing people into the industry to show them it's something they can be proud of. Being in the trades can give you a sense of independence and accomplishment, and the more people that understand that, the more people we'll bring into the trades."

Meanwhile, as not just *the* Young Professional of the Year but *a* young professional in construction, Perry is more than a little busy. In addition to helping run Perry Contracting, he serves as chair of the ABC Ohio Valley Chapter Board of Directors and formed the chapter's Next Gen Leaders group. He and his wife have two children; in his free time, he enjoys fitness, competitive shooting and spending time outdoors.

Not that there's a whole lot of free time. "Anybody with kids is going to tell you, it's a million miles a minute," Perry says with a laugh. "It's a busy life, but it's rewarding. It's all worth it every day when I get to go home and see my kids, and it's also worth it every day when I get to go to work and see my dad." 

Christopher Durso (durso@abc.org) is editor-in-chief of Construction Executive.

LIFELONG LEARNER



Craft Professional of the Year
Adam Haywood: ‘I don’t want
people to feel like it’s a lesser
choice to go to a trade school. It’s
a 100% valid career path.’

BY RACHEL E. O’CONNELL

Adam Haywood, electrical foreman and safety officer at Tewksbury, Massachusetts–based Premier Power LLC, was introduced to construction at an early age. His father worked for the phone company, and Haywood would accompany him on odd jobs, learning to love working with his hands. But his true affinity for the electrical field wouldn’t come until high school, when Haywood enrolled in technical school.

“Electrical was a big unknown,” Haywood says. “I didn’t know how it worked and it intrigued me. So, I decided that was a path I wanted to follow.”

Like many young people, he took a small detour before settling on his true calling. “I actually went there wanting to do culinary,” Haywood says. “But after going through that for a week, I decided I wanted no part of that at all. I liked cooking with my mom and my grandma, but I didn’t like doing it as a living and on a large scale.”

Luckily, trade students try each shop for a week before making a final choice, so Haywood knew that electrical was the one. “It was fascinating to me how you could take this invisible energy and do stuff with it,” he says. “So I followed that.”

Technical school was an influence on Haywood in other ways as well. “You touch a little bit of everything,” Haywood says. “Now, being a homeowner, I know how to do all that—masonry; I can fix a stair; I can fix a cabinet; I can change my own oil in the car and a flat tire. You learn those life lessons.”

Spoken exactly like someone who’s been named ABC’s 2022 Craft Professional of the Year.

KIDS IN AMERICA

Now a teacher at that same school (“When the opportunity came to go back to my own school and teach, it was a no-brainer,” he says), Haywood believes that vocational, technical and trades education is the future. “I don’t want people to feel like it’s a lesser choice to go to a trade school,” he says. “It’s a 100% valid career path.”

In addition, it’s critical for students to believe that, Haywood says, because the trades have a serious shortage. “In Boston, the average age of a licensed electrician is 65 years old,” he says. “That’s not going to last very long. Where are we going to be at when we have no one that does it anymore?”

To be part of the solution, he teaches two nights per week for three hours each, so apprentice-level electricians can get their licenses. Haywood also ran and won a seat on his children’s school council. He is currently working on a program to pair the local trade school with the elementary, so kids can be introduced to the trades at the earliest possible moment. “It’s very important to get the next up-and-coming group,” Haywood says. “My kids will go to a technical school, and they’ll get a license, so they’re covered forever. And if they decide they want to go to college after that, they’re welcome to.” Haywood’s oldest son, in fact, is currently a junior in the electrical program at the local vocational school.

Haywood himself graduated high school at age 17 and watched his friends head to college; meanwhile, he had already begun getting hours for a license and earning money on jobs during his senior year. With his career already in front of him, Haywood “kept going and going—any chance to work, I’d work any night, any weekend” to get his hours. At 19, he was a fully licensed electrician running his own crews. “I was running work, building supermarkets, shopping malls and office buildings,” Haywood says.

But he didn’t stop there. Twenty years after achieving his journeyman’s license, Haywood worked to get his master’s license. It was while taking those courses that he was approached to become a teacher himself—and added a teaching license to his resume. “The only reason I know anything is because people took the time to

show me,” Haywood says. “I feel it’s almost my duty to pass it along to the younger generation that, ‘Hey, I didn’t know anything either.’”

IT’S A LIFESTYLE

To anyone considering a career in construction, Haywood says, simply: “Do it. It’s the best decision you’ll ever make.”

To his colleagues across the industry, he urges them to make room for newcomers. “We need to change our attitudes as leaders—humble yourselves a little bit,” Haywood says. “Try and remember back to your first day in the trades. Remember that when we started, we didn’t know anything either. So, let’s give these guys a chance, because we need them to grow, and we need them to be the leaders of the future going forward.”


Student. Teacher. Full-time employee. Husband and father. Craft Professional of the Year. Does Haywood ever stop? “No, I don’t,” he says. “I go 100 miles per hour all the time. I cannot sit still. My wife can’t stand it. ‘Will you sit down?’ ‘No, stuff to do.’”

Haywood even keeps a notepad beside his bed in case it happens—and it often does—that he continues to work in his sleep. “I’ll wake up at two o’clock in the morning with an idea and jot it down so I can think about it again,” he says. “It’s not a career; it’s a lifestyle.”

A full plate isn’t a burden, however. Haywood views his life and career as “the American Dream.” He says: “Whether it’s working on a project at home or getting stuff ready for class or planning out my next job, you’re responsible for yourself. And if you put your head down and you hammer, you can be on top of the world.”

“I honestly love what I do and the company I work for, and when you love what you are doing it’s easy,” he adds.

His achievement as Craft Professional of the Year is just one stop on Haywood’s career track. Although he didn’t expect the award—“Who am I? I’m just a guy. I don’t consider myself someone special. I’m just out there doing what I do. To be recognized and awarded for it is humbling,” he says—Haywood certainly isn’t packing it in now that he’s garnered industry recognition.

“The day is never done,” he says. “Learn something new every day. That goes for every guy on the job, myself included. To me, it’s all about learning, and it doesn’t have to be electrical. We’re privy to so much of building a building, and the learning opportunities are endless.” 

Rachel E. O’Connell (oconnell@abc.org) is senior editor of Construction Executive.

HONESTLY SHOCKED



Craft Instructor of the Year Larry Harris: ‘My favorite part of working in this industry is seeing something built from the ground up. You can drive by and say, “I had a major part in that.”’

