

# CCIA HIGHLIGHTS *of the week*

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

Phone: 860-529-6855

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**CCIA PRESIDENT** Don Shubert was [interviewed](#) by reporter Keith Phaneuf of *CT Mirror* this week and, in the discussion, covered a broad spectrum of transportation topics such as Gov. Malloy's stalled \$100 b. transportation rebuilding program, a Special Transportation Fund headed for insolvency, the sticky question of tolls on state highways, and the risk of squandering federal transportation dollars in years to come. Addressing the issue of tolls, he said, "When you look at transportation, the state needs a new revenue source, either an astronomical increase in the gas tax, or some new revenue source, and tolls are a very viable option."

**THE STATE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION** Fund is expected to run an operating deficit of \$47.1 m., according to a monthly budget [report](#) from Office of Policy and Management Secretary Ben Barnes. Anticipated revenues have been revised downward from last month's forecast by \$13.3 m., as the various funding sources that comprise the STF continue to underperform their target. The report says the fund balance on June 30, 2017 is expected to be \$95.7 m., which is a 37 percent reduction in the fund balance since the year began and "underscores the Governor's call to provide increase stability and support for this fund in the upcoming biennium and beyond." Barnes also reported that the State General Fund is expected to end the 2017 fiscal year with a \$107.2 m. shortfall, which will be closed with money from the Rainy Day Fund.

**CONNDOT HAS PLANS** to renovate I-95 in Greenwich in 2021 after determining the concrete underpinning of the road and its bridges is nearing the end of its serviceable life, according to an [article](#) in the *Stamford Advocate*. The project, estimated at \$158 m., would include resurfacing, bridge rehabilitation, a new median barrier, drainage improvements and new lights in both directions, among other improvements. The project's design is set to be completed in the fall of 2020. Several hurdles are left to clear, including acceptance of the project by the state's bonding commission and the Federal Highway Administration.

**TWO VACANT, DECAYING** office buildings in downtown Hartford are being converted into apartments giving a lift to a key corner across from the city's signature CityPlace office complex, according to an [article](#) in the *Hartford Courant*. The New York firms of Girona Ventures and Wonder Works Construction and Development Corp. will redevelop the buildings at 95-101 and 111 Pearl St. into 258 studios, one- and two-bedroom apartments in a \$51 m. project. The redevelopment is part of a four-year wave of apartment conversions in and around downtown adding hundreds of apartments to help boost vibrancy beyond the traditional work week.

**A NEW PARTNERSHIP** between the CT Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Correction (DOC) will create a new OSHA 10 training class to those in DOC

custody who are nearing the end of their sentences and preparing to seek employment, according to a [press release](#) from Gov. Malloy's office. The federally-approved course is a new initiative aiming to increase the education and skills of those leaving incarceration. The course will be held over the course of five weeks in two-hour segments. Successful participants will receive a course completion card from the federal OSHA Region 1 Training Institute Education Center.

**THE ARCHITECTURE BILLINGS** Index (ABI) recorded the fourth consecutive month of growth, reflecting an increase in design services in the approximate nine to twelve month lead time between architecture billings and construction spending. The AIA [reports](#) the May ABI score was 53.0, up from a score of 50.9 in the previous month. Any ABI score above 50 indicates an increase in billings. But while the national ABI reflected positive news, the Northeast Regional ABI average was a not-so-favorable score of 46.5, which would reflect a decrease in billings for our region.

**THE WHITE HOUSE** believes foreign investment will be key to fulfilling President Trump's promise to upgrade U.S. roads, bridges, airports, and other public works, according to a [report](#) in *The Hill*. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the success of President Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure package, expected to rely heavily on the private sector, will likely depend on help from foreign investors. A number of foreign investors, including in Australia, Canada, Europe and the Middle East, already invest in U.S. infrastructure, and Trump's infrastructure proposal will try to encourage even more private-sector involvement through various incentives. The administration hopes to spend \$200 b. to leverage \$1 trillion worth of overall investment.

**PRESIDENT TRUMP'S PROPOSED** budget for the U.S. DOT is running into bipartisan resistance, *The Hill* [reports](#). During a hearing last week, House appropriators expressed concern over the administration's proposed cuts to a number of popular transportation programs, as well as Trump's support for a controversial plan to separate air traffic control from the federal government. Trump's budget would cut the department's discretionary budget by

nearly 13 percent to \$16.2 b. U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, R-FL and chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, said that air traffic control should remain as a system that is accountable to the public.

