

WINTER 2021

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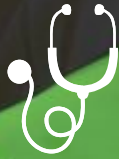
Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association

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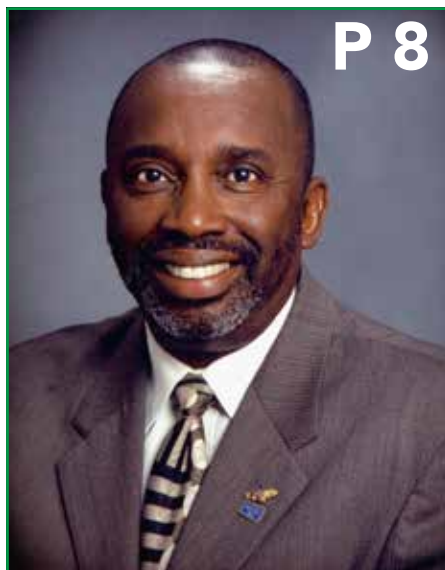
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Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association



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Mike Nystrom

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As 2020 comes to a close, many MITA members have been wondering what the plan is for the 2021 MITA Annual Conference. It has been decided that the best option for our members is to provide you a virtual experience on January 20–21, 2021.

Executive Vice President

MITA staff, as we speak, are busy putting together a schedule for the conference (see page 26). Stay tuned to your MITA bulletins for further details regarding the conference, and also MITA's new winter webinar series, which will run through early April.

MITA's 2021 Honorary Members would have been recognized at the in-person annual conference with videos. Instead, we are featuring the Honorary Members on pages 8 and 12 of this magazine. Congratulations to Kirk Branson, P.E., and Doug Walls, P.E., who have made tremendous contributions to our industry, and we wish each of them all the best in their retirement.

The MITA Scholarship Fund, usually featured during the Wild

Game Dinner in the fall, is still alive and well, thanks to many generous donors (see page 22). If you haven't already donated, it's never too late to support this program and provide opportunities for the next generation of industry professionals. Contact MITA's Director of Workforce Development Ken Bertolini at kenbertolini@thinkmita.org. Like all of the MITA events that have been cancelled this year, we are hopeful to be able to see you all next fall in person at the 2021 Wild Game Dinner.

2020 has definitely been the year for adjustments to the way we provide services to our members, and we will continue to provide you information about new COVID-19

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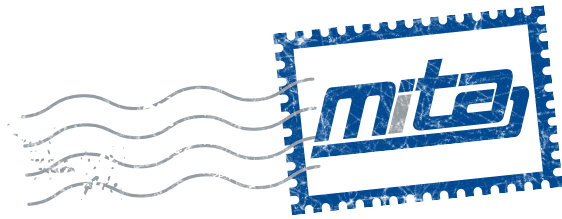
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Dear Nancy:

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Thank you so much.

Cheryl Hughes

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The stereotype that all engineers like to do is lock themselves in their offices and churn out ideas and solutions with as little human contact as possible is quickly shattered after you meet Kirk Branson Sr., P.E.

Branson, a well-respected leader and mentor in the Michigan transportation industry, is transitioning into retirement. The people who knew him best throughout his career at MDOT and WSP Michigan, Inc., paint a picture of a gregarious, intelligent leader who knows how to get the job done, but keeps everyone, including himself, smiling along the journey to project completion.



“I believe Kirk’s greatest skill is keeping the issues serious, but always with fairness and a sense of humor.”

– Michael Frankhouse, P.E., MDOT Engineer, who worked with Kirk in the Lansing area for 20 years.



Michael Frankhouse, P.E.



Kimberly Webb, P.E.



“I will miss the fun way he goes about getting difficult work completed.”

– Kimberly Webb, P.E. Metro Region Engineer, who has known Kirk for 32 years, and worked with him at the MDOT Okemos Field Office.

While Branson kept 'em laughing throughout his career, he is also known for being an inspiration to many young engineers. MDOT Director Paul C. Ajegba, P.E., said Kirk is a "man of integrity, knowledge and wisdom, and he is always willing to volunteer his time to help mentor young engineers in the industry."

"Kirk deserves to receive recognition as a Honorary Member of MITA because he has been a mentor and inspiration for so many engineers at MDOT and within the industry," added Kimberly Webb, P.E., MDOT Metro Region Engineer.

Edwin Tatem, P.E., Vice President of WSP Americas, said that Branson is trustworthy, honorable and experienced and above all he "cares about the people he works with and he always shows patience with younger staff. He encourages people around him."

