



The Monitor

RAISING THE BAR BY MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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The Monitor is a free biannual publication of the Indiana, Illinois, Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting
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The State of Construction Amid COVID-19

The past year brought to our nation a devastating loss of jobs and economic growth with COVID-19 forcing most of the world to a halt. The unemployment rate peaked at an unprecedented level not seen since data collection started in 1948 – 14.8% in April 2020.

A recent report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute found that due to the pandemic, Illinois collected \$308 million less in motor fuel taxes with total loss in revenue to the state and transit agencies totaling more than \$1 billion.

While COVID-19 surely derailed economic growth, there does seem to be light at the end of the tunnel for the state of labor. According to the ADP Research Institute, company payrolls showed a 32,000 increase in construction jobs this past March. As much of the country faced a grueling end to the winter season, starting this spring and into summer, we expect to a sustained uptick in work. The Institute also reported that U.S. private employers have added the most jobs in six months, with an increase of 517,000.

The growth trend has also been fueled by increased rate of COVID-19 vaccinations and eased restrictions. Some analyses show construction bids are up 36% over pre-pandemic levels, signaling faster than expected recovery.

These figures are promising and come at a time where the nation's dire infrastructure needs are being recognized. Released every four years, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) issues a report that grades America's infrastructure in the form of a school report card. The latest report, based on 17 categories, was issued this past March and America received a C-. State reports are issued on a rolling basis. Covering our jurisdiction, Iowa received a C in 2019 and Illinois received a C- in 2018. Indiana does not have a recent grade, however the state report indicates 23% of roads are in poor condition costing each motorist \$638 per year in costs due to driving on poor roads. To read more about the ASCE report card, turn to "National Infrastructure Scores a C- in 2021 ASCE Report" on page 7.

With this backdrop, and as you are likely aware, President Joe Biden unveiled his \$2 trillion infrastructure plan this past March, a plan that comes at a critical time given the devastating effects of the pandemic coupled with the latest ASCE report rating detailing America's crumbling infrastructure. Called the American Jobs Plan, the proposal would rebuild 20,000 miles of roads and includes \$155 billion earmarked toward repairing roads and bridges, \$80 million toward Amtrak repairs, \$40 billion for public housing improvements, \$111 billion for repairing lead pipes, \$42 billion for ports and airports, \$100 billion for public school improvements, and \$180 billion for research and development.

Investing in our nation's infrastructure is critical to strengthening the middle class, keeping America competitive, and creating millions of jobs. President Biden has stated that the American Jobs Plan is a "once-in-a-generation investment in America, unlike anything we've seen or done since we built the interstate highway system and the space race decades ago." Aptly put, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg noted that our nation is "still coasting on infrastructure choices that were made in the 1950s.

State construction outlooks are also looking positive. In Illinois, lawmakers introduced the Climate Union Jobs Act, expanding prevailing wage protections to renewable energy projects, that would put thousands of tradespeople to work as we move toward a clean energy economy. House Bill 1381 has been introduced in Indiana, whereby the state is lifting arbitrary restrictions on solar and wind developments to spur investment. Such legislation not only ensures a future of renewable energy, it also helps ensure economic growth and middle class job creation at a time when it is needed most.

With the height of the construction season on the horizon, COVID-19 immunizations on the rise, and people eager to get back to work, there appears to be much to look forward to as we move our nation forward.



LETTER
FROM THE
**Executive
Director**
Marc R. Poulos

Although
transportation
revenues
were
lower than
expected,
they were still
\$800 million
higher prior to
the passage
of Rebuild
Illinois

COVID-19 One Year Later: Impact on Rebuild Illinois

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges for people, businesses, institutions, and state and local governments. This is especially true for Illinois’ historic six-year capital infrastructure plan, Rebuild Illinois, which was enacted in June 2019. Rebuild Illinois generated new revenues and increased appropriations. The plan was expected to boost Illinois’ state transportation revenues by almost \$2 billion annually.

