

Spring/Summer 2023

The Monitor

RAISING THE BAR BY MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

A Bridge to Excellence

I-74 Bridge in Quad Cities was named the Grand Award winner at the Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA).

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

I-290 BLUE LINE COALITION



The III FFC is proud to be a founding member of the newly created I-290 Blue Line Coalition. Comprised of representatives from labor, local government, and business and industry, the Coalition is committed to the reconstruction of the I-290 Eisenhower Expressway and the Forest Park Branch of the CTA Blue Line. This project represents one of the region's greatest opportunities to create jobs, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve job accessibility for economically disconnected areas.

Originally built in the 1950's, the I-290 corridor is unique in being the first multimodal interstate corridor in the United States that incorporated a transit rail line within its right-of-way. Maintaining its multimodal status to this day, the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) Forest Park Branch Blue Line runs parallel and down the center of the expressway between Forest Park and Chicago.

Despite the importance of this transportation corridor, minimal improvements have been made to either I-290 or the Blue Line for decades, leading to deteriorating infrastructure. A recent study by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) reports that as much as 90% of I-290's existing pavement structure is original and exceeds the normal roadway design life. Additionally, 34% of bridges are considered "structurally deficient" and 86% are "functionally obsolete." The roadway reduces from four lanes to three between Mannheim Road and Austin Boulevard, leading to bottlenecks, safety concerns, and severe congestion. And transit riders face unsafe conditions as they are forced to use narrow sidewalks along busy roads to access the Blue Line stations.

This project represents one of the region's greatest opportunities to create jobs, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve job accessibility for economically disconnected areas.



Marc Poulos
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 13-mile segment of I-290 between I-94 and the I-88/I-294 interchange has been under consideration for reconstruction for almost a decade, however inadequate funding has inhibited its progress. The almost \$6 billion project includes the reconstruction and modernization of the entire corridor, including the redesign and replacement of interchanges and bridges on I-290, the construction of a new lane, and implementation of an express toll lane. It also incorporates the rehabilitation of all tracks on the Blue Line, full ADA accessibility for all stations, and overall modernization of existing Blue Line infrastructure.

In addition to these crucial infrastructure improvements, the modernization of the I-290 Blue Line will result in 22,000 jobs, reduce traffic congestion, improve travel times, and dramatically enhance access to jobs for Chicago's most disadvantaged. It supports the development of new housing and commercial facilities and improves the overall quality of life for corridor residents.

The I-290 Blue Line Coalition is now the leading voice in promoting this project and ensuring its success. With the recent passage of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Illinois' Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan, Illinois now has the opportunity to acquire much needed funding to support this crucial infrastructure corridor.

Moving forward, the Coalition strives to increase membership and supporters to help in its mission. It will continue to advise state, federal, and local officials of the importance of this project. It will provide updated information to local residents and businesses, contractors, engineering firms, and the building trades. The Coalition will support IDOT and the CTA in their pursuit of federal funding.

For more information on the Coalition and how to get involved, contact John Greuling at john@i-290blueline.com or visit the website at www.i-290blueline.com.





Todd Dotson and Tim Glass presenting on water infrastructure at the Public Construction Summit in April 2023.



PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION SUMMIT 2023 AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

In our last edition of *The Monitor*, we talked about the historic underfunding of water infrastructure and why investing more is imperative. Whether it is drinking water pipes, stormwater retention systems, wastewater treatment systems, or water towers, our nation's water systems face staggering public investment needs over the next several decades. The American Society of Civil Engineers' (ASCE) 2020 economic study, "The Economic Benefits of Investing in Water Infrastructure: How a Failure to Act Would Affect the U.S. Economic Recovery" found that the annual drinking water and wastewater investment gap will grow to \$434 billion by 2029.

Funding for water infrastructure has not kept pace with the growing need to address aging infrastructure systems, and current funding sources do not meet the total needs. On average, about two-thirds of public spending for capital investments in water infrastructure since the 1980s have been made by state and local governments. Smaller municipalities are unable to properly fund these investments and raising water utility bills on residents is often not enough to fund necessary projects.

