



Fall/Winter 2017

# The Monitor

RAISING THE BAR BY MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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# The Monitor

RAISING THE BAR BY MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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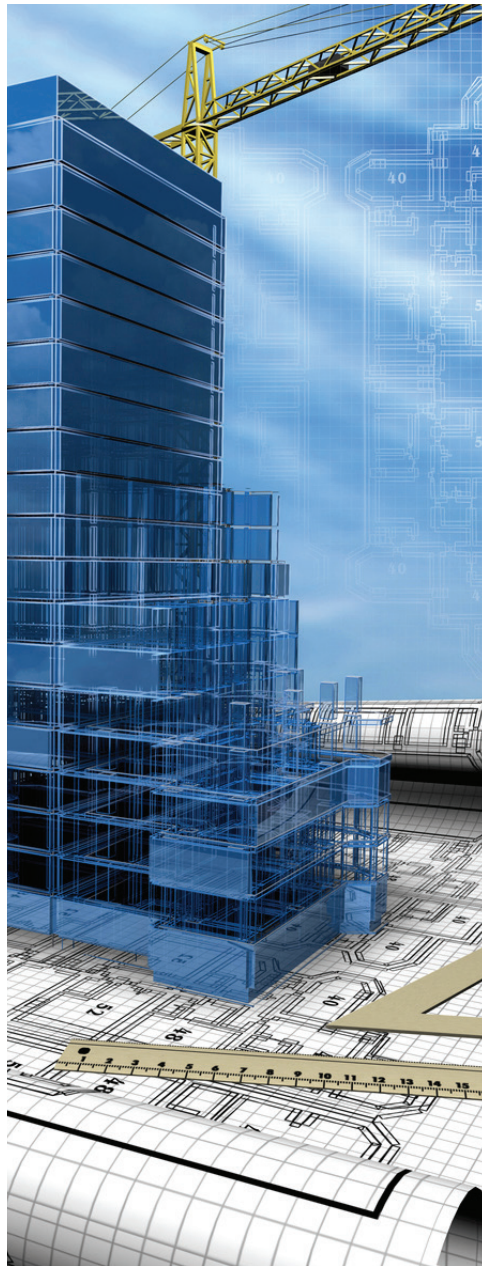
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## Climate Change and Its Impacts on Infrastructure

According to Mary Craighead, a Transportation Policy Analyst at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, (ILEPI) climate change is at the forefront of problems facing infrastructure. ILEPI's new report, *Climate Change and Its Impact on Infrastructure Systems in the Midwest*, discusses the problems of extreme weather conditions and how it negatively impacts the physical conditions of our existing infrastructure systems. The world has witnessed a number of extreme weather events such as: Hurricane Harvey, Irma, and Maria that have left major challenges to providing adequate electricity and infrastructure to areas affected by these disasters.

Climate change causes damage to transportation systems that result in economic loss and leads to increased maintenance costs.<sup>1</sup> For example, ILEPI found with increased heat, the life of asphalt is reduced, increasing stress to expansion joints for bridges and highways. This is a major problem for infrastructure since pavement and railways can buckle. Flooding also weakens structural supports for bridges, deteriorates soil that supports infrastructure, and shortens the lifespan of pavements.

Some states have taken significant strides to combat the negative effects of climate change on infrastructure. Minnesota and Michigan lead the Midwest in adequately preparing their systems for climate change, which is evident in their adoption of Climate Action and Adaptation Plans.<sup>2</sup> ILEPI's research also showed Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Minnesota have pursued asset management programs

to address climate change and assess vulnerabilities.

The Midwest is home to over 61 million people with expansive transportation networks that support \$2.6 trillion in regional gross domestic product.<sup>3</sup>

**Climate change causes damage to transportation systems that result in economic loss and leads to increased maintenance costs.**

Damage to our freight routes or hubs such as those in the Chicagoland area and across the Midwest would require trade flows to shift and pose a significant economic burden to fix.

States will need to prepare for the adverse effects of climate change in new public infrastructure and private development plans. With temperatures rising, climate change can and should be accounted for in rainfall and heat standards used in designs.<sup>4</sup> This will help ensure that states are prepared

for the challenges that climate change brings.

1. Craighead, Mary. "Climate Change and Its Impact on Infrastructure Systems in the Midwest." <https://midwestepi.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/Mepi-Infrastructure-and-Climate-Change-Final.pdf>.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*



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

The III FFC  
looks forward  
to 2018 as  
we prepare  
for our  
organization's  
20-year  
anniversary  
in 2019.