So far it sounds like the past 51 years have been just full of fun and encouraging times for Branson and staff. But the truth is, of course, a little more complicated than that, especially with the challenges that the construction industry faces every day. But if you ask Branson and those who worked with him about those challenges, they have similar answers.

"My favorite thing about Kirk is he really knows how to enjoy the situation no matter how bad it is," Tatem said. "His positive attitude is very welcoming. He's a very intelligent individual who has a lot of wisdom and is always willing to share with others."

That positive attitude is a gift that Branson uses to resolve problems.

"He has demonstrated an open mind while always considering and evaluating both sides to any construction-related problems before making decisions," said Michael Frankhouse, P.E., MDOT Engineer.

Kirk A. Branson Sr., P.E., was born and raised in Lansing, Mich. He is one of six children, two brothers and three sisters. The fifth child born was the first to graduate from college. Branson graduated from Everett High School in 1969 and married April, his high school sweetheart. They have three children — two boys and a girl — 11 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Branson received an associate's degree in engineering from Lansing Community College, his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Michigan State University and a master's degree in management from Aquinas College. He spent his developmental years working in numerous positions for MDOT from 1982 to 2002, where he left a position as Manager of the Jackson Transportation Service Center in 2002 to be a consultant for CTE and Parsons Brinckerhoff, now known as WSP Michigan Inc. He is now working part-time for DLZ.

His career highlights include working on the final stretch of I-69 Northeast/Southwest of Lansing.

"This was a civil engineer's dream project," Branson recalled. "It involved laying out the freeway from original survey points, major interchange, building demolitions/merge weave lanes/ collector distributor ramps, swamp mucking treatment, timed surcharges, many bridges, early stages of environmental mitigation, unique drainage treatments, equalizing draining culverts: you name it, we did it on this project!"

His hobbies throughout his lifetime have included golf, attending sporting events for his children and grandchildren, and doing drive-by inspections of various MDOT projects (post and during construction).

Branson's motivation to enter the construction industry began many years ago.

"It goes way back to my childhood when Santa Clause brought me a bright yellow Tonka dump truck and a Tonka front end loader!," Branson recalled. "What else could a little boy need? I studied two years of architecture in high school and worked one summer building houses with a local one-man builder. I joined MDOT (AKA Highway Department) in 1969 in the Bridge Design Division as a drafting tech. I went to night school and graduated in 1980 from MSU with a BSCE. I became an assistant project engineer in 1984 and haven't regretted one minute since!!!"

"I have been in the business since 1982, when I worked as an auditor in the Commission audit, also known as the 'Grim-Reaper.' I have worked in the construction industry for approximately 38 years — whew, that is a long time!"



Kirk Branson Sr., P.E.
enjoying golf.



I-496 project photos from Branson's past.

"He uses his personal experiences to demonstrate his understanding of problems/issues and to better describe solutions that may affect aspects of a project."

Frankhouse said that his favorite thing about Branson is that he is a great listener, with a great sense of humor who always treats people with respect and fairness. "It seems like that whenever a serious construction or personnel issue would occur on a project or meeting, the outcome would always be the same – problem solved and everybody walks away happy and friends again."

Webb recalled a memorable story about Branson's dispute resolution talents. She was working with him on the Shiawassee Bridge project when they were going to blast the footings and she still remembers listening to

Branson work with the contractors and the community on a peaceful solution to their concerns.

Watching Branson resolve disputes has taught others key lessons about surviving in the construction industry.

"Keep an open mind when contract and personnel issues occur," Frankhouse said. "Listen to both sides of an issue. Offer personal experiences with similar problems and how they were resolved. And communicate with all sides and always follow up for the future."

Tatem said that Branson taught him a lot about the industry, such as: "You spend a lot of time working with many different types of people, so you might as well enjoy it while you're there. He's taught me to be patient, to look out for others and be strategic in your thought patterns.

Being proactive and to not let things just happen to you. I have learned from him how to deal/interact with contractors, consultants and MDOT."

Ajegba said that Branson taught him that the future of the industry is bright, however, "we have to continue to promote equity and inclusion, and commit to creating a pipeline to recruit under-represented groups into the industry."

As their chance to have fun and work with Branson comes to a close, those who knew him best will lean on their memories, most of which have that added spice of humor that makes Branson who he is.