BY MAGGIE MURPHY

For Alabama native Larry Harris, a career in the skilled trades was a happy (if frightening) accident. As a newlywed DIY-er in 1966, Harris wasn't one to shy away from a home-improvement project.

“I was working at the steel mill and I got married, and *Popular Mechanics* was a good magazine way back when, and it told you how to do a lot of things,” Harris says. “So I put a light in over my sink and I put a hood in over my stove, and everything went great. Then I hooked a dryer up, and it didn't go so great. I got shocked pretty bad.”

About a week later, after recovering from that mishap, Harris saw an advertisement in his local newspaper: “Learn electrical wiring. Go to trade school.” Harris says: “I saw that advertisement, looked at my wife and I said, ‘Well, if I'm gonna keep foolin' with this stuff, I better find out more about it.’”

Harris went to the school, and he found it so interesting that he just couldn't stop—taking class after class. That education made quite an impression on Harris, who loves his trade so much that, at 76 years old, he continues to teach electrical work at the Academy of Craft Training in Birmingham, Alabama—sponsored in part by ABC of Alabama—where he's made such an impact that he's been named ABC's 2022 Craft Instructor of the Year.

Humble to his core, Harris feels certain that “there are a thousand people out there who, if they just knew about them, would be here instead of me,” he says. “But I am grateful that they picked me.”

RESPECT THE HUSTLE

Harris continued working at the Republic Steel Mill in Gadsden, Alabama, while simultaneously honing his electrical craft, doing a bit of work for friends for free. “Of course, you never run out of work if it’s for free,” Harris says. “Then I met this man, and he said, ‘Would you like to learn this work?’ And I said, ‘If you’ll teach me, I’ll work for free.’” That man, electrical contractor David Hood, replied: “You won’t work for free if you work with me.”

Harris apprenticed with Hood for nearly five years, and the pair remain friends to this day—Hood being 95 years old. “I’m just family [to him], and he is to me,” Harris says.

Following his apprenticeship with Hood, Harris set out on his own, forming Larry Harris Electric, a well-respected electrical contracting company that he owned and operated for more than 35 years. The group performed electrical installation and repairs in residential, commercial and industrial settings, building a base of repeat and long-term clients along the

way—one of the things Harris is most proud of in his more-than-45-year career.

“We were able to keep up two factories for 15 years, and everything that went on—new construction, old-construction repairs—we did it all. The owner said that I always worked miracles in the shop, but really it was just hard work and dedication,” Harris says. “I once worked 37 hours in one weekend without even going outside. They brought our meals into us. So that was hard work, but you just have to do what the job calls for.”

What the job called for, as it turned out, was often 80-hour work weeks with no days off—Monday to Saturday spent doing full-time electrical work, with Sunday as a bookkeeping day to bill clients. When asked if he thinks the incoming generation has this same work ethic, Harris replies: “No, I don’t, but maybe that’s good. Maybe we were too much. I was always trying to satisfy our customers or chasing a buck, and maybe I should have found a happy medium. You need to enjoy life a little bit.”

YOUNG, SCRAPPY AND HUNGRY

For all the long hours and the string of years with no days off, Harris somehow still managed to do just

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HAMMER TIME

More than 175 skilled trades professionals faced off in 15 competitions across 12 crafts as part of the 2022 National Craft Championships at ABC Convention. Gold-medal winners are listed below; for the full list of winners, visit abc.org/ncc.

CARPENTRY

Drew Hawkins

Royal Construction Inc.
ABC Wisconsin Chapter

DRYWALL

Ethan Neilson

Klover

ELECTRICAL: COMMERCIAL-INDUSTRIAL

Charles Bartley

ABC San Diego Chapter

POWER LINE

Raymond Dean

Gaylor Electric Inc.
ABC Indiana/Kentucky Chapter

ELECTRICAL: RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL

Aaron Swisher

Gaylor Electric Inc.
ABC Indiana/Kentucky Chapter

HVAC

Wayne Lathrop

American Heating Inc.
ABC Pacific Northwest Chapter

FIRE SPRINKLER

James Ainey

Cox Fire Protection Inc.
ABC Florida Gulf Coast Chapter

SHEET METAL

Timothy Vannasy

ABC San Diego Chapter

PIPEFITTING

Zachary Wilson

American Boiler and Mechanical

MILLWRIGHT

Travis Greenleaf

CIANBRO



FIRE UP: Welding was among the 12 crafts represented at ABC's 2022 National Craft Championships.

INSTRUMENTATION FITTING

Billy Boyd

ISC Constructors LLC
ABC Pelican Chapter

PLUMBING

Jesse Sala

Empyrean Plumbing Inc.
ABC Southern California Chapter

WELDING: PIPE

Levi Andrew

CIANBRO

WELDING: STRUCTURAL

Timothy Martinez

EXCEL Group
ABC New Orleans/ Bayou Chapter

TEAM: COMMERCIAL

Alex Uribe

Matthew D. Ambriz

Kameron Ellis

Reina Montoya


ABC San Diego Chapter

that—enjoy life. One of the things he’s enjoyed most about his 50-year career has been sharing his passion with his family: his wife, Linda, and their two children, Allison and Jason.

“I think my favorite part of working in this industry is seeing something built from the ground up,” he says, “and you can drive by later and say, ‘I had a major part in that.’” Eventually, the number of buildings Harris pointed out as having had a hand in grew so large that his kids asked him to just show them where he hadn’t worked. Chuckling as he shares the story, Harris says: “I was really excited telling them all this, and I didn’t realize they weren’t all that interested.”

But he got that part wrong. Like a lot of children, his son and daughter may have rolled their eyes on the outside, but inside, these conversations sparked an interest in construction that only grew stronger with time. Allison now has a career as an interior designer, and Jason followed in Harris’ footsteps and today is a master electrician. “My children are just such an inspiration to me,” Harris says. “They are doing so well, and I feel proud that I’ve played some small part in helping them find fulfillment in a career in this industry.”

Of course, they’re far from the only young lives he’s influenced. The NCCER-credentialed instructor imparts his knowledge and experience daily to his craft students, often sprinkled with nuggets of wisdom along the way. He reminds them daily that they can have all the skill in the world, but in order to be truly successful, good, old-fashioned hard work and a sense of integrity are the real key. “Integrity and honesty go a long way in this world,” Harris says. “I try to make my word my bond. And if I give you my word, if there’s any way—I’m going to keep it.”