## III FFC Highlights of 2017

**T**he III FFC had a productive and successful 2017. With a staff of twenty-four employees ranging from construction analysts monitoring our areas in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa, to a team of lawyers and staff that focuses on policy and communications, we strive to be a national leader in labor management initiatives. The III FFC also recognizes the importance of sharing ideas and resources with other organizations. In 2017, the III FFC attended the AFL-CIO Lawyers Conference, as well as the National Alliance for Fair Contracting (NAFC) Conference, where the III FFC helped conduct several workshops on labor-management activities. We also distributed a newly developed bid protest guide and responsible bidder toolkit. These resources are now being used by fair contracting groups across the country.

In Illinois, the III FFC had many accomplishments in 2017. The III FFC welcomed two new Construction Analysts: Miriam Smith and Andy Skoog. In June, the III FFC coordinated efforts with workers, contractors, and IUOE, Local 150 to submit information for the Illinois Department of Labor's (IDOL) annual prevailing wage survey. IDOL used this information to update rates, effective in August 2017. The III FFC also hosted a prevailing wage seminar in Downers Grove, Illinois which was well-attended with an estimated 200 participants. We also sought to give members of the General Assembly a labor-management perspective on industry issues by providing free labor education seminars and Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) courses. In addition, the III FFC gave a presentation on the Safe Roads Amendment, implemented in 2016, at the popular UIS "third house" annual lobbying symposium.

In Indiana, the III FFC worked with public officials who implemented responsible bidder

ordinances across eight Indiana counties: La Porte, St. Joseph, Starke, Dyer, Merrillville, Schererville, Hanover, and Porter. Indiana now has thirty-seven responsible bidding ordinances and policies on the books. The Indiana Construction Analysts also assisted in developing a new reporting and tracking system to update and streamline previous techniques.

In Iowa we had two new Construction Analysts join the III FFC: Dylan Parker and Brooke Thyne. We also hosted our annual contractor dinner in Rock Island, Illinois to show appreciation to the contractors and elected officials who support high road construction and the hard-working men and women of the construction industry.

Overall, 2017 was a successful year for the III FFC. In 2018, we will continue to build on these successes, and will begin planning a 20-year anniversary celebration in 2019. Starting out as a small construction research group, the III FFC has grown significantly. While we enjoy welcoming new staff members, we also appreciate that a number of employees have been here for years, including Regional Director Tom Frailey and Construction Analyst Richard Stewart, who have worked with the III FFC since its inception. As an organization, we look forward to what is in store for the next year as we strive to be a leader in fair contracting.

## Illinois General Assembly Fails to Override Gov. Rauner's Veto of a Right-To-Work Bill

Over the last few months, there has been an audible buzz in Illinois surrounding “right to work,” and with good reason. Recently, the Illinois General Assembly failed to override Gov. Bruce Rauner’s veto of a bill that sought to prohibit local “right to work zones” in Illinois. If passed, the legislation would have codified a recent federal district court decision that reaffirmed the plain language of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA); mainly, that only a state – not a city, township, or any other local government – may institute so called “right to work” laws affecting private sector union security agreements. “Right to work,” in effect, allows individuals who are part of a bargaining unit covered by a collective bargaining agreement to enjoy all of the collectively bargained benefits in the agreement without having to pay union membership dues, or the lesser, “fair share” dues, which cover costs of administering of the agreement, negotiations, legal representation during grievance proceedings, and so on. This wholly un-American idea – being that one person must, under the color of the law and threat of legal recourse, provide free services to anyone – as unethical as it may seem, is the law of the land, and, until that changes, *states* have the freedom to join this race to the bottom if they so choose.

However, alarmingly, there has been a recent trend perpetrated by anti-union interests to illegitimately expand upon the plain language of law. Crafted by the American Legislative Exchange Council, “right to work zones” attempt to legitimize the idea that home-rule cities, townships, school districts, water reclamation districts, and so forth, may declare “right to work” the law of their local jurisdiction. Aside from its illegality under current federal law and jurisprudence, “right to work zones” have no place in our national or state-wide flow of commerce. First, such “zones,” are in direct conflict with some of the fundamental purposes of the NLRA. In passing the NLRA, congress desired there to be labor peace, that collective bargaining be encouraged, and that there be one set of laws to govern such relations as to not affect the free-flow



of commerce across the country. What congress DID NOT intend was to subject this nation-wide policy governing labor relations to a patchwork scheme that would result from city-by-city or county-by-county regulations governing union security agreements. Such a quilt-like threading of varying laws would not only be fundamentally unfair to workers across numerous industries, but also create extreme burdens on contractors and governing entities and courts called to enforce and maintain such organized chaos.

