THE LEADING BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR CONTRACTORS

NOVEMBER 2025 | CONSTRUCTIONBUSINESSOWNER.COM

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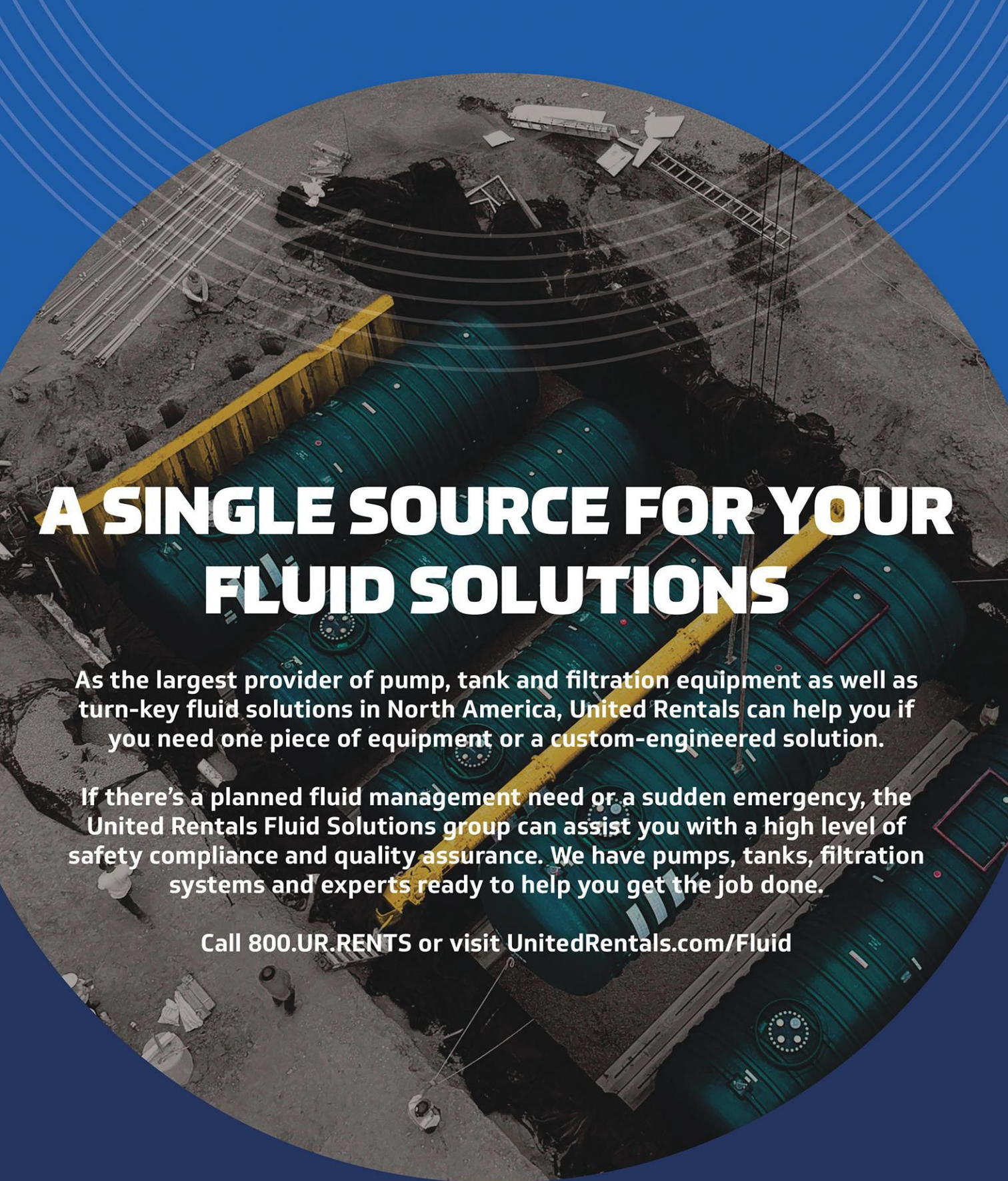
12 OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION



Marina Andrade-Silva
Project Manager
Bauer Foundation Corp.

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FROM THE EDITOR

MEGAN BEAM



Editor-in-Chief
Megan Beam

Earlier this fall, I had the opportunity to visit the Autodesk University Design & Make Conference for the first time since starting with Construction Business Owner. It was every bit as exciting as I'd been told. Even as I wandered the show floor, I could overhear experts from all over the world dig into their niche areas with ease and tour some of the coolest, most innovative corners of emerging technology.

One of the events I attended was a media and analyst exclusive session with Autodesk CEO Andrew Anagnost, who talked through the newest cloud-based workflows, specifically Forma (formerly Autodesk Construction Cloud/Built). As naturally as any other tech conversation these days, many questions steered back to the use and expectations of artificial intelligence (AI) in the construction industry.

He explained that Forma is Autodesk's bid to connect every stage of work — from concept sketches to jobsite execution — under one intelligent system. Its new AI engines aren't the chatbots crowding our screens but trained "brains" that know construction logic, materials and tolerances. The aim isn't to take the reins from engineers or builders at all, according to Anagnost. It's to clear the clutter so the human decisions can be made faster and smarter. Overall, think fewer reuploads, quicker cost updates and a continuous thread of real-time data from design to delivery. Even the session itself felt like the kind of collaboration the construction industry has been fostering (through massive changes) for decades.

The emphasis on keeping the human in the loop feels fitting to point us back to our November issue, as we honor the women driving change across every area of construction in our 2025 Outstanding Women in Construction (OWIC) spotlight, beginning on page 22. Reading through these profiles only validated for me that innovation isn't just about smarter tools but about the people bold enough to use them differently. Every major shift in this industry has been carried forward by someone (or a group of someones) willing to learn, to listen and to try. So, as you read this year's OWIC stories, I hope you'll find a bit of boldness stirring in yourself, too. The tools may change, but the courage to try something different is still at the heart of this industry.

As always, thanks for reading,



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Construction Business Owner (ISSN 1551-3246) is published by Cahaba Media Group, PO Box 530067, Birmingham, AL 35253. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, AL and additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: Free of charge to qualified construction business owners. Publisher reserves the right to determine qualifications. Annual subscriptions: U.S. and possessions $48, all other countries $125 U.S. funds (via air mail). Single copies: U.S. and possessions $5, all other countries $15 U.S. funds (via air mail). Call 800-256-2785 inside or outside the U.S. Postmaster: Send changes of address and form 3579 to Construction Business Owner, PO Box 271, Lincolnshire, IL 60069-9835.

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WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION



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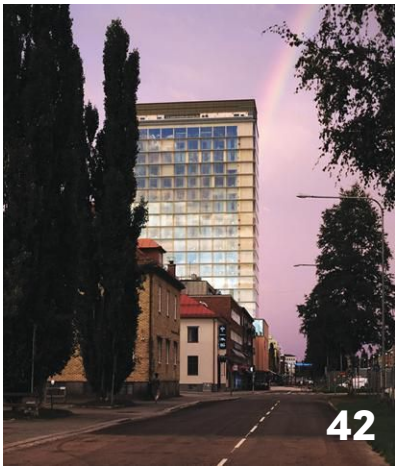
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SCAN FOR MORE INFO

Procore Announces Ajei Gopal as CEO


Ajei Gopal

Procore Technologies Inc. announced the appointment of Ajei Gopal as CEO officer designate, and a member of the company's board of directors. Gopal will succeed Procore's founder, president and CEO Tooey Courtemanche following the public announcement of the company's Q3 financial results, with an anticipated start date of Nov. 10. Courtemanche will then transition out of operational responsibilities and focus on his role as chair of the board of directors. Gopal has over 35 years of experience leading global technology companies at scale, most recently serving as the president and CEO of Ansys Inc. from 2017 to 2025. Gopal's tenure at Ansys culminated in leading the company through its $35 billion acquisition by Synopsys Inc., after which he was appointed to Synopsys' board of directors. Procore reaffirms its third quarter fiscal 2025 and full-year fiscal 2025 guidance, as previously announced in its earnings release for its second quarter 2025 financial results on July 31. Visit procore.com.

Skanska & USF Launch 5th Cohort of Mentor Program

Skanska partnered with the University of South Florida's (USF) Office of Supplier Development and Engagement to launch the fifth cohort of the USF Mentor Protege Program in Tampa Bay. The free 12-week mentorship and training program is part of Skanska's Construction Management Building Blocks initiative, designed to help smaller construction businesses strengthen their capacity, expand operations and successfully compete for larger projects. Now in its fifth year in partnership with USF, this program aims to foster growth, enhance capabilities and build capacity for these businesses by providing tailored course content, resources and networking opportunities. The 2025 comprehensive training and development program brought together industry experts from Skanska, USF and community partners to lead hands-on workshops, one-on-one mentoring sessions and practicums. Topics ranged from project management and financial planning to regulatory compliance and business development strategies. Through this program, participants gained insights, practical skills and the support needed to thrive in the competitive construction sector. The program also includes two site visits, one at a Skanska construction project and another at a USF Health facility, giving participants exposure to best practices on active jobsites. Visit skanska.com.

CM Labs Launches Real-Time 3-Person Crew Simulation

CM Labs Simulations, a vendor of simulation-based training solutions in the construction, utilities and ports industries, announced the launch of Intellia 3-Person Crew Training for tracked excavators, articulated dump trucks and dozers. Featuring an open, sandbox environment, this new training solution immerses crews in a shared virtual workspace where they can coordinate operations, communicate in real time, and build the collaborative skills needed to perform safely and efficiently on the job. The open environment is realistic: earth rendered in the training uses CM Labs' technology, allowing it to spread, move and clump just like the real thing. Intellia 3-Person Crew Training requires a minimum of three simulators to run. It is compatible with the following CM Labs simulators: Edge Plus, Edge Max, and Advantage. Visit cm-labs.com.

Concrete Foundations Association Launches YouTube for Podcast

The Concrete Foundations Association (CFA) launched its new YouTube platform for the "Behind the Mike" podcast series, marking a strategic expansion of the organization's digital presence. This platform enhancement coincides with CFA's 50th anniversary celebration, featuring eight exclusive interviews with industry leaders who have shaped the residential concrete foundation sector. The newly launched YouTube channel provides accessibility and visual engagement for the podcast content, allowing professionals throughout the architecture, engineering and construction industry to access insights from experienced pros. To commemorate its milestone anniversary, CFA has added comprehensive interviews with eight industry professionals. The featured interviews include Ron Ward from Western Forms, Cole Beaudin of Perma-Structo Inc., Mark Irving from Irving Equipment, Russ Talpey of Talpey Construction, Mark Saldana of Saldana Concrete, Jason Ells from Custom Concrete, Dave Martinson of Martinson Construction and Amy Woodall from Conscious Habit. Visit cfaconcretepros.org.

Gordian Appoints Sharon Lubrano as Chief Marketing Officer


Sharon Lubrano

Gordian, a provider data-driven solutions for the building life cycle, appointed Sharon Lubrano as chief marketing officer. Lubrano brings extensive leadership experience and an approach to marketing strategy that will support Gordian's continued growth and customer-centric mission. In the new role, Lubrano will lead Gordian's global marketing organization, overseeing brand strategy, integrated campaigns, marketing operations and go-to-market execution. Lubrano most recently served as chief marketing officer at Litmos. Prior to that, she held senior marketing leadership roles at iCIMS and Dodge Data & Analytics. Earlier in her career, Sharon held general management and product leadership roles at ProQuest and LexisNexis before focusing on strategic marketing. Visit gordian.com.

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The Final 64 Seconds

Sometimes how you start will dictate how you finish



GREGG M. SCHOPPMAN is a partner with FMI Corporation, management consultants and investment bankers for the construction industry. Schoppman specializes in the areas of productivity and project management. He also leads FMI's project management consulting practice. Prior to joining FMI, Schoppman served as a senior project manager for a general contracting firm in central Florida. He has completed complex construction projects in the medical, pharmaceutical, office, heavy civil, industrial, manufacturing and multifamily markets. He holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in civil engineering, as well as a Master of Business Administration. Schoppman has expertise in numerous contract delivery methods, as well as knowledge of many geographical markets. Contact Schoppman by email at gregg.schoppman@fmicorp.com. Visit fmicorp.com.

64 seconds. No, this isn't me breaking my diet so soon after declaring a "new me" after stepping on the scale again. And yes, this may look like a complete fanboy moment, seeing as how I do bleed orange and blue. 64 seconds is the amount of time that the University of Florida's men's basketball team were leading in the 2025 national championship game. The readers from Texas might also be popping an antacid tablet as they see this, and for that I apologize. In truly one of the best championship runs, Florida ended up winning 65-63 against the University of Houston. Those who watched the game know that Houston was winning for 99.94% of that game (maybe no antacids, but blood pressure meds were on tap). There was a 12-point run where momentum shifted, and Florida ultimately secured its third basketball national title. As I sat in my recliner with the biggest smile on my face — purchasing my national championship "drip," as the kids would say — I immediately started thinking about how the Gators might be memorialized in sports history, but also how they might be the best-in-class mark as a construction closer. Let me explain.

So many of the organizations that I see discuss their ability to begin a project well, only to see their lead dwindle as it enters the home stretch. The punch list looks more like a novel than a quick summary, collecting closeout documents looks more like guessing the numbers in the Powerball and as-built drawings are reminiscent of a 4-year-old's coloring book. The final stage of the project probably should've been 64 seconds, but the entire project team is chugging Gatorade and sucking oxygen in the trailer, barely capable of mustering any energy. That is also under the grand assumption that the project team assigned with the completion is even the same team that started the project, since a preponderance of contractors have a tendency to pull their starting team. Imagine if my team had decided with 64 second remaining to put in that true, walk-on freshman who has only touched the ball when it rolled near him while on the bench.

There may be something in the "start" that requires more depth of understanding. None of the readers have ever muttered the following:

- "We will do whatever the client wants at the start: We get awarded a job on a Friday, and we'll start that Friday if need be."
- "Getting started is simple: We throw together a job book, do a handoff/dump and throw bodies at it. We'll throw A LOT of bodies if we need to. "
- "We start like a thoroughbred, coming out of the gates strong."

Interestingly enough, I have heard that last quote amended to include "but they

sure do finish like a mule." It is almost as if the construction community either fails to plan for a full game, losing steam in that last moment, or they think those small, tedious details at the end will finish themselves — only to create a death by a thousand paper cuts.

