

CCIA HIGHLIGHTS *of the week*

A weekly information bulletin for members of the Connecticut Construction Industries Association

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PLEASE DONATE OR JOIN TEAM CCIA as it Steps Out For The Brave Virtual Challenge benefitting Homes for the Brave in Bridgeport. We had to postpone our traditional luncheon fundraiser to support our veterans, but that hasn't stopped us! All CCIA members and industry partners are invited to join or donate to TEAM CCIA as it "steps out" for Homes for the Brave. You may participate individually, start a team, or join us or donate at the [TEAM CCIA website](#); learn more at [Homes for the Brave](#); and follow this [link](#) for CCIA Home for the Brave Announcement Flyer. There is still time to participate. The challenge begins August 8th!

GOVERNOR LAMONT SIGNED [Executive Order No. 7JJJ](#) last Friday creating a presumption that workers who became infected with COVID-19 between March 10, 2020 and May 20, 2020 contracted it on the job and are eligible for workers compensation benefits, according to an [article](#) in *CT Mirror*. The President of the AFL-CIO, Sal Luciano, said he was grateful for the order but signaled that the fight may not be over, saying he'd like to revisit the issue in a future special session of the legislature to ensure that the workers compensation presumption order applies to every essential worker regardless of the period time in which the employee contracted COVID-19. Employers' organizations, including CCIA, have consistently opposed making workers' compensation claims on COVID-19 presumptive.

THE CONNECTICUT BUSINESS COMMUNITY reacted with concern in the wake of Governor Lamont's workers compensation executive order this week. Prior to the order, CCIA President Don Shubert sent a [letter](#) to the governor conveying the association's concerns that, in part, such an order "would be putting construction employers in the untenable position of proving their employees did not contract the virus at work." CBIA President Joe Brennan said in a [statement](#) that, "We appreciate that the Governor's order is limited to a specific time frame and to employees who could not work remotely. However, this cannot set a precedent for future presumptions and the further expansion of a workers' compensation system that has worked well."

OZ GRIEBEL WILL BE REMEMBERED for his many civic contributions and endeavors, including his service as chair of the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board from 2001 to 2005, which oversaw multi-modal transportation policy for the state. But perhaps his most lasting legacy will be his reputation for advocating for good government and common-sense policy over partisanship, and his ability to navigate that ever-elusive political middle ground. Griebel died earlier this week from complications related to a car crash in Pennsylvania.

THE STATE'S RAINY DAY FUND, which stood at \$2.5 b. before the pandemic struck, now approaches \$2.8 b., according to an ongoing review of state tax returns filed after July 15, *CT Mirror* [reported](#) this week. And while the legislature's Office of Fiscal Analysis still expects

Connecticut to exhaust most reserves over the next 11 months, they now project the state will maintain a modest, \$250 m. cushion one year from now. That's a far cry from two months ago, when Gov. Lamont warned the state might be broke by mid-2021 and potentially saddled with \$500 m. in operating debt. How has state government gotten richer since the pandemic began? "That's a fair question," said Rep. Jason Rojas, co-chair of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. "I think it's a matter of us having a conversation" with the governor's budget office.

GOVERNOR LAMONT this week [announced](#) the launch of [business.ct.gov](#), an online, one-stop-shop where entrepreneurs can easily find information and quickly create a checklist with everything required to start up or manage their business in Connecticut. The portal aims to prevent businesses from needing to navigate the sometimes complex nature of state government by merging many of their common needs into one simplified location online. When completing transactions through the portal, users will be interacting with several state agencies all in one seamless interaction, allowing them to get their work done quicker.

GOVERNOR LAMONT'S RECENT reference to the town of Winchester as being among the communities receiving state money for school projects created confusion after local officials learned the town's \$17 m. renovation of the Mary P. Hinsdale School was not approved for funding, according to an [article](#) in the *Stamford Advocate*. The Hinsdale school project is the only one under way in the town and officials will be seeking state money to help pay the cost. The State Bond Commission approved \$200 m. for school construction projects last week and while the town of Winchester was noted by Lamont at the start of the meeting as among those included for state funding, it was not in fact part of the 2019 package, two officials said.

IN AN AGC OF AMERICA [analysis](#) of construction employment by metro areas across the United States from June 2019 to June 2020, the only area in Connecticut that registered positive construction employment numbers was the Norwich-New London-Westerly (RI) area. Construction employment there increased by 100 jobs, from 4,000 to 4,100 (a 3 percent increase). All other areas in Connecticut lost construction jobs over the year, with the Bridgeport-

Stamford-Norwalk metro area losing the most. Construction employment in that area decreased from 13,600 to 12,200, a 1,400-construction job loss for a decrease of 10 percent. Statewide, construction employment dropped from a total of 62,200 to 59,500, or -4 percent.

