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The Monitor

RAISING THE BAR BY MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



A.I. & Construction

Prioritizing good-paying construction jobs in the age of technological shifts and A.I.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

THE FAR COUNCIL'S FINAL RULING ON PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS IN FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION



Marc Poulos
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Federal Acquisition Regulatory (FAR) Council recently issued a final rule requiring project labor agreements (PLAs) for federal large-scale construction projects, where total estimated cost to the Federal Government is \$35 million or more (with limited exceptions). This rule, effective January 22, 2024, follows President Biden's Executive Order 14063, which mandated PLAs for such projects to prevent labor disruptions.

The final rule aims to promote efficiency in federal procurement by mitigating labor disputes and fostering inclusivity within the construction industry. This rule will facilitate faster project completion, ensure fair wages and benefits, and enhance safety measures for workers. Provisions within PLAs aim to bolster support for workers from underserved communities and small businesses, ensuring their participation in federal projects. By facilitating steady employment opportunities in federal projects, PLAs nurture a consistent pipeline of skilled workers.

The final rule had some initial changes from the proposed White House Executive Order. First, the rule eliminates the possibility of contractors signing multiple

PLAs for a single project by mandating a single PLA per contract. Additionally, the rule extends the timeframe for developing and negotiating PLAs, now ranging from 80 to 200 hours per party involved. Another clarification stipulates that subcontractors must also become signatories to the PLA, ensuring comprehensive coverage across all levels of the project.

Contrary to concerns of favoring unionized contractors, the rule asserts that PLAs will promote competition by allowing both union and non-union builders to bid on projects mandating PLAs. Prime contractors are tasked with negotiating the PLA without direct government involvement, streamlining the process.

By mandating PLAs on large-scale federal construction projects, the recent ruling by the FAR Council underscores a commitment to workers' rights, fair wages, and safety within the industry.

The PLA final rule could provide nearly 200,000 workers¹ on Federal construction projects the benefit of collectively bargained wages, benefits, and safety protections regardless of union membership. These provisions aim to provide clarity, consistency, and flexibility within the regulatory framework surrounding PLAs in federal construction projects.

Time and again, PLAs have proven to address labor supply issues, prevent work stoppages, protect workers' classification, strengthen health and safety standards, and achieve cost savings by standardizing contract terms for highly skilled workers. We at the III FFC applaud the FAR Council's final ruling, which prioritizes workers' rights, fair wages, and workplace protections.

1. The White House. (2022). "Fact Sheet: President Biden Signs Executive Order to Boost Quality of Federal Construction Projects." Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/02/03/fact-sheet-president-biden-signs-executive-order-to-boost-quality-of-federal-construction-projects/>.





TINLEY PARK SETS THE BAR WITH PLATINUM RISE CERTIFICATION

The Village of Tinley Park became the first public body in Illinois to achieve the Platinum level Raising Infrastructure Standards of Excellence (RISE) Certification, a testament to the community's commitment to excellence in public infrastructure and construction. The RISE Certification program recognizes and celebrates public bodies that go above and beyond in modernizing public construction practices, ensuring they meet the demands of the 21st century.

The Village of Tinley Park's Platinum level certification signifies the highest level of commitment to advancing infrastructure standards. This accomplishment reflects the Village's dedication to fostering sustainable, resilient, and technologically advanced public construction projects that benefit the community at large.

Mayor Michael Glotz expressed pride in this monumental accomplishment, emphasizing the village's enduring commitment to infrastructure excellence and its responsiveness to the evolving needs of the community. The attainment of the Platinum level certification underscores Tinley Park's proactive stance towards embracing innovation and pushing the boundaries of what is achievable in public construction.

RISE Certification is available to any public body that spends money on public infrastructure or works on public works projects. Public bodies and communities pursuing RISE certification earn points for passing a series of ordinances and resolutions related to raising standards in the public construction industry. These ordinances and resolutions

include a responsible bidder ordinance, capital improvement plan, advisory commission on labor and development, prevailing wage ordinance, and workers' rights recognition. Based on the number of points achieved, a community earns one of three RISE rating levels: Silver, Gold, or Platinum.

Achieving the Platinum level demonstrates not only compliance with industry standards but also a proactive approach to embracing innovation and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in the public infrastructure industry. Tinley Park's success in achieving this milestone is attributed to its enactment of various measures, including a responsible bidder ordinance, a capital improvement plan, the establishment of an advisory commission on labor and development, a prevailing wage ordinance, and the recognition of workers' rights.