Since we knew the importance of these projects, we included a session all about water solutions and how local municipalities can join community programs to fund water projects at our Public Construction Summit on April 6. Todd Dotson with the Corrosion Illinois Network and Tim Glass from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Illinois headed the session.

Todd Dotson discussed the need to address corrosion. The annual cost of corrosion on facilities, pipes, anchor bolts, and more totals \$450 billion across the United States. Corrosion weakens support structures and contaminates a community's

drinking water supply by attacking community water storage tanks and eating holes into water tanks. Fortunately, half of all corrosion costs are preventable, and 85 percent of the occurrences are able to have protective coatings. Todd mentioned that the goal is to keep infrastructure in optimal condition during its design life and beyond, which ultimately saves taxpayer dollars. However, keeping infrastructure in optimal condition requires funding to build and maintain water infrastructure systems that have long been neglected nationwide.

Luckily, Tim Glass presented on the grants, loans, and loan guarantees that the USDA provides to public bodies and nonprofits for water infrastructure projects. The USDA provides competitive, low fixed rate loans to local communities to upgrade deteriorating water and waste systems. Funds – which can range from less than \$100,000 to millions – can be used for new construction, improvements, renovations, replacements, extensions, engineering and legal fees, land, equipment, and more. The loans and grants provided by the USDA can also be partnered with other private, federal, or state funding sources to maximize the funding opportunities for these types of projects.

Todd and Tim both emphasized the importance of public bodies investing in these types of projects during their presentation. With more and more incentives and grants at the federal and state level, we expect water infrastructure projects to be a top priority for public bodies in the near future.

There were over 170 attendees and 30 public bodies present at the Public Construction Summit who asked a wealth of questions during all the sessions of the event. The IFC thanks all the speakers, sponsors, and attendees for their participation and looks forward to next year!

PUBLIC BODY SPOTLIGHT

Indiana School Districts

SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS THE STATE PASS LOCAL RBOs

While many of us know the importance of Responsible Bidder Ordinances (RBO), we still find that there are some public bodies and elected officials that have never heard of an RBO. Under an RBO, public bodies must award projects to the most responsive and responsible bidder. An RBO assists the public body in determining if a contractor is responsive and responsible by providing a list of objective criteria and standards that all bidders are asked to comply with.

All contractors are assessed equally. If irregularities or red flags are identified – such as cost overruns, OSHA violations, non-compliance of licensing or insurance, accidents, or litigation – the public body becomes aware of the contractor's track record pre-award. Simply put, RBOs are a great tool for the public body to compare apples-to-apples in identifying the best and most qualified contractors.

So why is an RBO important within the public school district and why are more schools adopting RBOs? Well, that's because their money for large capital construction projects can be hard to come by. Schools must ensure that they are getting the most responsive and responsible bidders, who are professionally trained, qualified, experienced, and have a record of completing work on time and underbudget.

In 2009, Indiana shifted to fund schools primarily through state revenue generated from sales taxes, individual income tax, and other taxes. Many school corporations rely on additional funds from local property tax referendums to fund new construction or maintain school buildings. In order for school corporations to spend taxpayer dollars on major construction that is not within their budget, the matter must go to the voters for approval in the form of a ballot initiative. These tax dollars are often very hard to come by. If passed, there is no extra money to address errors or cost overruns, so construction projects must be done right and on budget the first time. It is imperative that schools utilize a professionally trained and skilled workforce.

There were 10 schools across Indiana seeking a ballot initiative on the May 2nd primary ballot. The referendums were seeking addition tax revenue for various investments into the local school districts, ranging from teacher salaries to capital projects. Three referendums were struck down by voters, while seven were passed. We know the school districts who were successful in their ballot initiatives will make certain they spend the tax dollars wisely.

The III FFC congratulates the school districts who were successful in their May ballot initiatives. We also are thankful to the many schools who have passed an RBO to support quality and responsible contractors. When it comes to construction projects, an RBO ensures that the school districts are using the very best and skilled workforce in the public construction industry. We look forward to more Indiana school districts passing RBOs out of a matter of good fiscal stewardship.



