



Connecticut Chapter



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Governor to Attend the CT ABC Annual Dinner

It is a matter of days now before the BIG event. Of course this would be the CT ABC Annual Meeting & Excellence in Construction Awards on Thursday, January 27, 2011 at the Aqua Turf Country Club in Southington, CT. It will be a grand evening, honoring those in the construction industry who have successfully navigated the economic riptide, and will be receiving industry-wide acclimation for their projects, designation as contractor of the year, safety's "Best of the Best", and the corporate good citizen award (AQC).

You do not want to miss the premier event for our industry. **Governor Malloy** has confirmed that he will speak at the Annual Dinner and EIC Awards. **Oz Griebel**, who has served the civic and business communities well will be the event's Master of Ceremonies. He repaired the dwindling finances of BankBoston and is currently as CEO and president of the MetroHartford Alliance, all while providing assistance numerous boards and committees to improve the quality of life for all Connecticut citizens. Mr. Griebel intimately knows the business, budget, and education aspects of this state. More importantly, he remains committed to fixing and improving each sector as a means of advancing society as a whole. It is indeed an honor for CT ABC to have Oz Griebel as our Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

It will also be a very special honor that evening to present a Lifetime Achievement Award to KBE's Gary Sherman. Gary, who has served as KBE's Senior Vice President of Field Operations, is retired from KBE this past September. He joined KBE in 1983 as an Assistant Project Superintendent and became a Project Manager in 1992, overseeing many projects, and was

instrumental in KBE's growth from a \$30 million company to a \$350 million company in ten years. For Gary, work and personal life became one. He travelled to KBE's home offices in Farmington, CT each Monday, staying close to the jobsite all week, and returning to his family and home in upstate New York. A true team player, Gary brought out the best in his co-workers and has been greatly missed in the past few months.



And naturally, there is the gala ambience of the Annual Meeting and EIC Awards that can't be matched anywhere. The overall feeling of

acknowledging the construction industries accomplishments, especially in these difficult economic times, underscores the industry's steadfast commitment and ability to navigate and succeed no matter the challenges.

"Card Check" Legislation

Efforts to pass the so-called federal Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), aka known as "card check", will go on in the new Congress. The legislation would require employers to recognize a union if a majority of workers signs union authorization cards rather than the currently required secret ballot process, where workers are given the right to cast their vote for or against unionization in private. The bill would force binding federal arbitration on both the employer and the union if agreement on an initial contract is not reached within 90 days. Keep in mind that arbitration would not be limited to wages and benefits. It also means federal representatives making decisions about a company's day-to-day operations. Organized labor has spent tens of millions of dollars to push this legislation. Card check is sure to reappear in the 112th Congress.

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CT Legislative Session Underway

Connecticut's Legislative session officially got underway on January 5, 2011. However, there was a speed bump from the start as there needs to be special elections for 9 legislative seats that are open due to appointments by the new Malloy administration or otherwise. These elections are scheduled for February 22nd, and will obviously impact the composition of the various committees and committee chairs.

There have been several changes to Committee Co-Chairs with the departures of several legislators to positions within the Malloy Administration. The new Co-Chair on the Labor Committee is Rep. Bruce "Zeke" Zalinski, with the departure of Kevin Ryan. In addition, Sen. Andrea Stillman will Co-Chair the Education Committee. Also of note is Sen. Paul Doyle's new position as Co-Chair of General Law Committee, Sen. Maynard on the Transportation Committee, and Rep. Tim O'Brian on Regulation Review Committee.

This is a budget session with a \$3.5 billion deficit looming, so the session will be focusing on how to close the budgetary gap, through various options such as tax increases, business development incentives, cuts in state programs, and revenue enhancement plans.

In the very early days of the session, CT ABC knew of legislative initiatives being discussed or introduced to address mandated paid sick leave, establishing a health care exchange program to comply with the new federal health care standards, a crane apprenticeship requirement, DAS pre-qualification evaluation revisions, changing CEU requirements for electricians to 4 hours from 7 hours, prevailing wage exceptions for municipal transportation and school projects, and a new OSHA-10 Hour refresher standard.

CT ABC will be following these, and all legislative proposals affecting the commercial construction industry.



