

CCIA HIGHLIGHTS *of the week*

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

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GOVERNOR MALLOY highlighted needed improvements to the Heroes Tunnel on Route 15 in New Haven as he advocated for the transportation lockbox during a press conference this week at ConnDOT's District 3 Maintenance Facility, according to an [article](#) in the *New Haven Register*. The governor said the lockbox is the only guarantee that transportation funds will be set aside and protected for future use. Over the years, lawmakers have diverted millions of transportation funds for other uses, even as the state's roads and bridges continue to deteriorate and revenue from the gas tax continues to drop. CCIA President Don Shubert said the lockbox is important and urged voters to support it in 2018. Video coverage of the press conference may be found at this [link](#).

STOP THE TRANSPORTATION CUTS! Click on the following [link](#) to CCIA's Action Center and tell your legislator to Vote NO on the House Democrats' budget. The General Assembly is expected to convene a Special Session on July 18 to take up a budget. Under the latest Democrat budget, Connecticut will be forced to shut down transportation projects and cut transit service. Tell your legislator to stop the transportation cuts. It takes 2 minutes to make your voice heard.

CONNECTICUT WILL BE SPENDING more on highways and less on buses and trains due to cuts in federal aid for transit funding based on a draft of ConnDOT's four-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), according to an [article](#) in the *Hartford Courant*. Among the 280 major transportation projects listed in the [STIP](#) are several large highway and bridge projects between now and 2021, including repairs to the Mixmaster interchange in Waterbury, overhaul of the Gold Star Bridge between New London and Groton, and a redesign of Route 9 in Middletown. More than \$1 b. is planned for upgrading Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Line tracks, and replacing part of the CT Transit bus fleet.

CONNDOT HAS BEEN ABLE to trim three months from the construction schedule for the new West River replacement bridge along I-95, which connects New Haven and West Haven, according to an [announcement](#) from Gov. Malloy's office. An example of an innovative methodology utilized by the contractor included the use of self-propelled modular transporters (SPMT) for the demolition of the existing bridge superstructure. Large sections of deck, parapet, and steel girders were removed and transported utilizing the SPMT transport units. Originally scheduled to take 60 days of night time lane closures, it was completed in only 10 nights.

EVERSOURCE AND NATIONAL GRID, two of the largest utilities in New England, have dropped efforts to secure federal permit approval for a proposed \$3.2 b. natural gas pipeline project from Massachusetts and Rhode Island into Connecticut because of serious financial issues, according to an [article](#) in the *Hartford Courant*.

Connecticut energy officials last October canceled the state's plans for any major natural gas pipelines after court and administrative rulings in Massachusetts and New Hampshire that electricity ratepayers in those states shouldn't be charged to pay for multi-billion-dollar pipeline projects.

THE LONG-AWAITED RENOVATION of the State Office Building in Hartford could serve as a catalyst for bringing back a neighborhood where one hasn't existed in decades, [according](#) to the *Hartford Courant*. As demolition gets underway in the office building this month, planners are thinking how the area's parking lots could be transformed into a neighborhood of residences, shops, and restaurants anchored by the Bushnell Center for Performing Arts. The overall development is likely to cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and financing would be a combination of private investment and public subsidy. The timetable for construction could stretch out five or more years.

THE OPERATOR OF THE NEW CT Trail Hartford Line has been selected but ConnDOT is waiting for a contract to be finalized before Gov. Malloy makes a formal announcement, according to an [article](#) in the *Record Journal*. John Bernick, DOT's assistant rail administrator, said the Wallingford train station should be finished this month, followed by the Meriden train station in mid-August. Double tracking the rail line from New Haven to Springfield is complete to the Berlin line, according to Bernick. The remaining track work to Newington and under Route 9 will continue to I-84 in Hartford, where decisions about redesigning the highway will determine track placement.

EXCAVATION HAS BEGUN on the site of the future SoNo Collection in Norwalk, [according](#) to *The Hour*. As the work continues, the Chicago-based developer, General Growth Properties (GGP), is preparing to lay the concrete foundations and begin building the regional shopping center. The approved site plan for The SoNo Collection calls for 728,000 square feet of retail space, including anchor stores Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's, as well as 80 to 100 smaller retailers and public realm space.

