

# CCIA HIGHLIGHTS *of the week*

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

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November 3, 2017

**CCIA WELCOMES NEW MEMBER:** The Euclid Chemical Company, a provider of specialty concrete chemicals and building materials, is now a CCIA Associate Member, part of the CRMCA division. Contact: Scott Dicine, District Sales Manager; email: [SDicine@euclidchemical.com](mailto:SDicine@euclidchemical.com); Phone: 203-258-1312; website: <http://www.euclidchemical.com>.

**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT** in Connecticut fell sharply in September for the fourth straight month. The CT DOL [posted](#) on its website that there were 1,500 fewer construction workers in September than there were in August (56,200 vs. 57,700, a 2.6 percent drop). Construction employment on a year-to-year basis, is down by -4.3 percent overall as there were 58,700 construction jobs in September 2016 compared to 56,200 in September 2017. According to a [listing](#) of all states by AGC of America, Connecticut ranked 48th among all 50 states in both a 1-month construction employment gain or loss basis and 49<sup>th</sup> on a year-to-year comparison.

**CCIA PRESIDENT DON SHUBERT** told [Hearst Connecticut Media](#) this week it is unusual to see construction employment numbers drop in the prime of building season, and that the data could point to “underlying problems in the Connecticut economy.” While the mild temperatures of much of last winter may have affected the summer employment numbers by allowing builders to get started on projects earlier, Shubert said that would not be the only reason for a decline. He added that a shifting pipeline of intermittent work creates additional problems for contractors, forcing them to cut back staff only to retrain people as work picks back up. Entering November, Shubert expressed worries there may be fewer people being brought on in 2018, given the current outlook. “Right now, the industry has plenty of (labor) capacity,” Shubert said. “Some contractors are wondering what they are going to be doing next year.”

**S&P GLOBAL RATINGS** warned last week that municipalities will still struggle to get affordable credit in spite of approval of a bipartisan state budget, according to an [article](#) in *CT Mirror*. The Wall Street credit rating agency wrote in a report, “We note that virtually all local governments will see some reductions to state aid, while only a few – typically those with the greatest economic challenges – will see flat year-over-year state aid... In the end, if state fiscal pressures persist, all local governments in Connecticut will continue to be affected, and the degree of credit deterioration will depend on each government’s level [of] budgetary reserves and ability to adapt.”

**U.S. REP. JOHN LARSON** this week formally introduced the American Wins Act, a bill to invest \$1 trillion in the nation’s infrastructure over 10 years, according to a [press release](#). Larson first unveiled this legislation in August at

an event held with transportation stakeholders, including CCIA, in East Hartford. To pay for the investment, the bill would establish an upstream tax on the carbon content of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas. All of the revenue raised would be placed in a federal trust fund to be used solely for investing in the nation’s infrastructure, provide a consumer tax rebate, and provide dedicated funding to assist those in carbon-intensive industries such as coal workers.

**CONNECTICUT’S LARGE AND** small businesses are bracing for higher health insurance premiums in 2018, [according](#) to *CT Mirror*. According to United Benefits Advisors, an employee benefit consulting company that tracks more than 20,000 employer health plans, Connecticut had the highest employer plan premium increase of any state last year, an average of 24 percent or about \$655 per policy, largely because of rising medical costs. The trend toward more expensive plans will continue this year as all of Connecticut’s insurers have asked for, and most have been approved for, rate hikes for business coverage.

**FIVE OPTIONS FOR A NEW** train station in Hartford that would be built as part of the I-84 reconstruction project are in contention to replace the 128-year-old Union Station, the *Hartford Courant* [reports](#). All five are located on Asylum Hill, with three options north of Asylum Avenue to the west of the existing highway overpass and two to the south, on the corner of Broad Street and Farmington Avenue. The overall project will require the acquisition and demolition of existing buildings in the area, including an apartment tower.

**THE SECOND STAGE** of an ongoing green infrastructure project began at Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo last month, designed to filter stormwater before it reaches the nearby Pequonnock River, and ultimately, Long Island Sound, according to an [article](#) in the *Stratford Star*. Two new rain gardens and more permeable pavers in the parking lot will allow stormwater to migrate through the soil and be biologically treated, preventing rainwater runoff from washing harmful pollutants into the river.

**REALTOR.COM RECENTLY** analyzed 150 of America’s largest metro areas to determine the best and worst infrastructures, and New Haven came in 9th on the list of the 10 worst cities for infrastructure, according to an

[article](#) in the *New Haven Register*. “Cities that keep up with infrastructure needs are a big step ahead in attracting home buyers,” says Scott Muldavin, chair of the Counselors of Real Estate. The home buyers, he says, “want short commutes, transit options, and quality roads. Time is money, and being near good infrastructure improves home value.”