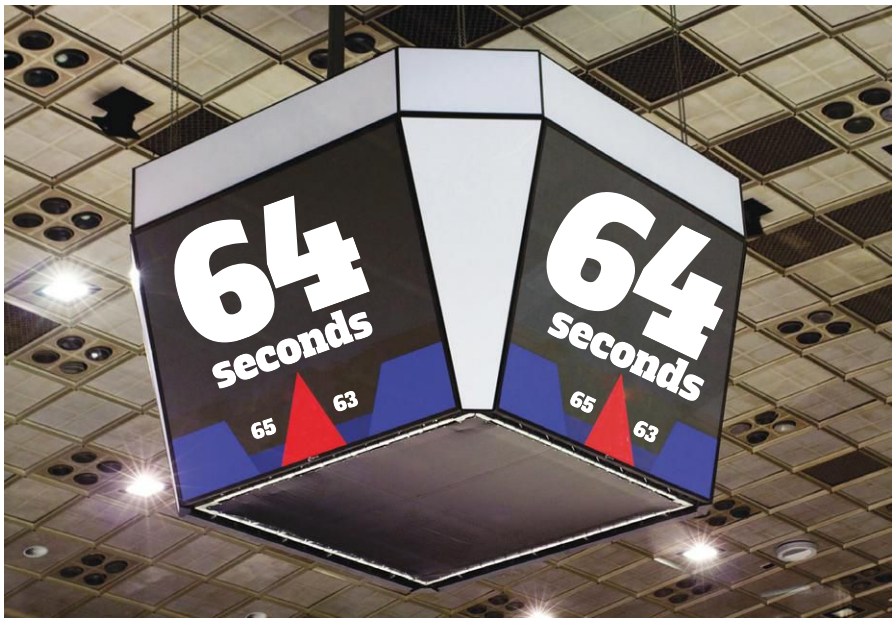
It is a mind-boggling phenomenon when you consider how many organizations truly struggle with this phase of work. Consider the reasons that could be root causes of closeout failure:

- Unknown expectations of what "done" looks like from the customer's perspective
- Unknown expectations about what the city, municipality or agency will require at the conclusion
- Supervision shuffling toward the end because of new project demands
- Distracted project leadership and an inability to finish the paperwork, possibly rooted in euphoria also created by new project demands
- Clients that are not motivated to get done when you want to get done
- Clients that have a never-ending "shopping list" of extras that complicate getting the base contract completed
- Clients that see the contractor as a "free maintenance staff"

Not all of these reasons specifically mean that the contractor exhibits a lack of control or weak operational execution. For instance, there are plenty of contractors deeply invested in fanatical customer service, and something like the last bulleted item may be a customer that is abusing a relationship. However, there is also a difference between a one-off client situation and a systemic breakdown within a business that consistently erodes margins and burns extra general conditions well past the final game buzzer.

Closeout, or a firm's "exit strategy," should be as well defined as a firm's kickoff strategy. Some of the closeout best practices should include the following:

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- *Preconstruction strategy* — If you call your project start a "handoff" or "turnover," please stop. This evokes a baton toss rather than a collaborative and structured strategy. More importantly, does a weak startup lead to an even weaker finish?
- *The end at the beginning* — "Begin with the end in mind" was a famous phrase, hardly invented by me. However, Stephen Covey clearly understood that closeout needs to be an integral part of preconstruction
- *Determination of the start of closeout* — Every firm has that moment where either closeout begins or when personnel transitions to a new project. Identify when the exit strategy process should begin in either case.
- *The closeout meeting* — Whether it is assigning punch list ownership or determining a timeline for document collections, each project should have a firmwide consistency closeout meeting
- *Client management* — Sure, the specifications say one thing, but how intimately does your client understand what done looks like? Better yet, do you know what they expect at the conclusion? How are you managing or exceeding those expectations?
- *Measurement of closeout* — How long is the process taking? What metrics are you using to measure the efficiency of your closeout process?

Consider the last item. Imagine your marketing or preconstruction team being able to use a metric like the following: "Our construction team has a closeout process, and our firm typically finishes a job 10% ahead of schedule compared to our competition," or "Over the last five years, we have a year-over-year improvement on our projects of 4.3%."

It is also important to ask your team about the "final date" they invest all of their energy in. It is possible that your team has made it a practice to focus on the two of worst words in the industry — substantial completion — rather than the ones that have the real power: final acceptance. Too often, there is a sense of urgency tied to substantial completion, only to see an organization take its foot off the gas in that final push.

Maybe that is where Houston failed to convert … they certainly had the first 99% down, but history will remember how Florida finished the game. ▲

Honor, Humility & Health

How Houck invests in its people



CAL BEYER, CWP, is senior director of SAFE Workplaces for SAFE Project. Beyer is a longtime national advocate for workplace mental health, substance misuse, suicide prevention, and opioid risk reduction and overdose prevention. This grew out of his work on human capital risk management and worker well-being. SAFE Project is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to overcoming the addiction epidemic in the U.S. Established in 2017 by Admiral James and Mary Winnefeld after the tragic loss of their 19-year-old son Jonathan due to an opioid overdose, SAFE Project aims to save lives impacted by substance use and mental health challenges through overdose prevention and response, education on stigma, and development of prevention and recovery programs. SAFE Project also provides tailored guidance and programming for workplaces and organizations; within college and university campuses; for veterans, service members and their families; and within communities. Since 2016, Beyer has served as a member of the editorial advisory board for Construction Business Owner. Reach Beyer at cal@safeproject.us or 651-307-7883. Visit safeproject.us.

If you visit Houck's headquarters in Linglestown, Pennsylvania (just outside Harrisburg), you'll see a plaque in the foyer honoring Lawrence Houck Jr., a Vietnam War veteran. You'll also likely be greeted by name, offered a laugh and maybe even told a story about someone's grandkids. This isn't just a company; it's a legacy, and one built on people first.

Founded in 1947 by Lawrence Houck, this third-generation, family-owned specialty contractor has grown into a leading facility preservation company across the mid-Atlantic. With around 500 employees and expertise in everything from masonry to solar panel installation, Houck is no stranger to scale. Its foundation isn't concrete or steel but its core values: honor, humility and health. (And if you ask Gary Houck Sr., who still signs his emails as "FOB — Father of the Boss" and "CTM — Chief Troublemaker," humor counts too.)

Now led by CEO Lin Sensenig and Chief Wellness Officer Kara McCaffrey, the founder's granddaughter, Houck is doubling down on what makes it truly unique: a deep commitment to its people and intentional culture building. The company is a leader in mental health and suicide and overdose prevention efforts.

Strategic Growth Rooted in Culture

Over its history, Houck has acquired more than 10 companies across Pennsylvania and Maryland, many of them since 2019. According to Sensenig, every acquisition is rooted in culture building:

- Newly acquired company leaders are invited to Houck's senior leadership team from Day 1 to foster trust and collaboration.
- Local teams gain access to centralized support in human resources, safety and finance, while preserving their operational identity.
- Houck's values are reinforced consistently through onboarding, leadership meetings and employee engagement.
- Cultural integration is approached as a long-term relationship, not a checklist.

"We preserve the entrepreneurial spirit that made these companies valuable," said Sensenig. "But we align around shared values. That's the glue."

Wellness & Mental Health at the Core

For McCaffrey, Houck's commitment to health and wellness is deeply personal. Her older brother, Gary Jr., died by suicide in 2005. "At the time, I didn't know that suicide was disproportionately affecting people in construction," she said. After a decade in health care tech — leading suicide prevention initiatives in clinical software — McCaffrey returned to the family business in 2023, not out of guilt but with purpose.

"I realized I wasn't just continuing the family legacy. I had something to offer to our employees and to the industry," she said. "I feel lucky every day to do this work."

Houck walks the talk when it comes to wellness following many best practices recommended by SAFE Project:

- Integrating mental health into physical safety culture
- Offering year-round health and wellness campaigns through texts, newsletters, posters and mailings home to families
- Improving access to care by piloting mobile primary care services
- Stocking naloxone in workplaces and worksites
- Distributing DisposeRx packets and pharmacy warning card stickers on prescriptions to reduce opioid risks
- Promoting the employee assistance program (EAP) to attain higher-than-average usage

"Construction has one of the highest rates of suicide and overdose deaths across all industries," said McCaffrey. "We can't ignore that suicide rates in construction are 56 per 100,000 workers, and overdose rates are 130.9 per 100,000 workers. For roofing and other industrial trades, the rates are even higher. Wellness isn't a nice-to-have — it's life or death."

Succession Planning With Intention

Few companies handle leadership transitions with as much foresight as Houck. In 2025, Houck Sr. took his first-ever sabbatical. He sent a letter to every employee explaining why: to activate succession planning and spend time with his wife, Patti.

Since joining in 2016, Sensenig has helped lay the groundwork for the next chapter of the business. McCaffrey now serves as chief wellness officer and vice chair of the advisory board. Promotions from within are common, such as field employees moving into safety inspector roles or division heads stepping into new leadership roles as Houck grows.

"We're proud of how leaders like Jason Harris and Ray Glackin have stepped into major roles," said McCaffrey. "Growth creates opportunity. Not just for the company, but for individuals."

Training Tomorrow's Leaders

Leadership development is embedded in Houck's structure:

- Emerging leaders participate in Dale Carnegie Training.
- Employees are encouraged to join industry associations like the Keystone Contractors Association and Associated Builders and Contractors.
- Over 50 employees trained in workplace suicide prevention and administering naloxone.
- Key leaders participate in external peer groups for benchmarking and accountability.
- Feedback and coaching are normalized and expected.
- The company uses Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) to keep leadership aligned and execution focused.

"Culture trumps strategy," said Sensenig. "We're building a sustainable business by investing in people — not just process."

Insurance Innovation That Drives Safety

In 2006, Houck Sr. helped organize a captive insurance program to manage risk and drive down premiums. It started with 20 members and $9 million in premiums. Today, it includes nearly 200 contractors and close to $110 million in premiums.

Why was this important? "To better our entire organization and help us control insurance costs," said Houck Sr. "But most importantly, to learn how to keep our people safe — ethically, morally and financially." The biggest takeaway? "There are companies with zero losses," he said. "It's possible, but only if we put safety first, every day."

Using Tech to Lighten the Load

Houck uses technology not to monitor, but to empower. According to CFO Joe Siebert, field leaders are equipped with smartphones and tablets loaded with tools for reporting time, uploading receipts, logging job progress and accessing HR systems.

Image 1. Kara McCaffrey holding a toolbox talk with a roofing crew.



Photo Credit: Houck

"The goal is to reduce stress and make life easier," said Siebert. "That's what technology should do."

Employees' risk of mental health challenges and substance misuse decrease when levels of stress are reduced within their workspaces. The availability of improved technology can assist in reducing stressors.

A Culture That Doesn't Quit

Houck's leadership recognizes that the stressors and circumstances of life affect workers at home and at work. Many companies shy away from the tough topics that Houck tackles. The company has educated, equipped and empowered managers and supervisors to offer help to employees facing challenges with mental health and substance use to reduce risk of suicide and overdose.

What sets Houck apart? Ask anyone, and the answer usually starts with the people. Houck Sr. puts it this way: "Our culture and values are earned and protected, hourly and daily. We're not perfect, but we care deeply. That's why people stay." ▲

6 OBBBA Provisions Reshaping Construction Tax Strategies in 2025 & Beyond

Unraveling the One Big Beautiful Bill & what it means for construction companies

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On July 4, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) was signed into law. The OBBBA is a broad reconciliation bill comprised of various measures impacting revenue, spending, taxes and the debt limit. Initially a vehicle for extending expiring provisions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017 and incorporating other key policy priorities, the OBBBA made its way through various congressional committees before taking shape as the law now in effect.

With its implications for 179D energy credits, depreciation, qualified business income (QBI), changes to alternative minimum tax (AMT) methods and much more, it's difficult to overstate the significance of OBBBA on your tax strategy. In the following article, we will review six OBBBA provisions that are likely to have the most significant impact on construction firms. Every construction business should be revising its tax strategy in the wake of the OBBBA's significant changes, and the following six provisions are an excellent starting point. We expect they will be the most broadly impactful and enable the greatest tax savings.

It should be noted that, as with any complex tax bill, the details of relevant OBBBA tax provisions and their impact on your business should be addressed in direct consultation with tax professionals who know your business and the construction industry. Construction industry tax professionals will help you develop an approach that serves your business's unique interests, maximizes the value of your planning efforts and instills the best practices that your future savings will depend on.

1. 100% Bonus Depreciation Permanently Extended

Construction companies can now fully expense qualifying equipment and property in the year of purchase. This provision applies to qualified property acquired after Jan. 19, 2025, and has also been made permanent, eliminating the previous phase-out schedule.

This change enhances long-term planning certainty, improves cash flow and encourages capital investment in machinery, vehicles and other short-lived assets. Because this provision is now permanent, it also provides construction firms with the certainty needed to strategically manage capital expenditures over the long term.

2. R&E Expense Deduction Restored (2025-29)

Taxpayers can now immediately deduct domestic research and experimental (R&E) expenditures paid or incurred after Dec. 31, 2024. While the OBBBA restores full expensing for domestic R&E, the new provision does add certain complexities.

Key details:

- Domestic R&E expenses are fully deductible in the year incurred.
- Foreign R&E expenses must still be capitalized and amortized over 15 years.
- Small businesses with average gross receipts of $31 million or less will



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generally be permitted to apply this change retroactively to tax years beginning after Dec. 31, 2021, by filing an amended return.

- All other taxpayers that incurred R&E expenditures between Dec. 31, 2021, and Jan. 1, 2025, will be permitted to elect to accelerate the remaining deductions for those expenditures over a one- or two-year period, beginning after Dec. 31, 2024, via a change in accounting method.
- Procedural guidance is expected to be released by the IRS relating prior year capitalized expenditures.

This change reverses the amortization rules introduced under the TCJA and supports innovation in construction processes and technologies. It also provides a strong incentive for firms to invest in productivity-enhancing tools and sustainable practices, with immediate tax benefits — especially for small and midsize firms.

Taxpayers affected by this provision should evaluate their remaining estimated tax payments for 2025 to preserve cash flow and plan accordingly.

3. Exception to Percentage-of-Completion Method for Certain Residential Contracts

Under prior law, home construction contracts involving buildings with four or fewer dwelling units were eligible to use more favorable accounting methods, such as the completed-contract method, instead of the percentage-of-completion method (PCM). This allowed builders to defer revenue recognition until the homes were completed.

The OBBBA expands this exception to include residential construction contracts involving more than four dwelling units, such as condominium complexes and multi-unit residential buildings.

This change enables a broader range of residential construction projects to utilize more favorable accounting methods, such as the completed-contract method, allowing for greater deferral of income until the project is substantially complete. It also offers significant tax planning

Tax season is just around the corner. That makes this the ideal time to take a fresh look at your tax strategy with the One Big Beautiful Bill Act in mind. When major tax opportunities like the OBBBA present themselves, taxpayers should be proactive.

flexibility and cash flow advantages for developers, builders and contractors working on larger-scale residential developments.

4. More Interest Expense Now Deductible for Capital-Intensive Businesses

The new law makes a permanent and favorable change to the limitation on business interest expense deductions. Previously, the deduction was limited to 30% of a business's adjusted taxable income (ATI), which included the deduction for depreciation, amortization and depletion. Under the new rule, the limitation is now based on 30% of ATI after an add-back for depreciation, amortization and depletion when calculating their deduction threshold.

This change enables businesses to deduct a larger portion of their interest expense, especially those that are capital-intensive and highly leveraged, such as construction firms with significant equipment or real estate investments. By permanently shifting to an EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization)-based threshold, the law provides greater flexibility and tax relief for firms that rely on financing to grow and operate.