"My most memorable story is when we were in a conference put on by graduate students and the facilitator wanted to introduce Kirk to pre-college students," Tatem recalled. "The facilitator asked me about Kirk. I told him how he's a great guy, goes to church, gives back to the community and is a great engineer. The facilitator picked up the church going part and then introduced him as the "Reverend Kirk Branson." Kirk was shocked and said, "I'll get in trouble with my pastor if you call me Reverend." Everyone in the audience laughed!"

And Branson is also the type of guy who can take a joke.

We asked MDOT Director Ajegba what his most memorable story was about Branson, and this is what he said:

"We have shared numerous good times traveling to different locations to play golf. Over the years, it finally dawned on me that he is a crappy golfer and his game cannot be helped. But I continue to enjoy hitting the greens with him."

We offered Branson a chance to challenge this comment, and he said: "Don't worry. You can print it. It will give me a reason to get even with him." **CS**



"I will miss his comradery, his constant advice, sense of humor, honesty and commitment to knowledge transfer."

– Paul C. Ajegba, P.E., Director of Michigan Department of Transportation.



"He is a hard worker, who likes to have fun. He believes that although you have a lot to do, enjoy it while you can."

– Edwin Tatem, P.E., Vice President of WSP Americas (Formerly known as Parsons Brinckerhoff.)



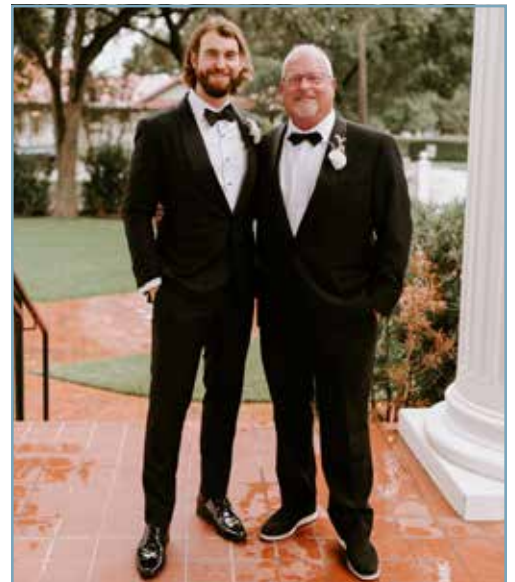
Kirk Branson Sr., P.E., with MDOT staff working on a I-96 project in Lansing.

On the left is Kimberly Avery (Webb), P.E. and on the right is Deidre Thompson, P.E



There is a motto that has carried Doug Walls, P.E., the founder of Eagle Excavation, Inc., in Flint through his 38 years of dedication to the construction industry. Even the current company president, Mike Hayduk, who has known Walls for over 25 years, still uses it.

“Doug’s motto has always been to do the job safely, do the job once, do it right and move on to the next one,” said Mike, who first met Walls during a bid at the GM Milford Proving Grounds in June 1995. “He taught me that honesty and integrity is most important. Completing the job correctly, safely and to the satisfaction of the customer is more important than profitability. If you are successful at doing that first, the latter seems to fall into place.”



The recently married Tyler Walls (left), and his Dad, Doug Walls.



Tyler Walls, Doug's son, who works at Eagle Excavation, repeated the same motto when asked what his Dad taught him about the industry.

"It's such a simple statement, but it certainly gets straight to the point," Tyler said. "My Dad's priority for our projects was always first and foremost the safety of our employees. But, secondly, he always wanted the quality of our work to speak for itself. And I think that every employee at Eagle Excavation has learned this trait from him."

Tyler said his Dad deserves to receive recognition as an Honorary Member of MITA because of "everything that he has put into the company he built and into the industry as a whole." Almost 30 years ago, his Dad took a big risk to branch out of his own and start up

Doug Walls, P.E., was born in Detroit, Mich., and raised in Walled Lake. He graduated from Walled Lake Western and earned his bachelor's of science degree in civil engineering from Michigan Technological University. He raised two daughters, and a son, Tyler, who works at Eagle Excavation, the company he founded in Flint in 1991.

Walls became motivated to work in the construction industry when he joined Laborers' union after high school and worked every summer. His first job after graduating from Michigan Tech was with CJ Rodgers as a P.E. He later worked for Genesee Bay before starting Eagle Excavation on April 1, 1991.



Doug Walls, P.E.

The highlights of his career that he is most proud of include starting Eagle Excavation when his second child was just three weeks old.