In short, Illinois is not in dire straits when it comes to “right to work,” at the moment. However, we must keep our ears to the ground, and be ready to fight back against new, and evolving strategies that aim to disrupt labor, and harm workers and responsible contractors.



Melissa Binetti  
*Counsel for the III FFC*



Kara Principe  
*Counsel for the III FFC*



Joseph Sweeney  
*Counsel for the III FFC*

# III FFC HOSTS 3RD ANNUAL PREVAILING WAGE SEMINAR



Michael Lingl  
Regional Director

## FOCUS ON Illinois



The III FFC  
Prevailing  
Wage  
Seminar was  
a success  
with close  
to 200  
attendees.

On October 25, the III FFC hosted a prevailing wage seminar at the Double Tree Hotel in Downers Grove. With close to two-hundred attendees, the III FFC was thrilled with the turnout, which included many public bodies, labor organizations, and contractors. Speakers included: Melissa Binetti, III FFC Counsel; Michael Duffee, Partner at Thompson Coburn LLP; Frank Manzo IV, Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) Policy Director; Josh Weger, III FFC Policy Director; and Leah Bartelt, Assistant Attorney General at the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Bureau.

Mid-America Regional Bargaining Association (MARBA) Executive Director Aaron Janik started the event by explaining that prevailing wage policy is an area where labor and management work together cohesively. He also introduced Melissa Binetti, who gave an overview of the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act (PWA), and Mike Duffee, who spoke from a management-perspective.

Melissa Binetti explained that prevailing wage laws set predetermined wages and fringe benefit rates for workers in a particular locality on public works construction projects. This helps ensure workers are paid a living wage, and it helps deter out of state contractors from undercutting worker wages. Binetti also discussed the responsibilities public bodies and contractors have under the PWA to ensure workers are paid the applicable prevailing wage rate.

Next, Michael Duffee spoke about the PWA from a management perspective, highlighting aspects of the law that "every contractor should know." Drawing on experience representing contractors in litigation, as well as in proceedings before the Illinois Department of Labor, Duffee shared real life legal experience with the attendees. He also covered some of the more confusing areas of prevailing wage enforcement, such as transportation of materials and equipment, landscape work, and prevailing wage rates vs. collectively bargained rates. He emphasized the importance of record keeping under the PWA.



*Pictured left to right: Michael Duffee, Partner Thompson Coburn LLP & Melissa Binetti, III FFC Counsel*

Wrapping up the morning, Frank Manzo IV of ILEPI gave a presentation on the economic benefits of prevailing wage laws. His research shows that prevailing wage helps build careers, not just jobs. And he discussed how prevailing wage requirements support middle class jobs and invest in the next generation of workers by strengthening apprenticeship training programs. Finally, he pointed to research that shows prevailing wage supports higher quality infrastructure, making it the best deal for taxpayers.

In the afternoon, Josh Weger discussed the advantages of Responsible Bidder Ordinances (RBOs), which establish objective criteria to help ensure public bodies contract with "high road" contractors. Stated differently, RBOs help ensure public works projects will be completed safely, efficiently, on time, and on budget.

Finally, Leah Bartelt ended the afternoon with a discussion about the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Bartelt's presentation included a wealth of information about the requirements of the Act. She reminded attendees that the Act presumes that public records should be open to the public for inspection and copying, unless there is a "clear and convincing" reason to exempt the records. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions about best practices and complying with the law.

Overall, the III FFC's Prevailing Wage Seminar was a great success and we look forward to hosting it again next year!

## SEASPAR

By Jodi Frailey

**B**ehind every great community is a great park and recreation department. A truly great park and recreation department includes and benefits every child and adult within the community. The state of Illinois is unique in that it is the only state that offers a network of Special Recreation Associations (SRA) or Cooperatives. SRAs are designed to provide recreational services and programs to individuals with disabilities and embrace the concept of recreation for everyone.