FACING OTHER PRIORITIES, Congress may push off work on President Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure package to 2018, according to Sen. John Thune (R-SD), chair of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, covered in an [article](#) in *The Hill* this week. The White House has yet to unveil formal legislative text for its massive rebuilding proposal. Thune told reporters, "We're sort of waiting on the administration to tell us what it is exactly they want to do." Before Congress can move on an infrastructure package, they need to tackle healthcare and tax reform.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH the Institute for New Economic Thinking, Jim Chanos of Kynikos Associates, known for his financial prescience, [believes](#) the public-private partnership model of funding infrastructure projects will only make sense for a small number of projects. He asserts, "You're not going to get private investors to sign up for those (P3's) without definable cash flows. It's something that sounds good but when we actually start looking at projects that make sense for private investors leveraged up with state-backed or federally-backed bonds to do a project, we're going to find that winnows down the list dramatically."

CONNDOT BID RESULTS for July 5, 2017: No bids were published this week.

BALFOUR BEATTY PREDICTS that construction sites will be human-free by 2050, with remote-controlled machines taking up existing labor tasks, while new materials and techniques will be used to improve safety and efficiency, while simultaneously reducing costs, according to an [article](#) in *ME Construction News*. The firm says that technology has already changed contemporary life extensively, so it feels confident that its predictions will come to fruition. The international infrastructure firm also expects new roles and requirements to emerge, and says new skills will be needed to support the pipeline of construction projects.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LAWYERS told a federal appeals court June 30 that the U.S. DOL plans to revise its pending Obama era overtime rule, according to an [article](#) in *Bloomberg BNA*. They also asked the court to affirm the DOL's right to use salary levels to determine overtime eligibility in the future. The pending [rule](#), which was a centerpiece of the Obama administration's labor agenda would have doubled the salary threshold to \$47,000 per year under which workers are automatically eligible.

FEDERAL RULES THAT ALLOWED states to establish retirement plans for private-sector employees are officially off the books. The U.S. DOL recently [revoked](#) rules that changed the definition of an employee pension benefit plan under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. The rules allowed states and cities to require small businesses that

don't provide retirement plans to automatically enroll their workers in the programs. Congress put a stop to these rules with two joint resolutions that ultimately killed the rules.

TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, Roman builders constructed vast sea walls and harbor piers using concrete that outlasted the empire, according to an [article](#) in *The Washington Post*. The long-lasting concrete holds lessons for modern engineers, scientists say. Concrete structures under water off the Italian coast are a mixture of volcanic ash and quicklime and has withstood the sea for two millennia and counting. What's more, it's stronger than when it was first mixed. By contrast, modern concrete exposed to saltwater corrodes within decades. Modern seawalls built to protect from coastal flooding require steel reinforcements; however, the Romans' reactive concrete was strong enough on its own.

OSHA ANNOUNCED A [proposed rule](#) on June 23 that would modify the agency's recent beryllium standards for the construction and shipyard sectors. The proposal would maintain the requirements for exposure limits and revoke the application of ancillary provisions such as housekeeping and personal protective equipment in the January 2017 final standards for the construction and shipyard industries. For information on submitting comments on the proposed rule and requesting public hearings, see the [news release](#).

OSHA IS PROPOSING TO DELAY the 2017 compliance date for electronic submissions of injury and illness logs from July 1 to Dec. 1. The five-month delay will allow the agency to further review the [final rule to Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses](#). Read the [news release](#) for information on submitting comments on the proposed deadline extension which are due July 13.

CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT increased in 245 out of 358 metro areas between May 2016 and May 2017, declined in 59, and remained the same in 54, according to a [report](#) by the AGC of America. In [Connecticut](#), all metro areas saw an increase in hires, except for Waterbury, where job numbers stayed the same. Jobs grew by 2,400 state-wide year over year. There was a 5 percent increase in the New Haven area, and a 10 percent increase in the Norwich-New London CT through Westerly RI area.

FLIERS INCLUDED IN *HIGHLIGHTS*, 7/7/17: 1) [CCIA July Calendar](#); 2) [YCF Golf Tournament](#), 7/17; 3) [2017 CCPC Annual Summer Picnic](#), 8/10

FROM THE INTERNET: On July 7, 1994, Amazon.com, Inc. was founded in Seattle under the name, "Cadabra." The first paved streets were laid in Rome in 170 B.C. Vincent Van Gogh sold exactly one painting while he was alive, Red Vineyard at Arles. The silhouette on the NBA logo is Jerry West. The most common Spanish surname is Garcia.