Unfortunately, Illinois’ state transportation and transit agency revenues were \$1 billion less than expected over the past year due to pandemic-related declines in fuel consumption, sales taxes, and transit ridership. By the end of 2020, vehicle miles traveled by people statewide were down 15 percent compared to 2019, and year-over-year ridership of public transit systems was down 90 percent.

This could potentially be a problem for construction projects in Illinois because gas tax revenues are a major contributor to road and bridge projects across the state. Fortunately, although transportation revenues were lower than expected, they were still \$800 million higher than they were prior to the passage of Rebuild Illinois thanks to the plan’s doubling of the gas tax rate. In addition, the blow was softened by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, one of the federal COVID-19 relief packages passed in 2021, which allocated \$353 million to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

As a result of the passage of the Rebuild Illinois capital plan, IDOT’s Annual Highway

Improvement Program is significantly larger than previous years. IDOT’s 2019 Highway Improvement Program totaled about \$2.27 billion. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Highway Improvement Program totals \$3.46 billion – or \$1 billion more than the FY 2019 program – and is expected to improve over 1,050 miles of highways and 180 bridges.

Because construction was deemed “essential” by Governor JB Pritzker at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, construction projects stayed on schedule, there were no pandemic-related cuts, and funding from Rebuild Illinois continued to be released for infrastructure improvements. For example, in April 2021, IDOT announced that \$110 million in funding would be released later in the year to improve, modernize, and revitalize public ports across the state. In May 2021, a fourth round of \$250 million in funding was released to local governments for road and bridge improvements, new storm sewers, and new bike paths and sidewalks, among other transportation-related projects. Projects are expected to stay on track for 2021, as well, though decreased transportation revenues may lead to projects being accomplished later than anticipated.

Rebuild Illinois addresses crumbling infrastructure, but it also supports the local economy: Every \$1 billion in infrastructure investment boosts the economy by between \$1.7 billion and \$3.5 billion in Illinois and saves or creates up to 25,000 jobs. One year later, Rebuild Illinois is helping revitalize Illinois’ economy as we recover from the pandemic, and it will continue to boost the state’s economy for years to come.

WORKERS RIGHTS



Workers Rights Constitutional Amendment

In November of 2022, Illinoisans will be voting to elevate workers' rights to a constitutional level. The Workers' Rights Amendment would prevent Illinois from ever passing a state law or local ordinance "that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety." In other words, voters will have the opportunity to ban so-called "right-to-work" laws permanently in Illinois. This amendment would ensure that workers across the state have the freedom to collectively bargain so their voices are more powerful.

The III FFC has been leading the effort in promoting this legislation for several years as a part of an effort to fight back against anti-union legislation that has passed across the nation in recent years. Anywhere from 19 to 22 states have proposed "right-to-work" laws each year between 2013 and 2017, including Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Illinois does not have a law on the books, and data shows that Illinois workers and the state's economy have fared better as a result.

A May 2021 report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign found that "right-to-work" states are worse at building middle-class jobs and delivering economic growth. Illinois workers earn higher wages, are more likely to have health insurance coverage, have higher rates of homeownership,

and are more productive than their counterparts in the 27 states with "right-to-work" laws.

Research continues to show us that collective bargaining offers workers solid pathways into good, middle-class jobs. Union members and signatory contractors certainly know this, and voters and elected officials are coming around to understand this even more. In 2018, Missouri voters overwhelmingly rejected a "right-to-work" law. Additionally, Governor Jim Justice of West Virginia recently admitted that "right-to-work" failed in West Virginia and that the policy has not been a magic bullet for attracting businesses and jobs.

At the end of May 2021, a bi-partisan majority in the Illinois General Assembly passed the Workers' Rights Amendment on to allow voters to decide whether Illinois should ban "right-to-work."

