

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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U.S. REP. JOHN LARSON was among a group of members of the House Ways and Means Committee who met with President Trump this week to discuss tax reform, and during the meeting, Larson said he raised the prospect of building a tunnel system to carry I-84 and I-91 underground through Hartford, according to this [story](#) in the *Hartford Courant*. "I spoke with the president about a robust infrastructure package citing the conditions of the Hartford and East Hartford levees and the need to replace the I-84/I-91 interchange in Hartford with a tunnel system, which would ease congestion and be a boon for commerce along the Hartford riverfront," Larson said in a written statement after the meeting.

PRESIDENT TRUMP TOLD Members of Congress this week he was abandoning a key element of his planned \$1 trillion infrastructure package, complaining that certain partnerships between the private sector and federal government simply don't work, according to an [article](#) in the *Stamford Advocate*. Trump's comments reveal an infrastructure plan that appears to be up in the air, as White House officials have struggled to decide how to finance many of the projects they envision to rebuild America's roads, bridges and tunnels. At the meeting, Trump indicated the administration instead would seek to pay for infrastructure upgrades through direct federal spending, either by paying for projects with new tax revenue or taking on new debt. Such an approach would likely limit the scope of the initiative to a fraction of what the president has previously described.

AGC OF AMERICA CEO Steve Sandherr, released the following [statement](#) in reaction to the Unified Framework released this week by congressional leaders and the Trump administration: "The tax reform framework is a step in the right direction. At 30.3 percent, the construction industry faces the highest effective tax rate of any industry in America," said Sandherr. "The overwhelming majority of construction firms are pass-through businesses, meaning the owners pay taxes at the individual rates, not the corporate rate. Tax reform that lowers the rates for businesses of all forms and sizes is long overdue, and will provide a shot in the arm to the industry, lower the cost of construction projects, and allow construction firms to focus more on their business, and less time with the IRS.

CONNECTICUT EMPLOYERS could see a major reduction in workers' compensation premium rates next year, the second consecutive year of double-digit declines. The National Council on Compensation Insurance, which analyzes and recommends rates in more than 40 states, filed a 14.1 percent overall average rate reduction for the voluntary market with Connecticut regulators. [NCCI's September filing](#) with the Connecticut Insurance Department also includes a proposed 12.6 percent overall reduction for the assigned risk market. The council is recommending the department approve both rate reductions, which would be effective for policies renewing on or after January 1, 2018. If approved, the contracting

classification could see reductions of 12.9 percent in the voluntary market and 11.4 percent in the assigned risk market.

THE MOHEGAN TRIBE this week celebrated progress made on its \$80 m. Exposition Center at Mohegan Sun, a project that has created 400 temporary and permanent jobs so far, according to an [article](#) in the *Hartford Business Journal*. The meeting and convention center project is responsible for 300 construction jobs, 50 permanent full-time positions and about 50 permanent part-time posts, with more hiring expected for a summer 2018 opening, a spokesperson for Mohegan Sun said.

BUSINESSES IN NORWALK are preparing for the economic impact of the Walk Bridge replacement project, *The Hour* [reports](#). ConnDOT opted for a phased construction schedule over five years in efforts to minimize disruptions to commuters, residents, and businesses, with preliminary track work already under way in East Norwalk and Westport advanced utility work to begin early next year. Major construction will start on the span itself in 2019. Any interruption in Northeast Corridor rail service for a single day would cost the U.S. economy \$100 m., according to estimates published by ConnDOT last spring.

WEST HARTFORD TOWN officials last week provided a more detailed outline of work to be done on the I-84 off-ramp at the Park Road intersection, according to an [article](#) in the *Hartford Courant*. The 15-month project is expected to begin in October and completed by spring 2019, according to Town Engineer Duane Martin and civil engineer Greg Sommer. Martin said the Park Road and I-84 intersection is the busiest interchange in West Hartford and averages 30,000 vehicles a day. The project will relocate the I-84 off-ramp so it is next to the existing on-ramp and will be re-graded and widened to include an additional left-turn lane. Left-turn lanes will be added to Park Road, Overbrook Road, Raymond Road, and Trout Brook Drive.

MORE THAN THREE YEARS after co-developers F.D. Rich Co. and Ironstate Development Co. received approval from the Stamford Zoning Board, a housing development known as Urby Stamford will break ground next week, [according](#) to the *Stamford Advocate*. The project will be

built in two phases with 648 units total, according to developer spokesman George Cahn. The development replaces one of the city's most infamous eyesores, a 4.3-acre pit that earned the nickname "the hole in the ground." The empty plot of land at the corner of Tresser Boulevard and Greyrock Place eluded development for more than two decades.

LONG COMMUTES are just a way of life in Connecticut, asserts an [op-ed](#) in the *NewsTimes*. The state's average commuting time is 25.4 minutes, with Fairfield County clocking the longest commute at 28.2 minutes. Litchfield County commutes are slightly better at 26.5 minutes, but not as short as New Haven County with an average of 24 minutes. More than 15 percent of commuters in Fairfield County spend an hour or longer, more than triple the 4.1 percent of a decade ago and well above the national average of 6.3 percent. The op-ed suggests clogged highways and 17,365 miles of local roads in poor-to-mediocre condition add commute time.