"We have had zero turnover of estimators and project managers," Walls said, "and four or five families have the second generation working with us. Take care of those who take care of you!"

In his retirement years he plans to continue his favorite hobbies, with his wife, Christy. Lots of travel; lots of golf!

"I've worked hard and played hard all my life," Walls said. "I've enjoyed giving and helping others, and I am a pretty good joke teller. All my kids are college grads and are productive and hard working. God has blessed me!"



Christy and Doug Walls



Aerial view of Eagle Excavation, Inc., in Flint.

created so many incredible memories for us. And he has given so much to scholarships and charitable programs over the years, with a goal of giving today's youth an opportunity to make a career in the construction industry."

When asked what their favorite thing is about Doug, besides his generosity, both Mike and Tyler gave pretty much the same answer.

"His wit and humor," Mike said. "At times he may have difficulty reading the room, but he can deliver a good joke.

"Probably his outlook on life in general," Tyler said. "He has always taught me to work hard and give 100

Eagle Excavation. He knew that by doing things the right way, and surrounding himself with others who had the same drive, founding Eagle Excavation would be the right move.

"He started the company in the spring of 1991," Mike recalled, "and in a very short time he turned it into one of the most respected excavation companies in the state of Michigan. Through the years, he has always put people first. He values the relationships with the people around him, which makes Eagle Excavation more than just a company. It is a family."

Many of those "family members" have been with the company since it was founded.

"In my eyes, one of the most impressive achievements of my Dad's is the fact that Eagle Excavation has so many lifetime employees," Tyler said. "We have many people who started and finished (or intend to finish) their careers here at Eagle, both in the office and in the field. This is not only because he built such a great company; but, more importantly, because of the great care that he has always had for anyone who works here."

Mike said Doug is known for never micro-managing his employees, and he has built the company by surrounding himself with like-minded people who get things done. Doug is also known for taking great care of his employees, his family and his community.

"He cares deeply for his family, his community and all the people around him," Tyler said. "He made that clear to my sisters and me as we were growing up. As much hard work and effort as he put into his career, he would always be sure to attend all of our school events and athletics. In fact, he coached many of our teams growing up, which



percent effort into everything you do. But he also has taught me the importance of enjoying life outside of work. He definitely knows how to have a good time. And if you have ever had the opportunity to hang out with him on the golf course, at a football game, or anywhere else, you'll certainly know what I mean!"

"I'm honestly blessed to have many memorable stories about Doug," Mike said. "One of the most memorable was when I was his guest at the Warwick Hill Invitational Golf Outing, and he had made three birdies in a nine-hole match. At that time, he had a very skeptical handicap, which resulted with three net 1's on our scorecard. We didn't win our flight over the three-day tournament, but that day we cleaned up on a whole bunch of bets!" **CS**



The happy golfers, from left to right, Tyler Walls, Mike Hayduk, Christy Walls and Doug Walls.

Gary Putrow, the retired founder of Michigan Pipe and Valve – Lansing, who has known Doug since the early 80s, said he has plenty of stories about Doug because “there is never a dull moment when Gary is in the room.”

“But the problem with Doug, is that there are books and books of funny stories about him,” said Gary, who retired in 2015 from the company he founded in 1996, Michigan



Gary Putrow

Pipe and Valve – Lansing. “But most of the stories are not repeatable.”

Gary said his favorite thing about Doug is his heart.

“He would give the shirt off his back to help someone out,” Gary said. “He has been supportive of the industry and the association, and his years of devotion to both the Associated Underground Contractors and MITA is a good reason to honor him. He started his small company and grew it into what it is today. It is not an easy task and he helped a lot of people along the way in doing so. He taught me about the industry and about integrity. There still are companies that appreciate loyalty, good service and honesty.

“When all is said and done, it is very difficult to put into words what could be said about Doug. Those who knew him well will know what I mean. Congratulations, Doug. The honor is well deserved.”



Lance Binoniemi

To contact Lance Binoniemi, email him at lancebinoniemi@thinkmita.org or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336.

2020 ELECTIONS RECAP

It took almost 24 hours after the polls closed for Michigan to certify and finalize the counts for the election. Many races, including at the top of the ticket with the election for President, were too close to call until all the votes were counted. What made things take even longer was a record number of absentee voters this election. Polling had suggested that Vice President Joe Biden had a sizable lead in Michigan over his opponent President Donald Trump going into election day; and, just as it was the case in 2016, late enthusiasm for President Trump made the race extremely close and put Michigan as one of the states that determined the presidential election. At the end of the counting, Joe Biden has officially been declared the winner in Michigan.