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OSHA's 2011 Regulatory Agenda

Regulatory initiatives specific to the construction industry are on OSHA's Regulatory Agenda for 2011. The agency announced in late December that the new rules for confined space are scheduled to be issued as final in November 2011. OSHA has been revising the confined space rules since 2033. The agency is still working on possible standards covering occupational exposure to crystalline silica and could be issued as a proposed rule. In addition, the will continue to finalize proposed rules for construction workers during the construction of electric power transmission and distribution lines. The current standards are 35 years old and the agency; the new rules are expected in May 2011. OSHA is also reported to be finalizing a rule that would keep the musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) column on the illness and injury recordkeeping form, know as Form 300. Keeping the MSD column on the Form 300 could be an indication that a MSD rulemaking may be in the offing.

OSHA's New Enforcement Policies

OSHA Bridgeport and Hartford Area Directors will met with CT ABC members on February 8th at the Rocky Hill office (8:00 to 10:00 a.m.) and explain the agency's new enforcement policies. All violations cited during an inspection after October 1, 2010, and investigations ongoing after the 1st, will be subject to the more stringent, enforcement standards. Penalties will be assessed based upon the following factors: number of employees, corporate safety history, good faith efforts, and repeat violations. As the Information Bulletin explains, one of the more significant changes is that OSHA will look back at the company's safety and health record for the past 5 years, rather than the current 3 year standard. In addition, the agency will use a "gravity-based" approach penalty structure for serious citations that will range from \$3,000 to \$7,000.

OSHA Posting Reminder – February 1, 2011

Employers are responsible for posting their OSHA Form 300A, the summary of the illness and injuries in 2010, from February 1, 2011 until April 30, 2011. The Form 300A should be posted in a prominent spot accessible to all employees.

OSHA Interpretation on "Noise Standard"

Currently, OSHA regulates the acceptable levels of noise to which employees are exposed in the workplace. To protect employees against hearing loss, OSHA has allowed employers to provide "personal protective equipment" (PPE) such as ear plugs and ear muffs as well as engineering controls like noise-dampening equipment and muffling systems to effectively supplement their operating practices. This policy has been effectively followed by industry for decades. However, in a reinterpretation of the noise standard, OSHA is now looking to require employers to implement all "feasible" controls – with "feasible" meaning "capable of being done"– regardless of the cost or effectiveness of currently used PPE. Under this proposed interpretation, these changes would have to be adopted regardless of the costs unless an employer could prove that making such changes will "put them out of business" or severely threaten the company's "viability." Federal agency interpretations are not subject to the notice-and-comment requirements provided in the traditional rulemaking process, meaning OSHA not only is not required to solicit comments nor required to respond to them or incorporate them into its reinterpretation.

NLRB Employee Rights Proposal

In late December, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) proposed a rule that would require employers to post a notice in the workplace to inform employees of their rights under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Under the proposal, employers would face various sanctions for failing to post the notice. Those sanctions include: being charged with unfair labor practices; having the time limits for filing other unfair labor practice charges against the employer extended; and having the NLRB consider the failure to post the notice as evidence of unlawful motive in other unfair labor practice cases. The NLRB is accepting public comments on the proposal; National ABC will be submitting comments.

2011 Mileage Rate Increase

As of January 1, 2011, the IRS's optional standard mileage rate to use for computing the deductible costs of operating cars, vans, pickup trucks, or panel trucks for business will be 51 cents per mile. This is a 1 cent increase from the 2010 mileage rate.

Construction Unemployment Hits 20.7% in December 2010

"The construction sector is poised to underperform in the year ahead due to a number of factors, including dwindling direct impact from stimulus spending and the ongoing malaise in commercial real estate." —ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu.

Note: ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu, author of this article, will be coming to Connecticut to meet with CT ABC members later this winter. Watch for registration details.

Despite a slight drop in the nation's unemployment rate, the construction industry ended 2010 with a jobless rate of 20.7%, according to the January 7 report by the U.S. Labor Department. The construction industry lost 16,000 jobs last month and 93,000 jobs, or 1.6%, compared to December 2009. While the unemployment rate was up from 18.8% last November, it is down from 22.7% in December 2009. The average annual unemployment rate for the construction industry in 2010 was 20.6%. That compared to 19.0% in 2009 and 10.6% in 2008.