BUILDING AND LAND TECHNOLOGY (BLT) announced this week that it is proposing to develop as much as one million square feet of new buildings on the fourteen-acre peninsula it owns in Stamford's South End, according to an [article](#) in *CT Post*. Potential developments could include a life sciences center, a corporate headquarters or a multipurpose hub with medical research buildings, apartments, a hotel and an e-sports arena, according to renderings posted on a website for the project. The site was originally intended as the headquarters for hedge fund giant Bridgewater Associates, but the project was abandoned in 2014 due to controversy over state subsidies.

CONNDOT BID RESULTS, of July 29: [Proposal 0005-0114](#), Intersection Safety Improvements at Route 318 and Route 219 (Barkhamsted): Richards Corporation: \$2,273,707.00; Guerrera Construction Company Inc.: \$2,310,459.60; Mather Corp.: \$2,466,666.00. [Proposal No. 0122-0103](#), Replacement of Bridge No. 02929 – Route 80 over Deep River (Deep River): Brunalli Construction Company: \$2,197,626.00; Guerrera Construction Company Inc.: \$2,205,003.50; Empire Paving Inc.: \$2,211,346.70.

AGC OF AMERICA CEO Steve Sandherr issued a statement in support of several provisions in the Senate Republicans' so-called HEALS Act, according to a [press release](#). Sandherr said, "Senate Republicans have crafted a relief measure that includes a number of vital provisions that will allow hard-hit construction firms to begin rebuilding their businesses and payrolls. Among the most promising of these provisions are liability reforms so construction firms that are protecting workers from the coronavirus will not be subjected to needless litigation. The proposal also includes important improvements to the Paycheck Protection Program and a much-needed expansion of the Employee Retention Tax Credit, both of which will help protect construction jobs." NSSGA has compiled this [overview](#) of the HEALS Act and key takeaways.

CONGRESS IS STILL TRYING to tie up a loose end from the first COVID-relief law in March that could, if left unsettled, end up costing small businesses \$120 b. in taxes, according to an [article](#) in the *Wall Street Journal*. Lawmakers from both parties say small businesses that get loans forgiven under the Paycheck Protection Program should be able to deduct associated expenses, such as wages, on their tax returns. Despite that consensus, Senate Republicans' HEALS Act omitted the provision. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin objected to including language that would allow the deductions, according to a Republican aide familiar with the discussions.

MORE THAN EIGHTY PERCENT of small-business owners who received coronavirus relief loans through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) say they will run out of funding by the first week of August, according to a Goldman

Sachs [survey](#) released last week, as [reported](#) by *The Hill*. In a survey of 1,511 small business owners conducted from July 7 to 8 by Babson College and David Binder Research, 84 percent of respondents said they would exhaust their PPP funding by the end of the month. Only 16 percent said they would be able to continue paying workers beyond that point.

THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY Administration (TSA), through a [federal rule](#) that is being issued today, is extending an exemption that will allow states to recognize the validity of expired hazardous material endorsements (HMEs) through Oct. 29, 2020. The original TSA exemption was issued in April and is set to expire today, July 31st. Many drivers are still unable to renew their HME due to state motor vehicle licensing agency closures, shortened hours of operation, or appointment-only processing.

ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION COSTS fell in July, according to [IHS Markit and the Procurement Executives Group \(PEG\)](#). The current IHS Markit PEG Engineering and Construction Cost Index registered 43.4 in July, falling from an almost neutral mark in June. The materials and equipment portion of the index came in at 44.8, still indicating falling prices, while the subcontractor portion came in at 40.2, reversing from rising costs last month. Labor prices moved back into negative territory after briefly jumping above the neutral mark of 50 in June, with the sub-index for current subcontractor labor registering 40.2 in July. Labor costs fell in every region of the United States and Canada.

THE ROLES OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGER and its various spin-offs such as Construction Manager as Constructor, Construction Manager as Advisor, and Construction Manager/General Contractor are explored in this recent [article](#) in *Construction Dive*. Determining which method is the best one for a project requires owners, contractors, and construction managers to understand their differences and be on the same page on what is required with each type. Often, the article states, all parties are not on the same page.

THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT (MDC) is hosting a Small Contractor Development Seminar, called Open for Business – COVID19 Relief Workforce Development Strategies, on Wed. Aug. 5, at 12:15 to 1:00 pm. Topics include: America's Job Center's On-The-Job Training Grants, the CT DOL Federal New Hire Employee Bonding Program and Small Business low fee employee background check programs. To register, access the announcement [here](#).

FROM THE INTERNET: On July 31, U.S. President Harry Truman helped dedicate New York International Airport (later John F. Kennedy International Airport) Airport at Idlewild Field. The Statue of Liberty is made out of copper. When it was originally built, it looked like a shiny new penny. Eighty-five percent of the water that the people of San Francisco drink and bathe in is pure snow-melt from Yosemite National Park.