As the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted working people, we need to make sure workers have the pay, benefits, resources, and protections they deserve. The Workers' Rights Amendment is a major step in that direction. "Right-to-work" is not only harmful to union workers and their families, but it's also bad economic policy.

So, talk to your friends, your family, and your brothers and sisters on worksites and tell them to vote "YES" on the Workers' Rights Amendment in November 2022!



Melissa Binetti
Counsel for the III FFC



Kara Principe
Counsel for the III FFC



Joseph Sweeney
Counsel for the III FFC



Myron Sutton
Regional Manager

FOCUS ON Indiana



Changes to Town & Country Paving

In the Fall of 2012, the Monitor had a spotlight article on the family-owned paving company, Town & Country Paving in Demotte, Indiana. The article showed how five brothers brought this company to the height of success from paving driveways when they started in 1982, to paving Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) projects in 2012. Fast forward to 2021 - on February 5, 2021, it was announced that Town & Country Paving was sold to Rieth-Riley Construction.

Town & Country has been a state and federal highway asphalt producer and paving contractor in northwest Indiana close to 40 years. The highly respected family company serves both public and private customers in the Demotte area, working simultaneously on INDOT projects and private jobs – such as driveways – when time allows.

Rodney Urbano is one of the five brothers who still owned part of Town & Country Paving with their mother and was the Vice President/ General Manager of the company. I recently spoke with him and found out that because a couple of his family members are near retirement age, his family was curious in seeing whether Rieth-Riley would be interested in purchasing their business.

“After much consideration, our family decided to consolidate with a long term and highly respected company that has significant operations in the region,” explained Urbano. “We have known the Rieth-Riley Construction group for many years and considered them to be the best choice to purchase our company so that Town & Country can continue well into the future. We are joining one of the oldest and most reputable companies in the area. Even better yet, it is the

only one in our industry in our immediate area that is 100% employee-owned, which provides a family feel as we embark on new beginnings.”

Town & Country will continue to operate under their name for the near future. Rodney Urbano, who became the President of the local asphalt plant in Demotte upon the sale, said he is thankful that his family members and co-workers will continue as members of IUOE Local 150 working at the plant. “Most co-workers will continue to operate as they have for years and years to come,” said Urbano.

The III FFC wishes to acknowledge Town & Country for their many years of raising the standards in the construction industry through a culture of innovation, safety, and continuous improvements. We wish the founding members much success with their future endeavors.

Five brothers brought this company to the height of success from paving driveways when they started in 1982.



National Infrastructure Scores a C- in 2021 ASCE Report Card

Aging infrastructure is a serious problem with serious consequences across the nation. The issue affects health and safety, as well as economic growth and sustainability. Unfortunately, America's infrastructure has not fared well according to the latest American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) ratings.

ASCE represents more than 150,000 civil engineers in private practice, government, industry, and academia who are dedicated to advancing the science and profession of civil engineering. Since 1998, ASCE has issued a Report Card for America's Infrastructure, a significant grading of infrastructure health in the United States. Beginning in 2001, the Report Card has been released every four years. Using a familiar A through F format, the Report Card for America's Infrastructure examines current infrastructure conditions and needs, assigns grades, and makes recommendations for how to improve in 17 categories of infrastructure.

The 2021 Report Card gave the nation's infrastructure a below average rating of C-. The report gave some bleak statistics: by 2039, America's overdue infrastructure bill will cost the average American household \$3,300 a year, or \$63 a week; there is a water main break every 2 minutes; 43% of our public roadways are in poor or mediocre condition. Leadership and action, investment, and resilience standards and technologies are the recommendations offered to raise the nation's grade.

State reports, issued on a rolling basis, include a C- for Illinois and a C for Iowa (Indiana was not graded). Illinois'

rail, air, roadway, and waterway systems have historically seen large investments to capitalize on the state's geographic advantages. However, in recent years, there has been a trend of underinvestment that threatens the state's competitive advantage as well as the health, safety, and welfare of residents.