5. Special Depreciation for Nonresidential Real Property Used in US Production

The OBBBA provides for a new special depreciation allowance for qualified production property, allowing full and immediate expensing for certain nonresidential real estate used in manufacturing or production.

To be eligible, the property must meet all the following criteria:

- It must be nonresidential real property (e.g., factories, refineries or production facilities).
- It must be used as an integral part of qualified production activity, such as manufacturing, production or refining of a qualified product.
- Construction must begin between Jan. 19, 2025, and Dec. 31, 2028.
- The property must be placed in service before Jan. 1, 2031.

This provision provides a powerful incentive for construction firms involved in building or upgrading U.S.-based production facilities. It supports long-term investment in domestic industrial infrastructure and offers immediate tax benefits for qualifying projects.

6. Permanent Increase in Estate & Gift Tax Exemptions

Beginning in 2026, the OBBBA raises the lifetime estate and gift tax exemption amounts to $15 million for single filers and $30 million for married couples. These amounts will be indexed for inflation starting in 2026.

Many construction firms are privately owned, with the majority of owner wealth tied up in closely held stock. These shares often lack liquidity, making it difficult for heirs to cover estate tax liabilities without selling off business assets. The increased exemption thresholds provide relief, allowing owners to transfer more wealth without triggering estate tax, thereby supporting business continuity and succession planning.

Tax season is just around the corner. That makes this the ideal time to take a fresh look at your tax strategy with the One Big Beautiful Bill Act in mind. When major tax opportunities like the OBBBA present themselves, taxpayers should be proactive.

While the six provisions of the OBBBA discussed above stand to impact the strategies of virtually every business in the construction industry, this sweeping reconciliation bill includes many other provisions with potential tax impact — including the temporary increase in the state and local tax deduction limit, acceleration of the expiration of several energy tax credits and expansion of the exemption available under Section 179, among many others.

Construction firms should adapt their tax strategies in consultation with a tax professional who knows their business and the construction industry to fully maximize OBBBA tax opportunities. Those who don't dedicate the time and attention to maximizing the value of these monumental changes risk leaving significant advantages untapped. ▲



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Building Careers Through Internships

Preparing the next generation of construction leaders

BY KIM TROTTER

Every year, the construction industry is growing with new talent — many of whom begin their career as interns. Thus, internships play a crucial role when it comes to building industries. Not only do they benefit the students that participate, but they also benefit the companies that host them.

For participants, internships introduce them to possible career paths, provide them with real-world experience and create a pipeline of future leaders.

For employers, internships are more than just a recruiting tool. They are an investment in the future of their workforce and the long-term success of their industry.

Creating a Strong Program

A strong internship program should be more than just a "summer job." It must be structured, intentional and supported at every level of an organization. The most successful programs center the following:

- ***Meaningful work*** — Busywork does not make an internship program. Programs should give interns the chance to apply classroom knowledge in real-life situations and contribute to projects that matter. In doing so, interns will feel like the work they have done will make a difference in the company and was worth doing.
- ***Hands-on experience*** — Interns should see firsthand how teams respond to challenges. The best internship programs don't shield interns from problems: They invite them to help solve them in real time. Internships are successful when students are exposed to the same situations full-time employees face. Transparency is key. Whatever a company's team sees, interns should see as well. By observing how professionals tackle real-world challenges, interns learn problem-solving skills and see how theory translates into practice. My workplace, McCarthy, implements this approach by putting interns directly in front of challenges rather than shielding them. "Whatever we see, they see," is the philosophy. This gives interns firsthand experience in solving problems, working with teams and understanding the realities of a complex industry.
- ***Structured learning and support*** — Clear agendas, onboarding tools and development resources help interns hit the ground running. By providing interns with the tools needed to be successful, program leaders can help set interns up for success. At McCarthy, interns have access to online learning modules, productivity trainings and regional/national boot camps.
- ***Mentorship*** — Each intern should have a dedicated mentor or supervisor, often matched to their project or business unit to guide them, provide feedback and answer questions. The mentor ensures the intern is welcomed, integrated and has a go-to resource for guidance and support. The mentorship structure is intentional: Mentors are expected to provide regular feedback, answer questions and aid skill development. Some locations pair interns with "peer partners" as additional resources for day-to-day acclimation. Many projects have 1:1 check-ins (formally and informally) between interns and managers at set intervals (weekly or biweekly). The emphasis is on consistent, ongoing feedback and meaningful connection.
- ***Leadership involvement*** — For a program to truly succeed, support must come from all levels of the organization. When leadership values interns and invests in them, the entire program gains credibility, and critical resources needed for the program to be successful.
- ***Relationship building*** — Emphasis on developing professional relationships with fellow peers, partners and leaders helps interns build a professional brand that they can take with them throughout their entire career.
- ***Exposure to career pathways*** — Internships exist in nearly every industry and — within each — there are more roles than many people realize. With so many different areas of focus, it's important to expose interns to various pathways that are available to them. In the construction industry, there are jobs on-site working as project engineers or safety interns supporting field operations, in the office supporting estimating and preconstruction, supporting our

virtual design and construction teams through 2D and 3D models, and more. My company provides career pathway seminars that dive into the different roles in construction such as project engineers, estimators, virtual design and construction mechanical electrical plumbing scopes and superintendents.

Leaving With Actionable Learnings

At their core, internships should give students real-world experience. But the best programs go beyond that, helping interns grow both personally and professionally. Companies that invest in internships should want their interns to walk away with:

- ***Industry knowledge*** — Interns should leave with a better understanding of the industry and the career opportunities that exist.
- ***Professional growth and exposure*** — Programs should provide interns with opportunities to step outside their comfort zone and take on new responsibilities with the encouragement and support of their mentors.
- ***Collaborative skills*** — Stronger teamwork and communication skills should be developed through peer and leadership connections.
- ***Company values*** — Interns should have a deeper understanding of the company values and what it means to be all in.
- ***Holistic growth*** — Interns shouldn't only take part in project work but also in team-building activities, career pathway seminars and leadership boot camps that expand their perspectives and reinforce professional development.

The Long-Term Impact of Internships

The benefits of a strong internship program extend far beyond a single summer and goes both ways. For employers, hosting interns creates a pipeline of talent that strengthens the workforce for years to come as many interns go on to accept full-time roles after graduation. Benefits include:



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- ***Early access to talent*** — Companies get to know students before they enter the job market, creating opportunities to recruit top performers early.
- ***High retention rates*** — Interns who transition into full-time roles already understand the company culture, making them more likely to stay long term.
- ***Fresh ideas*** — Interns bring creativity, technological savvy and new perspectives to the workplace. They often introduce different ways of thinking and challenge the status quo.
- ***Enhanced brand presence*** — A strong internship program builds visibility on college campuses and within professional communities, reinforcing the company's reputation.

For McCarthy, interns are one of the biggest source of early-career talent. Over time, many of these individuals rise into leadership positions such as managers, directors, vice presidents and even regional CEOs.

This cycle reinforces the long-term value of investing in internships: Today's interns become tomorrow's leaders, who then turn around and mentor the next generation.

The Next Generation of the Workforce

Internships also provide a window into the up-and-coming workforce. Today's interns are technologically savvy, value diversity and seek meaningful work with real responsibility. They are motivated by professional development opportunities and strong mentoring relationships. They expect feedback, inclusion and clear pathways for advancement.

For companies, this means that investing in internships is not only about filling immediate needs; it's about aligning with the values and expectations of the next generation of talent. ▲

Kim Trotter is an early career program manager at McCarthy Building Companies, where she leads early career talent acquisition initiatives across the Southern Pacific and Northern Pacific Regions. Trotter specializes in cultivating talent pipelines and building strategic partnerships with universities nationwide. Visit mccarthy.com.

Fall Protection: A Business Imperative for Every Jobsite

Examining risk levels for small contractors, Hispanic workers & new hires

BY JASON RAGSDALE

Falls continue to be one of the deadliest hazards in construction. Despite years of warnings and awareness campaigns, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) still cites fall protection violations more than any other issue, and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data shows more than 300 workers die in falls each year — a number that hasn't budged in a decade.

The risks are widespread, but not uniform. Smaller contractors carry the greatest burden; between 2011 and 2022, 70% of fatal falls happened in businesses with fewer than 10 employees. Yet larger businesses aren't immune, despite greater resources to dedicate to the issue. With multiple subcontractors working side by side, a single gap in planning or communication can cascade into tragedy and liability.

Beneath those company-level risks, the data tells an even sharper story about who is most vulnerable:

- *New hires* — Workers with less than two years on the job make up more than half of fall claims since 2020, according to Nationwide's claims data.
- *Specialty trades* — Roofing, electrical, plumbing and painting account for nearly 70% of both fatal and nonfatal falls from 2011 to 2022, reflecting the high-exposure nature of this work.
- *Hispanic workers* — National data from the BLS and the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) shows Hispanic construction workers are disproportionately affected by falls, which rank as the second leading cause of death for this group. In 2020, their fatality rate was 41.6% higher and injury rate 14.5% higher than non-Hispanic workers. Even more concerning, from 2018 to 2020 their fatality rate rose 46.5% while declining for others.

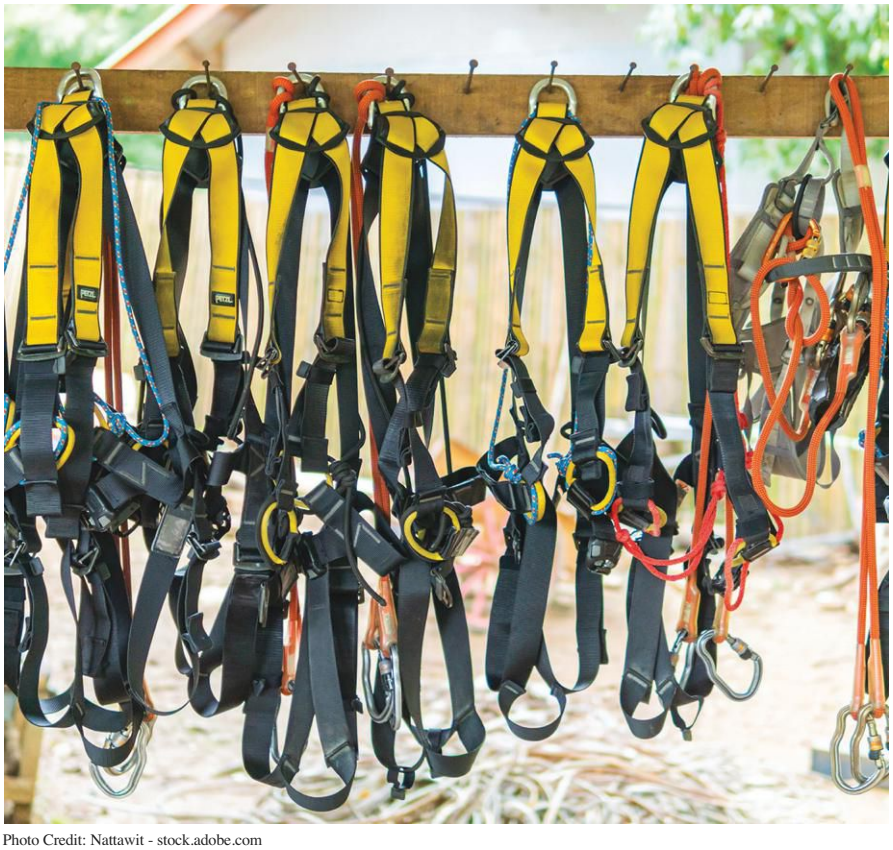


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The data makes one thing clear: Without smarter, more targeted safety efforts, the same tragic numbers will continue to repeat. Protecting workers requires tailored training for new hires, trade-specific safeguards, and safety programs designed to reach people in the languages and formats they use every day. Without that commitment, the industry will keep seeing the same fatal statistics year after year.

What's Behind the Issue

A recent CPWR study into the root causes of construction falls revealed that most incidents could have been prevented. Researchers gathered

responses from workers who had either experienced or witnessed a serious fall, and the findings highlight systemic gaps in planning, communication and accountability:

- **Planning failures lead the list.** Insufficient or ineffective planning was cited as the top contributor to falls. In fact, use of fall protection was 71% lower when employers failed to address fall protection needs before work began. This shows that prevention isn't just about equipment — it's about foresight.
- **Lack of protection remains common.** A large percentage of respondents (48.8%) reported that no fall protection was in use at the time of the incident, underscoring how often the most basic safeguards are missing.
- **Clear expectations matter.** Workers who believed fall protection was required by their employer were eight times more likely to actually use it. Consistent messaging from leadership can be the difference between compliance and risk.
- **Subcontractors increase fall risks.** Workers employed by subcontractors were nearly three times more likely to die from a fall compared to those working for general contractors, pointing to uneven safety standards across the industry.

More Than Compliance

Federal OSHA requires a fall protection system to be implemented in construction when workers are exposed to falls of 6 feet or more to a lower level. But OSHA standards are the floor, not the ceiling. A strong safety culture protects lives, strengthens worker retention and shields a business's profitability. Consider the costs beyond medical expenses: Falls also lead to expensive project delays, drive up insurance premiums and damage your company's reputation as a safe employer.

4 Essential Steps for Business Owners

1. Plan Ahead

Integrate fall prevention into project planning from the outset. The ultimate goal should be to eliminate fall hazards altogether, whether by resequencing work, prefabricating components, or using tools and equipment from the ground. When that's not possible, the next best step is to implement engineering controls, such as erecting guardrail systems to keep employees away from the hazard, before crews ever step on-site.

2. Provide the Right Protection

Every jobsite where crews work at height — whether it's a small renovation or a complex commercial build — requires a clear and effective fall protection plan. Start by trying to eliminate the hazard by using tools or methods that allow work to be completed without exposing workers to height-related risks.

If elimination isn't feasible, follow the fall protection hierarchy: passive systems like guardrails, fall restraint setups (harness, anchor, lanyard) and fall arrest systems to stop a fall before impact. Administrative controls, such as warning lines or safety monitors, are an alternate and less preferred method when other measures aren't feasible. Just as critical as selecting the right system is ensuring that workers are properly trained to use each one correctly.

3. Train — & Retrain

All workers, and especially workers who are new to the industry or workers with language barriers, need targeted, hands-on training. Safety instructions should be clear, repeatable and culturally accessible.

4. Enforce Without Exception

Safety rules only work if they're applied consistently. Supervisors should have authority to stop unsafe practices, and leadership must back them up without hesitation or consideration of project timelines.

Protecting People, Protecting Business

With the industry working to make up a shortfall of more than 430,000 workers, protecting your current workforce is not just a moral obligation, but a competitive advantage. Preventing falls saves lives, reduces claims and strengthens your ability to deliver projects on time and on budget.

For construction firms of all sizes, fall protection is not just about OSHA compliance; it's about safeguarding people, protecting profits and ensuring your company thrives in a tight labor market. A company's most valuable asset is its workers.