In the race for U.S. Senate, Senator Gary Peters narrowly defeated his opponent John James. Mr. James is a strong candidate that we likely will see again on the ballot for office in the future.

Despite the two top races going the Democrats way, the House Republicans pulled off what many thought was not possible by maintaining their majority in the State House. Republicans were able to hold onto all except one of their vulnerable seats in Oakland County and Traverse City, while also knocking off two Democratic incumbents. Representatives Brian Elder (Bay City – D) and Sheryl Kennedy (Davison – D) lost their re-election efforts. Democrats also flipped two seats, but fell way well short of reaching a majority.

Just days after the elections, Republicans and Democrats picked their leadership positions to lead their respective caucuses for the 2021 - 2022 legislative term. Representative Jason Wentworth (Farwell – R) was voted in as Speaker of the House by his Republican colleagues and Representative Donna Lasinski (Scio Twp. - D) was chosen as the minority leader in the House by her Democratic colleagues.

Of all the candidates that the MITA PAC supported this election cycle, approximately 60 candidates in all, Representative Elder was the only individual who lost their election. As we move forward, we look forward to working closely with the new Speaker and his leadership team on many items affecting the heavy construction industry.

Lame Duck Session

Now that the majority is known for the House, we can expect a relatively busy lame duck session. Likely filled with outgoing lawmakers priorities, it doesn't appear that there will be many controversial issues that will come up. MITA will be working on a few items, including Employer COVID Liability Reform legislation, mining permitting and getting the necessary approval for the Governor's \$500 Million Clean Water initiative.

Continued on 45

An advertisement for Lawrence Technological University. The top half has a blue background with the text "POWER UP YOUR CAREER" in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Below this, in white text, is "Master's degrees, graduate certificates, and degree completion". Underneath that, in smaller white text, are the fields "Architecture and Design | Arts and Sciences" and "Business and Information Technology | Engineering". The bottom half of the ad features a photograph of a modern university building with a large, curved, metallic sculpture in front of it. People are walking on a path in the foreground. At the bottom, a blue banner contains the text "Learn More: ltu.edu/powerup | ltu.edu/applyfree", the "Lawrence Technological University" logo, "SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN", and the tagline "Possible is everything."/>

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WINTER 2021: MITA PAC UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the MITA PAC. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. If you haven't donated to the MITA PAC yet this year, please consider making a contribution today.