**A NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT** in downtown Stamford will provide affordable housing for 125 people who earn less than a third of the area’s median income, the *Stamford Advocate* [reports](#). Inspirica, the largest provider of homeless services in lower Fairfield County, said its new venture provides housing without government subsidies used for construction or rent, helping to keep costs low and the project self-sustaining. The project was funded by private donors.

**CONNDOT BID RESULTS** for November 1, 2017: [Proposal No. 0102-0356](#), Rehabilitation of Bridge No. 00722 on West Rocks Road over Route 15 (Norwalk): New England Road, Inc.: \$4,117,827.00; New England Infrastructure, Inc.: \$5,940,420.30.

**A RECENT CENTERS FOR** Disease Control and Prevention [report](#) found that across all industries, construction has the second-highest suicide rate and highest total number of suicides. According to [Construction Dive](#), the CDC report was a first-of-its-kind study that separated suicides by industry. It examined 2012 data of 12,312 suicides reported in 17 states and found that the industry with the highest rate of suicide was farming, fishing, and forestry, followed by construction and extraction. By raw numbers, construction and extraction topped the list with 1,324 suicides.

**THE MOVE AMERICA ACT**, bipartisan legislation introduced in the House and Senate (H.R. 3912 and S. 1229), aims to enhance America’s infrastructure by strengthening public-private partnerships, according to a [press release](#) from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). The Move America Act would expand tax-exempt private activity bonds, develop an infrastructure tax credit and, through private-public partnerships, support infrastructure project funding. Project costs would be lowered and provide state and local governments the required flexibility to finance needed infrastructure projects.

**ADVANCED CONSTRUCTION ROBOTICS** Inc.’s first product circumventing the construction industry’s labor shortage is market-ready: Tybot, a rebar-tying robot, performs work across a frame that can expand 140 ft., [according](#) to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. A robotic arm ties the rebar together where they intersect, and only one worker is needed to supervise the process. The company says Tybot could cut the labor hours required for such projects by half.

**U.S. SEN. JOHN THUNE** (R-SD), chairman of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee said he is open to raising the federal gasoline tax to pay for infrastructure improvements, an idea currently being considered by the White House. An industry source [told The Hill](#) that the administration is considering a seven-cent increase, though it’s unclear if the proposal would be included in the initial infrastructure legislation or if the administration will push to have it added at the committee level. Such an increase would be the first hike in the federal gasoline tax in over 20 years.

**REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES** for the 2018 Republican gubernatorial nomination will participate in a CCIA-co-sponsored Transportation Forum on Fri., Dec. 15, 2017 at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville. This will be an opportunity for members of the public to meet and hear from candidates for governor as they discuss their views on transportation and other related issues. CCIA will also co-sponsor a Transportation Forum with Democratic candidates for governor on Jan. 19, 2018. To register for the Republican Transportation Forum, please send in this [registration form](#), or send an email to [John Wilhelm](#) at the CCIA office.

**CCIA IS HOSTING** the OSHA-30 Hour course in January 2018, with full-day classes scheduled on Jan. 4, 11, 18, and 25. The location of the course will be at the Qualidigm Conference Center, Suite 106, 912 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield (in the same building as CCIA). Presenters for this special program are safety professionals employed by CCIA-member construction companies, OSHA, and safety consulting firms. For a copy of the registration form, please click [here](#).

**THE CCIA SAFETY ROUNDTABLE** discussion, [Silicosis, OSHA, and What the New Silica Standard Means for Construction](#), presented by Dr. Jeffrey Altholz, Clarity Testing Services, is scheduled for Tues., Nov. 14, 2017, at noon at CCIA, 912 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

**SAVE THE DATE** and Call For Sponsors: The CCIA Annual Meeting and Holiday Reception is scheduled for Wed., Dec. 6, 2017, at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville. We invite you to make an impression and become an event sponsor. Registration details and other sponsorship opportunities will be announced shortly. Contact [Jean Barlage](#) with questions.

**FLIERS INCLUDED IN HIGHLIGHTS**, 11/3/17: 1) [CCIA November Calendar](#); 2) [CRBA Annual Fall Dinner, 11/8](#); 3) [Safety Roundtable, 11/14](#); 4) [2018 AGC/CT Build CT Award Application](#)

**FROM THE INTERNET:** On November 3, 1911, the Chevrolet Motor Car Company was co-founded by Louis Chevrolet and William C. Durant. Dueling is legal in Paraguay, as long as both parties are registered as blood donors. The average person spends about 2 years on the phone in a lifetime.