When Harris got the call that he’d won Craft Instructor of the Year, his students were among the first to hear the news. Seeing the look on his face, they immediately started applauding. “I’ve got some really great students,” Harris says. He adds: “I’m still not quite able to believe I’ve won this award. I’m honestly shocked and grateful they picked me, and I’ve looked forward to this ever since I got that call. I’ve never had a national award before, but I am excited and humbled by it. I think it’s a fitting way to wind down a career.” 

Maggie Murphy (murphy@abc.org) is managing editor of Construction Executive.



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The 17th Annual
Construction Law
Special Section



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Class of '22: The Top 50 Construction Law Firms™

Each year, *Construction Executive* reaches out to more than 600 U.S. law firms with a dedicated construction practice and asks them to complete a survey for the annual ranking of *The Top 50 Construction Law Firms™*. This year's 2022 ranking features some law firms that participated in the survey for the first time.

As the industry enters the second half of 2022, contractors continue to experience unprecedented supply-chain issues, workforce shortages, fluctuating markets and record inflation. Contractors are increasingly turning to experienced construction law firms for help with reviewing contract documents so they might reduce their business exposure to risk in an ever-changing, post-pandemic environment.

Methodology for *The Top 50 Construction Law Firms™*

CE developed *The Top 50 Construction Law Firms™* ranking by asking more than 600 U.S. construction law firms to complete a survey. The data collected included: 1) 2021 revenues from the firm's construction practice; 2) number of attorneys in the firm's construction practice; 3) percentage of firm's total revenues derived from its construction practice; 4) number of states in which the firm is licensed to practice; 5) year in which the construction practice was established; and 6) number of construction industry clients served during fiscal year 2021. The ranking was determined by an algorithm that weighted the aforementioned factors in descending order of importance. For more information, contact surveys@magazinexperts.com.

Visit [ConstructionExec.com](https://www.constructionexec.com) and search "Top 50" for more info.

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Rank	Firm	Year Founded	# States/Territories Admitted to Practice	# Office Locations	# Total Attorneys	# Employees	# Construction Attorneys	# Construction Partners in 2021	# Construction Clients	Construction Practice as % of Total Firm Revenue	Areas of Practice
1	Peckar & Abramson, P.C. New York, NY	1978	20	11	116	209	116	64	1,348	94.8	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
2	Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP* Atlanta, GA *Firms merged in 2020	1890	44	24	1,137	1,644	44	19	262	4.22	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
3	Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP Birmingham, AL	1870	37	10	571	612	71	39	909	11.6	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
4	Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani, LLP San Francisco, CA	1974	51	74	1,036	1,635	105	46	520	6.91	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
5	Cokinos Young Houston, TX	1989	13	6	85	150	72	34	701	88.24	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,LE,MA,SB
6	Cohen Seglias Pallas Greenhall & Furman PC Philadelphia, PA	1988	14	8	76	124	54	22	1,016	69.74	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,SB
7	Venable LLP Washington, D.C.	1900	7	10	792	1,515	112	112	274	3.75	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,MA,P3
8	Smith, Currie & Hancock LLP Atlanta, GA	1965	21	8	67	144	67	40	800	98.41	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,P3,SB
9	Duane Morris LLP Philadelphia, PA	1904	40	25	731	1,499	53	29	1,023	5.32	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
10	Husch Blackwell LLP Kansas City, MO	1916	45	25	726	1,243	58	37	708	5.37	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
11	Andrews Myers, PC Houston, TX	1990	3	2	57	98	34	15	4,383	71.43	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,LE,MA,P3,SB
12	Fox Rothschild LLP Philadelphia, PA	1907	43	28	980	1,914	44	31	533	3.72	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
13	Hinckley Allen Boston, MA	1906	19	7	158	303	26	16	510	19.53	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB

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14	Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC Memphis, TN	1888	37	22	627	1,170	29	18	390	5.91	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
15	Eversheds Sutherland United States	1924	55	8	390	741	25	14	56	6.01	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
16	Seyfarth Shaw LLP Chicago, IL	1945	51	12	935	1,025	41	25	138	2.78	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
17	Carlton Fields, P.A. Tampa, FL	1901	25	11	326	645	36	18	286	9.67	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
18	Adams and Reese LLP New Orleans, LA	1951	30	18	263	481	75	45	400	13.31	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
19	McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter, LLP Morristown, NJ	1983	19	13	194	340	22	17	296	21.48	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,P3,SB
20	Cotney Attorneys and Consultants Tampa, FL	2021	48	17	48	72	48	10	1,242	100	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
21	Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, LLP McLean, VA	1978	15	5	53	86	53	33	350	51.43	CD,DF,DR,CT,GC,IC,P3,SB
22	Finch, Thornton & Baird, LLP San Diego, CA	1987	8	3	33	55	33	14	1,411	100	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
23	Perkins Coie LLP Seattle, WA	1912	50	17	1,318	2,601	22	11	310	1.57	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,LE,MA,P3
24	K&L Gates LLP Pittsburgh, PA	1946	41	24	1,138	2,336	66	49	169	1.57	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3
25	Varela, Lee, Metz & Guarino, LLP Tysons, VA	2014	11	2	23	32	23	15	150	100	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB

KEY: Contract Documents (CD), COVID-19 Consulting (CV), Construction Defects (DF), Construction Dispute Resolution (DR), Construction Transactions (CT), Government Contracts (GC), International Construction (IC), Labor and Employment (LE), Mergers and Acquisitions (MA), Public-Private Partnerships (P3), Surety Bonding (SB).