Iowans obviously depend on the state's roads, bridges, aviation, railways, water infrastructure, energy systems, wastewater removal, and recreation facilities. The Iowa Report Card concludes that much of the state's infrastructure is aging and outdated with significant concerns over resilience.

Indiana also faces infrastructure challenges of its own. For example, the Report Card identified roads in need of repair in Indiana costs each driver \$638 per year, with 6% of bridges rated structurally deficient. Drinking water needs in Indiana are estimated to cost \$7.5 billion and 266 dams are considered to be high-hazard. The state's schools have an estimated capital expenditure gap of \$518 million. The Report Card continues to indicate that Indiana's deteriorating infrastructure impedes the state's ability to compete in an increasingly global marketplace.

If America and its states are to succeed in a 21st Century economy, serious, sustained leadership on infrastructure investment at all levels of government is necessary. Delaying these investments only escalates the costs and risks of an aging infrastructure system - an option that working-class families, taxpayers, and economies cannot afford.

To take an in-depth look at these Report Cards and more, visit <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/>.

If America and its states are to succeed in a 21st century economy, serious sustained leadership on infrastructure investment at all levels of government is necessary



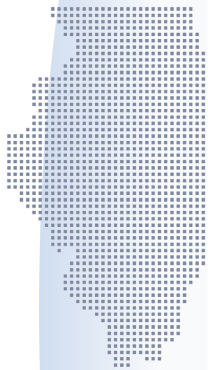
Jodi Frailey
Regional Manager



35th Street Pedestrian Bridge in Chicago

By Jodi Frailey & Thomas Haley

FOCUS ON Illinois



The view as you drive down Lake Shore Drive in Chicago has changed quite a bit over the years. The City of Chicago has placed an emphasis on investing resources into South Side neighborhoods which has led to the replacement of the pedestrian bridge at 35th Street, followed by the construction of a new pedestrian bridge at 41st Street. These projects connect the Douglas neighborhood and Oakland neighborhood, respectively, to the vast parkland along the Chicago lakefront. The City of Chicago is continuing the progress it's made of expanding access to its lakefront parkland by investing \$31 million dollars into replacing the current pedestrian bridge at 43rd Street in the North Kenwood neighborhood.

The project will include demolition of the current pedestrian bridge that stands over Lake Shore Drive and the Metra train track lines. The new bridge, which will be a similar design to its companion bridge at 41st Street, will feature a curved design able to accommodate pedestrians and bikes, as well as emergency vehicles. The project will also feature the replacement of the playground structure that currently stands, to

make way for the larger footprint, as well as a new drainage system. As it stands, the current pedestrian bridge is non-compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act due to the numerous sets of stairs someone must climb to reach the platform level. The project was awarded to Chicago-based contractor F.H. Paschen, S.N. Nielson & Associates in July 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, with work to prepare for the bridge demolition beginning at the end of November 2020. F.H. Paschen, S.N. Nielson & Associates has a long history completing quality projects throughout the City of Chicago, with a workforce comprised of members of numerous building trades unions, including participants in USDOL-approved apprenticeship programs. This skilled workforce helps provide crucial access to Chicago's natural resources for all, as well as building the quality infrastructure that the City of Chicago is renowned for.



Josh Weger

Josh Weger has served as Policy Director for the III FFC since 2015. In his role he leads policy development, strategic planning, and research and analysis, and is involved in nearly all aspects of the III FFC's work. Josh has led several key initiatives over the last 6 years to help the III FFC evolve, expand our influence, and grow our portfolio. Across Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, Josh has spearheaded the passage of dozens of new responsible bidder ordinances, persuaded local leaders to substantially increase funding for infrastructure, and helped craft innovative and effective local Project Labor Agreements.

Josh also led the design of a new technology architecture for the III FFC's market share analysis practice, ensuring that we maintain our position as a national leader among fair contracting organizations. Josh's work also involves helping analyze and craft legislation, participating in the formulation of political strategies, and quickly responding to the needs of Foundation staff with sound and candid advice and recommendations.