The nonresidential building construction sector lost 400 jobs in December, but was up by 5,700 jobs, or 0.8%, from the same time one year ago – the first year-over-year growth since August 2008. Employment in that sector was 688,300 in December on a seasonally adjusted basis. (See [Analysis](#) below)

Employment in heavy and civil engineering construction decreased for the second straight month, down 12,700 in December. However, employment in that sector was up by 18,100 jobs, or 2.3%, from December 2009. Specialty trade contractors gained 3,300 jobs last month, but the segment is down 79,000 jobs, or 2.2%, from the same time last year.

The residential building construction sector shed 5,900 jobs for the month and 37,000, or 6.2%, for the year.

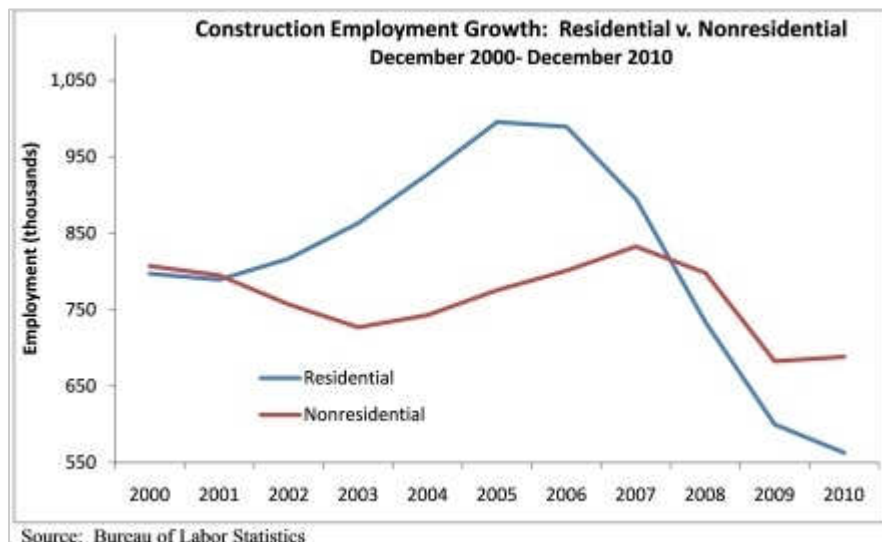
The nation gained 103,000 jobs in all industries in December with the bulk of job growth in leisure and hospital-ity, up 47,000 jobs; education and health services, up 44,000 jobs; and trade, transportation, and utilities, up 31,000 jobs. Year-over-year, the nation has gained 1,124,000 jobs, or 0.9%. The nation's unemployment rate dropped to 9.4% in December from 9.8% the previous month.

[Analysis](#)

"The nation's construction industry should be glad to see 2010 in the rearview mirror, as the sector ended the year on a dismal note," said Associated Builders and Contractors Chief Economist Anirban Basu. "It is noteworthy that heavy and civil engineering has lost jobs for two consecutive months, which may be a reflection of the steadily slowing impact of federal stimulus spending. For much of the past year, that segment had been adding jobs.

"The expectation is that the nation will continue to add jobs. However, the construction sector is poised to underperform in the year ahead due to a number of factors, including dwindling direct impact from stimulus spending and the ongoing malaise in commercial real estate," said Basu.

"With a national unemployment rate now at 9.4% – the lowest rate since May 2009 – this is an indication that the labor market is improving reasonably quickly," Basu said. "However, this does not seem to be the case with the construction industry as today's numbers may be a reflection of numerous factors in the economy including still subdued confidence among business owners and decision-makers."



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ABC Stickers Available

ABC members can start the new year off right and demonstrate their commitment to ABC's long-standing reputation for construction excellence and safety by branding their jobsites and company mailings with "ABC Member" logo stickers. These stickers are now available from www.abc.org.

The stickers come in a variety of sizes; ranging from 1-inch stickers, ideal for letters or envelopes, through 20-inch stickers which can be placed on large jobsite equipment, such as trucks, backhoes, cranes and mixers. Also available in 2-inch, 6-inch and 11-inch sizes, logo stickers can be placed on a wide range of construction equipment including hard hats, toolboxes, jobsite signs and small vehicles.