The establishment of an advisory commission on labor and development in 2021 showcased Tinley Park's commitment to setting new benchmarks in public works construction. This commission, serving as a vital cog in the Village's decision-making machinery, aims to formulate robust labor policies that promote fair contracting practices and safeguard the interests of local workers, contractors, and taxpayers.

In recognition of Tinley Park becoming Platinum RISE Certified, the Village was given a plaque to be displayed at Village Hall. Tinley Park continues to set new standards in infrastructure development and has set a precedent for others to follow. For more information on RISE Certification, visit www.risecertification.org.



PUBLIC BODY SPOTLIGHT

Moline, IL

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND PASSAGE OF LOCAL PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENT

Sometimes in life when things start to go awry it is best to hit the reset button, reevaluate priorities, and set a new course. That is exactly what the citizens of Moline did in 2021, when voters decided it was time for a change by electing a new Mayor and four new council members. Armed with a new outlook, the new leadership focused on the fundamentals of good governance and reinvesting in the City's infrastructure.

The new Mayor and council members put an emphasis on increasing investment in aging infrastructure, specifically the City's intricate network of streets and roads. In the spirit of good governance and equity, the City decided to employ new technologies in determining the best course of action by deploying a pavement condition index system. The system uses non-subjective criteria in assessing the condition of streets and alleys on the city's 582 lane miles of roadway. This survey helps guide Moline on its impressive goal of replacing or repairing 9 miles of roadway, up from 6 miles in previous years.

City leaders have also reviewed enterprise funds that go directly into making sure Moline's award-winning water and sewer system have the resources to ensure safety and reliability for decades to come. While hard decisions had to be made in terms of service increases, the City implemented a new monthly billing cycle making it easier for working families to more accurately budget for those costs. These decisions will ensure that Moline can keep up with the cost of replacing water and sewer infrastructure at a higher, more manageable pace than previously.

While Moline has seen its fair share of challenges, its commitment to effective governance since 2021 has been unwavering. In the face of adversity, the City has taken proactive measures to address issues head-on. One significant stride was the enactment of an ordinance mandating skilled labor for projects exceeding \$500,000—a move commonly known as a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) Ordinance.

Under this ordinance, Moline prioritizes contractors with expertise and safety credentials, ensuring that infrastructure projects meet the highest standards of quality. The local implementation of the PLA, known as the Illowa IMPACT Agreement, has become a cornerstone of construction projects across the Quad Cities. Not only does it guarantee superior craftsmanship, but it also underscores the City's dedication to fostering workforce development. By endorsing contractors involved in apprenticeship programs that graduate skilled craftspeople, Moline not only elevates the caliber of its projects but also invests in the future prosperity of its residents.

By investing in both its public infrastructure and workforce, Moline lays a solid foundation for a strong future. The City's commitment to good governance has resulted in a thriving present and a promising future for all who call it home.

BP'S WHITING REFINERY CARBON CAPTURE PROJECT

Since British Petroleum (BP) announced plans to develop a Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) project at their Whiting Refinery, there have been questions regarding carbon capture and what it is. While the term itself may seem self-explanatory, the exact process often eludes many.

Carbon Capture and Storage, commonly referred to as CCS, is a process that has been around since the 1970s. The inaugural large-scale project, initiated in 1972 in Texas oilfields, marked the beginning of injecting carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the ground. The CO₂ recovered from oil and gas production was injected into depleted oil and gas reservoirs to re-pressurize them to extract more hydrocarbons. The injected CO₂ into oil reservoirs enhances oil recovery by reducing oil's viscosity and increasing its mobility. Fast forward to 2024, the piping infrastructure for CCS largely remains unchanged, but the technology and needs have evolved significantly.

So, what precisely does CCS entail today? In simple terms, CO₂ emissions are captured at the source – be it refinery, factory, or any industrial facility – before it enters the atmosphere, and is processed and compressed into liquid form. This liquid CO₂ is then transported via buried pipeline to a storage site, located thousands of feet underground beneath impermeable layers of rock that securely trap the CO₂ for permanent storage. BP underscores the rigorous testing and ongoing monitoring of these storage units to ensure their integrity and stability.