The Shining Stars from the North Guiding Contractors Through Their Toughest Legal Problems

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26	Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP Columbia, SC	1897	32	31	897	1,669	23	17	720	2.19	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
27	Clark Hill PLC Detroit, MI	1890	42	25	669	1,251	23	18	730	4.67	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,LE,MA,P3,SB
28	Zetlin & De Chiara New York, NY	1992	6	3	26	43	26	12	2,189	100	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,MA,P3
29	Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo Cerritos, CA	1979	20	9	224	367	18	11	680	13.73	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,LE,MA,P3,SB
30	Goldberg Segalla LLP Buffalo, NY	2001	24	22	435	866	46	34	248	8.18	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,LE
31	Phelps Dunbar LLP* New Orleans, LA *Merger in 2021	1853	30	12	350	630	29	18	195	8.59	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
32	Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP Cincinnati, OH	1908	28	30	745	1,419	30	22	13,141	4.00	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,LE,MA
33	Alston & Bird Atlanta, GA	1893	37	10	878	1,598	18	8	239	1.34	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,MA,P3,SB
34	Shutts & Bowen LLP Miami, FL	1910	1	8	283	547	21	16	619	6.30	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
35	Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP Cleveland, OH	1920	14	6	124	268	43	33	1,021	16.79	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
36	Becker & Poliakoff Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1973	3	15	123	310	27	18	696	19.26	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,P3,SB
37	Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP Atlanta, GA	1893	21	8	234	412	15	8	98	8.08	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,P3,SB
38	Stoel Rives LLP Portland, OR	1907	33	10	363	700	18	10	334	4.46	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB

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39	Hanson Bridgett San Francisco, CA	1958	13	5	193	361	17	9	159	9.71	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3
40	Thompson Hine LLP Cleveland, OH	1911	31	8	389	722	16	9	270	4.81	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
41	Ahlers Cressman & Sleight, PLLC Seattle, WA	2007	1	1	19	29	19	5	586	100	CD,DR,GC
42	Fabyanske, Westra, Hart & Thomson P.A. Minneapolis, MN	1981	11	1	39	61	21	14	326	57.93	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,LE,MA,P3,SB
43	Offit Kurman P.C. Baltimore, MD	1987	9	17	248	506	22	14	200	8.09	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
44	Beltzer Bangert & Gunnell LLP Greenwood Village, CO	2017	11	1	19	39	19	8	121	100	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,MA,P3,SB
45	Oles Morrison Rinker & Baker, LLP Seattle, WA	1893	5	3	21	35	21	11	230	74.87	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
46	Akerman LLP Miami, FL	1920	43	24	727	1,365	19	12	86	2.06	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3
47	Davis Wright Tremaine LLP Seattle, WA	1944	29	8	700	1,500	15	5	638	10.38	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3
48	Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP San Diego, CA	1946	21	7	206	331	16	9	182	7.69	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
49	Hudson Lambert Parrott Walker, LLC Atlanta, GA	2013	8	4	20	30	20	15	550	92.5	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB
50	Porter Hedges LLP Houston, TX	1981	14	2	116	220	14	9	1,000	10.7	CD,DF,DR,CT,CV,GC,IC,LE,MA,P3,SB

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EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS

How can construction firms protect themselves during materials shortages?



Arguably the most effective mechanism for shifting the risk of supply-chain disruptions to other parties is through careful and thoughtful contract drafting.

WM. CARY WRIGHT
CHAIR, CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE
GROUP
Carlton Fields



It is imperative to communicate with both upstream and downstream parties regarding potential materials delays and to attempt to mitigate the impact and their cost on the project through cooperation and planning.

BEN WESTCOTT
CO-MANAGING SHAREHOLDER
Andrews Myers PC



Contractors should make sure they have a clear understanding, prior to proposing on a project, of the owner's intention as to where the risk of materials shortages will fall.

ERIC LEWIS NELSON
MANAGING PARTNER
Smith Currie & Hancock LLP



Contractors should assess risk related to where the project falls within a few categories: project delivery type, the project owner type and the project's status.

MICHAEL METZ-TOPODAS
PARTNER
Cohen Seglias



A contractor must be sure to include contract language that allows for compensation associated with early delivery and storage of materials that may be in short supply or difficult to find and secure.

ROB REMINGTON
PARTNER
Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP



Contractors need a dual strategy to both successfully complete impacted projects already under contract and to effectively address escalation risk in new contracts.

BRET R. GUNNELL
FOUNDING PARTNER
Beltzer Bangert & Gunnell

When is it appropriate for a contractor to invoke a force majeure clause?



A triggering event needs to first activate the force majeure provisions. The provision may describe the triggering event conceptually, specifically and/or in catch-all terms.

BEN DACHEPALLI
PARTNER
Bradley

What laws indemnify against errors and omissions arising from the work of the other party?



There are some protections under the law, provided that the claim for indemnity does not include claims of or damages resulting from a heightened degree of wrongdoing.

TIMOTHY WOODWARD
CHAIR OF THE CONSTRUCTION
PRACTICE GROUP
Shutts & Bowen LLP

What should a contractor consider when hiring a construction attorney?



Contractors should do their research to determine whether construction law is truly an attorney's specialty or whether it is one of many areas of the attorney's practice.

ROBERT SMITH
PARTNER
Fabyanske, Westra, Hart & Thomson



Key considerations include whether that attorney or their firm practices in the jurisdiction where the problem or the dispute resolution mechanism is located.

ALLEN W. ESTES, III
PARTNER, CO-CHAIR OF
CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE GROUP
Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani

What laws protect contractors for work already performed?



Ultimately, the key to payment involves reserving claims on waivers and making sure you meet the statutory and bond deadlines to preserve your right to payment.

ANGELA M. RICHIE
PARTNER, CO-CHAIR OF
CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE
Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani

What legal protections prevent bid rigging and ensure fair competition for government contracts?



To meet its goal of fiscal responsibility, Congress enacted a set of rules that govern the vast majority of its purchases.

STEVEN WEBER
PARTNER
Peckar & Abramson, P.C.

When should a construction firm use liens or other methods to secure the right to payment of its costs and fees from an owner?



Contractors should always use liens to secure their rights to payment when applicable.

But there are certain circumstances where this is more effective than others.

JASON LAMBERT
PARTNER
Dinsmore & Shohl LLP



When the contractor has properly requested payments but the owner is not issuing payments, the lien process is available to pursue payment.

JOSHUA LEVY
PARTNER
Husch Blackwell LLP

Can statements made during a mediation process later be used in an arbitration process?



In federal and state courts, statements made during mediation are generally protected from disclosure pursuant to procedural or evidentiary rules.

GREGORY COKINOS
PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Cokinos | Young

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CORPORATE PROFILE: LEADERS IN CONSTRUCTION LAW

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ADMITTED STATES



OFFICE LOCATIONS

Los Angeles, CA; Oakland, CA; Washington, D.C.;
Miami, FL; Chicago, IL; Boston, MA, River Edge, NJ;
New York, NY; Austin, TX; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX

COMPANY CONTACT

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SPONSORED CONTENT

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion— and Construction

Businesses across the construction industry, like many others, have been deeply affected by the “Great Resignation.” From our corporate cultures to our balance sheets, recruiting and retention methods and other business strategies, as well as the ways we use and leverage technology—this trend has led to numerous changes and more than a few challenges.