Prior to joining the III FFC, Josh spent 14 years in state government in a variety of progressively responsible roles. During college, Josh spent two years as a legislative intern with his home area state representative. After graduating, he joined the Office of the Illinois Auditor General, where he contributed to sensitive audits of high-profile state programs as directed by legislative audit resolutions. Next, he would spend 8 years with the Illinois Department of Commerce, where he held several positions with the agency including Region Manager, Policy Advisor, and Research Director. At the commerce department, Josh spearheaded the regionalization of the state's economic development strategy and policies. In addition, Josh helped forge a new agency policy that required recipients of multimillion dollar construction grants for ethanol and biodiesel plants to sign a local building trade council PLA as a grant condition.

Most recently, prior to joining the III FFC, Josh spent four years as Deputy Director of the Illinois Capital Development Board. Working with longtime construction labor leader, Executive Director Jim Underwood, Josh was responsible

for a \$3.9 billion construction program and directed a staff of 60 architects, engineers, project managers, and support staff. Josh oversaw CDB's implementation of the Project Labor Agreements Act in 2011, personally ensuring its integration into all agency contracting and project management policies.

In addition, Josh was instrumental in negotiating an improved statewide model PLA with the Illinois AFL-CIO's PLA committee in 2013. On Josh's watch, 99% of all CDB construction spending was covered by the state PLA.

Josh holds a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Illinois Springfield, where he was ranked 1st in his class and named its program marshal. He also has a bachelor's degree in Economics from UIS, and an associate's degree from Lincoln Trail College in Robinson. A native of Lawrenceville in southeastern Illinois, Josh grew up in a union household. His father Joe Weger worked in refineries and powerplants for 40 years and was a member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union Local 7-368 bargaining committee during his 27 years as an instrument technician at the now-defunct Texaco refinery in Lawrenceville.



In 2019, the III FFC teamed up with UCA and MARBA to host its 5th Annual Prevailing Wage Seminar. Josh Weger, who presented on Responsible Bidder Ordinances, is second from the right.



Andrew Waeyaert
Regional Manager

FOCUS ON Iowa



Work Continues on Interstate 74 Bridge



Quad Cities area contractors may be wondering what the next big project will be with only a year left on the schedule for the construction of the Interstate 74 bridge over the Mississippi River. While the needs are plentiful, one project has caught the attention of many in the Quad Cities: the Interstate 80 bridge over the Mississippi River. The current structure, built in 1966, is considered by transportation officials to be structurally sound at this time but is approaching the end of its useful life span. Being one of three major interstate bridges that links Iowa and Illinois in the area, it carries approximately 20% of the daily traffic that crosses the Mississippi River in the Quad Cities.

Replacing this key infrastructure asset in the area will not be an easy undertaking. Officials from the Illinois Department of Transportation, the lead agency on the project, have cited several reasons for reconstruction, including the bridge reaching the end of its expected life span, the current design not meeting modern standards, and ongoing safety concerns. Future maintenance costs continue to exponentially climb as the structure ages and as travel across the bridge increases.

The bridge itself has been closed many times throughout the past decades to make costly repairs, including in 2009 when the bridge was completely closed to traffic from May to September when cracks were found in the top flange of the beam. And in April 2015, the westbound lanes were closed to traffic. Transportation officials have projected the corridor will

experience a 20% increase in traffic by 2045.

Many Quad-Citizens are possibly skeptical of the Interstate 80 corridor plan given the decades of community pressure it took to begin the replacement of the Interstate 74 bridge. Fortunately, the Illinois Department of Transportation has already included \$304 million within its six-year transportation funding plan to address the needs of Interstate 80. The funding was made possible by the Rebuild Illinois program passed by the Illinois General Assembly and signed by Governor JB Pritzker in 2019.