For northern Indiana, CCS helps decarbonize industries like steel, cement, and refining. In BP's case, this CCS would also serve the manufacturing, marine, transport, and railroad industries in Northwest Indiana. Advocates tout job creation, enhanced energy security, and improved public health by improving air quality near high-polluting facilities.

This endeavor represents a substantial and long-term investment by BP, buoyed by a commitment of \$98 million dollars in

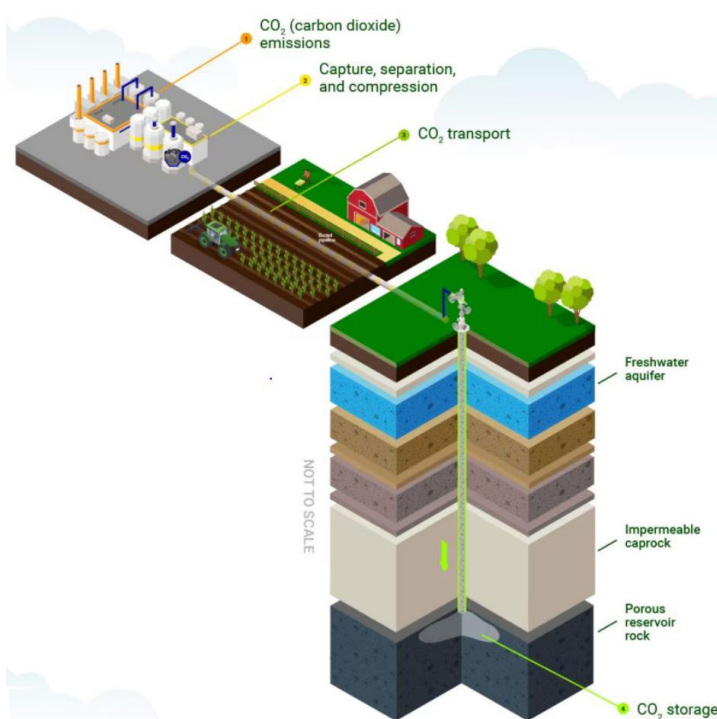
funding from the U.S. Department of Energy, plus an additional \$39 million in other funding. This funding does not include substantial investment that BP itself will spend on the project. Nonetheless, the prospects of CCS remain contentious, with both support and opposition.

The magnitude of the undertaking necessitates the installation of hundreds of miles of new pipeline and the drilling of storage sites thousands of feet into the ground. All construction will be done with cutting-edge technologies, specialized piping, and upgraded materials in a process designed to protect the environment. Simply put, a project of this scale will require a substantial number of manhours and workers, and it cannot be done without employing a professionally trained and skilled workforce.

This project has the potential to create good-paying jobs and grow the local economy in Indiana. As discussions unfold and project details emerge, the III FFC remains vigilant in watching this project come to fruition and the potential opportunities it poses.



Myron Sutton
REGIONAL MANAGER



1. Image from BP Carbon Capture & Storage website: https://www.bp.com/en_us/united-states/home/what-we-do/gas-and-low-carbon-energy/ccs.html. Accessed April 2024.



CONCERNS WITH CHICAGO'S CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE

In light of the ongoing discussions surrounding the City of Chicago's proposed Clean and Affordable Building Ordinance (CABO), the Indiana, Illinois, Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting (III FFC) has been actively engaged in voicing its concerns. With the possibility of a ban on gas hookups for all new construction looming under CABO, the III FFC has articulated its reservations regarding the potential negative impacts on the workforce and safety considerations.

The III FFC prepared comprehensive comments for the City's Committee hearing on Environmental Protection and Energy matters related to CABO. These comments expressed firm opposition to the ordinance, citing concerns regarding grid reliability, safety implications, and economic

repercussions. The III FFC contends that a swift transition to an all-electric model, as proposed by CABO, could strain the existing power grid, leading to potential power shortages and heightened instability, particularly during severe weather events.

Working in collaboration with Local 150, the III FFC has underscored the significant risks posed to the workforce by CABO's implementation. We have highlighted the potential for job losses and disinvestment resulting from the ordinance, drawing attention to past instances where similar regulatory decisions have led to layoffs and project cancellations. This transition could have a profound impact on the skilled workforce, disrupting established industries and livelihoods. The III FFC advocates for a more gradual transition to clean energy solutions, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding existing jobs and supporting the overall economy during this process. Additionally, the III FFC has suggested exploring alternative options to achieve sustainability goals while addressing concerns about workforce stability and safety. Recommendations include exploring emerging technologies such as Distributed Energy Resources and Energy Storage Systems as viable alternatives to an exclusively electric model. The III FFC emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that carefully weighs environmental benefits against grid reliability concerns.