Rising Above the Risk

Falls may remain the industry's most persistent killer, but they are also one of its most preventable. By investing in planning, equipment, training and enforcement, contractors can not only meet regulatory requirements but build a culture of safety that pays dividends in worker loyalty, project reliability and business performance.

For today's construction leaders, fall protection is not optional. It is the foundation of a thriving, resilient and responsible business. ▲

Jason Ragsdale leads risk management technical specialization for Nationwide. He has over 25 years of experience in the construction and insurance industry as a safety professional. Ragsdale has also worked directly on large construction sites as a general contractor. He holds the Certified Safety Professional (CSP), Certified Insurance Counselor (CIC) and Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST) designations. Visit nationwide.com.



Residential Optimism: Small Independent Remodelers See a Promising Pipeline

Unpacking Stanley's job satisfaction report

BY TIMOTHY BUSZKA

Residential pros depend on their tools to deliver the quality work necessary to build their reputation. At Stanley, we wanted to further understand the experience that professionals are having on the jobsite each day.

In a survey that we conducted earlier this year, owners and managers of small, residential repair and remodeling companies reported a job satisfaction rate of 85%, placing them among the happier professionals in the U.S. The findings also revealed that most of these professionals find pleasure and fulfillment in their work (86%), and believe the financial benefits are worth their efforts (82%).

The Stanley Pro's Perspective: Job Satisfaction Report surveyed 526 owners and managers of small (20 or fewer employees) repair and remodeling companies across the U.S., with all regions of the country represented. The survey aimed to assess job sentiment and satisfaction, understand current and projected workloads in 2025, and capture a snapshot of what projects their clients are pursuing.

Overall, the survey findings reinforce the fact that residential pros see continued unmet needs in the market, creating new opportunities for entrepreneurial contractors. The outlook for residential home improvement, remodeling and repair remains reassuring:

- Remodelers projected a steady market for residential repair and improvement projects through 2025.
- Homeowners are willing, even in an uncertain economy, to invest in home improvement and prioritize high-end design projects, according to contractors.

Residential Pros Really Matter

The high job satisfaction rate reported in this survey was reinforced by the sense among remodelers that owning and managing their business is a purposeful and fulfilling role in society.

- Eight out of 10 agree that society values skilled trade professionals like themselves, 84% feel respected as a professional and 82% agree their clients respect their recommendations.
- Eighty-two percent take pride in the "very high-quality" work that they perform, and 81% believe that their autonomy is essential to their job satisfaction.
- Finally, most residential remodelers (85%) say their clients show appreciation for their work, for example, by referring family and friends (64%), saying thank you (45%), writing a review or sharing about their business on digital platforms (44%), or giving repeat business (44%).

Real Business Pressures

While positive about their livelihood, remodelers expressed some concerns about running a business at the current moment in our economy. The top concern cited was the cost of materials (36%). Other concerns included:

- The cost of labor (30%), finding qualified labor (24%), retaining skilled employees (25%)
- Maintaining their reputation (27%), growing their business (25%), making sure customers pay on time (25%)
- The state of the economy (25%)
- Maintaining a work-life balance (25%), staying healthy enough to keep working (25%)

More Opportunity To Earn

Almost unanimously, residential remodelers say they were satisfied with their volume of work in 2024 (95%), and 89% were satisfied with their volume in the first half of 2025. While market conditions fluctuate, 89% of those surveyed still feel confident about the volume of work for the second half of 2025. In fact, 69% say their clients are increasing the size of their 2025 projects, and most survey participants disagree that their clients are backing out of (66%), scaling down (60%) or delaying (57%) approved projects.

State of the American Home

Participants in the survey report that most homes they work on are in good (54%) to excellent (37%) condition.

Nearly half of the survey participants work on homes valued between $250,000 and $499,000. Twenty-one percent of survey participants say they work

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on homes valued between $500,000 and $749,000.

Most survey participants say their projects fall between $10,000 and $19,000 — somewhat below the median spend on remodeling projects ($24,000 in 2023) — and 17% are between $5,000 and $9,000.

High-End Design Trends Creating Demand

Ninety-three percent of remodelers say their clients are interested in high-end design projects in 2025. The survey provided a list of high-end design projects selected from home and design publications and asked remodelers to identify those that their clients were asking for. Below are the most requested projects:

Focus Areas in the Home

Among areas of the home, residential pros reported that homeowner priorities in 2025 are full or partial renovations of the kitchen (81%) and bathroom (79%), followed by living room (48%) and basement (64%) renovations.

- Among partial kitchen remodels, the priorities for homeowners are flooring (48%), new cabinets (43%), wall tile or backsplash (43%), and countertop (41%).
- Among partial bathroom remodels, the priorities are the floor (51%), drywall (49%), wall tile or backsplash (47%), shower (46%), tub (44%) and sink (41%).
- Throughout the interior of the house, the priority areas for renovation are tile flooring (38%), painting (36%), ceiling enhancement (35%), and interior doors, lighting/ceiling fans, and stairs or railings (all 35%).

Among outdoor projects, residential pros said their clients were most interested in outdoor structures like garden beds and pergolas (35%); exterior doors (33%); patios, porches, decks or gazebos (32%); lighting (32%); garages (30%) and fences (28%).

Remodelers said their clients are prioritizing indoor and outdoor projects about equally in 2025. Priorities among repair and remodeling projects are also about the same.

All told, the results are clear: optimism and growth are bountiful in the residential trades. Beyond the financial benefits, the work is fulfilling, and these pros have the opportunity to leave a mark. Those who seize the opportunity will continue to find success, bucking employment trends seen in other industries. ▲

Top 10 High-End Design Projects*

Aesthetic Upgrades	Functional Upgrades
1. Blending painted and finished wood surfaces	1. Eat-in kitchen spaces and built-in seating
2. Painted wood cabinetry in bold colors	2. Outdoor living rooms
3. Color drenching (i.e., a space or room in one color, including walls and trim)	3. Prep kitchens
4. Layered lighting	4. Luxury patios or outdoor kitchens
5. Mixture of textures in the bathroom or kitchen	5. Freestanding tubs
6. Premium fixtures in the kitchen or bathroom	6. Double showerheads or double sinks in the bathroom
7. Architectural arches (e.g., bookshelves, ceiling, windows, doorways)	7. Oversized islands in the kitchen
8. Wellness-inspired design (i.e., soothing effects and natural elements)	8. Shower rooms (i.e., separate room containing showerheads and tub)
9. Sustainable design (i.e., minimal environmental and social impact)	9. Smart fixtures
10. Warmer tones of laminate flooring over grays and neutrals	10. Cold-plunge tubs

**Based on the Stanley Pro's Perspective: Job Satisfaction Report, which surveyed 526 owners and managers of small repair and remodeling companies. Survey participants were asked to rate the priority of home improvement projects among their clients.*

Timothy Buszka is the global brand director of Stanley, where he leads brand positioning and messaging strategy across the portfolio. With immediate family working in the trades, Buszka draws inspiration from the entrepreneurial drive of residential professionals. Over his career in marketing, he has specialized in revitalizing iconic brands. Visit stanleytools.com.



OUTSTANDING
2025
WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Pictured: Marina Andrade-Silva

recognizing today's leading

CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS



Pictured: Melissa Walters

This industry is full of incredible women leading the way to progress. Some you likely already know, but we love the opportunity to spotlight a few you may not.

Back for its seventh year, Construction Business Owner's Outstanding Women in Construction celebrates industry-leading women and their skills, achievements and contributions to the construction industry.

This year's contest drew nominations from across the U.S. and many sectors of construction, including representatives of leading associations and organizations.

In the following pages, you will meet 12 women who are helping to rebuild today's industry and shape the next generation of construction pros.

These finalists were selected for their everyday dedication to excellence, growth and leadership, as well as their involvement in the industry and their respective companies and communities.

Visit constructionbusinessowner.com to read the expanded profiles.

"I am continuously inspired by the work I do. I focus almost exclusively on public works projects, and my passion for improving and inspiring people's lives through the built environment is what motivates me every day."

– Danielle Pemberton





Amy Henningfield

DIRECTOR OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
SUPERIOR CONSTRUCTION

For Amy Henningfield, construction isn't just about projects — it is also about people.

"It's about building not only roads and bridges, but also building futures, building confidence and building the next generation of leaders who will carry this industry forward," she said.

"I'm driven by the opportunity to make women more visible in construction and to open doors for young people through initiatives like Superior's Women in Construction, Indiana Constructors Inc.'s Women in Roads, Construction Advancement Foundation Women in Construction and the Northwest Indiana Influential Women Association program."

Henningfield helped create the first-ever ICI Women in Roads All-Girls Summer Camp this year. "This program introduced high school girls to heavy civil construction through hands-on activities, equipment demonstrations and direct engagement with female professionals in the field," she said.

"Watching these young women step into hard hats, climb into machinery simulators and ask thoughtful questions was powerful — it gave them visibility into roles they had never imagined for themselves."

Henningfield noted that within Superior Construction, its Women in Construction program and SWIC Steering Committee have been invaluable.

"Together we've built a strong internal network of women who want to see each other succeed, navigate challenges and create space in what has long been a male-dominated field," said Henningfield.

"That community has been just as instrumental to my growth as any external network, and it continues to inspire me every day."

Benita Nve Nnegue

PROJECT ENGINEER
SKILLED CONSTRUCTION SUBS UNLIMITED

Benita Nve Nnegue's passion for construction was sparked early when her father took her along to see the new house he was building for their family.

"From the initial site clearing and excavation to the final finishes, I witnessed every phase and often peppered the architect with questions about the process and purpose behind each step. Those experiences planted the seeds of curiosity and excitement about how projects come to life, and that sense of wonder is what drew me into this field."

She remembered a critical moment when her mentor told her that you cannot solve for what you cannot see. "At that time, I did not understand the meaning until a year later," she said. "This lesson is critical in problem-solving, and I always apply it."

If she could give her younger self one piece of advice about succeeding in this industry, it would be this: "Talk less, listen and observe more. This is a way to cultivate emotional intelligence and attention toward others."

"Construction is not just about physical strength or skills, but mental skills that require planning, problem-solving and leadership," Nnegue pointed out.

Nnegue advises industry leaders that to retain women in construction, they would do well to provide better support and create an inclusive workplace where they feel valued by enforcing policies about discrimination and harassment.

In helping to foster the next generation of women in the workforce, Nnegue said: "I am putting myself out there to demonstrate that women can also excel in construction. By being visible and confident, I hope to inspire others and show that it is possible."

"I also help by being supportive and encouraging women to showcase their capabilities so they can break barriers and thrive."





Christi Powell

PRESIDENT & CEO
ASSOCIATED BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS CAROLINAS

In Christi Powell's 30-plus year career in building materials and construction, certain projects and roles stand out, not just for their scale but for the real impact they had on communities, teams and her own growth. "These moments remind me why I love this work: Turning blueprints into homes, breathing new life into old spaces and connecting people to build something bigger together," she said.

One particularly rewarding project was transforming an old mill into apartments. "Walking through the finished units, hearing the echoes of the past mixed with new laughter — that's when you feel like you're part of something timeless," she said.

Powell advises industry leaders to better support and retain women in construction by building a respectful workplace with zero tolerance for bias or harassment, offer mentorship and training, support flexible work schedules, promote women to leadership, strengthen networks and seek feedback.

Powell is currently spearheading 84 Lumber's "Build the Way" program, designed to build a network where "everyone from women-owned outfits to minority-led firms has a seat at the table."

She also co-hosts the Women Talk Construction podcast with Angela Gardner.

One big misconception about women in construction is that they're less capable of handling the tough, hands-on work, whether it's swinging a hammer, managing a site or leading a crew, Powell said.

"That's nonsense. I've framed multi-unit buildings, coordinated complex turnkey projects and mentored teams through high-stakes jobs like revitalizing historic mills," she said. "Women in this industry are just as skilled, resilient and innovative as anyone else."

Danielle Pemberton

VICE PRESIDENT
SWEET GROUP LLC

Danielle Pemberton graduated from college with a public relations degree but soon learned it was not what she wanted to do with the rest of her life.

"I decided to go back to school for a degree in urban planning and quickly realized my love for the built environment," she said. "While I was in school, I started work at the NYC Department of Buildings (NYC DOB) which solidified not only this, but also my dedication to public works and finding innovative ways to support and enhance our city.

"I am continuously inspired by the work I do. I focus almost exclusively on public works projects, and my passion for improving and inspiring people's lives through the built environment is what motivates me every day."

A project that stands out to Pemberton was her time at the NYC DOB, where she had the opportunity to work on a historical design competition to design an innovative sidewalk shed. It would be an alternative to the standard (at the time) blue sidewalk sheds that stretched on every corner of the city.

"The design competition, called urbanSHED, was a one-of-a-kind opportunity for a design firm to truly change the face of the city," Pemberton said.

"The winner of that competition, Agencie Group, developed a stunning design called the Urban Umbrella. The design — a sidewalk shed alternative that brought light and air onto the sidewalk below — was a welcome alternative to the claustrophobic and sometimes unsafe-feeling sidewalk sheds."

The design was fully approved for use through NYC DOB technical, and is being used on countless projects throughout the city.

"For me, this moment showed me how efforts that seem small can have huge, positive, long-lasting impacts on a much larger scale," Pemberton said.



WOMAN



Diana Daddo

OWNER — QUALIFYING PARTY
PEOPLE'S CHAMP ELECTRIC

"Construction has made me feel like I am the master of my own destiny," Diana Daddo said. "Being a woman who comes from a traditional Assyrian background, it's quite unorthodox to venture into a career in the construction industry. I believe that the pursuit of freedom, worth and excellence is what continues to drive me."

Last year, her company reached new heights by successfully completing a project at TSMC in Arizona with zero injuries and a 100% inspection pass rate. "Successfully completing this work gave my team and I the confidence to take on more challenging projects. In 2025, we did just that," said Daddo. "We are currently working on the Maverick Helicopter Tours Project at the Grand Canyon National Park Airport with Holdsworth Construction. We are also working on the Venture X project in Chandler, Arizona, with Tepcon Construction. In 2026, we plan to become a prime electrical contractor in government contracting."

In August, Daddo joined Gateway Community College as an adjunct trades instructor for United Integrated Systems at TSMC for its electrical apprenticeship program. "This has been an incredible honor, personal confidence booster and a great advance in my career in general," she said.

Daddo is helping to foster the next generation of women in the workforce through leading by example. "Currently, a third of my workforce are women. I would love to continue to hire more as the company grows."

Her dream for her business is to pass it down to her children.

"My 6-year-old, Amira, has already dubbed herself 'the princess of People's Champ Electric' and the next 'electrical builder,'" Daddo said. "I've had to add locks to my toolboxes to keep my 5-year-old son away."

Indra Gutierrez

PRESIDENT
GUTIER

Indra Gutierrez, president of Gutier in Missouri City, Texas, loves working on challenging issues. "Construction, in my opinion, is one of the toughest industries to be in," she said. "Our impact goes beyond the project sites. We make a difference in our communities and contribute toward building the future in many different ways through the work that we do."

When it comes to being a woman in the industry, Gutierrez notes that a major barrier they face is women being seen as less ambitious or driven when it refers to their careers. "This assumption may lead to women being overlooked for more opportunities within their organizations," she added.