Myron Sutton
REGIONAL MANAGER

Marci Kunstek
SENIOR CONSTRUCTION
ANALYST

Frank Lucchese
CONSTRUCTION ANALYST



UTILIZING A LOCAL WORKFORCE

The True Economic Benefit to our Communities and Local Economies

In a past *Monitor* article, we touched on some of the good and the bad that can occur with multi-million-dollar, out-of-state solar developers. The good: St. Joseph County officials took steps to ensure that 75% of the workforce would be local labor and that project materials and supplies would be purchased from qualified vendors from the area. The bad: Mammoth Solar, who is developing a \$1.5 billion-dollar solar project in Starke County, where the developer utilized a global hiring agency to recruit out-of-state workers and the unknown problems that can accompany these workers.

The clean energy sector is expected to be a large job creator in the future. A study, *Building Good Local Jobs on Utility-Scale Clean Energy Projects in Wisconsin: The Impact of High-Road Labor and Contracting Standards*, published by the Midwest Economic Policy Institute (MEPI) in 2022 found that a community may not capitalize on these clean energy projects if they are awarded to non-local workers. The study finds that every \$1 billion invested in clean energy creates \$1.63 billion in economic activity and \$153 million in state and local tax revenues.

So, what is the relevance of a local workforce? And how does that benefit our local communities and economy? Hiring a local workforce is very important to our local economy, especially in the case of solar developments where the work is a one-time event. The promised high-quality jobs created during the construction of the solar project are over when the project is complete. Some solar developers will tout the millions or billions of dollars invested in their project, promising hundreds upon hundreds of jobs. However, in reality, developers can be vague about hiring local workers and do not need to sign any commitment or agreement to do so. Some developers intend to utilize out-of-state workers from the very beginning and know these workers will follow the developer to other jobsites in other states.

The local economy and community can benefit if a local workforce is used on these projects. While some money is retained in the local economy from out-of-state workers due to food and lodging during their stay, most of their income will not be spent locally. Generally, out-of-state workers will spend their income when they return home to the state in which they live. On the other hand, local workers spend a much higher percentage of their income in the surrounding area. These workers tend to spend more at local restaurants and stores and contribute more to state and local taxes due to living and working in the same community.

Numerous economic studies reinforce the benefits of hiring local workers on public and private construction. In addition to the MEPI report, a 2021 report by Forward Analytics, *Capturing the Sun: The Economic Benefits of Using Local Workers on Wisconsin Solar Projects*, found that using local workers creates between 73% and 158% more economic activity than using out-of-state workers. Because local workers live in the same community in which they work, they spend more on sales and property taxes and spend more on goods such as vehicles, groceries, housing, healthcare, entertainment, and food.

Local communities can take steps to ensure a local workforce is utilized. Enacting a Responsible Bidder Ordinance with local business preference language is one measure a local government body can take to create local jobs and support the local economy. The bottom line is that it doesn't matter whether it's a multi-million dollar solar development or the demolition of a local structure, when a local workforce is hired it is the local workers, local families, local communities, and local economies who all benefit and are the winners.

1. "Building Good Local Jobs on Utility-Scale Clean Energy Projects in Wisconsin: The Impact of High-Road Labor and Contracting Standards." (2022). Frank Manzo IV, Andrew Wilson, and Russell Kashian. Midwest Economic Policy Institute. Accessed May 2023. <https://midwestepi.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/mepi-building-good-local-jobs-on-clean-energy-projects-wi-final.pdf>

2. "Capturing the Sun: The Economic Benefits of Using Local Workers on Wisconsin Solar Projects." (2021). Dale Knapp. Forward Analytics. Accessed May 2023. https://www.wisbusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Solar-Project-Report-Reduced.FINAL_.pdf

THE USDOL AND THE NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP ACT



The United States Department of Labor's (USDOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) has a longstanding history in our nation and is an important determinative factor in whether a contractor is responsible. In fact, one tool the III FFC utilizes to determine whether a contractor is responsible is including criteria in responsible bidder ordinances that a contractor bidding on a project participate in a USDOL registered and approved apprenticeship program.