As the City of Chicago continues its deliberations on CABO, the III FFC remains committed to advocating for a thoughtful and inclusive decision-making process. While recognizing the importance of promoting clean energy and affordable housing, the III FFC stresses the necessity of ensuring that policy measures are implemented with careful consideration for their broader socio-economic impacts. Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders, Chicago can chart a course towards sustainability that prioritizes the welfare of its residents and workforce. It's imperative that any decisions made by the City regarding CABO take into account the potential impacts on workers and their families, ensuring that the transition to clean energy is both responsible and equitable.





A.I. & AUTONOMOUS EQUIPMENT IN CONSTRUCTION

The construction industry stands on the brink of a technological revolution that promises to reshape its landscape: the rise of autonomous equipment (AE). The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and AE is poised to revolutionize industry practices. However, amidst the allure of increased efficiency, enhanced safety measures, and reduced costs, numerous concerns loom over the potential on the workforce and the overall quality of construction projects. It is imperative to critically examine the implications of this technological shift and advocate for safeguards that prioritize both progress and human welfare.

THE ROBO-CONUNDRUM

Proponents of AE tout its ability to streamline construction processes, enhance productivity, and minimize the risk of accidents. Advanced sensors and machine learning algorithms like computer vision, GPS navigation, and LiDAR can help analyze blueprints, navigate complex worksites, predict material needs, and optimize schedules. According to proponents, increasing automation helps alleviate labor shortages and mitigate the impact of skilled labor deficits. A study conducted by MIT and Boston University found that automation and its negative impact on the job market can be offset with the addition of new skills and tasks; assembly operators and testers become line-compliance auditors and robotics technicians. The annually published 2020 Future of Jobs Report predicts that by 2025, at least 12 million more jobs will be created from emerging technologies than will be eliminated. Furthermore, “94% of business leaders report that they expect employees to pick up new skills on the job, a sharp uptake from 65% in 2018”.

The widespread adoption of AE raises legitimate concerns. Foremost among these is the displacement of skilled workers and the erosion of job opportunities. It’s estimated that automation could lead to the displacement of 75 million jobs, while creating 133 million new positions. As machines assume monotonous, repetitive tasks traditionally performed by humans, there is a pressing need for comprehensive training programs and initiatives to ensure that workers can

adapt to evolving technological landscapes without being left in the dust.

More concerning, however, is the lack of supplemental jobs to offset the imbalance. As we enter the Autonomous Revolution, a vigorous and proactive approach becomes paramount. Collective bargaining agreements, for example, can include additional labor-management cooperation clauses to address the impact of technological changes.

Organizations like the Tech Workers Coalition work to bring the labor and tech workforce together to fight for workers’ rights. In October 2023, Microsoft signed an historical labor neutrality agreement shortly after acquiring Activision Blizzard, opening the door to collective bargaining for nearly 10,000 employees.

The construction industry is evolving from one that uses tools mimicking human intelligence to one that operates within an intelligently artificial environment. It now becomes an obligation to emphasize the need for these technologies to complement the workforce, not replace it.

SAFETY'S DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

There’s no denying construction is a dangerous job, with a considerable number of injuries and fatalities attributed to accidents involving heavy equipment on jobsites. Therefore, the primary advantage of autonomous equipment lies in its ability to significantly enhance safety measures on job sites, while simultaneously alleviating any financial burden associated with workplace injuries and compensation claims.

Tasks that are repetitive, strenuous, or dangerous can be assigned to machines, reducing the risk of injuries, and allowing workers to focus on more skilled aspects of construction. Moreover, the use of AI can potentially lead to better planning and execution of construction projects.

However, the enhanced safety measures touted by these machines may unintentionally bring about a slew of ancillary risks. Such risks include data privacy, data security, data transparency, decision-making conflicts (the moral machine dilemma), and liability concerns. State and federal mandates, regulations, and statutes need to be promptly addressed, and should be atop legislators' minds. Across the pond, the European Union (EU) recognized the urgency for comprehensive guidelines and have provided a federal regulation model known as the AI Act. This Act limits any "race to the bottom for AI if no guardrails are offered".