Illinois is the only state that has legislation that enables two or more municipalities to partner in a joint agreement to “establish, maintain, and manage recreation programs,” and to levy a special tax to fund programs for residents with disabilities. Currently, Illinois has 33 such cooperatives in place.

SEASPAR (South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation), located in Downers Grove, is one of the largest SRAs in the state. Their board has 12 directors, and each represents the neighboring park districts of: Clarendon Hills, Darien, Downers Grove, La Grange, La Grange Park, Lemont, Lisle, Westmont, Woodridge, as well as the Villages of Brookfield, Indian Head Park, and Western Springs. SEASPAR does not receive state or federal funding. Program revenue, donations, grants, and a small amount of investment interest comprise about one third of the operating budget. More than 60% of SEASPAR’s funding comes by pooling a portion of property taxes from each associated district. Joint funding mechanisms are more economical for these entities than individual funding would be. They can provide a much greater range of programs and services to be offered in a wider geographical area than in any one single community. Being an integral part of SEASPAR motivates each of the member entities to ensure their own parks, recreation areas, and facilities continuously meet the needs for all to enjoy. It is vital to accommodate their communities’ diverse needs -- not just to comply with federal standards for safer playgrounds, sports fields, and facilities, but also to go out of their way to promote inclusion and non-discrimination in all areas.

SEASPAR employs a staff of 14 full-time and over 170 part-time staff that put in approximately 115,000 service hours on more than 750 programs and planned events year-round. SEASPAR provides fun, recreational, and inclusive programs and services for individuals of all ages with disabilities including, but not limited to, ADD/ADHD, Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorders, Behavior Disorders, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay, Down Syndrome, Hearing or Visual Impairments, several Physical Disabilities, and Mental Health Needs. SEASPAR also helps Disabled Veterans and Youth at Risk. Residents that participate in SEASPAR’s programs see substantial positive improvement. Some key benefits are enhanced independence, increased self-esteem,



improved physical and emotional health, development in social, cognitive, and motor skills, and most importantly, a feeling of inclusion and integration into their communities.

Matt Corso, the new Executive Director of SEASPAR, has more than 27 years of experience in working with people with disabilities. He became the Executive Director in July of 2017, succeeding Susan Friend, who retired after serving 38 years in Special Recreation with SEASPAR. Matt is dedicated to carry on the mission of offering only the best services to residents with disabilities. SEASPAR strives to give each of their participants the opportunity to achieve and maintain a quality of life that makes them proud.

Corso stated, “Our vision is to enable our participants to discover abilities, achieve potential, and realize dreams. We operate with the core values of fun, excellence, service, respect, and accountability. We are proud of what we do here at SEASPAR.” We focus on people’s abilities and not their disabilities. Play and recreation is so important for anyone to have a positive quality of life and our communities and staff are dedicated to providing that to all of our residents.