Established in 1937 under the National Apprenticeship Act, also known as the Fitzgerald Act, the goal of the USDOL OA was to establish a national system of apprenticeship, designed to promote the development of skilled labor, and to protect the welfare of apprentices. The OA is tasked with administering and enforcing the provisions of the National Apprenticeship Act and has since worked to promote and expand apprenticeship programs across the nation.

For an apprenticeship program to register with and be approved by the OA, there are several steps:

1. Develop a Program Plan: The plan must outline what industry the apprenticeship will cover including what skills will be taught and the length of the program. This includes a curriculum for classroom instruction and on-the-job training.
2. Identify Sponsor: A sponsor is responsible for overseeing the program and ensuring OA quality standards are met. This can be an employer, a labor-management organization, a trade association, etc.
3. Application process: The application to the OA must include the information stated above.
4. Review and approval: The OA reviews the application, may request additional information or revision, and finally will issue a Certificate of Registration if approved.
5. Program Implementation: Once approved, the program may be implemented, monitored, and evaluated.
6. Maintenance and Monitoring: The OA will continue to monitor approved programs for quality and compliance standards.

One unique aspect under the National Apprenticeship Act is the ability individual states have to establish their own apprenticeship program. Specifically, states can establish State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs) in which they have the authority to register, monitor, and oversee apprenticeship programs within their state. SAA programs must be approved by the OA and otherwise meet minimum training, safety, and labor protection standards.

In order to establish a SAA, a state must first pass enabling legislation authorizing the creation of the agency. This includes an SAA's organizational structure, duties and responsibilities, and funding. Once enacted, the state must receive OA approval.

The SAA plan should include the following elements:

1. Agency Structure: The plan should describe the SAA's organizational structure, including its leadership and staffing, and how it will interact with other State agencies and the USDOL OA.
2. Apprenticeship Standards: The plan should describe the State's apprenticeship standards, including training requirements, safety protocols, and labor protections.
3. Monitoring and Enforcement: The plan should describe how the SAA will monitor and enforce apprenticeship standards, including the frequency and scope of inspections, penalties for non-compliance, and the appeals process.
4. Funding: The plan should describe the funding sources for the SAA, including State appropriations and federal grants. Within the III FFC's jurisdiction, all apprenticeship programs are administered by USDOL OA. This can be advantageous in that there is uniformity among the programs in regard to registration, oversight, and support. However, Senate File 318 introduced in Iowa this session would enable Iowa to establish an SAA program. The bill contains several criteria regarding administration, responsibilities and duties, and oversight required by the OA for a SAA program, as discussed above. This may result in less consistency across the states and industries regarding the registration and oversight process. This is particularly of interest to the III FFC as our jurisdiction spans three states.

A USDOL OA registered and approved apprenticeship program has long been an objective standard of responsible training, safety, and labor protections. Whether OA administered or a SAA, the III FFC will continue to use approved programs as a tool to determine contractor responsibility.



Tiffany Ward
COUNSEL

SUCCESSFUL HANDS-ON TRADES CAREER FAIR

On April 28, the III FFC, International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 150, and Construction Industry Service Corporation (CISCO) hosted a hands-on Trades Career Fair for high school students. Trade career fairs are an essential part of connecting students to the construction industry by exposing them to an alternative educational and robust career pathway than the standard four-year or two-year degree from a college or university. In addition, industry partners and the union construction trades have a chance to connect and engage with enthusiastic members of the future workforce within their communities while increasing local awareness about their jobs and the trades as a whole.

Six schools located in Chicago were in attendance: Catalyst Schools, Prosser Career Academy, Simeon Career Academy, Richard T. Crane Medical Prep High School, Alcott College Prep High School, and North-Grand High School. Students learned how to start a career in the construction industry and how to become an apprentice. Representatives from a variety of trades explained their application process and how students can apply to become an apprentice and why apprenticeship programs are so essential to the public construction industry. Students learned that while they are an apprentice they can earn a good living, being paid for their in-class and on-the-job schooling. Skilled trades careers offer family-sustaining wages with stability and long-term potential, but all require training.