THE EVOLVING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The construction industry is evolving from one that uses tools mimicking human intelligence to one that operates within an intelligently artificial environment, crafted by the very technologies we develop. It now becomes an obligation to emphasize the need for these technologies to complement the workforce, not replace it. The goal should be to leverage AI to enhance the skills of construction workers, ensuring job security and fostering a culture of continuous learning and advancement.

The future of construction lies not in the hands of artificially intelligent machines, but in our ability to create intelligently artificial systems that enhance human capabilities and redefine the boundaries of construction.



Dan Weksler
POLICY ANALYST

1. Acemoglu, Daron, and Pascual Restrepo. (2019). "Automation and New Tasks: How Technology Displaces and Reinstates Labor." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 33 (2): 3-30 World Economic Forum, The Future of Jobs Report 2018, 2020.

2. Acemoglu, Daron, and Pascual Restrepo. (2019). *Automation and New Tasks: How Technology Displaces and Reinstates Labor*. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 33 (2): 3-30.

3. Kresge, Lisa. (2020). *Union Collective Bargaining Agreement Strategies in Response to Technology*. Working Paper, Technology and Work Program. Center for Labor Research and Education, University of California, Berkeley.

4. AFL-CIO. (2023). *AFL-CIO and Microsoft Announce New Tech-Labor Partnership on AI and the Future of the Workforce* [Press release]. <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-and-microsoft-announce-new-tech-labor-partnership-ai-and-future-workforce>.

5. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). *Construction Laborers* [Spotlight publication]. <https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/workplace-injuries-and-job-requirements-for-construction-laborers/home.htm>.

6. C. Liang, et al. (2024). *Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Industry*. *Automation in Construction*. Volume 162. ISSN 0926-5805.

7. National Conference Of State Legislatures. (2023) *Approaches to Regulating Artificial Intelligence: A Primer*. Report retrieved from the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0006936/>.

CHICAGO'S O'HARE AIRPORT DEAL: ACCELERATING MODERNIZATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

In early May, Chicago's two main airlines – United and American Airlines – and the city made a deal regarding changes to the rebuild at O'Hare International Airport. The agreement involves rephrasing the construction order, with the Global Terminal now taking precedence. The airlines' approval of the new plan sets the stage for a significant advancement in the airport's overhaul by ensuring that funds will first be allocated to critical components like the Global Terminal and Satellite 1. As United said in a statement, this deal will “deliver the most impactful elements of the modernization project the quickest.”

A new study by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, *Cleared for Takeoff: The Economic Impacts of Completing the O'Hare 21 Modernization Program*, reveals the importance of finishing O'Hare 21. Completing the program as initially planned would generate a staggering \$18 billion in economic activity and create nearly 95,000 jobs by 2033. This includes 53,000 good-paying local jobs that cannot be outsourced for skilled tradespeople in the construction industry, or 5,300 per year. The report also incorporates over \$500 million in remaining improvements on the I-190 road construction project to improve traffic flows to and from the airport. All of this is to say that moving forward with the program will ensure a steady flow of projects and employment opportunities for IUOE Local 150 signatory contractors and members for years to come.

Additionally, the report finds that completion of the program will allow Chicago O'Hare International Airport to meet the projected 20% increase in passenger demand. It will boost revenues at the airport by \$280 million annually and create more permanent jobs for positions like baggage handlers and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents than both Midway and Chicago Rockford International Airport combined. As a result, the Chicago metropolitan economy will grow by over \$500 million per year and state and local tax collections will increase by more than \$60 million annually after the

construction phase. Ultimately, the program will bolster economic development, public budgets, and travel efficiency in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The agreement between the city and the airlines signifies a significant step forward in O'Hare's growth and emphasizes its importance as a global transportation hub. It also highlights the collaboration between stakeholders to guarantee the program's success and underscores the dire consequences that would have occurred had work been scaled back or further delayed. Moving forward, any changes in project scope or budget overruns will continue to require approval from the partner airline companies, as per the terms of the original 2018 agreement with the city.

The data shows that finishing the job will ensure that O'Hare maintains its status as the most connected airport in the nation, improving O'Hare's ability to efficiently serve both residents and visitors from around the world. O'Hare 21 will deliver a first-class airport and produce historic economic value for passengers and the regional economy.