*Matt Corso, Executive Director of SEASPAR coaching a student in basketball.*

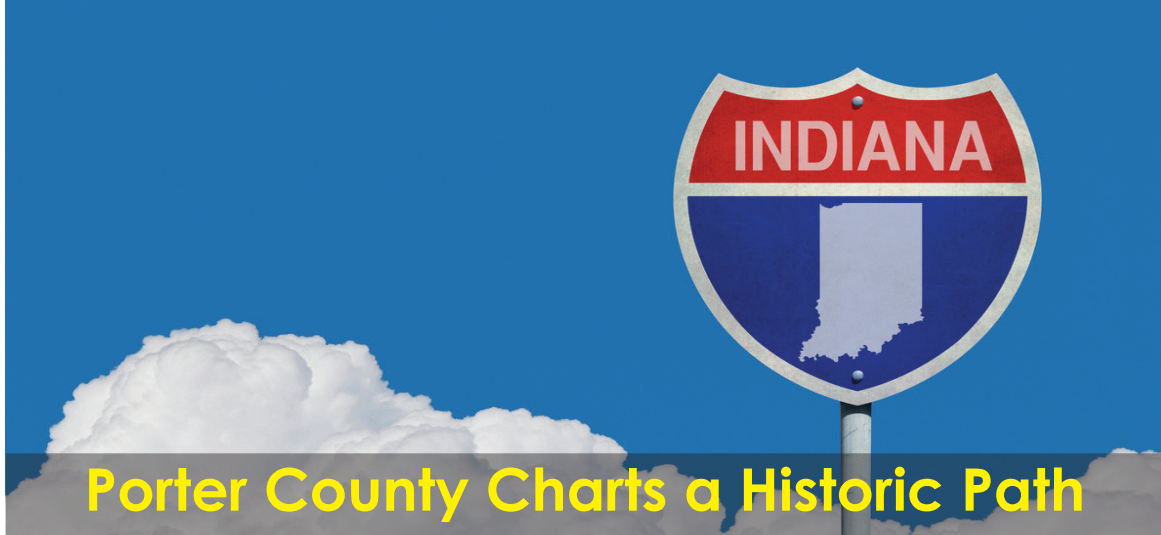


Tom Frailey  
Regional Director

## FOCUS ON Indiana



**Porter County  
makes a  
comeback  
after the  
lean years  
of the great  
recession.**



## Porter County Charts a Historic Path

**W**hen Porter County government in Indiana sold its hospital in 2007, there was a broad consensus that the \$150 million from the sale should be preserved, and the investment proceeds be used to supplement their general fund budget and fund special projects. But dreams soon hit a wall, because the Indiana Constitution mandated that state government agencies invest in only a short-term fixed income with at most a five-year duration.

In addition, like most Indiana municipalities, Porter County struggled through the lean years of the great recession with lower property and income tax collections. Budgets were cut and capital projects put off, resulting in millions of dollars in deferred maintenance on infrastructure and county owned buildings.

Undaunted, county officials turned to State Representative Ed Soliday of Valparaiso who successfully shepherded a 2015 law (IC 5-13-9.3) to give municipal governments the ability to fund foundations with proceeds of property sales, and to hire investment consultants and money managers to run the assets in a broader range of investment options than allowed under the Indiana Constitution. The law also stipulates annual investment returns of up to 5% be used for any municipal use with the remainder to be kept in the foundation.

Soliday had introduced an earlier version in 2007, but pulled the bill after a consensus could not be reached. With a receptive legislature, along with support from Porter County officials including committee testimony from Commissioner Laura Blaney and County Council member Mike Jessen, it passed and was signed into law in 2015.

“The whole intent is to optimize the investment of capital, preserve the corpus, and provide a way for governments that are strapped for money to sell some assets and get

a better return on those assets,” said Soliday.

County officials moved quickly to establish the Porter County Government Non-Profit Charitable Foundation in 2016. In the first year, the Foundation earned over \$6 million in returns, compared to less than \$1.5 million a year under the old investment mandates.

With the new foundation, dreams were renewed. The county developed a Capital Upgrade Plan with improvements to bridges and county owned buildings that addressed current maintenance requirements and future space needs.

The \$30 million Capital Upgrade Plan came with unique benefits for taxpayers. While financed through a General Revenue Bond paid from Local Income Taxes, the amount of the annual bond payment will be offset by a transfer from the interest earnings from the Foundation. Additionally, because of the county’s fiscal health aided by the Foundation, the bond offer drew multiple and competitive bidders. This resulted in lower than expected interest rates and an estimated \$850,000 interest savings over the bond term.

“Our buildings and infrastructure will be improved for now and the future, good paying jobs in the construction trades are supported, and there are no tax increases for our residents,” said Jeff Good, President of the Board of Commissioners. “It is a win-win-win for Porter County, and this is how government should work.”

I am glad that we were able to work with the Porter County Commissioners and the County Council in helping to address their infrastructure investments. We look forward to working with them to ensure that these projects, as well as future projects, will be completed with responsible contractors. In utilizing responsible contractors, the county is ensuring a quality product that protects the interest of tax payers. We would be happy to work with any Government entity with the same interests and concerns.

## Brooke Thye

**H**ailing from Wapello, Iowa, Brooke Thye joined the Indiana, Illinois, Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting in April of 2017. When she is not researching upcoming projects or walking around a construction site, you can find her at the place she loves most, the river. She also immensely enjoys hanging out with her family, watching her three nieces grow and always putting a smile on their faces.

Prior to joining the III FFC team, Brooke attended Southeastern Community College for her Associates of Arts degree followed by Western Illinois University where she received her Bachelor's in Business. Upon graduating, she worked as the Southern Division Assistant Operations Manager and then as an Operations Analyst at Trinity Logistics Corporation Supply Chain Solutions for three years. When the opportunity arose to join the III FFC family, it felt like a perfect match.