She built her own construction company alongside her husband, Michael, from the ground up without any outside capital. She considers this one of the most pivotal moments in her career.

Gutierrez credits "an extraordinary team of advisors that have built many construction companies, and they have been instrumental in helping me build Gutier."

She advises industry leaders that to better support and retain women in construction, they should be intentional about recruiting more women in the industry.

"Look for women outside the construction industry," she said. "There's a lot of talent in other industries that the industry desperately needs. Take the time to listen and understand their feedback, perspective and insights."

If she could give her younger self one piece of advice about succeeding in this industry, Gutierrez says it would be this: "Be patient with your career. Success is not achieved overnight. Enjoy the journey as you continue to work toward your professional growth. Embrace the setbacks, as they will not define your future as long as you continue to propel forward."



Kristy Huysman

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GETTYSBURG COMMERCIAL CORPORATION

Kristy Huysman followed her father's footsteps into the construction industry. "My father was in commercial construction. Even though I went to college for criminology, I took a part-time job in construction to help pay for school," she said. "There became a point I fell in love with the construction industry and decided to pursue the construction field."

Huysman's career has been marked by pivotal moments, such as when her company's president asked her to assume the executive vice president role.

"It was a very special moment in my career," she said. "I am 49 and started in the industry at 19. I worked very hard to get to this place in my life. It felt wonderful that there was someone who noticed my abilities."

Huysman noted while women don't face as many barriers in the construction industry now as when she started, they still exist. "Sometimes when I am in a meeting, I can tell I am not being taken seriously, or none of the men direct questions at me but to my male co-worker even though I'm the executive vice president of the company," she said. "I have worked very hard to get into the position I am in. It's disheartening when I can tell no one in the room trusts my opinion."

Huysman appreciates the mentors she had in her career for teaching her what she needed to know to get to where she is. Huysman tries to mentor women in her company every chance she gets by teaching, pointing out complexities on plans or letting them listen in on weekly meetings.

"If there is a woman in your company who wants to learn project management, estimating or even a place out in the field, give her a chance," Huysman advised. "Teach her what you know. You may just have found your best PM, estimator or field worker."



Marina Andrade-Silva

PROJECT MANAGER
BAUER FOUNDATION CORP

Marina Andrade-Silva, project manager for Bauer Foundation Corp., discovered geotechnics during her higher-education years. "From my first internship, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in this field and that it was meant to be," she said. "Somehow, I loved the challenge, the organization and all the equipment required. Since then, I decided that this would be where I wanted to be."

Andrade-Silva is motivated by seeing everything that her company can build. "What we do has a purpose and serves the public interest. I like the challenges, dealing with deadlines and organizing our operation in the best way possible in order to lead to a successful project whilst maintaining safety and quality standards."

Joining Bauer Foundation Corp. was a turning point in Andrade-Silva's career as she took on more responsibilities with each project. "From being a quality manager to a project manager, there was only one step that I took as an opportunity," she said. "I was not sure at first due to my past experience as a project manager, but with the support and the success that we have encountered on the Natomas Reach A project (levee improvements in the Sacramento, California, region), I know that I can do it, and this is essential to be happy in my position."

Andrade-Silva advises industry leaders to implement supportive policies, offer better family leave options and make efforts to adjust workplace cultures and policies to be more welcoming for women.

She has been mentoring a few new women engineers over the past years as well as women interns.

"On our job, we have also taken on board a woman excavator operator," she says. "On our project, we have proven that we can be as successful as others with more women involved, showing that blue-collar women can also foster the next generation in the workforce."





Melissa Walters

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, ENGINEERING (CIVIL CONSTRUCTION) TRIMBLE

Melissa Walters' first job at Trimble was on the assembly line during a college summer break. She worked a few years at Boeing and loved it before returning to Trimble. "I have since focused on working on teams that develop products that drive significant efficiency gains in the construction industry," she said. "My passion for the work is also a family interest, with my daughters growing up identifying machine types, manufacturers and telling me what was happening on the jobsite while I was driving."

Walters' youngest daughter is currently studying engineering. At a career fair, she observed that "all of the fun jobs are in construction."

Walters notes the construction industry is vast and requires a wide range of skills. "With advancements in technology, there is an increasing need for diverse talent, from project managers to engineers to equipment operators to job quoting, improving the workflow and designers," she said.

Walters credits her manager for being helpful in her career advancement. "He not only gives me opportunities to grow but also continually provides me with ownership in a nonjudgmental way. ... His willingness to share his knowledge and instill confidence in my work has truly helped me thrive."

Walters loves helping everyone accomplish something that they never thought they could. "To grow the next generation of women in construction, we need mentorship that does two simple things. First, it must actively find each woman's unique talents and hidden strengths. Second, it must match them with real projects where they can actually use and improve those skills. This practical approach is the best way to help them build confidence, advance their careers, and become the industry's future leaders"

Neely K. Sadowski

PRESIDENT OF CONSTRUCTION THE MISSNER GROUP

Neely K. Sadowski, LEED AP, BD+C (building design and construction), entered college intending to become an architect. "But I soon discovered my true passion wasn't in designing buildings, but in bringing them to life," she said.

"What's most meaningful now is developing people, shaping strategy, and creating a culture where both clients and teams succeed," she said. "It's rewarding to know that I'm not just guiding projects but also building an organization positioned for long-term growth and impact."

If Sadowski could give her younger self one piece of advice, it would be to invest in developing emotional intelligence as much as technical expertise.

"Construction is a relationship-driven business, and the ability to listen, empathize and adapt is just as critical as knowing the details of a project," she said. "Working with a leadership coach for several years was pivotal in helping me refine those skills and approach challenges with clarity and confidence.

"From Day 1, I've focused on building strong connections with mentors who offered guidance, colleagues who challenged me and industry partners who collaborated to deliver successful projects Construction is at its core a relationship-driven business, and those partnerships built on trust, respect and shared goals have been the most impactful in my career growth."

For Sadowski, the best way to foster the next generation of women in the workforce is to be an advocate and a sounding board.

"I strive to inspire, educate, empower and develop all of those around me, for I truly believe success follows those who champion a cause greater than themselves. Mentorship is key: Seek out mentors, but just as importantly, be one."





Sandya Dandamudi

PRESIDENT
GI STONE

Sandya Dandamudi's inspiration to pursue a career in construction comes from her mother.

"My mother started this business and has always been my biggest motivation," she said. "When I joined her, little did I realize that I would fall in love! My passion became stone, and the joy that I receive when the job is well executed continues to motivate me in reaching new heights."

When Dandamudi started in this business 30 years ago, it was rare to see women on construction jobsites unless they were in administrative positions. "It's definitely improved over the years," she observed. "There are a lot more women as engineers, general contractors, architects, project executives and in the trades, but as women we still have a long way to go."

Dandamudi considers herself very fortunate in the types of iconic projects in which she has been involved.

"In recent years, we completed the Tribune Tower, McDonald's headquarters, renovations of The Four seasons, the Ritz-Carlton, One Chicago, One Bennett Park, and now we are in the middle of completing all of the interior stonework of the Obama Presidential Center — an incredible honor," she said. "What a privilege it has been to be part of one of the most incredible skylines in the world."

Dandamudi's company has always had a diverse workplace, not just in terms of gender and race but also of backgrounds.

"I believe that diverse groups bring diversity of thought and add to a creative environment," she said.

"When members of a team have different perspectives and experiences, they approach problems differently, spot potential issues others might miss and often come up with more innovative solutions."

Sara Pope

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ENABLEMENT
KAHUA

Sara Pope stumbled into the construction industry by chance. "To my surprise, I loved it — the energy of the jobsites and seeing projects come to life hooked me," Pope said.

In her mid-20s, she had the opportunity to visit a truly unique jobsite: one of the world's largest copper mines in Chile. "The sheer scale of that project was eye-opening and became a pivotal moment for me," Pope recalled. "It showed me just how incredible the construction process can be, and it underscored how globally connected this industry really is. That experience deepened my appreciation for the work we do and inspired me to think about construction on a much larger scale."

One of the biggest challenges women still face is visibility and access, Pope noted. "While we've made progress, many young girls don't get enough exposure to the industry to even know it's an option for them. They need to see the full range of opportunities — from hands-on roles in the trades to careers in technology, project management and leadership — so they understand there's a place for them no matter their interests."

Pope advises industry leaders to reframe recruitment messaging. "Construction isn't just hard hats and boots," she added. "Show the full spectrum of roles from tech and design to leadership so women can see how their skills and interests can truly thrive in this industry."

For her part, Pope loves speaking to college students, sharing not only her general experience in business but also the lessons she's learned progressing in this industry.

When she's not at work, Pope is usually cheering at her children's soccer games, conquering a workout class or getting lost in a good book.

"I love watching movies, spending time with my family and doing anything that helps me keep leveling up — personally or professionally," Pope said.

Walking Off THE JOB

Navigating project terminations in construction's economic down cycle

BY CHAD V. THERIOT

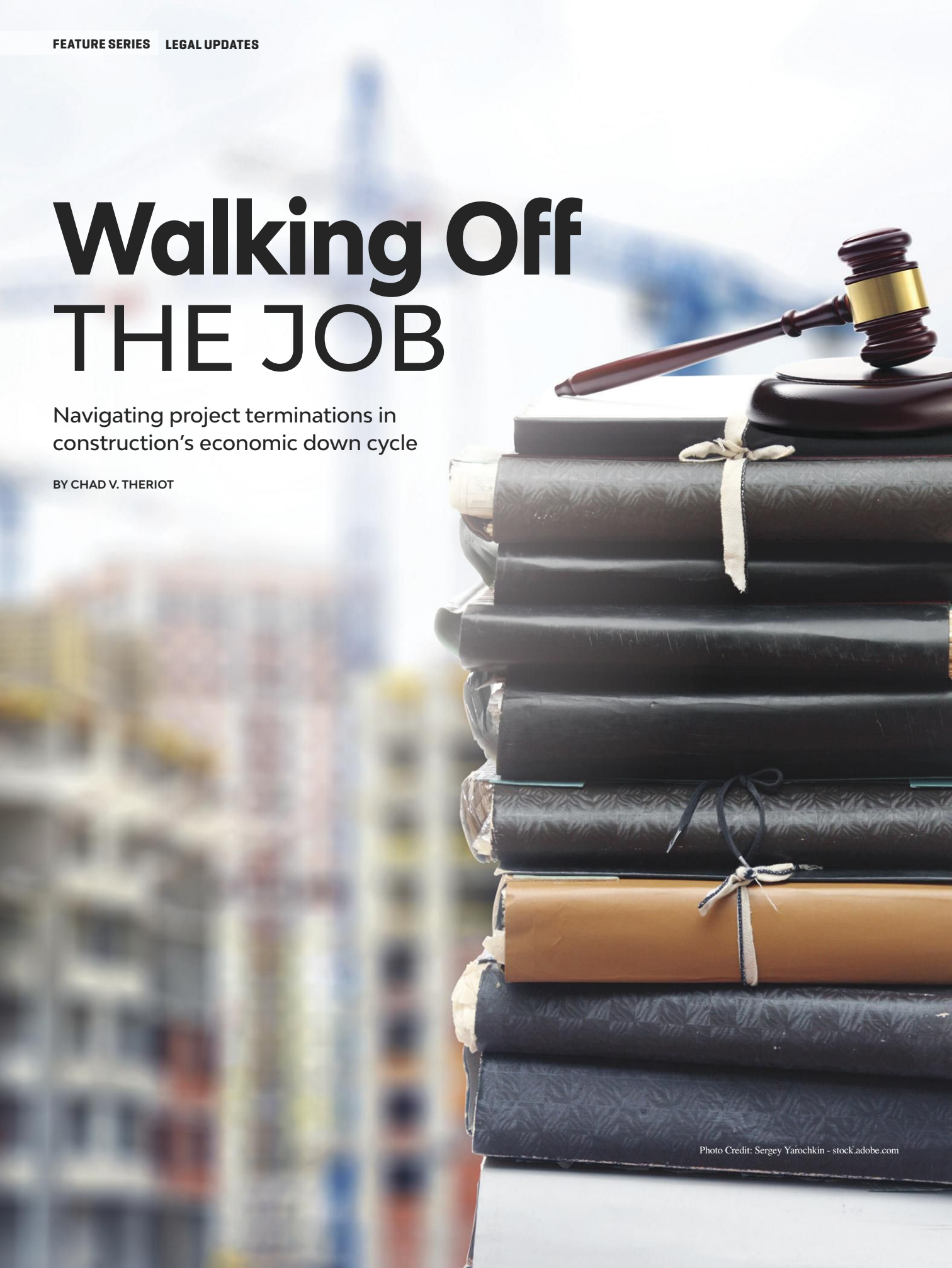


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Terminations always come with high stakes that could make or break a firm's future. One case that stands out to me is Kiewit-Turner v. Department of Veterans Affairs (Civilian Board of Contract Appeals [CBCA] 3450) from December 2014, where I helped secure a win for my client, Kiewit-Turner. This joint venture contractor was allowed to stop work on an approximately $2 billion Veterans Affairs hospital project due to the government's material breach — specifically, underfunding massive design changes that ballooned costs and timelines. The decision not only halted performance but also opened the door for the recovery of equitable adjustments, underscoring how critical it is for contractors to recognize when an owner's actions cross the line from routine friction to fundamental disruption.

The case challenged the Federal Acquisition Regulation mandate that a contractor must always "continue work" under protest, even amid legitimate disputes. While this was a federal government contract case, the principles — rooted in common law doctrines of contract performance and remedies — apply broadly to all commercial construction contracts, from private developments to public-private partnerships. In an industry where projects often span years and involve intricate supply chains, these rules govern whether a contractor can pause without risking default termination, liquidated damages or reputational harm.

Landmark Decision: Affirming That a Material Breach Must Go to a Contract's 'Essence'

The Kiewit-Turner case affirmed that when a party — here, an owner — commits a breach that goes to the contract's essence (such as chronic funding shortfalls for scope-altering changes), it may excuse the nonbreaching contractor from further performance. This was a landmark decision that revived a perennial discussion among contractors on complex, large-scale projects: At what point can a contractor contractually and legally stop working without inviting catastrophe? The ruling emphasized that not every delay or dispute qualifies; the breach must deprive the other party of the contract's core benefits, making cure impracticable or futile.

Fast-forward a decade from the Kiewit-Turner decision. Has the legal landscape evolved? The short answer is yes, but incrementally, with courts and boards applying these doctrines more rigorously in light of supply chain volatility, labor shortages and economic pressures. Recent rulings continue to cite Kiewit-Turner as a touchstone, but they've expanded its application to emerging issues such as payment withholding and safety-driven work stoppages.

Material Breach Doctrine: Applied With Caution

A review of cases citing Kiewit-Turner reveals that courts and boards still uphold the material breach doctrine, but they apply it cautiously, weighing factors such as the breach's impact on project timelines, costs and overall feasibility. This scrutiny is especially relevant for construction executives navigating fixed-price contracts where change orders can erode margins.