On April 22, 2020 the Illinois Department of Transportation hosted a virtual public meeting to launch a Planning and Environmental Linkages study. The study is the first step toward the preliminary engineering and environmental stage – also called stage I – in the project schedule. The study will also review the impacts of a 9-mile road between the bridge and the I-80/I-88 interchange on the Illinois side and from the bridge to Middle Road in Bettendorf. During the public meeting Illinois Department of Transportation Program Development Engineer Becky Marruffo stated, "Initially looking at the existing structure kind of drove the consideration of looking at a study, but we want to make sure we're considering all the transportation elements within a corridor and not limiting ourselves with tunnel vision with just looking at the bridge itself."

With a year left until completion on the Interstate 74 bridge and the 3-year bridge deck replacement and resurfacing on Interstate 280 beginning this year, the heavy highway construction industry is positioned well for a very bright future. In the words of former Rock Island County Board Chairman Ken "Moose" Miranda – it's all good in Rock Island County.



The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has been busy with new initiatives and actions. With over 70 items on the agenda, the U.S. DOL has plans to address and overhaul a host of issues in the coming year – including addressing worker misclassification, modernizing and updating the Davis-Bacon Act, increasing the minimum wage for federal contractors, revisiting the overtime rule, tipped wages under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and a range of occupational safety and health standards.

One of the Biden Administration’s early actions at DOL was to delay the effective date of a final rule published the first week of January 2021, regarding the classification of workers as independent contractors or employees under the FLSA. DOL subsequently withdrew the rule in May, citing a concern that the rule as proposed would have further eroded worker protections.

According to a report commissioned by the U.S. DOL, as many as 30% of employers have misclassified some workers, ultimately affecting millions of workers across the country. President Biden used his inaugural budget request to signal his administration’s commitment to extending employment protections to misclassified workers, budgeting \$7.5 billion in the coming fiscal year to boost efforts to root out misclassification.

Department of Labor Secretary Marty Walsh recently visited Iowa to talk about the Department’s efforts in creating an economy that is more “equitable, more sustainable, and more inclusive with good jobs.” In Des Moines, he talked about worker misclassification, registered apprenticeship programs,

and the need for stronger unions to “build back better” and create opportunities. Secretary Walsh also discussed how initiatives put on by the U.S. DOL would support improvements for infrastructure, workers, and families.

An initiative that would support improvements for infrastructure and the economy is improving the 90-year-old Davis-Bacon Act, which governs federal construction projects. From 1931 to the present, the historically bipartisan Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) have been central to the modern American procurement system. The Davis-Bacon Act requirements create a level playing field for all federal construction contractors by ensuring that public expenditures maintain and reflect local area standards for wages and benefits. The main purpose of the DBRA is to support middle-class American families by protecting market-based local wages and benefits in the competitive public bidding process. In November, the U.S. DOL is expected to propose a new rule that would “update and modernize”

the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931 “to provide greater clarity and enhance their usefulness in the modern economy.”

The U.S. Department of Labor has been busy at work over the past six months. Their recent efforts are addressing and overhauling some policies that the construction industry has long-awaited. We at the III FFC look forward to seeing changes implemented to improve worker protections in construction and across many other industries. ■

Initiatives put on by the U.S. Department of Labor would support improvements for infrastructure, workers, and families.

CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT



McCleary Excavating

They say, “If you do what you love, you’ll never work a day in your life.” Dick McCleary embodied this quote. Returning home from overseas, he traded in his milk bucket for dozer keys. Running heavy equipment for the engineering division of the army in 1952 he found his passion. In 1954, McCleary Excavating was founded and the family business went from having a herd of dairy cows to a fleet of heavy equipment.

Working as a two-man crew, Dick, and his father Bert, got their start digging ponds. Through the years they grew the business, doing subdivision work in the late 50s to early 60s. The McClearys added a handful of employees and began doing sewer lagoons and eventually road work. In the mid-60s, McCleary started grading county roads and doing snow removal work. Continuing to grow, in the late 80s, the company added underground utilities to their service list.