III FFC, IUOE Local 150, and CISCO collaborated to get a variety of union construction trades and organizations to attend. Over 25 representatives from organizations set up tables with informational pamphlets and promotional products. Unions that were present included IUOE Local 150, LiUNA, Bricklayers District Council, Plumbers Local 130, Cement Masons Local 502, IBEW 134, Carpenters' Training Center, Chicagoland Roofers JATC, Pipefitters Local 597, Boilermakers Local 1, and Sheet Metal Workers' Local 73. Some trades – such as the bricklayers, operators, and cement masons – brought hands-on activities for students to do. Students were able to lay bricks and drive a simulated excavator. Contractors Nicor Gas, NPL Construction, and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) were present, as well.

This event was a great opportunity for diversity outreach for the trades. We at the III FFC – along with other trades and community-based construction organizations – aim to build relationships with high schools across Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa to address the worker shortage and need for a diverse local workforce. Hosting these trades career fairs and similar events can help show all students there are great opportunities to take advantage of right here in their own backyard.

Thank you to all of the students, counselors, and representatives from the skilled trades unions who attended the event. We look forward to hosting many more in the future!





Students had hands-on experience at the Trades Career Fair in April 2023.



"Every student in every neighborhood should dream about great career possibilities that offer high wages and quality benefits. We know the skilled construction trades are a great opportunity to build a fulfilling and meaningful life."

- Marcus Jordan, III FFC DE&I Outreach Coordinator



WILLOW-HIBBARD STORMWATER PROJECT - VILLAGE OF WINNETKA

FOCUS ON

ILLINOIS

The Willow-Hibbard Stormwater Project is projected to be the most expensive public construction project in Winnetka history. On June 21, 2022, the Village trustees approved the \$16.5 million contract with IUOE Local 150 signatory contractor DiMeo Brothers for construction work on the stormwater improvement project at the northwest corner of Willow and Hibbard Road. The Village plans to add 79 acre-feet – or 25.7 million gallons – of stormwater relief for west and northwest Winnetka.

The project has been a long time coming and will help immensely with stormwater mitigation. Flooding is not a new problem in Winnetka, various projects to hold or redirect stormwater when major storms occur have been implemented in the past. This project will take on a large-scale initiative that will result in a major change in the way stormwater is handled in the area.

When the Willow-Hibbard Stormwater Project is complete, the new water detention and drainage system will ease intense flooding experienced by many Winnetka residents. Once completed, water will drain into tanks and be slowly released into the Skokie Lagoons during major storm events. The stormwater collection and holding tanks that are located under Duke Childs' Field, the Winnetka Park District's golf course, and behind Crow Island School are the key developments of this portion of the construction project.

The Village of Winnetka is uniting with New Tier High School District 203 and Winnetka Park District to get this monumental project complete.

The plans for the site also include \$5.3 million in improvements to New Trier athletic facilities that are slated to begin in the summer of 2023.

New Trier has pursued upgrades to its baseball and softball fields for nearly a decade, and under this project, a new softball field will be constructed with modern backstops, improved parking and walking areas, and a new locker room and restroom structure. These changes are not only meant to update the fields, but also will moderate past safety concerns at Duke Childs' Field. Currently, the varsity baseball field borders Willow Road and has outdated fencing that allows baseballs to travel into traffic and the bordering parking lot.

The Willow-Hibbard Stormwater Project is part of a five-year push to improve stormwater maintenance across the Village of Winnetka. DiMeo Brothers, alongside with the skills of IUOE Local 150 operators, have kicked off this historic project into action. Since June 2022, a significant portion of the project has been executed.