For instance, in Adventus Techs. v. Dept. of Agriculture (CBCA 7283, 2023), the CBCA found that the government's failure to provide essential janitorial services — despite the contractor's labor challenges — constituted a material breach justifying the contractor's default termination. The board explicitly noted that this lapse went "to the essence of the contract," echoing Kiewit-Turner's standard by focusing on how the omission undermined the project's core operational integrity. This case echoes the Kiewit-Turner breach standard, often upholding the owner's decision to terminate when the contractor fails to deliver the "essence" of its obligations. But the doctrine cuts both ways.

A more recent private-sector example illustrates Kiewit-Turner's growing relevance beyond federal work. In the September Utah appellate decision of Globe Contracting LLC v. Hour et al., 2025 Utah Ct. App. 98, the court ruled that an owner's unjustified withholding of three progress payments — totaling more than $1.2 million — amounted to a material breach, entitling the contractor to suspend work and seek damages. The ruling clarified statutory limits on payment withholding under Utah's prompt payment laws, reinforcing that such tactics can trigger contractor remedies if they jeopardize cash flow and project continuity. For construction executives, this serves as a stark reminder that payment games can backfire, exposing owners to counterclaims and interest penalties.

Duty of Good Faith & Fair Dealing: Cooperation Without Malice

The implied duty of good faith and fair dealing was a cornerstone in Kiewit-Turner, requiring parties not to impede the other's performance through unreasonable actions. Crucially, this doctrine doesn't demand proof of bad faith — mere hindrance suffices. Recent cases build on this, applying it to safety protocols and geopolitical disruptions. In Griz One Firefighting v. Dept. of Agriculture (CBCA 6358, 6567, 2022), the contractor alleged a breach from government-mandated suspensions during accident investigations at wildfire sites. The CBCA rejected the claim, finding the agency's actions reasonable for ensuring safety and professionalism — a balanced application that protects owners from frivolous challenges while holding them accountable for overreach.

Likewise, in First Kuwaiti Trading v. Dept. of State (CBCA 3506, 6167, 2018), the CBCA denied the government's summary judgment motion on delay claims stemming from excessive "duck and cover" alarms during embassy construction in

Baghdad. Disputed facts about whether these security measures unreasonably hindered progress led the board to invoke the Metcalf Construction Co. v. United States (2014) and related Kiewit-Turner good faith standard, rejecting the sovereign acts defense.

Like the decision in Kiewit-Turner, which highlighted how external factors, such as funding shortfalls and design deficiencies, can lead to a material breach of a construction contract, ultimately justifying the contractor's right to stop work, a recent decision from the United States Supreme Court underscored that cooperation serves as the baseline for government contracts and that a finding of breach under the implied duty of good faith and fair dealing does not require malice or conscious wrongdoing. In other words, mere bad faith, including arbitrary or unreasonable actions, suffices. In Kousisis v. United States, 605 U.S. _____ (2025) (decided May 22, 2025), a painting contractor was convicted of wire fraud after making material misrepresentations to secure a state contract by falsely certifying the use of a disadvantaged business supplier, even though the work was performed competently and without economic harm to the government. While a criminal matter focused on the bidding phase, it reinforces how the covenant of good faith and fair dealing underline both solicitation and performance.

While no case after 10 years directly replicates Kiewit-Turner's scenario of an owner issuing multiple changes and refusing payment under a purported fixed-price regime, the principle endures and should still serve as guidance. Put simply, material breaches discharge duties if they deprive expected benefits.

This Issue Is More Critical Now Amid Economic Headwinds

The stakes have never been higher, as construction grapples with a perfect storm of macroeconomic pressures. The material breach and good faith doctrines aren't abstract legal niceties — they're survival tools for executives steering firms through uncertainty.

The Dodge Construction Network reports that U.S. total construction starts declined 10% in July, with nonresidential sectors such as manufacturing and institutional buildings hit hardest. Meanwhile, the American Institute of Architects (AIA)/ Deltek Architecture Billings Index scored a dismal 47.2 in August. Further, the AIA's July Consensus Construction Forecast projects just a 1.7% uptick in nonresidential building spending this year, with manufacturing output declining amid trade tensions. Compounding this are tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, now projected to drive material price hikes of 10% to 12% toward the end of the year, per industry analysts, alongside supply chain snarls from geopolitical flashpoints.

High interest rates — hovering near 5% for commercial loans — have delayed project financing, while potential stagflation risks from persistent inflation could squeeze owner budgets further. Cash-strapped developers and agencies may resort to delaying payments, disputing change orders or imposing unilateral "safety" halts, forcing contractors into Hobson's choices: absorb losses or risk breach claims.

Owners, too, face peril. Terminating a contractor invites the "capital punishment" of construction and brings with it protracted litigation, as the fallout — damaged reputation, eroded bonding capacity and mandatory disclosures of defaults on future bids — can cripple a firm's pipeline of logged work.

Practical Strategies for Executives: Mitigating Risks in Volatile Times

To navigate this, construction leaders must embed proactive safeguards into not only their contracts but also their operations. Beyond the basics — meticulous daily logs, certified mail for notices of dispute — consider these executive-level tactics:

- *Contract drafting upgrades* — Incorporate escalation clauses for material cost surges tied to tariffs and define "essence" breaches with objective metrics (e.g., payment delays exceeding 30 days trigger suspension rights). Reference Kiewit-Turner precedents in the boilerplate to deter aggressive owner tactics.
- *Early intervention protocols* — Form cross-functional teams (legal, finance, operations) to monitor red flags such as payment lags or excessive requests for information. Seek formal assurances via certified letters and engage neutral mediators before disputes harden — reducing escalation costs by up to 40%, per industry benchmarks.
- *Bonding and insurance alignment* — Review surety policies for coverage of suspension-related losses and negotiate endorsements for economic force majeure events such as interest rate spikes.

My advice? Document everything, seek assurances early and consult counsel before walking off a job or terminating a contractor. In this volatile market — where a single breach can cascade into multimillion-dollar judgments — understanding these risks isn't optional; it's the difference between resilience and ruin. By leveraging Kiewit-Turner's enduring lessons alongside fresh precedents, construction executives can fortify their positions, turning potential pitfalls into competitive edges. ▲

Chad V. Theriot is a partner at Jones Walker. He coleads the firm's construction team and is also a member of the board of directors. With a focus on major public and commercial construction and infrastructure projects, Theriot advises domestic and international clients across a broad spectrum of construction, contracting and procurement activities. Visit joneswalker.com.

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Legal Insights on Construction Defect Claims

Inside Florida's regulations on damages & defective conditions

BY JACOB A. EPSTEIN & KARA OLESKY

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Most Florida construction professionals and any property owners who have lived in new condominium buildings are likely familiar with what attorneys in Florida refer to as the "558 process," a legal process in which a property owner — whether an individual owner or a community association — facilitates an investigation of its building and, depending on the results, alleges claims against the developer, general contractor and those that constructed and/or designed the building (the "construction parties") for construction defects.

As a part of the 558 process, the property owner typically will hire engineers to determine what repairs are necessary to fix the defects as well as a cost estimation expert to estimate how much it will cost to repair the defective conditions.

However, the expert's estimate for how much it will actually cost to perform the repairs may not necessarily equate to the owner's damages in a potential lawsuit against the construction parties.

This legal reality creates a series of practical difficulties for all sides. How can the property owner accurately evaluate what recovery it can expect in a construction defect lawsuit? Similarly, how can the construction parties (and their insurance companies) reasonably evaluate their potential exposure in a construction defect case?

The seminal case in Florida concerning construction defect damages is Grossman Holdings Ltd. v. Hourihan, 414 So. 2d 1037, 1040 (Fla. 1982). However, this case was in a very specific context and involved an alleged breach of a construction contract. Grossman established that "damages for breach of contract are measured as of the date of the breach," and "fluctuations in value after the breach do not affect the nonbreaching party's recovery." In Grossman Holdings Ltd., the breach occurred when a contractor built a home facing the wrong direction.

While the Grossman analysis applies under Florida law in cases where the plaintiff and defendant were both parties to a construction contract, a key distinction separates Grossman from the "typical" case of a condominium association's construction defect lawsuit where there is no contract between the association and the construction parties. The absence of a contract means there is no specific "date of a breach", which the Florida Supreme Court in Grossman relied upon for determining the proper measurement of damages. Nonetheless, many construction defect practitioners have taken the position



that the Grossman holding should be applied to condominium associations' third-party construction defect claims and argue that the "date of breach" in that context is the date that the unit-owner controlled condominium association took control of the building from the developer (often referred to as "turnover").

However, applying Grossman in the context of an association's third-party construction defect claim ignores crucial practicalities of the 558 process. First, the association never had the opportunity to contract with any of the construction parties and did not control any portion of the underlying construction. In addition, it often takes several years from turnover before a condominium association is in a position to perform construction defect repairs. Using the Grossman damages measurement would limit condominium associations to historical labor and material costs as of the date of turnover, which do not reflect what amounts the association will actually spend at the time of the repairs. This could result in a damages calculation that severely undercompensates the association and its members, failing to account for fluctuations in the cost of labor and materials from the date of turnover to the time of the repairs. Typically, to make up for these price changes, construction defect plaintiffs seek to recover prejudgment interest on any "date of turnover" damages calculation. However, while prejudgment interest rates are generally meant to address market changes like inflation, they are not designed to accurately reflect labor and material price variations in the construction industry.

Rather than looking to contract law, many construction defect practitioners suggest that the courts look to tort law to determine the proper measure of damages in this context. Florida law provides that "recoverable damages occasioned by a tort include all damages which are a natural, proximate, probable or direct consequence of the act" because "the defendant is held to notice of the natural and ordinary result of its negligent acts" (Taylor Imported Motors, Inc. v. Smiley, 143 So. 2d 66 [Fla. 2d DCA 1962]; Mansfield v. Brigham, 91 Fla. 109, 107 [1926]).

Considering that an association's legal claims against construction parties typically include claims of negligence (along with claims of statutory warranties or statutory breaches where available), tort damages arguably offer a more accurate reflection of the nature of the damages by including both immediate and foreseeable costs. It is arguably more practical to apply this measurement of damages because the association's actual damages would be based on the cost to repair and to remediate the building as of the date the repairs are being performed, not a historical "date of breach" that has no relationship to the actual damages. In addition, the Grossman court's logic in limiting a contracting party to damages resulting from a contractual breach is entirely inapplicable in a situation where there is no contract. In that situation, the "breach" at issue is of a duty owed to foreseeable third parties rather than to another party under a contract.

Opponents of this tort-based damages measurement argue that it would put the association in a better position than if the construction parties had performed their work and/or services without committing any violation or breach of a duty. Appellate courts in Florida have yet to provide any clear guidance on how construction defect damages should be measured where a construction defect plaintiff did not contract for the underlying construction project, and until that clarification is provided, we expect that construction defect practitioners will continue to advocate for one of the two above-referenced methodologies depending on what is more beneficial to their client in a particular case. For example, depending on the prejudgment interest rates and the amount of time between turnover and the final judgment, applying the Grossman measurement could potentially result in a larger monetary final judgment than using a tort-based damages measurements reflecting a more accurate and up-to-date cost estimate.

In sum, the facts of each case could determine what position each side might take rather than the practical and equitable considerations in calculating the most accurate measurement of damages possible. We expect that the courts will continue to evaluate this issue in the coming months and years until a case like Grossman, but outside of the construction contract context, is addressed. ▲

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Photo Credit: Bobcat

Choosing a Wheel Loader for Your Next Job

Unpacking the benefits of these powerful performers

BY RYAN SAUNDERS

Wheel loaders offer a powerful blend of speed, maneuverability and attachment versatility, making them essential, multipurpose machines on nearly every jobsite. From landscaping and nursery work to construction and agriculture, these nimble and powerful performers can do loads of work.

Match the Machine to Your Mission

Wheel loaders are not subject to a universal categorization standard. This lack of uniformity means a machine labeled "medium" by one brand may have significantly different horsepower, tipping capacity and bucket capacity than a competitor. Consequently, buyers must look past the generic size label and instead focus on the machine's technical specifications to ensure its capabilities are properly matched to the jobsite application and operational needs.

To select the wheel loader that best fits your job, take into account the primary tasks and the type and size of the jobsite. While many wheel loaders share a foundation of robust design, they may differ significantly in terms of power, lifting capacities, features and speed.

If the mission involves high-volume material handling, such as loading heavy aggregates into high-sided transport trucks or working against substantial resistance, prioritize models with a high tipping load, high horsepower and significant bucket capacity. These features allow the machine to complete the task efficiently, often requiring a larger, more powerful machine designed for heavy production cycles.

However, if the machine's mission is defined by access limitations, such as navigating tight residential areas, working indoors or minimizing ground disturbance on finished surfaces, select a machine with size and handling that allows maximum agility. This often demands a wheel loader with a tighter turning radius and a design that is easier and more cost-efficient to transport, prioritizing maneuverability over peak capacity.

Maneuver Your Jobsite With Ease

Working in confined or congested spaces

doesn't mean sacrificing capability. A wheel loader's articulated steering delivers nimble performance and a tight turning radius through its articulation joint. As the machine turns, the rear tires match the path of the front tires, allowing for easy navigation in tight spaces or around obstacles in larger spaces.

Increase Efficiency With Attachment Versatility

One of the biggest advantages of a wheel loader is its ability to serve as a multipurpose tool carrier. Compatible attachments go far beyond the standard buckets and forks, encompassing angle brooms, grapples, snow pushers, snow blowers and augers.

By using attachment mounting systems, operators can also share select attachments with other compact equipment — such as skid-steer loaders and compact track loaders — for greater versatility, fleet efficiency and profitability.

Get Comfortable

Operator comfort and ease of use are major considerations, as there is a direct link between well-being and consistent productivity. Most modern machines enhance the operator experience with features like pressurized cabs, ergonomic controls and optimal visibility.

Beyond comfort, the industry also focuses on intuitive controls and simplified maintenance. A variety of standard and optional features including seat-mounted joysticks, full-color displays and rearview cameras allow for easy, comfortable and intuitive navigation. This ease extends to servicing, as some modern engines achieve emissions compliance without the use of a diesel particulate filter or selective catalyst reduction, which leads to less downtime and simplified regular maintenance.

Selecting the right wheel loader is a decision that can impact your productivity and bottom line. By carefully evaluating your operational needs and matching them with a machine's actual specifications — including its tipping capacity, maneuverability features, hydraulic capabilities and serviceability — you can ensure your investment yields maximum efficiency and long-term success on the jobsite. ▲

Ryan Saunders is a senior marketing specialist for Bobcat Company. He is passionate about educating construction company owners and operators about solutions that create new opportunities for their businesses. Visit bobcat.com.







Photo Credit: Sunbelt Rentals

Temporary Containment Walls: Revealing the Advantages for Indoor Construction

Protecting the public from construction dust, debris & noise

BY KIRK STEWARD

Have you ever entered a building being renovated and found the noise and dust off-putting? Or been inclined to find a different place to shop or to stay at a different hotel to avoid the activity of a construction job? If so, you aren't alone. But there are ways that contractors can make renovation projects in public spaces quieter and safer: temporary containment walls.