1. Manzo, Frank IV. (2024). *Cleared for Takeoff: The Economic Impacts of Completing the O'Hare 21 Modernization Program*. Illinois Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://illinoisupdate.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ilepi-economic-impact-of-ohare-21-program-final.pdf>



Jodi Frailey
REGIONAL MANAGER





The I-290 Blue Line Reconstruction Project represents one of the region's greatest opportunities to create jobs, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve job accessibility for economically disconnected areas.

communities that had previously been cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure.

IDOT will also receive \$8.6 million from a federal grant to reduce flooding on I-290, which will be matched by \$15 million from IDOT and \$1.2 million from Cook County. Altogether, this \$25 million investment will upgrade sewers along Harrison Street to reduce flooding on I-290 and also protect homes and local streets in Maywood. This complements the recent construction of a \$46 million pump station next to the Des Plaines River, completed by IDOT.

Furthermore, the Coalition is hopeful that future funding will be successfully secured with the aid of the recently created Program Management Office (PMO) for the I-290 Blue Line Project. IDOT and the CTA created a formal partnership, in conjunction with CMAP, agreeing to a PMO to coordinate and manage the many facets of the project. A PMO consultant will be retained and managed by CMAP and will be tasked with identifying potential funding sources, supporting in funding applications, and coordinating the sequencing of project work and schedules. The I-290 Blue Line project is an expansive, complicated project. The use of a PMO will undoubtedly help to lead the project to success by coordinating projects under both IDOT and CTA, in addition to other project partners like Cook County, City of Chicago, the RTA, and other local governments and transportation agencies.

The I-290 Blue Line Coalition will remain a key advocate and leading voice as this project advances and pursues additional funding opportunities. It will continue to communicate to and advise state, federal, and local officials of the importance of this project.

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.

The III FFC is proud to be a founding member of the 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.

The Coalition has seen multiple successes on the I-290 Blue Line project in recent months, with the announcement of federal funding awards. Additionally, a formal partnership and management structure was developed under an agreed upon Program Management Office (PMO) to be overseen by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). All these achievements are further expanded upon below.

It was announced in March 2024 that the federal infrastructure bill – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – would provide \$111 million to the CTA for Blue Line track work and an additional \$2 million for the City of Chicago, both under the Reconnecting Communities Program. The \$111 million will be used to replace more than 10,000 feet of track between Kedzie and Pulaski, which is expected to begin in Summer 2027. The \$2 million will be used to enhance connectivity over and around I-290 on Chicago's West Side, as a means to improve community safety, cohesion, and quality of life. The Reconnecting Communities Program was a new program under the IIJA and the first federal program designed to reconnect

CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT



JAY DEE CONTRACTORS, INC.

LEADER IN UNDERGROUND CONSTRUCTION
SINCE 1965 TAKES ON O'HARE 21 PROJECT

Jay Dee Contractors, Inc.'s work underground makes the surface world more livable. The reputable construction firm has a 50-year history of conquering complex, underground projects across the country. The company pioneered pipe jacking tunneling and has amassed over 100 miles of tunnels in various soil conditions. With a skilled team of 50 dedicated employees and extensive equipment inventory, Jay Dee delivers quality work, on time and on budget, without compromising on excellence.

Jay Dee Contractors, Inc. is currently engaged in the O'Hare 21 project (see "Focus on Illinois" article on Page 8 for more on this project), undertaking the crucial task of earth pressure balance tunneling. The project involves the construction of an 8,000-foot-long tunnel that is 14.5 feet wide and 55 feet deep, which will facilitate the transfer of water from O'Hare Airport's main water basin to its south basin. Utilizing advanced tunneling technology, Jay Dee will use a 17-foot-wide machine to navigate challenging ground conditions. Because the large tunnel must be built in a specific area, this machine makes it possible to build in unfavorable ground.

In addition to building the large tunnel, Jay Dee will construct several large shaft excavations at O'Hare. This includes side shafts for water collection and a retrieval shaft

at the tunnel's end. These shafts play a vital role in supporting the infrastructure and facilitating the flow of water within the system. Furthermore, the company will oversee the construction of concrete structures to connect tunnels and shafts, ensuring structural integrity.