So how does construction as an industry address this workforce “disruption”? Already contending with ongoing impacts due to an aging workforce, a critical part of the solution is both increased attention and dedicated resources focused on the development of more diverse teams.

WHERE WE STAND.

Economists signal a sign of relief as current employment within the industry has exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Yet, the construction unemployment rate of 6% is well above the 3.5% unemployment rate across all industries.

But how does the construction industry compete with other companies for skilled labor and employees? One part of the answer resides in both increased attention and dedicated resources for diversity and inclusion within an organization.

The terms “diversity” and “inclusion” may seem overused and undefinable. Diversity can be defined as a variety of abilities, skills, backgrounds and experiences. While inclusion reflects a sense of belonging. Organizations that embrace diversity and inclusion practices excel in recruiting, retention and overall growth.

THE WORKFORCE IS DIVERSE.

A study conducted concluded that the tradeswomen workforce is very diverse. Of 2,635 respondents, 17.8% identified as Latina, 15.5% as Black, 5% as Asian, 4.2% as Native American and 54.3% as White.

The tradeswomen became attracted to the construction industry because of the pay and benefits. Of those surveyed, 55% earned at least \$50,000 compared to the median annual earnings for all women of \$36,000, the latter number according to a separate study. Despite the higher pay over their non-construction peers, 44% of tradeswomen considered leaving the industry due to lack of respect, discrimination and harassment.





While higher wages were a primary hook that lured employees into the industry, retention requires acknowledgement and commitment to diversity and inclusion practices.

THE BENEFIT OF AN INCLUSIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

The industry has heavily invested in safety training and programs that have transformed organizations. Similarly, organizations that invest in diversity and inclusion practices have reported higher employee engagement, increased ability to recruit the most qualified workers and higher productivity. Organizations that recognize the impact of implicit bias can prevent employee burnout and turnover.

For corporate leaders, profits are naturally among the most influential metrics driving business decisions. Numerous studies have indicated that diverse teams do better, with one recent report indicating that companies with ethnically diverse executive teams are 33% more likely to outperform another team’s profit margin.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICES.

A company’s leadership must assess its understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion, recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their workforce and identify the challenges to implementing best practices.

A new generation of leaders—along with existing, committed allies—is focusing on the development of diverse employees and putting their time, human and financial resources behind these efforts. Efforts must be supported by a company’s leadership to see maximum benefit.

Written by Crystal T. Dang, Senior Associate

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market commentary
refers to Peckar &
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COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS

- Top ranked in *Construction Executive's Top 50 Construction Law Firms™*, 2020-2022
- Named a "2021 Practice Group of the Year" for Government Contracts by Law360
- Named a "2020 Practice Group of the Year" for Construction Law by Law360
- 108 attorneys across all offices are listed in Chambers USA, 2021 edition, including eight attorneys ranked nationally
- 312 attorneys from across all offices are listed in The Best Lawyers in America®, 2022 edition, including 46 attorneys that are listed in Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch
- Top ranked for the 12th consecutive year in U.S. News & World Report

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Founded in Alabama in 1870, Bradley has retained the tradition of Southern hospitality even as the firm has grown into a global force. As one of only a handful of U.S. law firms to reach this milestone, the firm has developed a national reputation for serving businesses around the world.

From initial contract negotiation and bid preparation to project closeout and dispute resolution, Bradley's Construction Practice Group has handled every aspect of large-scale construction projects across the country and internationally. Bradley's broad experience comes from a hands-on approach to managing both the business and legal challenges its clients face every day. Bradley understands the sophisticated dynamics of the construction industry at home and abroad, and it delivers smart, real-world solutions to its clients.

Bradley's construction lawyers travel extensively to advise clients on projects in the United States, Canada and Mexico, as well as more than 35 countries across Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, the Middle East, the Caribbean and South America. The company recognizes that the nature of its practice demands spending time onsite at projects, with its lawyers engaging with clients face-to-face on matters as they develop.

Although Bradley is a large law firm with almost 600 lawyers, its clients still enjoy the personal attention, responsiveness and deep relationships they would expect from a boutique firm. For Bradley, nothing is more important than relationships with its clients. The firm combines unsurpassed integrity with a flexible and professional approach to advance clients' interests. The company has built a reputation for taking a collaborative approach to solving clients' legal challenges, and it maintains a deep level of commitment to the highest quality client service.

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Construction and Government Contract Law

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With eight offices nationwide, Smith Currie provides legal services to the public and private construction industry spanning the entire spectrum of project design, contract drafting and negotiation, project administration and dispute resolution—from the ground up.

CONSTRUCTION

Smith Currie attorneys assist clients throughout a construction project’s lifespan and beyond to help achieve better outcomes and successful projects, consulting on project development; drafting and negotiating project-related contracts; and advising during project construction. Smith Currie’s lawyers also represent clients in claim development, litigation, arbitration and all forms of dispute resolution.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Smith Currie has decades of experience navigating the complex laws governing federal contracting, assisting and advising clients entering the federal market as well as experienced federal contractors on a wide range of public works projects. Its lawyers regularly handle federal procurement matters including bid protests, regulatory compliance, material and labor pricing compliance, small business teaming arrangements, surety bonding matters, claim preparation and prosecution, and government investigations.

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Cokinos | Young has led Texas construction law for over three decades. And today, its team of more than 100 dedicated professionals operate coast to coast and proudly handle all aspects of construction law. The firm provides both dispute resolution and transactional services to clients through all phases of commercial, industrial, pipeline, offshore, civil and residential construction.

Successfully navigating construction law requires lawyers with industry-specific knowledge, skills and experience. Cokinos | Young's specialized attorneys routinely handle challenging and complex projects from design and development to completion and disputes. The team includes experienced trial and arbitration lawyers prepared to address the challenges unique to complex construction disputes, as well as experienced transactional lawyers focused on construction contract drafting and negotiation, real estate and corporate issues.

Cokinos | Young's reputation was built on a relentless commitment to client service and the construction industry, and that remains its primary driver. From California to Texas to New Jersey, the firm is there for its construction clients every step of the way. Dedication. Resilience. Expertise. That's Cokinos | Young. We look forward to working with you.