DiMeo Brothers has been hard at work and has taken on an enormous task with the scope of this project, including building a concrete box and storm trap that ties all the storage facilities together. DiMeo Brothers's operators – who are IUOE Local 150 members – will continue stripping topsoil and excavating the area. The expertise and hard work of DiMeo Brothers and these operators is a significant reason this project has come to fruition. We look forward to seeing the completion of the project and know it will bring much needed stormwater upgrades to the community.



Gerardo Mendez
CONSTRUCTION ANALYST



Drone footage of the construction phase of the Willow-Hibbard Stormwater Project in Winnetka, IL.



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY'S PROMISE TO CREATE LOCAL JOBS

Throughout the last decade, the Illinois Tollway has spent billions of dollars and created thousands of local jobs for contractors and construction workers. Current and upcoming Tollway projects promise the same.

In 2011, the Tollway adopted a 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*. The goals of the program are to improve congestion, alleviate pollution concerns, and create jobs. In fact, *Move Illinois* was slated to create an estimated 120,000 jobs throughout the Tollway's region. Data released by the Tollway reports that 117,740 jobs have been created or sustained from 2012 through 2022.

In addition to addressing the current needs of the Tollway system, *Move Illinois* was to address the rebuilding and widening of the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), construction of a new interchange connecting the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57, building a new all-electronic Elgin O'Hare Western Access, and fund planning studies for new projects. Today, 70.5 percent of the program's work is complete.

In 2022 alone, the *Move Illinois* program awarded 79 construction and professional service contracts, 38 construction contracts under \$10 million, and closed out 83 construction and professional service contracts. In addition, several projects were completed: Jane Addams Memorial Tollway rebuild and widening; Illinois Route 390 Tollway construction; existing needs on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), and Edens Spur Tollway (I-94); and Phase I of the Tri-State Tollway (I-294)/I-57 interchange.

By corridor, there are several projects and initiatives throughout the Tri State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) corridor including the North Tri-State Tollway (I-94) Roadway, Bridge and Ramp Repairs, the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project to update, widen, and relieve congestion, and the I-290/I-88 Interchange Project at I-294 to improve safety and congestion, just to name a few.

The Illinois Tollway has spent billions of dollars over the past decade, creating thousands of local jobs for contractors and construction workers.

In the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) corridor, the Tollway worked in conjunction with the Village of Oak Brook to replace the Windsor Drive Bridge over the ramps connecting the Reagan Memorial Tollway and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294). The project is complete and now open to traffic.

The I-490 Tollway corridor has several large initiatives including the \$3.4 billion I-490 Tollway Project, which, coupled with the new Illinois Route 390 Tollway, will connect businesses, communities, airports, freight, and highways and will create as many as 65,000 jobs by 2040. Other projects include various interchange projects including I-490/I-90, I-490/IL 390, and I-490/I-294. In addition, the Illinois Route 390 Tollway and Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) corridors have various ongoing projects and initiatives.

The Illinois Tollway continues to maintain Illinois' status as a critical transportation hub while providing billions of dollars for projects that will create thousands of jobs for contractors. We look forward to many great years ahead!

PROVIDING QUALITY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES TO
CONTRACTORS BUILDING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

A member of the Alta team has said that what sets the firm apart is that “they are a service company that both sells and rents equipment.” Servicing equipment is a big part of the industry and immensely important on construction jobsites. Alta Equipment Company technicians fix numerous machines to get jobsites back up and running. They understand that downtime on any construction project impacts when the project gets complete and hurts the contractor, workers, and the customer (i.e., business or public body).

Alta employees have a team culture of providing quality services in a timely manner for contractor and their customers. The company prides themselves on being a “service first company” – building customers for life. If you would like to learn more about Alta Equipment Company, you can view their website at www.altg.com.

III FFC would like to thank Alta Equipment Company for the quality service they provide to our area and our signatory contractors who build and maintain America's infrastructure in the Midwest.