**THE \$68 MILLION REVIVAL** of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School in Hartford is back on track after the city board of education endorsed new plans that will be sent to the state for approval, [according](#) to the *Hartford Courant*. After working with the state for weeks on the proposal, Superintendent Leslie Torres-Rodriguez expressed confidence that the King school will finally be renovated after years of unmet promises. The project would take about three years to finish, including a year of planning, and costs would likely exceed the original \$68 m. price tag.

**AGC OF AMERICA** this week joined 113 other national trade associations, including the National Stone, Sand, and Gravel Association, in calling for members of Congress to support H.R. 2101, the [Prior Approval Reform Act](#), introduced by U.S. Rep. Mark Armodei (R-NV). The bill would repeal the Federal Election Campaign Act's "prior approval" requirement for corporate member trade association political action committees (PAC's). In sum, this requirement discriminates against these associations by making their PAC's the only political committees that must first obtain exclusive permission from member corporations before soliciting eligible employees for support.

**CONNDOT BID RESULTS** for June 21, 2017: No bid results were published this week.

**FORTY-FOUR PERCENT** of highway contractors reported that motor vehicles had crashed into their construction work zones during the past year, according to the results of a [new highway work zone study](#) conducted by the AGC of America. As a result, association officials launched a new national advertising and outreach campaign to urge motorists to stay alert and slow down while driving through highway work zones. AGC CEO Steve Sandherr noted that the campaign will feature [new radio ads](#) that will air in dozens of cities around the country that caution drivers to be careful in highway work zones. The ads warn drivers that speeding, texting and losing focus while in work zones aren't worth the "nightmare" of killing workers, drivers or passengers.

**COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION** is in high demand across the country and contractors are confident in the trajectory of the industry, according to the [USG + U.S. Chamber of Commerce Commercial Construction Index](#), launched last week. Nearly all contractors surveyed, 96 percent, expect revenues to grow or remain stable this year compared to 2016, with 40 percent expecting an increase and only 3 percent expecting a decrease in revenue. The report looks at the results of three leading indicators, backlog levels, new business opportunities, and revenue forecasts, to generate a composite index on a scale of 0-100 that serves as an indicator of health for the contractor segment on a quarterly basis. The Q2 2017 composite index score was 76, representing continued health in the sector.

**U.S. TRANSPORTATION** Secretary Elaine Chao last week told members of the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee that the Trump Administration's budget "challenges all of us to rethink the way we are setting our priorities," according to a [report](#) in ARTBA's *Washington Newsline*. While Chao touted the budget's support for the FAST Act in FY 2018, she did not discuss the administration's proposal to hold highway and transit investment at FY 2018 levels in FY 2019 and FY 2020, an approach that would forgo nearly \$4 b. in FAST Act authorized and funded surface transportation investments.

**THE U.S. DOL LAST WEEK** [published](#) a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to rescind the Persuader Rule, which requires employers and labor-management consultants to report consultants' indirect contact with workers during union organizing campaigns. The rule regulates the practice by employers of hiring labor relations consultants to develop and implement their message during union organizing campaigns. The rule requires that employers and the consultants they hire file reports not only for direct persuader activities, consultants talking directly to workers, but also for indirect persuader activities, such as consultants scripting what managers and supervisors say to workers.

**OSHA IS SEEKING TO DELAY** by a year its new certification requirements for construction crane operators, which are currently set to go into effect on Nov. 10, 2017, according to a [recent Federal Register notice](#). Before it can officially delay the rules, however, OSHA must consult with the Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health (ACCSH).

**THE YOUNG CONTRACTORS FORUM** will hold its 2017 Charity Golf Outing, July 17, 2017, 2:30 pm, at Lyman Orchards, 70 Lyman Road, Middlefield. The event features nine holes of golf on the Robert Trent Jones Course, plus reception and dinner. Sponsorships are available and foursomes are limited so reserve yours today. For details, download the attached event [flyer](#).

**2017 ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC** of the Connecticut Concrete Promotion Council will include all-you-can-eat and drink including pizza, wings, salad, ice cream sundae bar, beer, plus mini-golf. Join us on Thurs., Aug. 10<sup>th</sup> at the Odetah Camping Resort, Bozrah, CT, beginning at 5:00 pm. The cost is \$65 per person or \$450 for a table of 8. [Register](#) or sponsor by Aug. 4<sup>th</sup>.

**FLIERS INCLUDED IN HIGHLIGHTS**, 6/23/17: 1) [YCF Golf Tournament](#), 7/17; 2) 2017 [CCPC Annual Summer Picnic](#), 8/10.

**FROM THE INTERNET:** On this day, June 23, 1972, U.S. President Nixon and White House chief of staff H.R. Haldeman discussed a plan to use the CIA to obstruct the FBI's Watergate investigation. People all over the world are walking 10 percent faster than they did a decade ago. Thirty thousand websites are hacked every day.