Working to make sure contractors and workers receive a fair, living wage hits close to home for Brooke. Not only did her grandpa work as a Craft Union Steward for twenty years, her uncle has made a thirty-six year career to date out of being an arbitrator for the United Steelworkers. Brooke now resides in her own proud union home since she recently married an IUOE, Local 150 Operator. This has been not only gratifying, but also enlightening. She sees first-hand the hard work these workers do, the great things they construct, and the sense of pride they



**Working to make sure contractors and workers receive a fair, living wage hits close to home for Brooke coming from a family of union workers.**

gain as a result of their achievements. Brooke now gets to see the process from the planning, bidding, and construction, all the way through completion.

Working as a Construction Analyst, she monitors four Iowa counties: Muscatine, Louisa, Des Moines, and Lee. While this area has been known to be a tough area with resistance to change, Brooke is ready for the challenge. She has hit the ground running, testing and trying out different methods depending on the issue.

Keeping in mind whom the III FFC represents, with the intent to level the playing field and help tax payers receive the best value for their dollar, Brooke has jumped right into on-site monitoring. This portion of the job is one she greatly enjoys. She now sees projects from start to finish, monitoring the job for compliance with local, state and federal laws and regulations. Looking ahead, Brooke aspires to help pass Responsible Bidder Ordinances across the counties where she works to help ensure projects are completed safely, on time, and on budget. Also on her radar is to meet and form stakeholder relationships, spreading the word of whom the III FFC is and the great things they do.



# Annual Salute to Industry Summit



Brooke Thye  
*Construction Analyst*

## FOCUS ON Iowa



**The Lee  
County  
Economic  
Board Salute  
to Industry  
Summit  
brought  
together area  
contractors,  
leaders, and  
elected  
officials.**



**T**he Lee County Economic Development Group was created with the purpose of “assisting existing and prospective industries- working closely with state and local governmental entities to facilitate the objectives of those industries.” In October, they brought area contractors, leaders, and elected officials together for the Salute to Industry Summit where successes were celebrated, newsmakers spoke, and awards were given to those making an admirable difference in the county.

The Chief Executive Officer, Joe Steil, gave opening remarks focused on collaboration then handed off the mic to the Operations Director, Dennis Fraise. He began the Summit with some background information on Grow Lee. Keeping the Lee County Economic Development Group intention in mind, Grow Lee was created in 2014 as another program to further aid the local workforce in their growth. 2015 was declared the Year of Action with ten workforce initiatives. Among the initiatives, is the goal of getting everyone to “Speak a Common Language.” One way of accomplishing this is to get the upcoming workforce and the current workforce on the same page. Action has already begun on this initiative with teachers going into businesses to see what they need, while businesses are going into schools to see what their struggles are. For their efforts thus far, Grow Lee was recently awarded the Gold Excellence in Economic Development Award.

Governor Kim Reynolds was a guest speaker for the event where she began by commending the great things Lee County is doing. She continued by discussing Iowa as a leader in

manufacturing. While the unemployment rate has dropped, there are still jobs available. According to the Governor, “Jobs are looking for people.” One of her goals is to help Iowa achieve 70 percent of the workforce having education and/or training beyond a high school level by 2025. Another objective for the head of the state is reviewing outdated rules.

The Lieutenant Governor, a sixth generation Iowan, Adam Gregg, also spoke a few words. He views Iowa as a state that represents hard working, problem solvers. With that being said, the Lieutenant Governor said that he and the Governor know that they signed up to address some hard problems. And, in fact, they view obstacles as opportunities. Echoing the Governor’s comment on raising the level of a trained workforce, the Lieutenant Governor stated, “We need to train the workforce for jobs that do not exist, using technology that doesn’t exist, for problems that do not exist.”

The Summit wrapped up with some deserving businesses receiving awards. The award categories were Legacy, Workforce Champion, and the World Champion. The Legacy Award was presented to four companies who have been active leaders in the community for a hundred years or more. Among them, was Seither and Cherry out of Keokuk, Iowa. The Workforce Champion Award was presented to nine companies chosen because of their participation in events and programs put on by Grow Lee, as well as being a leader in these efforts.

Lastly, Scotts Miracle Gro was awarded the Guinness Book of World Records for having all of their employees participate in the challenge of most people planting flower bulbs simultaneously back in 2016. A total of 1,463 participants took part in the challenge!