AMAZON, ON THE HUNT for a place to build a second headquarters, has set officials from all across North America on a journey to sell their towns, with the aim of getting in on what some are calling one of the largest economic development deals of the century, according to this [article](#) in the *New York Times*. Danbury mayor Mark Boughton posted a [video](#) on Sept. 14 calling himself a "proud Amazon customer" and asking Alexa, the Amazon virtual assistant, where Amazon should build its second headquarters. "Danbury," a female voice responds.

CONNDOT BID RESULTS for September 27, 2017: [Proposal No. 0173-0464](#), Beam End Repair and Bearing Replacement in District 3: New England Road, Inc.: \$3,430,808.00; Mohawk Northeast, Inc.: \$4,212,016.00; SPS New England, Inc.: \$5,270,513.00; [Proposal No. 0058-0332](#), Reconstruction of Route 349 NB and SB over Amtrak Railroad (Groton): ROTH A Contracting Co., Inc.: \$6,709,524.90; The Brunalli Construction Company: \$6,754,923.00; Mohawk Northeast, Inc.: \$7,304,281.20. [Proposal No. 0174-0403](#), Beam End Repair and Bearing Replacement in District 4: McNamee Construction Corp.: \$10,523,259.70; ROTH A Contracting Co., Inc.: \$11,078,905.00; Mohawk Northeast, Inc.: \$11,432,452.70. [Proposal No. 0173-0472](#), Replacement of Highway Signing on Route 15 (Fairfield): A.M. Rizzo Electrical Contractors, Inc.: \$4,239,236.10; Mohegan Associates, Inc.: \$4,496,123.75; Liddell Brothers, Inc.: \$4,651,496.00.

FALL PROTECTION in the construction industry led OSHA's annual list of the most commonly-cited workplace safety violations, according to a preliminary ranking [reported](#) by the National Safety Council. Four violations on this year's list are specific to OSHA's Part 1926 – Safety and Health Regulations for Construction, including inadequate fall protection, lack of guardrails for scaffolding, improper use of ladders, and lack of fall-protection training, according to [Business and Legal](#)

[Resources](#). The category of Fall Protection – Training Requirements is new to OSHA's top 10 this year.

CONSTRUCTION LENDERS are getting creative when it comes to funding projects and in the process, reducing their risk during the labor shortage, according to a [report](#) on the bisnow.com website. Financiers and borrowers are shifting their efforts to accommodate rising construction costs and to lock in quality labor. Trimont Real Estate Advisors Managing Director Thomas Wise said major investment banks have become more cautious with how much construction lending they have on their books which has led to a rise in private equity funding, debt opportunity funds, and foreign capital. To minimize potential risks, lenders now require a certain percentage of the contracts to be executed, meaning subcontractors have signed an agreement for a specific price, before lenders will commit to funding a project, Wise said.

THE AGC OF AMERICA EDUCATION and Research Foundation Scholarship application is now open to students dedicated to pursuing a career in the construction industry. Over \$10 m. in scholarships have been awarded to more than 4,000 students attending colleges and universities across the country. Through endowments made by AGC members and supporters, as well as AGC Chapters, the Education and Research Foundation awards over 100 scholarships each year to students dedicated to pursuing a career in the construction industry. The [application](#) opened July 1, 2017 and closes November 1, 2017.

THE YOUNG CONTRACTORS FORUM will host a membership meeting on Thurs., Oct. 19, 2017 at Thomas Hooker Brewery in Bloomfield. The featured program, "Three Keys to Personal Effectivity and Holding Others Accountable," will be presented by Jim Rochford of Rochford Coach Business Consulting. Registration is at 4:30; the program is at 5:00 followed by dinner at 6:00. Follow this link to access the [registration form](#).

THE CCIA SAFETY ROUNDTABLE discussion, [Controlling Soft Tissue Injuries in Construction](#), presented by Casey Banks, Senior Construction Risk Consultant, Travelers Construction Risk Control, is scheduled for Tues., Oct. 10, 2017, at noon at CCIA, 912 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. The Safety Committee will meet immediately after the roundtable.

FLIERS INCLUDED IN HIGHLIGHTS, 9/29/17: 1) [AGC/CT Recognition Awards 10/12](#); 2) [CCIA Safety Roundtable 10/10](#); 3) [YCF Fall Meeting, 10/19](#); 4) [2017 Community Services Awards 10/27](#); 5) [CCIA Safety Award Applications 10/27](#).

FROM THE INTERNET: On September 29, 1962, President John F. Kennedy nationalized the Mississippi National Guard in response to city officials defying federal court orders to enroll James Meredith at the University of Mississippi. A 2009 search for the Loch Ness monster came up empty. Scientists did find over 100,000 golf balls.