While a relatively new option for indoor construction and renovation projects,

temporary containment walls are growing in popularity. Since their introduction around 10 years ago, the systems are increasingly found in a range of facilities where it is necessary to protect the public from the work being completed by contractors and their teams. These include health care facilities, data centers, airports, retail spaces and hotels.

Temporary containment walls consist of an aluminum frame structure with a foam core, along with painted aluminum and galvanized steel panels. For aesthetic reasons, the aluminum panel side faces outward toward the public, while the galvanized steel faces toward the project to protect against damage from the construction activity. These walls are sturdy, reusable, and keep dust and debris from escaping the area. They also reduce more noise than other containment methods.

Some rental providers stock temporary containment walls, offering these systems and their services as a turnkey solution to contractors. Rental providers erect the walls in occupied spaces with grid ceilings where there's a construction project underway.

After the walls are in place, the rental provider will create negative air in that space by adding a HEPA filtration air scrubber and manometer. The manometer measures the pressure difference inside and outside of the walls, while the scrubber ensures that air leaving the space is clean (HEPA filters provide approximately 99.96% clean air). This system is especially helpful in sensitive environments like hospitals and data centers.

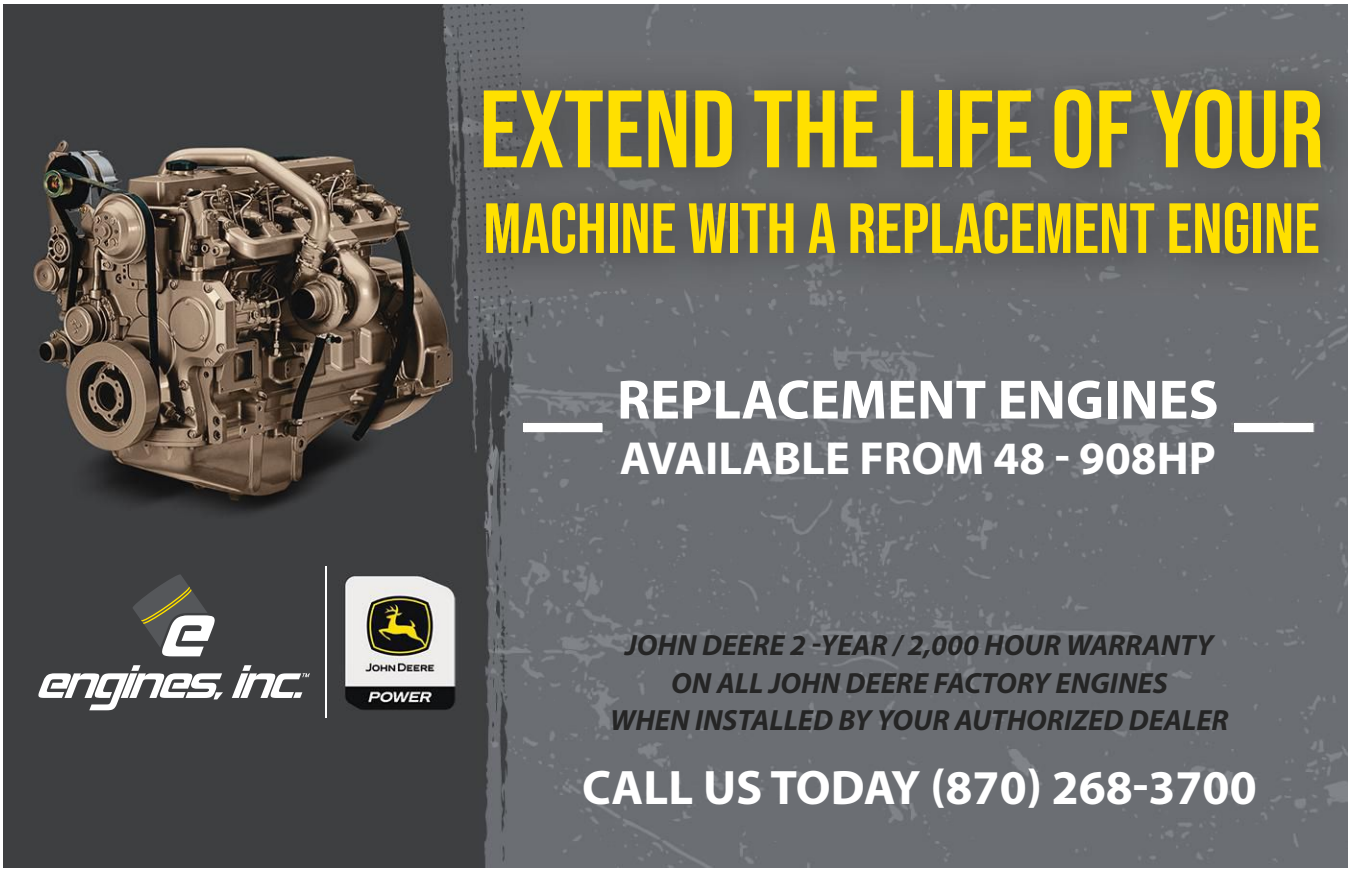
The extra protection provided by the negative air is just one advantage of using temporary containment walls compared to other types of containment for indoor construction projects.

What Are the Traditional Methods & Pitfalls?

Typically, contractors rely on drywall to contain indoor construction projects. Despite its popularity, there are several disadvantages to this method. It can be costly and time-consuming, since putting up these walls requires hiring separate vendors and multiple steps to complete.

Drywall and the wood frame also create dust and debris in the process, which is the exact issue that contractors need to avoid.

For temporary construction applications, contractors will sometimes use plastic to block off an area. Unsurprisingly, this method does not offer much protection or security, which



Typically, contractors rely on drywall to contain indoor construction projects. Despite its popularity, there are several disadvantages to this method. It can be costly and time-consuming, since putting up these walls requires hiring separate vendors and multiple steps to complete.

can pose a risk to the public.

Polycarbonate walls are another more secure method of containing indoor construction projects, but they are not reusable. That increases costs for replacement during future jobs.

What Are Additional Benefits of Temporary Containment Walls?

Along with keeping dust, debris and noise from the public, temporary containment walls offer many benefits for indoor construction projects, with rental adding to the advantages.

1. Safety & Compliance

Temporary containment walls are available that meet the ASTM E84 Class A Fire and Smoke Rating, which is the highest fire resistance level under the ASTM E84 test. The rating ensures that after 30 minutes of exposure to fire, the system will not exceed values set forth for flame spread index (FSI) or smoke developed index (SMI). Panels are also available to meet and exceed Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) Class IV and V requirements. Meeting these requirements means that the space within the walls will contain any environment-associated infections. The addition of an air scrubber supports that compliance by creating negative air. Meeting both the E84 and ICRA requirements is necessary for construction projects in health care facilities.

2. Cost Savings

Like equipment rental, renting temporary containment walls is an operating expense, as opposed to a capital expenditure, and the responsibility of obtaining and caring for them is on the rental provider. This not only reduces a contractor's barrier to investing in these systems, but it also eliminates the cost of storing the panels, transportation to and from the jobsite, and the labor to install, modify and remove the walls.

3. Fast Installation & Flexibility

Compared to drywall, temporary



containment walls are quick to install, generally within hours. If modifications are necessary due to a change in the scope of the construction project, it is fast and easy for the rental provider to adjust the walls. Temporary containment wall panels also come in a variety of widths and heights, with the standard being 10 feet tall; taller panels are also available. The shape of the area is flexible, according to the project's requirements. Additions such as doors, extra panels or windows are all options to incorporate with little effort by the rental provider.

4. Less Waste

Because they are reusable, temporary containment walls eliminate the waste associated with using drywall or polycarbonate walls for indoor construction projects. For contracting companies that have sustainability goals, that advantage is attractive. Less waste also means less cost, since there is no need to hire vendors to tear down the walls or pay to rent dumpsters for material disposal.

5. Inventory Availability & Management

Some contractors have their own temporary containment walls for their construction projects; however, rental providers maintain an abundant inventory of the panels and accessories. This gives contractors greater availability and options, while also minimizing their inventory management. If a contractor needs doors, windows or extra panels, they can turn to rental to supplement their own inventory without the capital investment or having to secure additional storage for the panels.

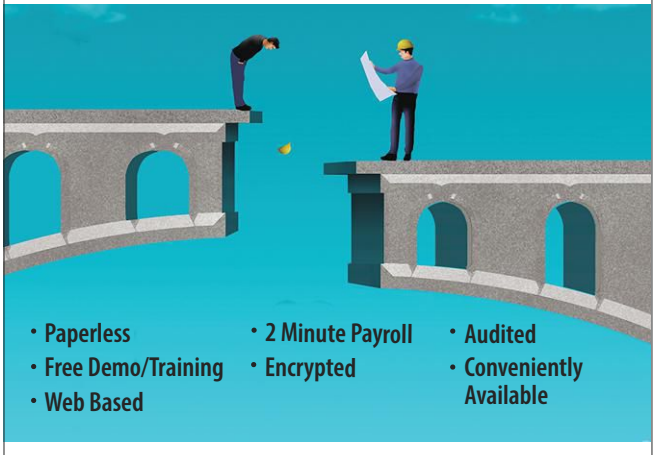
How Else Can a Rental Provider Help?

Rental providers can offer guidance and education about temporary containment wall design, along with cost estimates. This assistance helps keep contractors' projects on time and budget by providing the best recommendation up-front. In most cases, for longer-term rental (months as opposed to days), temporary containment walls are a cost-effective means to protect the public from construction activity within a facility. Having the rental provider take on the responsibility for inventory, delivery, setup, teardown and modification also frees up contractors to focus on the project at hand rather than the logistics of temporary containment walls. ▲

Kirk Steward is the national products and operations manager – temporary walls at Sunbelt Rentals. Visit sunbeltrentals.com.

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Why the US Needs a Homegrown Mass Timber Industry

HFA Chief Designer Andrew Mack weighs in on mass timber construction's potential

BY ANDREW MACK

Europe has outpaced the U.S. for years when it comes to mass timber construction. In Sweden and Austria, timber towers rise with a warmth and craft that feel alive, not just sustainable. Cross-laminated timber (CLT) factories hum, making it possible to build entire floors in days, not weeks. Yet in the U.S., mass timber often feels like a regulatory slog — adopted to meet carbon goals, not to spark excitement.

As part of a grant-funded study on mass timber, I traveled across Europe to interview the builders of some of the world's first timber skyscrapers. While visiting Sara Kulturhus in Skellefteå, Sweden, for example, I felt wood's magic; it wasn't just green, it was inspiring.

To truly lead, the U.S. architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry needs more carrots than sticks. Codes and mandates push mere compliance; incentives like grants or streamlined approvals ignite creativity. Europe has shown what's possible — curved geometries, hybrid systems, buildings that breathe. We can do more than just chase Europe's lead on mass timber; we can take it. Here are a few suggestions for making progress on that path.

Embrace Hybrid Approaches

European approaches to hybrid structures — buildings where timber is integrated intelligently with glass, steel, concrete and aluminum — are instructive. At Mjøstårnet, a 280-foot tower perched along Lake Mjøsa in Brumunddal, Norway, glued-laminated (glulam) columns and beams form the primary load-bearing system. The building's elevator shafts and balconies were built with CLT, and structural laminated veneer lumber spans the deck slabs up to the 11th floor, according to Moelven Limtre. The project exemplifies the precision of prefabrication — joists embedded with fiber wall insulation, optimizing performance while reducing waste.

In the Netherlands, I also visited Rotterdam's 231-foot-tall, 22-story De Karel Doorman. This hybrid building is essentially steel construction. However, in

lieu of having composite steel-concrete slabs, the architects chose to have wood joists standing between the beams, with wood floors. This combination of steel, concrete and wood allowed the building, which sits atop a former shopping mall, to achieve the required lightness and rigidity.

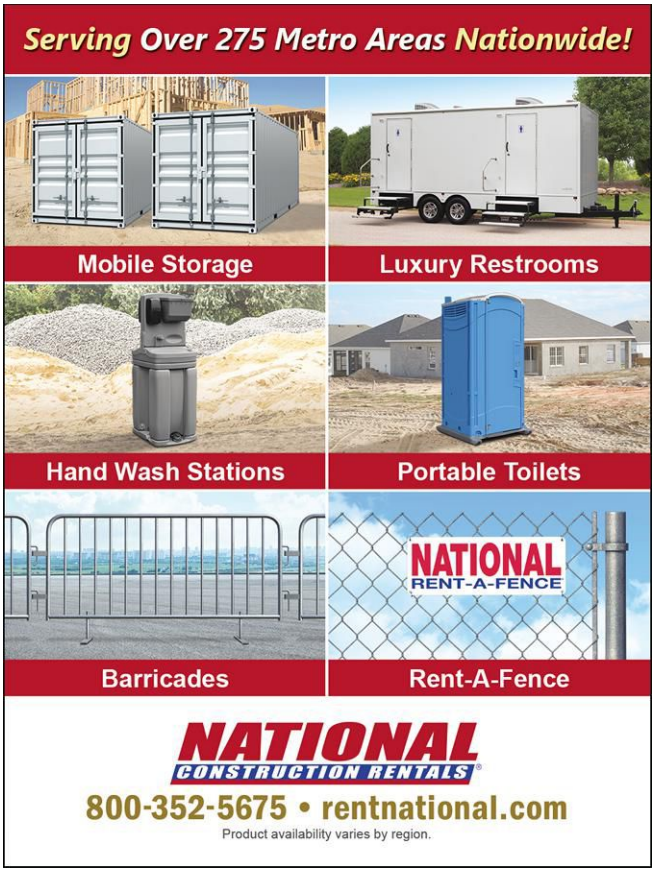
Designers in Europe have realized that hybrid buildings can be used to overcome some of the disadvantages of pure CLT skyscrapers — such as the tendency of wood, when lying flat in a floor-to-ceiling connection, to compress like a kitchen sponge. While this might amount to just a few millimeters per floor, the compression can be significant enough for the structure to lose height and actually settle. In a year or two, certain doors in the building might not even open.