Jay Dee Contractors, Inc. utilizes state-of-the-art earth pressure balance machines for tunneling operations, enabling the construction of larger tunnels in challenging ground conditions. These machines, acquired from reputable manufacturers like Herrenknecht Group, exemplify Jay Dee's commitment to employing cutting-edge technology to ensure project success. While these machines can take up to 18-months to get built, Jay Dee already possessed the machine needed to construct the O'Hare 21 tunnel.

Tunneling operations are set to start in late Summer 2024 and the tunnel is expected to be complete in early 2025. There is additional work Jay Dee must do once the tunnel is finished; thus, Jay Dee's portion of the O'Hare 21 project is set for Late Fall 2025 completion. When construction starts, Jay Dee will operate two shifts of 25-30 personnel. These skilled workers will encompass a diverse range of trades such as operators, laborers, and electricians along with engineers and supervisors.

Jay Dee Contractors, Inc. is a signatory contractor of IUOE Local 150. The company's commitment to a skilled workforce and partnership with IUOE Local 150 underscores its dedication to delivering quality construction that is cost effective and safely executed.

Beyond the O'Hare 21 project, the company continues to pursue opportunities in tunneling, excavation, and infrastructure development nationwide. The company's unwavering determination and passion drive it to discover efficient and groundbreaking solutions for even the most unconventional projects. With an unwavering commitment to innovation, excellence, and safety, Jay Dee Contractors, Inc. stands ready to confront future challenges and play a pivotal role in building critical infrastructure.



IOWA'S APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS MUST REMAIN STRONG

The State of Iowa is in the process of ramming through drastic changes to the apprenticeship registration process, raising concerns among skilled trades workers and the responsible contractors that employ them. While “cutting the red tape” might sound great, these changes threaten the integrity of apprenticeship programs and ultimately lower the bar for the construction industry that is in desperate need of a reliable pipeline of skilled workers.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) approved registered apprenticeships are time-tested pathways to a rewarding career and the middle class. They combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction, ensuring workers gain the necessary skills and knowledge. These programs are overseen by the U.S. DOL, guaranteeing a high standard of training, and protecting workers from exploitation.

Proposals to loosen registration requirements will have detrimental effects. Less stringent oversight could lead to the creation of “paper apprenticeships” that lack the structured training and do not graduate any apprentices. These programs prioritize checking boxes over proper skill development, leaving workers unskilled and unsafe on the job. We know that operating heavy construction equipment comes with inherent risks and improperly trained workers are more susceptible to accidents and injuries. Weakening apprenticeship standards will lead to an increase in workplace incidents, putting workers at risk and driving up insurance costs for contractors.

A strong apprenticeship system benefits not just workers but also the construction industry as a whole. Joint labor-management apprenticeship programs produce a qualified workforce capable of completing projects efficiently and safely. A 2021 study conducted by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute in partnership with the University of Illinois’ Project for Middle Class Renewal found that job sites with union workers, who participate in joint labor-management apprenticeship programs, were 19% less likely to have health and safety violations than job sites that have workers who did not participate in a union apprenticeship

program.¹ Lowering the bar for apprenticeship programs will decline job competency and cause project delays with lower quality.

Unions spend millions of dollars investing in their apprenticeship programs. Research found that union apprenticeship programs require 27%-41% more hours of training than four-year universities do for bachelor level degrees.² Loosening registration requirements could undermine these efforts, ultimately leading to a collapse of the entire system that has been producing the safest and most skilled construction workers in the State of Iowa.

The changes to Iowa's apprenticeship registration process pose a significant threat to the skilled trades workforce and the construction industry. Protecting the integrity of registered apprenticeship programs is critical to ensuring worker safety, maintaining industry standards, and building a strong future for Iowa's infrastructure. Before making any changes, the State of Iowa should prioritize preserving the quality and effectiveness of this valuable training system.



1. Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) and Project for Middle Class Renewal (PMCR). (2021). “Unions and Construction Health and Safety.” Retrieved from <https://illinoisupdate.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ilepi-pmcr-unions-and-construction-health-and-safety-final.pdf>

3. Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI). (2021). “Union Apprenticeships Equal College Degrees.” Retrieved from <https://faircontracting.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ilepi-union-apprentices-equal-college-degrees-final.pdf>



Andrew Waeyaert
REGIONAL MANAGER

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Marcella Kustek

Senior Construction Analyst

Marcella "Marci" Kustek epitomizes dedication, expertise, and compassion. She takes these qualities with her in her personal and professional life, leaving an indelible mark on both people she meets inside and outside her career.