CORPORATE PROFILE:
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Avoiding Pitfalls

How to communicate a vaccine mandate to your organization—before, during and after its implementation.

BY JENNIFER L'ESTRANGE

While Biden administration vaccine mandates for large companies and federal contractors have been overturned and suspended,

respectively, the pandemic's lingering presence suggests that the debate over mandates isn't going anywhere. With that in mind, construction companies

should consider both the financial and opportunity costs around mandate implementation at their own organizations. Moreover, once a decision is made, how

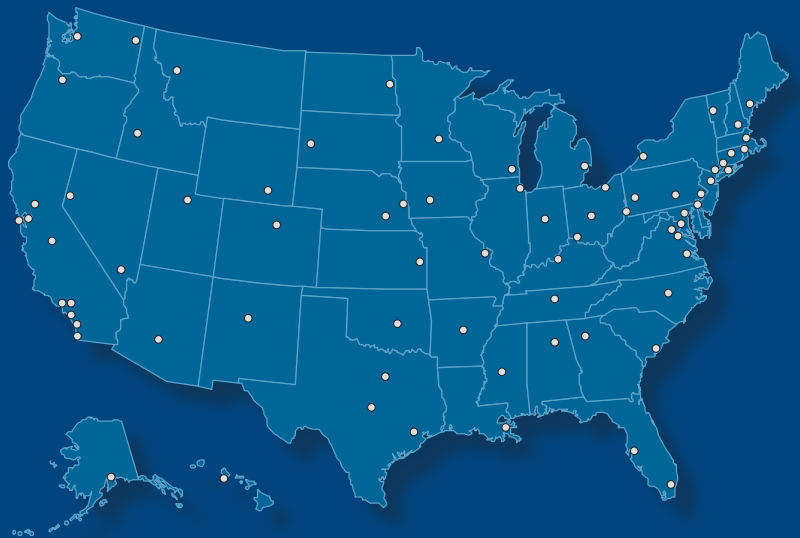
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management sets about communicating the decision will mean the difference between success and failure.

Can You Afford to Do It?

When making any substantive change in an organization, it’s important to look at the cost of implementation as well as the productivity cost during and after the change. For organizations that decide to mandate vaccinations, extending the time for remote work after vaccination will likely have an impact on business continuity. Reconfiguring conference rooms and open-space offices can be expensive and time consuming.

On the other side of the equation, given that so few organizations were conversant in remote work practices in March 2020, ongoing remote work may impact productivity unless there is an intentional effort to establish ways of working and managing performance that are built for a virtual world. Also, consider the risk to business continuity in the event of an office outbreak. It is difficult to mitigate in advance and even more challenging to solve with little to no lead time with the current transmission rates. So, the question becomes not only can you afford to do it, but can you afford not to?

Company Values and Culture

Any change that is perceived as being counter to the company’s culture will meet with employee resistance. Organizations deciding between vaccinations or weekly testing should consider which change supports a larger company value.

Consider one business that has already come forward saying that they are requiring staff members to be vaccinated to help protect them from exposure to the virus and has asked—or required—that customers do the same. Now, consider another that has allowed employees to make the choice between vaccination or testing for themselves, believing that individual choice and personal accountability are at the forefront of the issue. Both sides of the argument are grounded in values-based conversations and aligned to culture. And both can be successful as policy.

There are solutions, but they need to be developed thoughtfully. Both precipitous change and swift refusal are damaging to businesses. Once a decision

“ *The question becomes not only can you afford to do it, but can you afford not to?* ”

is made, communications planning and execution takes the lead. Some of the best ideas have fallen flat because of poor communication, and this is no exception. The simplest way to think of communications planning comes from Aristotle: “Tell them what you’re going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you told them.”

Before the change: This begins when management is considering change—either at the beginning of a project, or in this case, on the back of a change that impacts the workforce. The focus of the communication is twofold: Communicate why the change is being considered and, in a second step, how it may impact employees.

Surveys, focus groups or task forces can be effective at this stage of communication. They provide a much-needed pulse check on organizational climate and may shed light on new and different issues. However, ask the question—and be ready for the answer. Running a survey or focus group generates demand. It creates an implied contract that the company and its leadership will implement any requested changes from the organization.

Non-response is not an option. For example, if you issue an employee survey to understand comfort levels with vaccination, it is critical to use that feedback to clearly communicate the survey results and how they factor into decisions around company policy. Acting in accordance with the survey results and presenting the survey as support for a decision will help policy changes be received more positively.

During the change: The first communication at this stage includes what the change is and a repeat of why it’s important to do it. Organizations that decide to mandate vaccines will also need to



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communicate the reasoning behind the decision, how they feel that the requirement is supporting culture and values and how it will achieve the overall goal, even if it's in response to a government decree.

There is also an impact on other business processes that needs to be evaluated and addressed. For example, how will job postings or initial phone screens need to be changed to communicate new requirements? What systems will need to be changed to accommodate vaccine attestations or verifications? Communication continues here until the change is fully implemented—in this

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“ *Communication is twofold: Communicate why the change is being considered and, in a second step, how it may impact employees.* ”

case, when fully vaccinated employees are working together in a physical setting.

Frequent repetition is also important. It takes several different communications, usually through different channels, for a message to be fully received by an audience. Lastly, it's important to clearly state that the change is a decision at this point, not a discussion.

After the change: Finally, it's critical that leadership walk the talk at this stage. Managers must actively support the decision, and the leadership team should have a game plan for how to handle backlash to ensure that everyone responds the same way.

Regardless of whether you plan to mandate weekly testing, vaccinations, masks, some or all of these measures, make sure to get your leadership team together to establish a communication plan in advance. If you're still in the consideration stage and aren't sure what decision to make, let alone how to communicate it, start by asking: Will the change help create a safer work environment? Will making this change reinforce or undermine core values? Can we afford to do it? Can we afford not to?

Finally, keep in mind that we've reached a point in the pandemic where companies need to be decisive and direct, and any organization that fluctuates or waivers in its decision-making should prepare for the consequences. 

Jennifer L'Estrange is founder and managing director of Red Clover. For more information, visit redcloverhr.com.

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Plugged In

Three leading contech executives discuss being a woman in construction technology, what they've accomplished—and what's still left to get done.