A BRIDGE TO EXCELLENCE

As a lifelong Quad Citizen – an area made up of the Illinois and Iowa bi-state region – I have had it engrained into me, like many other Quad Citizens, that our little corner of the universe is in fact the center of the universe, where all things excellent have its origins. We didn't just make up this delusion of grandeur. There are several examples of this excellence, such as being the home of industrialist John Deere, birth place and home to Sauk War Chief Black Hawk, the first railroad to cross the Mississippi River, the headquarters to the First Army, the only place in the world where the Mississippi River flows east to west, and last but not least, the stunning engineering marvel that is the Interstate 74 (I-74) Bridge over the Mississippi River.

The Quad Cities latest accomplishment, the I-74 Bridge, is truly a testament of the Quad Cities. It was a culmination of decades of planning, vision, bi-partisan advocacy, and perseverance to make this jewel of the Quad Cities a reality. The first study and Draft Environmental Impact Statement that kicked off the planning and construction phases of the project was approved October 30, 2003. Construction of the I-74 bridge did not start until 2017. The \$1 billion complex, mega-project was built to accommodate increased capacity and structural improvements along a 7.8-mile stretch of I-74 in the Quad Cities. The I-74 Bridge is not only a physical bridge, but a symbolic bridge between the people of Illinois and Iowa living as one community.



Andy Waeyaert's children on scooters over the I-74 Bridge in the Quad Cities.

As a testament to the hundreds of skilled union craftspeople and dedicated engineers that made this project come to life, the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) announced this spring that the I-74 Corridor over the Mississippi River was named the Grand Award winner at the Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA). The Engineering Excellence Awards are considered the “Academy Awards of the engineering industry.” The project will be nationally recognized at the EEA in June in Washington, D.C.

The awards for this spectacular piece of infrastructure does not end at the prestigious EEA. The I-74 Bridge was also awarded the #1 Bridge in 2022 by Roads & Bridges Magazine. However, probably the highest honor the pedestrian walk path on the bridge received was it being named “the coolest scooter ride in the world” by the 7-year-old and 9-year-old Waeyaert children.



1. Interstate 74 Quad Cities Corridor Study: Draft Environmental Impact Statement.” Iowa DOT. Accessed May 2023. <https://iowadot.gov/ole/nepaprojects/projects/i74corridor/START/START.pdf>
2. “I-74 river bridge named Roads & Bridges’ Top Bridge Of 2022.” IDOT Update Blog. Accessed May 2023. <https://idot.illinois.gov/about-idot/stay-connected/blog/i-74-top-bridge.html>
3. “I-74 bridge wins national engineering honors.” Sharon Wren and OurQuadCities.com. Accessed May 2023. <https://www.ourquadcities.com/news/local-news/i-74-bridge-wins-national-engineering-honors/>



Andrew Waeyaert
REGIONAL MANAGER

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Michael McNally

III FFC Counsel

Michael McNally's passion for labor was instilled in him from an early age. Growing up in a family of union members, including several members of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 150, he witnessed firsthand the vital role of unions in supporting the local community and businesses. From this upbringing, Michael developed a deep appreciation for the value of productive, well-paying jobs and the positive impact they have on society. With this perspective, it was no surprise that he always knew he wanted to be involved in the labor movement.

Michael's journey into the world of labor began in 2005 when he started operating heavy equipment for IUOE contractors. During his off-seasons, he pursued higher education at the University of Illinois, returning to work in the summer months. In 2012, he passed his civil exam and began working as a full-time operating engineer at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) of Greater Chicago. His experience in the public sector fueled his desire to contribute more to his community by advocating for the benefits of skilled labor and securing middle-class jobs. He also developed a keen interest in the legal complexities and regulations surrounding labor issues in the construction industry. Michael enjoyed examining the impact of labor laws on different stakeholders, including industries, workers, and businesses.



After working full-time as an operating engineer at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) of Greater Chicago, Michael decided to pursue his law degree. In 2013, he embarked on a challenging journey, working over 50 hours a week at the MWRD and attending evening classes at DePaul Law School. Michael was determined to graduate early, and he achieved this goal by taking summer classes, completing his degree in just 3.5 years, and graduating in December 2016. He aimed to take the bar in February 2017, before the construction season picked up, and with relentless dedication and sleepless nights, Michael accomplished his objective, becoming a licensed attorney in April 2017.