Years prior, when winter came and work halted, the McClearys began vacationing in Florida. Dick, suffering from boredom on one of their trips, decided he wanted to fill his time with what he loved to do. He called his son, Tim to request he bring a piece of equipment down. In time, this led to a Florida branch of McCleary Excavating beginning in 1984. The business experienced much success among the palm trees, only having to call 6 weather days before selling the branch to a local contractor.

Keeping up with the ever-changing industry, Tim’s

son Chris, the Vice President, added advancements to company software to work up a more accurate bid. McCleary has also added GPS equipment to their fleet.

Tim’s business philosophy is to take care of the customer and make sure to go the extra mile to make them happy. He credits his father’s drive, honesty, and belief of “do it right or don’t do it all” for the success of the four-generation company.

Riding alongside his father in the equipment at a young age, Tim grew to love the family business. He longed to be at the job site instead of school. Tim would eventually take over the reins of the corporation when his father semi-retired. Up into the last few months of his life, Dick would still run parts for the guys and make his rounds checking in on the job sites.

Taking the hardworking page from his father book, Tim tries to have around 6 to 10 jobs running at a time. He likes to bid on jobs within a 50-mile radius of McCleary’s hometown, Bluegrass, Iowa. This enables him to be able to get to the jobs in case of an emergency. That being said, no job is too big or too small.

McCleary Excavating became a union operation a few years after opening. Dick realized one of the benefits of being a signatory contractor is the access to a pool of skilled labor. The number of employees on the payroll fluctuates with the number and size of jobs



Riding alongside his father in the equipment at a young age, Tim grew to love the family business.

McCleary is working on. McCleary also offers safety classes throughout the year, recognizing employee and job site safety is of the utmost importance.

McCleary Excavating continues to be an exceptional example of a great family business through and through. In February, the family and company lost the founder and one of the best motor grader operators. Before laying Dick to rest, the family did a tribute by driving by the job sites one last time. But without a doubt, Dick will continue to watch over the jobs from the skies above. ■



Local Infrastructure Faces Severe Funding Gap

Counties Take Action to Increase Revenue

Here in the Midwest, the III FFC works on initiatives to educate the public about America's crumbling infrastructure. We strongly urge local, state, and federal governments to make the difficult but necessary decisions to ensure adequate funding for infrastructure, now and in the future. On that front, there is much work to be done.

For more than 30 years, the American Society of Civil Engineers has released its quadrennial Infrastructure Report Card, an exhaustive 50-state study on the condition of the nation's infrastructure. The reports examine infrastructure across 18 categories, and the findings have quantified and validated what most Americans already know from the experiences of our everyday lives: that America's infrastructure is in serious disrepair and suffering from decades of chronic underinvestment.

A key finding from the Infrastructure Report Card is that past "big-ticket" state and federal infrastructure programs have likely had too much political influence and not enough expert influence at the programmatic level, with an overemphasis on attention-grabbing new construction at the expense of rebuilding and repairing existing systems. As a result, America's infrastructure suffers from a particularly acute maintenance backlog.

Another key finding is that local, state, and federal governments will spend a combined estimated \$3 trillion on infrastructure over the next ten years; but to achieve even a passing grade, that amount needs to be doubled to \$6 trillion. And the report finds that not one single local area or region in the U.S. spends adequately on infrastructure.

Here in Illinois, the same challenges persist. Everyone knows that there is enormous pressure on the Chicagoland region's infrastructure, and that pressure will reach unbearable levels in the coming decade unless decisive action is taken. The

good news is that recently some very positive developments have taken place to address the problem. Rebuild Illinois, Gov. JB Pritzker's 6-year, \$45 billion infrastructure program, authorized Chicagoland counties to enact a new county motor fuel tax (CMFT) or increase an existing CMFT. In the last six months, key counties have taken action on this issue.