BY RACHEL E. O'CONNELL

Women in construction are a growing minority—increasing from 9% of industry workers in 2019 to 11% in 2021. Today, accomplished, influential women work in every sector of construction. As part of Women in Construction Week in March, *CE* checked in with three women in construction technology to discuss being a leader, where contech is headed and their contributions to the industry: Lauren Lake, chief operating officer and co-founder of Bridgit; Allison “Alli” Scott, director, construction customer experience & industry advocacy at Autodesk Construction Cloud; and Alexandra McManus, chief executive officer at Eyrus, Autodesk’s newest acquisition.

What is unique about technology in the construction industry?

Lauren Lake: A lot of technology companies take a one-size-fits-all approach with the goal of satisfying the needs of multiple industries. Essentially, the low-hanging fruit. That doesn't work for construction. The main reason construction technology adoption would be considered slow is simply that technology companies shy away from putting all their eggs in one basket.



Construction is one of the most dynamic and ever-changing industries. Contractors want (and need) tools that were designed and built specifically for construction by companies that truly understand their world and can quickly adapt to the needs of their industry.

Alli Scott: The construction industry is unique because it's one of the few industries where technology has a direct and visible impact on the physical world. The technology we use in construction not only exists in digital spaces through things like data analytics or 3D models (and more) but also lives out on job-sites and has real, tangible effects. Construction technology bridges

the digital and physical world and is an enabler to building the world around us in more productive and innovative ways.

Alexandra McManus:

Construction is very decentralized and fragmented. Technology initiatives in the industry, and specifically those on project sites, need to be able to aggregate and consolidate dynamic data sets and then add value to simplify workflow for multiple stakeholders who often work for different entities. On a project site, for example, Eyrus will coordinate with a project owner, general contractor, hundreds of subcontractors and thousands of workers. We need to be able to

provide a solution that works for that project and every other construction project, which each have their own budgets, operations and data concerns.

Why do you think technology firms are a catalyst for women-led spaces?

Scott: Both the technology and construction industries have historically struggled to attract and retain under-represented populations, including women and people of color. Both industries still have a long way to go, but as the rate of innovative technology grows, the formation of new career types also grows—creating interesting roles for individuals who may not have seen themselves in these spaces before. For instance, you don't need to know how to code to work in technology—the variety of roles is vast, from data analytics and product development to marketing, communications or even customer relationship management.

Technology firms also have adapted very quickly to pandemic conditions, creating a lot of work-life flexibility for employees. Whether we like it or not, women still make up the majority of household labor in the U.S., and more working moms left their careers or scaled back during the pandemic due to lack of flexibility in their work to accommodate other needs. Flexibility is one small way to create more equity in the workplace, and technology firms have a responsibility to keep this momentum up.

McManus: Women are generally underrepresented in the construction industry; that said, there are

a fair amount of strong women technology leaders in this industry. In my opinion, technology enables women to have a greater impact in the industry where more traditional routes might be limiting.

What do you enjoy most about leading your company?

Lake: I love that I get to have an impact in multiple ways. I get to help our customers in taking a people-first approach to their own teams, I get to provide resources and support a better work-life balance for my team, and I get to show there's space for women to succeed in both the construction and tech industries.

Scott: As a leader in construction, I enjoy inspiring the next generation to look at how the construction industry is continuing to evolve and empower them to have their voices heard and their needs met. We will not enact positive and sustainable change in our industry without an influx of new talent who are hungry to bring their authentic selves to work, excited to employ technology and an innovative mindset, and have a passion for blending new ways of working with proven craft. As someone in a leadership position, I also look for ways to support organizations or initiatives that help promote awareness and to help folks break into this industry.

McManus: My co-founder, Hussein Cholkamy, and I are working to build a successful company that would also be a place we would want to work. It gives us the chance to promote the values we believe in: hard work, inclusivity, transparency,

flexibility and a strong belief in individual empowerment. Personally, I loved that I could participate in my kids' carpool when the school buses were shut down and let everyone know that is what I am doing. We expect everyone to work hard and be accountable, but life, especially during the pandemic, dictates that work hours might be different on different days.

What is important to you about being a woman with a platform?

Scott: As a cisgendered white woman, I have a responsibility to ensure that we create space and opportunities for those who have been historically marginalized, and that also means acknowledging the intersections that exist in our world. Our teams are dynamic and have rich identities as not only women but also across cultures, ethnicity, race and as members of the LGBTQ+ community. These experiences make us who we are and do not exist in silos. This diversity and these intersections also have positive and proven impacts to increasing innovation, engagement, employee retention and even profit. So, it's important to me that we talk about these dynamics as powerful avenues for making our industry better.

McManus: There has been and still is a lot of heads-down work that we are involved with to grow Eyrus. Personally, I am still coming to the realization that as a woman, there is a greater value I can offer back to the community. I am consciously looking for ways to utilize my position to provide motivation

and understanding. On a local level, we are focused on creating an empowering and flexible workplace for everyone at Eyrus.

What do you hope to achieve with this representation, and with your position in general?

Lake: Being a leader at Bridgit has allowed me to put a stake in the ground on the topics that are important to me. This year, we announced a progressive parental leave program, including paid time off for birth/non-birth/adoptive parents; paid leave for pregnancy loss; coverage of fertility drugs; and a phased return-to-work to make the transition easier on parents. Having two young kids myself, I know firsthand that these are policies that will help create equality in the workforce. I love that Bridgit has given me and Mallorie Brodie (my co-founder) the platform to bring our own perspective and shine a light on a different approach.

It's rare to see a company with two women founders, not to mention a team of 100 employees with a 50/50 gender split. It's important to us to show that people from all different backgrounds can succeed at Bridgit. There is nothing more satisfying than seeing our team members thrive at Bridgit.

McManus: By promoting and showcasing how we value our people and by giving them flexibility and control, we hope to inspire greatness from our team. In turn, we hope for Eyrus to provide the same culture to our customers. Having happy employees and happy customers goes a long way.

What is different about you and your company that no one else is bringing to construction?

Lake: We are the only workforce planning product built specifically for general contractors to manage professional staff. We saw that the leading general contractors were managing their professional, salaried employees on spreadsheets or even whiteboards. Trying to understand the utilization rate, hiring needs and capacity to bid more work was incredibly difficult when everything was done manually. There were no other companies focused on solving this pain point for general contractors, and it was clear it was a big opportunity. We made the conscious decision to focus on large-scale general contractors only to start, as being focused would allow us to build a better-fit product for those customers.