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Mike DeFinis	Angelo Iafrate Construction Company	\$250.00	Chad Listerman	CL Trucking & Excavating, Inc.	\$1,000.00
Jim Kloote	J.E. Kloote Contracting, Inc.	\$1,500.00	Pete Scodeller	Scodeller Construction, Inc.	\$2,000.00
Mike Peake	Action Traffic Maintenance	\$1,000.00	B. Thomas Stover	Toebe Construction LLC	\$1,000.00
Darrell Kaltz	Kaltz Excavating Co., Inc.	\$1,000.00	Nic Troshac	Cardinal Fabricating, Inc.	\$250.00
Jeff Irvin	Action Traffic Maintenance	\$100.00	Remi Coolsaet	R. L. Coolsaet Construction Company	\$500.00
Jessica Kaltz	Kaltz Excavating Co., Inc.	\$100.00	Bob Nobbs	NBSX, LLC	\$500.00
Jeff Stover	Toebe Construction LLC	\$500.00	Ed Boucher	Kotz Sangster	\$500.00
Pat Dunigan	Dunigan Bros., Inc.	\$2,500.00	Mark Campbell	GM & Sons, Inc.	\$200.00
Alan Sandell	Cadillac Asphalt LLC	\$200.00	Jim Dykema	Dykema Excavators, Inc.	\$1,000.00
Nick Apostol	Giannetti Contracting Corporation	\$500.00	Donn Ellis	CSI/Geoturf, Inc.	\$1,000.00
Brian Hoffman	Hoffman Bros., Inc.	\$5,000.00	Bob Adcock	Angelo Iafrate Construction Company	\$4,000.00
Kurk Schweitzer	GM & Sons, Inc.	\$250.00	Dan Cortis	Cortis. Bros.	\$250.00
Karl Schweitzer	GM & Sons, Inc.	\$1,000.00	Amy Hall	Ebony Construction	\$500.00
Sean Morrissey	GM & Sons, Inc.	\$200.00	Edward C. Levy	Ed C. Levy Corp	\$1,500.00
J.W. Fisher	Fisher Contracting Company	\$2,500.00	Karl Grant	TCI Inc. of Michigan	\$500.00
Craig Fons	GBM Companies	\$1,000.00	Lincoln Noel	Payne & Dolan	\$250.00
Dave Sturuss	Grand Valley Concrete Products	\$1,000.00	Pete Vandenbos	Pete's Contracting Inc.	\$1,000.00
Joe Cook	Pro-Tec Equipment	\$500.00	Toni Vandenbos	Pete's Contracting Inc.	\$1,000.00
Ron Acciavatti	Pamar Enterprises, Inc.	\$2,000.00	Kurt Shea	PK Contracting	\$500.00
Ken Nowicki	M&M Excavating	\$1,000.00	Mike Buck	Salus Consulting Group	\$500.00
Dave Pytlowany	AIS Construction Equipment	\$500.00	Tom DiPonio	Jay Dee Contractors	\$10,000.00
Dave TerBeek	AIS Construction Equipment	\$500.00	Rob Wilson	Mid Michigan Materials	\$1,000.00
Bob Allison	AIS Construction Equipment	\$500.00	Mike Peake Sr.	Action Traffic	\$1,000.00
Byron Miller	AIS Construction Equipment	\$500.00	Ryan O'Donnell	Anlaan Corporation	\$2,000.00
Gabe Nowicki	M&M Excavating	\$250.00	Scott Bazinet	Lowe Construction Co.	\$4,000.00
John Landrie	M&M Excavating	\$750.00	Mike Anderzack	Tenmile Creek Excavating LLC	\$2,500.00
Brandie Meisner	M&M Excavating	\$1,000.00	Patrick Dunigan	Dunigan Bros. Inc.	\$2,500.00
Jack Dykstra	Jack Dykstra Excavating, Inc.	\$1,000.00	David Marsh	Peninsula Prestress Company	\$300.00
Dave TerBeek	AIS Construction Equipment	\$1,800.00	Paul Muscat	Cortis. Bros.	\$250.00
John Zito	Zito Construction	\$1,000.00	Derek Arens	Anlaan Corporation	\$250.00
Brent Gerken	Gerken Paving, Inc.	\$1,000.00	Nicholas Baker	Anlaan Corporation	\$2,500.00
Robert Wilson	Mid Michigan Materials	\$1,000.00	Jim Dykema	Dykema Excavators, Inc.	\$1,000.00
Ron Wey	1 Wey Safety Training	\$200.00	Andrew Rose	Rehmann	\$250.00
Tom Larabel	Ferris State University	\$500.00			

December 2019 – December 2020 PAC Donations

HOW TO SIGN UP FOR A BUSINESS CUSTOMER ACCOUNT WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE

During the pandemic, normal business operations have been interrupted in many ways. That is no more prevalent than with necessary transactions at Secretary of State (SOS) offices. The Legislature approved extensions for items like license renewals and vehicle registration renewals; however, there are still some items that members need and can't get accomplished in a timely fashion. Thankfully, earlier in the year the SOS administrative team opened up an avenue for essential businesses to obtain their necessary items through channels with MITA and hundreds of members took advantage.



There continue to be many stories about backlogs at individual SOS branch offices and difficulties getting appointments when needed, and some individuals are having to schedule appointments several months down the road. It is likely that delays will continue into the near future. However, the SOS is expanding its current online services for commercial clients to include vehicle title and registration transactions, such as renewals and obtaining duplicate title/registration. This new feature also allows businesses to renew multiple vehicles at the same time.

It seems to be a relatively simple process, and MITA staff has been told it takes about a day to get approved. You are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity as it will alleviate a lot of time and frustrations down the road.

You can participate in just a few easy steps:

Step 1: Complete a Business Customer Account Application – this will be used to create a business account within the state's system storing all the vehicles owned by the business.

Step 2: Verify your Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) – this is needed to establish the business account and will be used to associate the

business' vehicles to the account and to access the account online.

Step 3: Gather a listing of the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) for all vehicles owned by the business. This information should be in an Excel worksheet (see example) and will be used to associate the vehicles to the business account.