### III FFC Policy on Right-to-Work Legislation

Under federal law, no one can be forced to join a union as a condition of employment. In addition, decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court have concluded that workers cannot be forced to pay union fees earmarked for political activities. But the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act amendment to the National Labor Relations Act (1935) took an even bigger step in reducing the power of unions in American society. It gave states the authority to pass laws that prohibit unions from requiring a worker to pay any dues, even if the worker receives the full benefits of a union-negotiated collective bargaining agreement. As a result, workers may receive all the benefits of union membership for free. Twenty-eight states currently have such laws on the books.

Somehow these laws, which promote a freeloader mentality, have come to be known as “Right-to-Work” (RTW) laws, even though they have nothing to do with anyone’s right to work. The only right that RTW laws create is the right of workers to receive the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement (such as equitable wages, safe working conditions, protection against unfair firing) without paying for them, while unions have a duty of fair representation to represent all employees within the bargaining unit fairly, regardless of whether they are dues paying members.

Over many years a substantial body of

scholarly research has been produced on RTW laws and their impact. Here in the midwest, the Illinois Economic Policy Institute has been a leader in the effort to produce high-quality evidence-based research evaluating RTW laws. Some of ILEPI’s key findings include:

- RTW laws are associated with a 5-8 percent decrease in worker earnings and a simultaneous increase in income inequality.
- RTW laws reduce private sector annual earnings by over \$2,000, lower manufacturing worker earnings by 9 percent, and construction worker earnings by over 22 percent.
- RTW laws reduce union membership by up to 10 percent in a state.
- RTW laws lower the earnings of African-American workers by between 2 and 9 percent.
- For employed females, RTW laws lower earnings by between 2 and 8 percent.
- In Illinois, a higher county-level unionization rate has no statistical impact on employment growth, the unemployment rate, or business growth in the county.

The bottom line: RTW laws promote a “free rider” mentality, and they make the working class more vulnerable as they undermine unions and the better wages and working conditions unions deliver. On the merits, RTW is a clear loser for workers and has no basis for mainstream acceptance.



Josh Weger  
*Policy Director*

# CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT

In 1929 John Pohar Sr., a Slovenian immigrant, began hauling coal, wood, and ice to area homes. With one dump truck, his business began demolition work. Pohar would tear down buildings by hand, salvaging the lumber, which he later sold. He sought help from his brothers and area coal miners in the summer months. In 1945, he acquired a Ford tractor, which he used to load dirt and plow gardens.

In 1947, at the age of 15, John Pohar Jr. joined his father. At this time, the company was engaged mostly in the trucking business. During the same year, the company financed its first hydraulic track loader for \$9,800. This enabled Pohar and his son to gather topsoil from an area cement company. The soil was hauled to sites where new homes were being constructed, shortly after World War II.

The year 1955 brought additional work for the business. A small hydraulic backhoe was purchased, allowing Pohar to begin sewer and water installation. Two years later, they also began digging graves for local cemeteries.

Frank Pohar, the younger son of John Sr., joined the business in 1956, and the company continued to grow with John Sr. working side by side with his sons. In 1965, the company's current location, 2253 Crosat Street, LaSalle, Illinois, was established. At this time, six people were employed, and the business owned five dump trucks and nine pieces of various excavating equipment. The company held maintenance contracts with area factories, and continued growing in demolition work and commercial site work.

In 1966, the business was incorporated as John Pohar & Sons, Inc. Two years later, John Sr. passed away leaving his two sons, John Jr. and Frank to run the business along with their sister Josephine Pohar Grabowski.

In the 70s, John Pohar & Sons, Inc. did a great deal of sewer and water main work, along with private development. The blizzard of 1979 kept equipment running throughout the winter. Snow removal was a big part of the business at this time.

The 80s brought bigger jobs and larger equipment. In 1981, Frank's sons, Frank Jr. and David, joined the business full time. At this point, the third generation began proving their value in the family business. John III, the only son of John Jr., worked part-time while studying to become a civil engineer. After graduation in 1991, John III joined his father, uncle, and cousins working full time.

The 90s into the new millennium were great growth years. While maintaining existing contracts, they also expanded business into many new areas. Expansion areas included over burden for local quarries, general contracting of underground utilities



and roadways for municipalities, design-build site development, as well as private development.