- In November 2020, the DuPage County Board voted to increase its existing CMFT from 4 to 8 cents a gallon, which will generate an additional \$20 million in estimated annual revenues for the county's pressing road system repair and expansion needs.

- A month later in December, the Will County Board, recognizing the county's extraordinary population and economic growth pressures, adopted its first ever CMFT of 4 cents a gallon, expected to generate an estimated \$28 million in net annual revenue to help fortify the county's overwhelmed transportation infrastructure.

- In March of 2021, the Lake County Board, facing its own long-running traffic congestion nightmares, enacted the county's first ever CMFT of 4 cents a gallon. This is projected to net an additional \$26 million in annual revenues to help relieve the county's overloaded roadways.

The III FFC was fully engaged in each of these efforts, with Policy Director Josh Weger detailed to the task. Josh gave presentations at town hall meetings, answered questions at county board committee hearings, delivered oral and written testimony at full county board meetings, and carefully monitored each of the proposals to successful passage. Most recently on this front, press reports have indicated that the Kane County Board recently began facing down the "double whammy" of the county's expected 43% population growth by 2050 and the reality that there are currently \$163 million worth of needs identified in the county's five-year transportation plan that have no funding source. The board's transportation committee is reportedly on the cusp of proposing an increase to the county's existing 5 cent a gallon CMFT and also exploring ways to obtain an equitable user fee from electrical vehicle drivers. The III FFC board of trustees and staff are encouraged by these developments, and we intend to continue to engage actively in these initiatives in pursuit of adequate and sustainable funding for infrastructure in the communities we serve.





Municipal Governments Await Federal Infrastructure

By Michael Lingl

In a March 28, 2021 news release, the Lake County Division of Transportation announced the closing of Stearns School Road in Mill Creek due to a culvert failure found during a routine road inspection. The culvert was scheduled to be replaced in 2023 because of its age. Great catch and kudos to the Lake County Division of Transportation for finding the failure before someone got hurt. While this is a local snapshot of aging infrastructure, the nation was introduced to the \$1.9 trillion American Jobs Plan that focuses on infrastructure from a federal level a few weeks later. How does the American Jobs Plan impact our area and what are the needs that we have locally?

The American Jobs Plan addresses a wide range of infrastructure issues from roads, bridges, water systems, public transit, and the electric grid among other things. Locally, the two biggest infrastructure needs appear to be roads/bridges and water systems. The national infrastructure bill dedicates \$115 billion for roads/bridges and \$111 billion for water projects over an eight-year period. Obviously, we can only guess what our share would be if the plan is enacted into law. In the meantime, issues persist as well as questions about the funding for this work.

Several counties including Lake, Kane, and DuPage have considered, enacted, or raised a County level Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) to fund prospective infrastructure needs. This is on top of the statewide MFT, which was recently raised by Illinois to fund work through the Illinois Department of Transportation. DuPage County raised their MFT by 4 cents per gallon to

offset a 25% drop in MFT revenue during the pandemic in 2020. Lake County enacted a 4 cents per gallon MFT to offset an annual shortage of about \$50 million per year to complete the projects listed in the Counties 2040 transportation plan. Kane County is considering enacting a MFT to help pay for the county's five-year \$214 million transportation plan. The needs at the County level are in the \$100s of millions going forward, and that doesn't cover local road and water issues that municipalities face.

Since the beginning of 2020, infrastructure has been a key issue in recent elections in Schaumburg, Libertyville, Mundelein, and Roselle. Schaumburg enacted a \$237 million multi-year Capital Improvement Plan that included \$151 million for road work and \$39 million to water and sewer improvement. Libertyville enacted a tax and fees to address an estimated \$53 million in work needed to alleviate flooding issues. In recent Mayoral elections in Mundelein and Roselle, infrastructure was a key issue with both candidates bringing up the need to address local infrastructure problems with long-term plans.

While the American Jobs Plan will be welcomed in our area, it is only a start to addressing the needs we have at the state, county, and municipal level.



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