McManus: Eyrus provides a jobsite intelligence solution to help manage things like equipment and materials. We understand that the dynamic of a jobsite can change and be difficult, and we are providing a holistic solution to fit any dynamic. We continuously consider the difficulties contractors, trade partners and trade workers face when trying to complete a project, and aim to deliver a technology platform that is flexible enough to fit within their sometimes drastically different project environments. Eyrus provides the platform to manage the complete worksite, so the site team can focus on building the project.

What is the biggest risk for you right now, in this position? And the biggest risk for contech?

Lake: Consolidation. We've seen a lot of companies be acquired by the big players in a battle for market dominance. While this has created a lot of excitement in the industry, it can change the experience for the customer. At Bridgit, our magic is our speed and agility. We are able to speak one-on-one with our users and implement feedback in real time. We know that construction companies want a streamlined solution, so we have invested heavily in building robust integrations with the other leading construction software companies. This has allowed us to offer the seamless experience customers are looking for, while maintaining the nimbleness we have as an independent company. We believe the industry also benefits from this, as we are able to continue innovating at top speed.

McManus: Both risks are the same. There is a lot of technology in the construction market, and many of them are niche solutions or work with only one stakeholder group on a project. But in the field, the focus is to build a project, not to manage technology. Technology needs to work together more seamlessly, and solutions will need to be consolidated. 🇺🇸

Rachel E. O'Connell (oconnell@abc.org) is senior editor of Construction Executive.



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SETTING UP SHOP: A crew of volunteers prepares the worksite at Francine Roberson's home. Together, the team helped to complete repairs that Roberson had been unable to keep up with on her own, ensuring safe living conditions for the U.S. Army veteran.

Women Warriors

A safe housing initiative gets a boost from ABC Greater Houston's LOGIC committee while partnering to provide critical repairs to the home of a female veteran.

BY MAGGIE MURPHY

On a quiet street in southeast Houston, U.S. Army veteran Francine Roberson lives in a modest 1960s rambler that she's called home for the better part of 30 years. Roberson inherited the house from her mother in 1990, and over time—as with all homes of a certain age—it began to show signs of wear and tear.

Enter Rebuilding Together Houston, which, as the largest and oldest affiliate of the national Rebuilding Together network, has provided hundreds of families, low-income elderly individuals, homeowners with disabilities and U.S.

military veterans with much-needed home repairs on an annual basis. During this year's national Women in Construction Week from March 6-12, the organization partnered with Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Houston's LOGIC (Ladies Operating for Growth in Construction) committee on a day of community service dedicated to making repairs on Roberson's home.

A LOGIC-al Partnership

Created just three years ago, ABC Greater Houston's LOGIC committee aims to assist women who are presently in the construction

industry through continuing education, community outreach and networking programs, and to provide a channel for women to enter the construction workforce. Each year, the committee's more than 140 members have the opportunity to participate in two community service events. When the opportunity presented itself to partner with Rebuilding Together Houston on a female veteran's home repairs, the "yes" was a no-brainer.

"Knowing that Rebuilding Together Houston was celebrating its 40th anniversary with an ambitious project schedule



NEVER SAW THIS COMING: Karsten Interiors Logistics Manager Nora Casanova doesn't often get hands-on construction experience, but the opportunity to learn skills from women in the field was "very exciting, and a fitting way to wrap Women in Construction Week."

this year, we were interested in helping them out," says Noraliz Casanova, logistics manager for Karsten Interiors and co-chair of the LOGIC committee. "When we learned of Francine's story, we knew it was the perfect fit for our committee. What better way to celebrate Women in Construction Week than with a group of women in the construction industry volunteering time to repair a female veteran's home?"


On the morning of Saturday, March 12—a rodeo day in Houston, where the sport reigns supreme and generally commands the attention of the city—a group of nearly 40 women, representing 15 construction companies and ranging from seasoned construction professionals to entry-level workers, met up at Roberson's home. Although their day-to-day roles differ—some office managers and accountants, some

superintendents and project engineers—the group worked together to complete repairs that included renovations to siding, caulking and replacing windows.

"It was really incredible to see this group of women come together and just learn from one another," Casanova says. "Some of us had never picked up a power tool, and those who had that hands-on construction experience stepped in and showed us the ropes."

Domino Effect

If the LOGIC committee's mission boils down to one thing, it's to empower women—a mission they work toward each and every day through a mix of networking events, leadership development opportunities and charitable outreach.

"I think that women's success is just contagious. As a woman, you see other go-getter women and you start thinking, 'Why am I not doing this thing?'" Casanova says. "If I could pass along one piece of advice to the incoming women in this industry, it's to encourage yourself and those around you to just get involved. Coming off the high of a successful Women in Construction Week like we have here [in Houston], you know there are going to be people who are excited to do it again—and that momentum is like a domino. If you can inject that sense of purpose and drive into just one other person, then little by little, you can start something really big." 

Maggie Murphy (murphy@abc.org) is managing editor of Construction Executive.

VIEWPOINTS



Amanda Tran

McCownGordon Construction
Packaging Manager,
Manufacturing Business Unit
Kansas City, Missouri

What is the future of your vertical (packaging engineering) in the construction space?

I think there will be a surge of multidisciplinary, engineering, procurement and construction-style projects that will incorporate both the “box” and the “inside-the-box” solutions.

Do you have any pets?

I don’t have any pets yet, but I am hoping to get a red miniature poodle in the future that would be named Ginger. I have niece and nephew poodles named Elleigh and Othello.

Describe a time you overcame a workplace challenge. How did this change your career?

On one project, there were some disagreements between the onsite team and the project management team due to different communication styles. This taught me to understand how to work with different communication types and the need to develop a communications plan early on the project.

Disney or Pixar?

Disney. I love anything Marvel, with my favorite being “Guardians of the Galaxy”!


Is there a podcast you can’t stop listening to?

My recent obsession has been “The Dropout,” which follows the rise and fall of Theranos and Elizabeth Holmes.

Do you prefer work from home, work from the office or hybrid?

I prefer hybrid. I love the flexibility that working from home brings, but I love mingling and working face-to-face with people in the office.

If you could trade places with anyone for a day, whom would you choose?

Oprah, in order to have the opportunity to talk to whomever I want and have immediate impact. 



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