Marci's career began in law enforcement at the age of 21, influenced by her father's career as a police officer. She underwent rigorous training at the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, laying the foundation for her tenure with the Indiana State Police – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division. In this position, Marci enforced state and federal laws pertaining to commercial motor vehicles.

After 25 years of dedicated service, Marci retired from the Indiana State Police and was ready to pursue new challenges. She was intrigued by the construction industry's dynamics, and joined the Indiana, Illinois, Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting (III FFC) as an Construction Analyst in 2010. Marci's experience with the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division helped her excel in her position at III FFC monitoring construction jobsites in Indiana that used large commercial vehicles and hauled products. She brought a positive change to III FFC's field operations and was promoted to Senior Construction Analyst in 2017. One of Marci's greatest contributions to III FFC is her



fervent advocacy for Responsible Bidding Ordinances (RBOs). One of III FFC's main objectives is to provide education to government on "high-road" construction laws, ordinances, and policies in the hopes of local municipalities adopting policies that raise standards in the construction industry. An RBO ensures qualified contractors and workers are employed on public works projects.

Marci has worked tirelessly to educate communities on the benefits of passing good public policy and has successfully grown the number of RBOs in Indiana during her tenure. "I am passionate about community engagement, which I have honed through years in law enforcement, and believe strongly in RBOs. I want to make sure public

works projects are done right, on time, with the best workforce, which RBOs help ensure. Passing RBOs have been my biggest achievements as a Senior Construction Analyst."

Getting RBOs passed is no easy feat. It took 10 years to get an RBO passed in Michigan City. It takes time to nurture and educate public officials on the benefits of the policy and the importance of raising standards in the local public construction industry. Marci's passion for community engagement has been instrumental in fostering dialogue and nurturing relationships with local policy decision-makers to get RBOs passed.

Marci continues to foster strong relationships with her peers. She plays a pivotal role in mentoring new III FFC Construction Analysts, sharing insights and best practices with new team members. In addition, she has a great working relationship with IUOE Local 150 Officers, Business Agents, and signatory contractors in her jurisdiction. She is often in conversations about issues in the field and how the III FFC can help, underscoring her commitment to holistic problem-solving and industry cohesion.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Marci enjoys traveling





Marci and her family at Walt Disney World.

and living the country life. She and her husband, Tim, raise chickens on their five-acres and plan to expand by adopting more farm animals. She has two sons, Noah, who is a Senior Financial Analyst working on an MBA, and Nathan, who is an Infantryman with the 82nd Airborne Division in the United States Army. Nathan resides in North Carolina with his lovely wife Piper.

Marci's journey from law enforcement to her impactful role as a Senior Construction Analyst underscores her unwavering commitment to excellence and community betterment. Through her dedication to advocating for RBOs, she has not only elevated industry standards but also exemplified the power of perseverance in effecting positive change. III FFC is incredibly fortunate to have Marci as a valuable member of our staff.



Marci's son, Nathan, Infantryman with the 82nd Airborne Division in the United States Army.

INTERSTATE 69: TRANSFORMING INDIANA'S INFRASTRUCTURE & ECONOMY

Indiana is nearing completion of its segment of Interstate 69, a highway project spanning from Canada to Mexico and decades in the making. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is putting the final touches on the state's sections of I-69, with expectations to finish by year-end. While the section from Indianapolis north to Port Huron, Mich., opened in 1992, progress on the southern stretch, south of Indianapolis, commenced in 2005.

Once fully operational, I-69 will connect Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, solidifying Indiana's status as the "Crossroads of America." The completion of this interstate is anticipated to uplift cities along its route and stimulate regional development.

Interstate highways like I-69 are pivotal for enhancing safety, stimulating economic growth, and providing essential links between cities, aligning with the original vision of President Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System. The project's construction phases, financed through various mechanisms including public-private partnerships, underscore the complexity and significance of such infrastructure investments.

Despite challenges, including disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, INDOT remains committed to finishing the interstate by the end of 2024. Tangible benefits—including improved commute times and newfound opportunities for communities—underscore the project's enduring value and significance for Indiana's future prosperity.

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 (IIFFC).

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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