In 2015, John Pohar Jr., passed away handing over the reins of presidency to his brother, Frank Sr. Current corporate officers also include John Pohar III, Vice President; Josephine Pohar Grabowski, Secretary/Treasurer; Frank Pohar Jr., Director of Operations; and David Pohar, Director of Field Operations. The office staff consists of John Jr. and Frank Sr.'s daughters and now the grandchildren of John Jr. and Frank Sr. are employed making John Pohar & Sons, Inc. a fourth generation run business.

Through the years the Pohar family has been known for their uncommon work ethic, high standards, fairness, and honesty. Today, John Pohar & Sons, Inc. employs 30 and owns over 200 pieces of equipment and trucks. A year's worth of work during the founding years is the equivalent of one day in 2017. Although the company has grown far beyond what its founder envisioned, still no job is too small for John Pohar & Sons, Inc.

# III FFC Participates in Toys for Tots Drive

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*Pictured left to right: Marcella Kunstek, III FFC Construction Analyst; Officer Doug Parker ("Don Parker's son"), and Jodi Frailey, III FFC Construction Analyst delivering the donations to Toys for Tots.*

*In memory of Don Parker*

In our last issue, we remembered long-time III FFC Construction Analyst Don Parker. With Don and his family in our thoughts this holiday season, staff at the III FFC and Illinois Economic Policy Institute had fun picking out donations for the Toys for Tots Program, which collects new, unwrapped toys, and delivers them to less fortunate children. A former Marine, this U.S. Marine Corp Reserve Program was dear to Don. III FFC Construction Analysts Marcella Kunstek and Jodi Frailey delivered the donated toys to Don's son, Officer Doug Parker, in early December. Knowing how important the Toys for Tots Program was to Don, we wanted to carry on with his tremendous giving spirit by continuing the tradition in his honor – mission accomplished!

**The III FFC sought to carry out Don Parker's legacy by donating to the Toys for Tots Program, an organization dear to Don as a former marine.**

# III FFC Attends the NAFC Conference in Nashville, Tennessee

In September, the III FFC attended the 19<sup>th</sup> annual National Alliance for Fair Contracting (NAFC) conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Each year, the NAFC conference is attended by hundreds of participants from across the nation, including representatives from labor organizations, contractors, fair contracting organizations, as well as researchers, academics, attorneys and officials from federal, state and local governments. This year's event saw one of the largest turnout of participants in NAFC's 19-year history, and all the attendees reported benefiting greatly from the numerous panels and informative breakout sessions.

Several members of our III FFC staff proudly took an active part in the conference and served as moderators, presenters, and participants during NAFC workshops. III FFC Executive Director, Marc Poulos facilitated a regional breakout session where reports were given from fair contracting and labor organizations from Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. It was a very informative session as collectively we learned of the circumstances influencing the labor industry, both good and bad, in other states, and were made aware of some of the regional dynamics affecting our industry.

III FFC Policy Director, Josh Weger presented and led a discussion on the construction industry in right-to-work states and in states with no prevailing wage laws. III FFC Regional



Director, Michael Lingl and III FFC Counsel, Melissa Binetti assisted in the facilitation of a breakout session on preparing and presenting bid protests. In addition, the III FFC staff also attended a legislative panel that included Indiana State Senator Ed Soliday (R), and Ohio State Senator Sean O'Brien (D), which produced a very interactive discussion from the audience on political factors facing the local construction industry.

III FFC Executive Director, Marc Poulos also served as a moderator for a panel discussing the many dynamics of public-private partnerships (P3s) in the construction industry and the importance of understanding those dynamics. Timing could not have been more important for attendees, as various state officials, and President Donald Trump has indicated that he may now be hesitant in his support for using private spending on public infrastructure projects on what was anticipated to be a \$1 trillion infrastructure spending plan.

The NAFC attendees also benefited from the content of the other work sessions that included topics concerning health and safety, social media, fair contracting strategies, academics and economists dialogue, and legislative updates, to name a few. The NAFC conference was by far an enjoyable experience and those who attended gained valuable insight on matters affecting our industry.



*III FFC Executive Director, Marc Poulos leading a panel at the NAFC Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.*



**HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE III FFC**



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## It's really quite simple.

Successful projects happen when Labor and Management share the same priorities. And when the highest priority is having a team of safe, well-trained workers on the jobsite, those projects are completed on time and on budget.

## We're the Indiana, Illinois, Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting.

We bring Labor and Management together to assist public bodies and contractors with OSHA, contract compliance and other contracting matters, while striving to secure work for responsible contractors.



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