Michael was then hired as a Labor Liaison with Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. He enjoyed the job, but the toughest challenge of his career was the transition from work boots and a lunch pail to a suit and the circuit court. III FFC hired Michael as Counsel for the Foundation in August of 2021. His firsthand knowledge and experience as a construction worker has made Michael a well-rounded addition to our staff.

Michael has taken a special interest in renewable energy and everything progressing in the energy sector. With many new federal and state incentives on the horizon, Michael is excited about the potential opportunities for III FFC signatory contractors and IUOE Local 150 members to

secure new construction projects. The recent passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act in Illinois has been a major milestone, requiring large-scale solar and wind projects to adhere to specific regulations and be linked to public works. As part of his role, Michael is dedicated to ensuring transparency and compliance with prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements for all new public works projects. He recognizes the importance of advancing green energy and job opportunities that support sustainable development.



Michael presenting on responsible bidder ordinances.



Michael during his years as an Operating Engineer.



III FFC staff golfing at the Sweeney Classic Golf Outing in August 2022. From left: Marcus Jordan, Jeff Phillips, Michael McNally, and Kara Principe.

Going forward, Michael is excited to work on more bills involving the renewable energy sector across our jurisdiction. He recognizes that this sector represents the future and that the time is ripe to establish worker protections for projects benefiting from government subsidies and incentives. While much of the attention is currently focused on wind and solar projects, Michael is keenly aware that hydropower and other renewable energy sources are equally important for III FFC signatory contractors and IUOE Local 150 members. He looks forward to advocating for worker rights and ensuring that the labor force is fairly represented in the green energy industry. Michael is committed to advancing the cause of labor in this exciting and rapidly growing sector.

In his role at III FFC, Michael has made significant contributions in multiple areas. While his primary focus has been on renewable energy legislation, he has also played a critical role in advocating for changes to the Davis Bacon and Related Acts by submitting comments to the USDOL. Additionally, Michael has championed the inclusion of apprenticeship programs on construction projects that receive federal funding. He has collaborated with III FFC Construction Analysts to ensure bid packages meet high quality standards, and he has drafted new responsible bidder ordinances that incorporate apprenticeship requirements at the municipal level. Michael has also been working on promoting President Biden's Executive Order on project labor agreements for construction projects over \$35 million in Iowa and ensuring that projects across every jurisdiction comply with these requirements. He is committed to improving the construction industry for workers and creating better opportunities through strategic advocacy and policy development.

Outside of work, Michael enjoys exploring new places and trying out different dining experiences. He and his wife are currently in the process of renovating their new home. Together, they are excited to bring their vision to life and create a space that reflects their personal style and preferences. Whether it's through traveling, trying new restaurants, or working on home renovation projects, Michael values the importance of taking a break from work and enjoying quality time with family.



IUOE, LOCAL 150 SCHOLARSHIP FUND, INC. AWARDS 2023 SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, the IUOE, Local 150 Scholarship Fund, Inc. selects 29 recipients for scholarships towards higher education. The Scholarship Committee was very impressed with the quality of the applications submitted this year, and the selection of awardees from the overall pool of candidates was not an easy task. Nonetheless, 29 individuals were selected to receive a scholarship to go towards their tuition, books, and room and board.

The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 150 created the IUOE, Local 150 Scholarship Fund, Inc. in 2013 to support members' children and dependents who aspire to further their education. The Scholarship Fund has granted over \$700,000 in scholarships since its founding. These scholarships are awarded to students who are attending 4-year universities, 2-year colleges, and technical and mechanical schools.

Awardees will be recognized at the July Gold Card Dinner before Local 150's General Membership Meeting. We are looking forward to meeting the awardees in person and know they have a bright future ahead!

The Monitor

RAISING THE BAR BY MONITORING
THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



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 (III FFC).

We were established to increase market share for responsible contractors, work opportunities for skilled craftsmen and craftswomen, and value for taxpayers by executing a comprehensive program of procurement oversight, jobsite monitoring, market analysis, and public policy education.



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