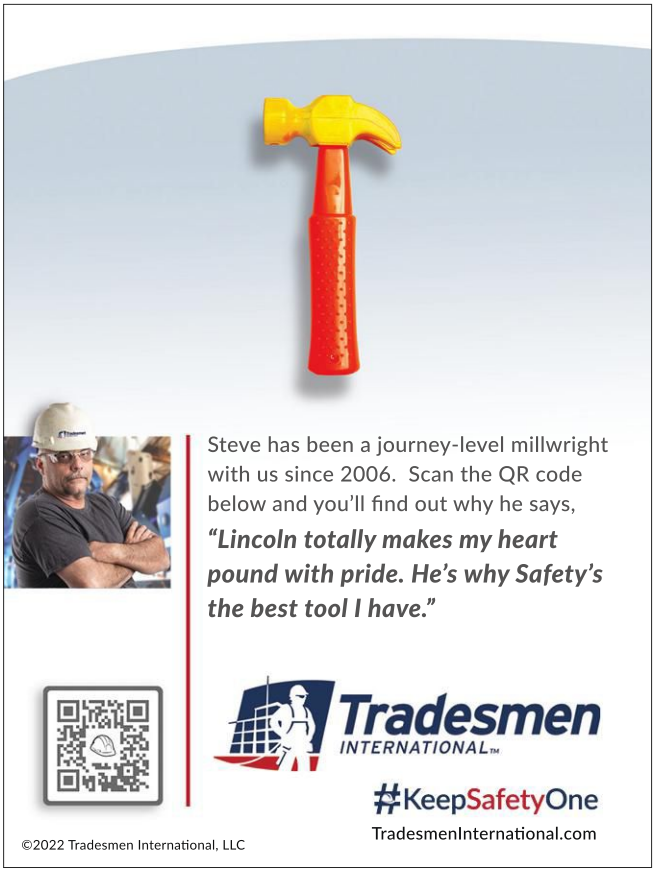
By contrast, vertical CLT walls are rock-solid and do not suffer from compression in the same way. In other cases, European architects are preventing compression by sandwiching horizontal CLT surfaces between concrete or other materials. Current plans for the 330-foot-tall "Rocket" building in Winterthur, Switzerland, call for the use of "wood composite flat slab" by Implenia AG and WaltGalmarini AG. It is essentially a torsion box of wood filled with concrete, allowing the building to be quite light but also have a low carbon impact.

The selective use of concrete is one way to overcome one of the bigger challenges faced by the tallest of timber buildings: Wood can be so light as to lead to an uncomfortable degree of swaying on the upper floors. Architects have realized that they can use heavier materials to add mass and stability to the top of the structure. Think of an old-timey water tower in the Old West that is perched on three legs. The huge bucket of water is essentially



sway-proof. Using concrete for the top four floors of a mass timber high rise — and maybe even adding a rooftop





swimming pool — can add stability in the same way.

Push for a Domestic CLT Network

To catch up with Europe and realize more of the benefits of mass timber and CLT, the U.S. needs a homegrown industry and more creative engagement. In Europe, producers, universities and government form a three-part engine for wood innovation. In the U.S., the AEC sector is certainly eager for mass timber, but we need more broad-based support.

From Oregon to Georgia, our forests could supply an extensive CLT network. However, our mills currently lack the scale and technology needed to compete. Visiting Austria's KLH factory, I saw producers and designers working together to create innovative buildings. A U.S. industry could do the same, empowering architects and fabricators to collaborate on bold designs.

Check any lumber yard and you will see that the best "select-boards" come from Scandinavia, a sign that our domestic lumber production lags Europe at the higher, value-add end. Improved Local sourcing could change that, creating jobs in rural areas and defining a new technical profession. This would require changes to zoning restrictions that often stifle new facilities.

But it can be done. In Oregon, Freres Engineered Wood (formerly Freres Lumber Co.) and other mills are now producing CLT from local Douglas fir trees, feeding projects like the PAE Living Building. For its part, Illinois-based Sterling Structural is taking advantage of breakthroughs in panel-pressing to manufacture CLT at smaller sizes with lower tolerance — but ultimately in much higher volume — than traditional manufacturers. It is a uniquely American approach that could become the standard as our market matures.

Incentives like grants for mills and tax breaks for local sourcing will be critical to spurring the growth of a homegrown timber economy. The AEC industry needs to educate lawmakers, zoning boards and economic development officials about the benefits of developing this capability. Concrete plants already dot every U.S. city, making construction fast and cheap. Why not timber mills? Local wood could make mass timber as practical as it is beautiful, supporting communities, alleviating the housing crisis, cutting carbon and turning overgrown and/or underused forests into the backbone of a new architectural era.

Keep Advancing the Tech

Tech-intensive approaches to prefabrication also stand to help U.S. designers and manufacturers further explore the creative potential of mass timber. In the case of Sara Kulturhus, the Swedish company Derome prefabricated entire hotel rooms, made largely of wood, that were then transported to the jobsite and slotted into the building like shoeboxes onto a shelf. Derome's factory was not far from Skellefteå, allowing the project to employ dozens of local factory workers and tradespeople.

Focused on mass timber sustainably sourced and made in California, the Oakland-based company Fabric Mass Timber (FMT) is an example of how this approach can look in the U.S. FMT employs professionals in areas such as design, forestry, manufacturing, real estate development, digital fabrication, supply chain-management, and design for manufacture and assembly (DfMA). Their mission, per the FMT site, is to use "advanced, automated manufacturing technologies to transform the overgrown trees fueling California's wildfires into carbon-neutral building materials."

In addition to manufacturing glue-laminated-timber (GLT) beams, and columns and CLT floor, roof and wall panels, FMT offers a tech-intensive process for design-assist, engineering and mass timber fabrication. FMT's goals include helping to solve California's housing crisis by providing prefabricated building solutions at scale. The FMT team is developing specialized building information modeling (BIM) tools designed to connect fabricators and designers in ways that allow for greater customization of mass timber.

These supply-side design professionals have emerged from institutions like the University of Michigan, with its robust interplay of architecture, technology training and robotics. The essential insight here is that production methods need not limit the architectural imagination. Along with studs, panels, walls and other essential building components, designers of mass timber structures could one day have a vast menu of prefabrication options at their fingertips — curves, coffering and intricate geometries included.

As architects continue to experiment with this material and related technologies, we will see more creative solutions along these lines — wooden buildings with intricate web shells and interconnected cross-bracings that achieve strength and rigidity without sacrificing lightness or carbon savings.

And fortunately, U.S. AEC firms continue to make progress on mass timber. Projects like Ascent MKE, a 25-story timber hybrid high-rise apartment building in Milwaukee, and the PAE Living Building in Portland, Oregon, prove we can build bold, sustainable timber structures.

What timber offers is not just an alternative to conventional materials but a shift in thinking. Its history is as old as building itself, yet its potential continues to unfold. The question is not whether we can build in timber, but how far we are willing to push it. ▲

Andrew Mack is chief designer in the Franklin, Massachusetts, studio of national AEC firm HFA Architecture + Engineering. The Boston-based architect has more than a decade of experience in commercial, mixed-use and multifamily design and has conducted extensive research into timber design and construction. Visit hfa-ae.com.

New Products To Watch

Selected by the editors of Construction Business Owner, these new-to-the-market products are just a few of our favorites recently released to the construction community. Stay tuned in every issue to find out what you need to know about the latest gear, solutions & industry-leading innovations.



▲ GEORGIA BOOT

Core 37 Logger

Released: 9/22/25

Availability: U.S. market

What's new? The Core 37 collection is designed for all-day comfort, performance and durability for whatever the job requires. Two new logger styles feature full-grain leather uppers with Goodyear welt construction, the Georgia Waterproof system for protection from the elements and an advanced memory polyurethane insole for added comfort.

Specs: A triple-ribbed steel shank; removable brush guard kiltie; and a heat, abrasion and slip-resisting Carbo-Tec rubber-lugged outsole provide durability, stability and protection while on the job. All Core 37 Logger boots meet ASTM F2892 electrical hazard classification, and protective toe SKUs also feature an ergo-fit safety toe designed to match contours of feet, provide comfort and flexibility, and meet ASTM F2413 protective toe classification.



▲ WERNER LADDER

Werner Ready Step

Released: 9/8/25

Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets

What's new? A lightweight, compact fiberglass stepladder built for residential trades pros, including HVAC technicians, electricians, remodelers and contractors who demand safety, worksite durability, and tool organization in one highly efficient, professional-grade design. Available in 4-foot and 5.5-foot sizes. The high efficiency work-top keeps tools close at hand.

Specs: Weighs 15% lighter than a traditional 300-pound ladder and fits into 4-inch spaces for easy storage and portability. A large work zone platform provides five times standing surface for enhanced comfort while working at height. Quick one-handed setup for faster, safer use.



▲ JCB

4TS-8T Teleskid

Released: 8/26/25

Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets

What's new? The new JCB 4TS Teleskid delivers power, reach and versatility in one compact track loader. With a 109-horsepower engine, up to 15-foot telescoping boom and nearly 4,000-pound lift capacity, it handles everything from lifting and loading to grading and trenching with ease. Engineered for peak performance and equipped with JCB's exclusive side-door entry, it helps business owners boost productivity and keep their crews safe.

Specs: Rated operating capacity: 3,999 pounds (retracted); 1,878 pounds (extended). Overall height: 6 feet, 10 inches. Standard features: Seven-way joysticks; ISO-/H pattern changeover; 125 liters per minute (lpm) high-flow hydraulics; electrical quick hitch; vinyl, heated, air-suspension seat; LED lights (four front, two rear); reversing fan; Livelink; reverse camera.



▶ OTR ENGINEERED SOLUTIONS

25x10-12 PROWLER tire

Released: 8/28/25

Availability: U.S market

What's new? Engineered specifically for today's high-performance side-by-side utility vehicles (UTVs). The new tire delivers a blend of turf protection, quiet ride quality and hard-surface durability, making it an ideal fit for commercial golf carts, municipal utility vehicles and ATV/UTV applications on asphalt, concrete and gravel.

Specs: The PROWLER features a proprietary tread pattern that includes V-shaped shoulder lugs with sipes for improved grip, cornering and self-cleaning. A solid center tread element helps reduce road noise and resist wear on hard surfaces, while the six-ply rating provides load-bearing capacity and puncture resistance, making it well suited for hauling heavy gear and equipment across mixed terrains.



▲ GRIPPLE

TecLoc Conduit Claw

Released: 5/1/25

Availability: U.S. market

What's new? The TecLoc Conduit Claw is a fast and secure, IAPMO-approved seismic rod stiffening clip, designed to be quickly installed using pipe or conduit to secure suspended services and prevent buckling in seismic conditions in a variety of construction applications.

Specs: Designed for easy, one-person installation, minimizing labor requirements and simplifying the process. Its universal compatibility with 1-inch electric metal tube (EMT), 1-inch Schedule 40 Pipe, and 3/8-inch, 1/2-inch and 5/8-inch rod sizes eliminates the need for multiple SKUs, streamlining inventory and ensuring coverage for a broad range of applications.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

Publication Title: Construction Business Owner
Publication Number: 23454
Filing Date: 10/1/2025
Frequency: Monthly
Number of Issues Published Annually: 12
Annual Subscription Rate: $48.00
Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication
Cahaba Media Group
217 Country Club Park STE 101
Birmingham, AL 35213
Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher
Cahaba Media Group
217 Country Club Park STE 101
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Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publishers, Editor and Managing Editor
Publisher: Matthew G. Conroy
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Editor in Chief: Megan Beam
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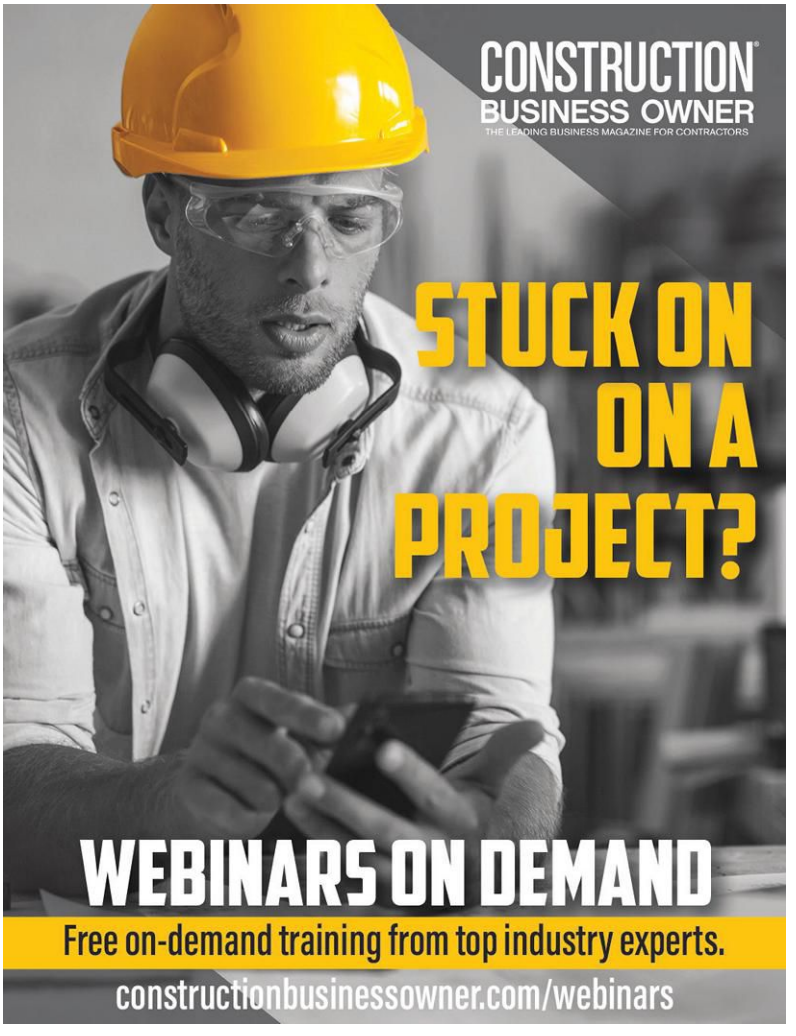
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May-25	47.2	51.4	43.6	43.5	49.2	44.3	46.1	43.8	46.2	45.4
Jun-25	46.8	53.6	46.5	45.7	50.6	45.8	43.8	47.4	49.2	45.5
Jul-25	46.2	53.4	47.8	45.1	47.5	46.4	43.7	49.9	47.9	42.8
Aug-25	47.2	50.3	46.2	48.0	49.9	43.5	49.9	50.8	44.5	43.3

For more information on the index or to subscribe to the complete historical data going back to 1995 for your internal analysis, **please contact economics@aia.org.** The ABI presents monthly construction billings data, using a base score of 50. A score of more than 50 indicates a growth from the previous month, and a score of less than 50 indicates a contraction from the previous month. A score of 50 indicates no change. Source: The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Architecture Billings Index (ABI).

*Regional and Sectoral indexes are three-month moving averages, due to small sample size. All data is seasonally adjusted.
**Every January, the AIA research department updates the seasonal factors used to calculate the ABI, resulting in a revision of recent ABI values.

At the time this issue went to print, the government shutdown prevented new data on the annual value of construction put in place.



"While business conditions remained soft at architecture firms nationally, there are signs that the downturn may be bottoming out," said Kermit Baker, Ph.D., AIA chief economist. **"Inquiries for new projects have increased four straight months, and billings both at firms with a multifamily or commercial/industrial specialization are beginning to stabilize."**

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SPEAKER



John Meibers
Vice President & General Manager
Deltek ComputerEase

John has been a leader at Deltek ComputerEase for over 25 years. Deltek ComputerEase serves over 6,000 contractors. In today's rapidly changing, fast-paced world, a big part of John's role is to ensure that Deltek ComputerEase equips customers with the most cutting-edge technology. Prior to Deltek ComputerEase, John spent 10 years working as controller for a large mechanical contractor.

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