2011 EdCon & Expo

ABC members should get ready for education, technology and competition that will be offered during four days at the 2011 EdCon & Expo, April 12-15 in San Antonio. The program has expanded in 2011 to include interactive education sessions plus new events in a powerful Expo—uniting everything construction under one roof. During the EdCon & Expo, more than 30 educational sessions will provide innovative strategies for construction executives and specialty contractors, as well as practical methods for contractors to improve their project and business management practices. The program also includes sessions that address the interests of training and safety professionals, plus several industry general sessions for all attendees that highlight industry trends and emerging issues.

The expanded Expo will feature the National Craft Championships, showcasing the skills of craft professionals from around the country. The Expo also will host the team-based Student Chapter Construction Management Competition with students from colleges and universities across the nation vying for top honors. Attendees will be able to watch both competitions throughout the conference.

For more information about EdCon & Expo, including the schedule of events and conference highlights, visit www.abc.org.

Mastering Time Management in 2011

If you missed our recent “Lunch & Learn,” read on to get some tips and tricks on how to make 2011 the year that you master the art of effective time management. First, let’s put some assumptions right out on the table:

- ⇒ *Time is time*: You can’t make it, you can only manage it
- ⇒ Goals cannot be reached if you don’t know how to manage your time
- ⇒ Being decisive is **key** to effective time management

Knowing these things, here are some tips to making the most of the time you have to spend:

Saying “No”: How many of us say “yes” to requests without really considering the option of saying “no?” The answer is: too many of us. The next time you’re faced with a request, think about this: if you say “yes” but you’re really not invested in the task/project, you prevented the person who might have been a better fit from having that opportunity. And, you’ve now over-

burdened yourself and everything suffers. If you’re not the best person for that job, let the person who is say “yes.”

Setting the Right Goals and Reaching Them: There are some critical questions to getting you on the right “goal track.” What is it that you are looking to accomplish? Are you invested in the outcome? Are you the right person to accomplish this goal? Once you have answered these questions and have a goal in mind, make sure that it is specific (you know exactly what it is) and measurable (you’ll know when you’ve reached it). Provide yourself a constant reminder of your goal by posting it where you’ll see it every day. Track your progress with a journal or on a chart.

The 4 Ds of Time Management: When considering a task, ask yourself if any of the four Ds apply. Delegate (give it to someone who is a better fit for the job); Diminish (make the project smaller in scope); Delay (consider if letting it sit for a bit will make it obsolete); Delete (does it really need to be accomplished?). If you pause before you act and consider these options, you will work less but accomplish more.

(Continued on page 7)

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AT WORK FOR YOU!

(Continued from page 6)

TOP SECRET: Multi-tasking does NOT work. In order to achieve maximum results with least amount of effort and time, you must FOCUS. Fewer distractions lead to better productivity. Immerse yourself in the present, trusting that you have scheduled time to address other things that might come to mind. Keep a notepad handy so that you can write down anything that comes to mind (“remember to do such & such”) and know that you’ll do that after you’re done. Then, let it go out of your mind so you can focus on the task at hand. Group “like” tasks so you can focus on one type of activity at a time.

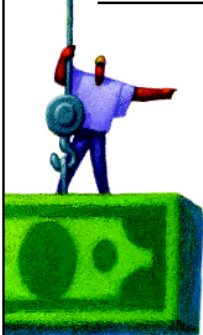
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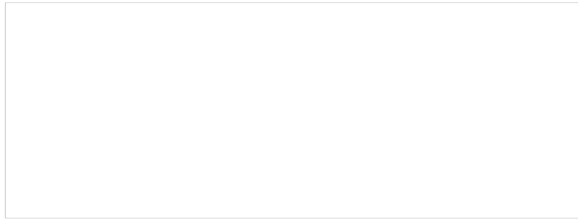
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Upcoming Events



February 2011

- 16**
Board of Directors meeting
- 17**
Smart Start Breakfast:
Advanced Conceptual Estimating

March 2011

- 1**
Trenching & Excavation
- 9**
Business Day at the Capital
- 10**
After Hours, Savin Rock Roasters,
Stratford
- 16**
Board of Directors meeting
- 24**
Grand Prix- OnKart Racing, Wallingford
- 29**
Smart Start Breakfast:
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