



CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS GROUP

Building Wisconsin Together



*Skilled Construction Trades and Respected Contractors
Building Wisconsin Together®*

Welcome to Construction Business Group's Industry Updates. This monthly e-newsletter will help us communicate the important initiatives that we have underway and relevant updates on issues that impact Wisconsin's construction industry.

Message from Executive Director Robb Kahl



[Weakening Wisconsin's Prevailing Wage Law Will Negatively Impact Veterans](#)

Veterans in Wisconsin's construction industry are about to be negatively affected by Wisconsin's 2015-17 Budget Bill.

REPORT: [Prevailing Wage and Military Veterans in Wisconsin: Applied Policy Brief](#)

A new [study](#) released by the Midwest Economic Policy Institute finds that prevailing wage greatly improves economic outcomes for veterans in Wisconsin. As many as 2,000 blue-collar veterans in Wisconsin are expected to separate from their construction jobs due to the prevailing wage changes in the state.

Signed into law by Governor Scott Walker, the 2015-17 Budget Bill made significant changes to the state's prevailing wage laws by repealing prevailing wage for local governmental units and municipalities. The repeal of prevailing wage at the local level will become effective in January 2017.

Military veterans join the construction industry at a higher rate than non-veterans. Nationwide, veterans account for 6.9 percent of blue-collar construction workers compared to 5.8 percent of the overall workforce. In Wisconsin, veterans account for 8.3 percent of all blue-collar construction workers compared to 5.5 percent of Wisconsin's overall workforce. Any given construction worker is 2.8 percentage points more likely to be a military veteran than an individual in the rest of Wisconsin's economy. ([Read more](#))

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Destinations Career Academy (DCA)

We are excited to announce that the first semester of Destinations Career Academy is now underway with 28 students enrolled in the Operating Engineers Exploration Course.



Here are some basic facts to help you understand DCA of Wisconsin:

- An online charter school that is focused on Career & Technical Education (CTE)
- A tuition free option for Wisconsin high school students
- Allows students to stay at a traditional school and take select courses through DCA
- The Operating Engineers Pre-Apprenticeship Pathway is only available in Wisconsin!
 - Earns technical college credit
 - Fulfills high school CTE credits
 - Completes coursework required of apprentices
- The first official course, Basic Equipment, is under development for Spring 2017

Know of a student or high school that would be interested in the Operating Engineers' program? Please contact [Laura Cataldo](#) for more information.



Industry News and Updates

From the News Stand

WisDOT Projects FY 17 Let Level of \$945 Million

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) projects a construction let level of approximately \$945 million for state fiscal year 2017.

That compares to the final let program for FY 2016 of \$1.28 billion, which included the Core 2 letting for the Zoo Interchange. The FY 2016 program was also boosted by additional federal aid and the contingency bonding approved last fall by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC).

WisDOT administrators said this year's program could include an additional \$35 million in lettings if JFC allocates additional revenues from the Transportation Fund's closing balance to the highway program. The contingency bonding provision requires that any revenue growth beyond budget estimates be used to reduce bonding. WisDOT must submit a request to the committee to allocate the additional funding to the program. ([Read More](#))

MISSION (real)POSSIBLE: SAFER COMMUNITIES!

Construction workers, law enforcement and veterans united in effort

Earlier this year, St. Norbert College conducted a statewide poll. **The results were startling**, even for the clients - the Wisconsin Professional Police Association and the Wisconsin Operating Engineers and the thousands of military veterans who are represented in both sectors. ([Read More](#))

2015 Travel in Wisconsin Sets Record

WisDOT recently reported that travel on Wisconsin roads last year reached an all-time record of 62.1 billion miles, an increase of nearly 2.1 billion miles over 2014 and the largest increase in 17 years. The Department attributed the increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to several factors, including a strengthening economy, growing population, lower gas prices and continued growth in commercial motor vehicle traffic. The growth in Wisconsin's VMT is consistent with traffic increases seen nationally.

According to WisDOT, 58.3% of all travel in the state last year occurred on state highways while local roads carried 41.7%. The 7-county region of southeastern Wisconsin represented 27% of statewide travel.

WisDOT's budget proposal released last month would increase aid for local roads while cutting the state highway program and suspending work on most mega-projects in southeastern Wisconsin.

Upcoming Events

TDA Annual Meeting

November 15, 2016
Monona Terrace

2016, what a year...

- 50 plus presentations to chambers of commerce and others.
- 6 regional meetings.
- Over 500 tweets and Facebook postings.
- More than 5,000 contacts to elected officials by 1,700 advocates.
- Upwards of 500 Just Fix It resolutions.
- 10,000 Just Fix It buttons distributed.
- In excess of 200 press hits posted to the TDA website, including positive editorials in every major daily.
- An unprecedented event with 70 local community forums around the state.

So the questions is: What's next? How do we not only keep the momentum going but grow the momentum?

Please attend this year's annual meeting to hear the answer to those questions and what you can do to help.

[Click here](#) to register online and [here](#) to view the registration form. **Please register by November 9th.**

Labor Updates

McGowan named Innovator of the Year

It's no secret that the construction industry is struggling with a labor shortage.

For one, a lot of those working in the field are either retiring or getting close to retirement. At the same time, the young are becoming less inclined to seriously consider pursuing a career in construction.

Eliminating this shortage will require a willingness to do things differently. There will need, for instance, to be a greater emphasis on recruiting at the high-school level.

Unfortunately, these efforts are coming at a time when many school districts are offering fewer technical education courses, which are often one of the best means of piquing students' interest in the trades.

Terry McGowan, president and business manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 139 - the largest construction-industry union group in the state - may have found a solution: the Destinations Career Academy of Wisconsin. It is because of these efforts that McGowan was recently named The Daily Reporter's Innovator of the Year. [\(Read More\)](#)

Legislative Alerts

Rural Broadband Study Committee Makes Final Recommendations

Early this year, the Wisconsin State Legislature created a Legislative Council Study Committee of Rural Broadband. The Committee was directed to:

- a) Review the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program and the extent to which it has encouraged construction of broadband infrastructure in areas of the state with few broadband service providers;
- b) Discuss the criteria used to evaluate applications and award grants, consider alternatives for determining eligibility and prioritizing proposed projects; and
- c) Consider alternative methods for encouraging construction of broadband infrastructure, and identify options. [\(Read More\)](#)

Place article copy here. Be sure to make the articles short and concise as people tend not to read much more than a couple of paragraphs. Place article copy here.

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