Step 4: Submit your application and VIN worksheet to MDOS-Business-Customers@michigan.gov. You will be notified once the business account has been established. Note: Commercial clients with an existing business account should indicate the FEIN when you title a new vehicle to ensure online services are applicable to that new vehicle.

If you have any questions, please contact Lance Binoniemi, Vice President of Government Affairs, at lancebinoniemi@thinkmita.org or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336. **CS**



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Rachelle VanDeventer, P.E.

To contact Rachelle VanDeventer, P.E., email her at rachellevandeventer@thinkmita.org or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336.

MDOT'S NEW MATERIALS AND QUALIFIED PRODUCT EVALUATION PROCESS

Have you ever wanted to try a new product out on a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) project? MDOT has stated that they continually seek new materials, technologies, and construction methods, and they commit to evaluate road materials and construction methods that, when implemented, could allow the Department to build high-quality roads in Michigan. For this reason, MDOT now has an improved single centralized process in place, the New Materials and Qualified Product Evaluation Process, to assess such innovations requested by any industry partners.

MDOT considers a "new material" to be any material which has not been adopted by MDOT and has no current specification requirements per the current Standard Specifications for Construction, nor a defined basis of acceptance. Examples include, but are not limited to, alternatives to an existing material specified for use on MDOT projects.

To request for a new material to be evaluated, the process starts with the completion of MDOT's New Materials Product Evaluation Request Form (Form 1022N), which can be found on the MDOT New Materials and Qualified Products Evaluation Request webpage. When the form and any pertinent product information is submitted, it is logged into a centralized database (NEMIS) for tracking, and the request is assigned to a MDOT Subject Matter Expert (SME). The SME will evaluate along with a subcommittee and is responsible for ongoing communications with the vendor/

Continued on page 47



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WORK ZONE SAFETY: DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?



In an effort to continue encouraging Michigan motorists to drive safely through traffic work zones, the Michigan **Work Zone Safety Task Force** is seeking stories and photos of incidents or “near misses” in work zones. Do you have a story and or photo that you would like to share anonymously? This information will be used on the **Michigan Work Zone Safety Facebook Page** to spread the word about work zone safety. Your identity, the identity

of your company, and the exact location of the job you were working on will not be released.

You may submit your information and photos anonymously to MITA's Director of Communications Nancy Brown by emailing her at nancybrown@thinkmita.org. If you have any questions, you can reach her at [517-896-1456](tel:517-896-1456).

Thank you for your participation! **cs**

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Ken Bertolini

To contact Ken Bertolini, email him at kenbertolini@thinkmita.org or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336.

Michigan in the fall is one of the best places to live. The trees change from deep green to wonderful hues of gold and red. Family gathers as the daylight slowly shortens and the weather becomes cooler. Kid's Trick 'r Treat and we move from Halloween and transition to Thanksgiving. We reflect on all that we have and the opportunity that we have been given by our industry. We slow down a little and reflect on family and why we work so damn hard during the summer. During a normal year, we would have had the MITA Wild Game Dinner. We would have had a fun night of camaraderie, networking, enjoying each other's company as well as taking home some amazing gifts that represent the change of the season.

While we reflect on all that our industry has provided for us; as we give thanks; as we teach the younger generation close to us about all of the opportunities our industry can provide, we also need to reach out to those outside our circle. That is what the Wild Game Dinner provides. It's a way for us to raise money and to provide an opportunity for the next generation, for those outside of our

MITA SCHOLARSHIPS, WILD GAME DINNER

HOW MEMBERS CAN HELP STRENGTHEN THE INDUSTRY



circle, to become a part of our family. It also helps strengthen what we have built and continue building our state's infrastructure as well as build the future of our companies.

Because of the generous donations of our members, the MITA Scholarship Fund in 2020 provided nine recipients with \$17,000 to help pay for tuition as they work towards an education in construction related studies that will help prepare them to enter our industry. We thank those member companies that helped make this possibility a reality, including M&M Excavating, Action Traffic Maintenance and the Dave Fons Memorial Fund. None of this would have been possible in 2020 without them.

If you haven't already donated and would like to join your fellow members who made donations to the Scholarship

Fund, it's never too late. In order to keep this highly successful program going, we need additional sponsors to join in. As you enjoy the slowing of the days, the slowing of the season, and the changing of the hues that Michigan has blessed us with, let's reach out to those that also want to be a part of our future family and reap all that our industry provides and invite them in.

To donate to the **MITA Scholarship Fund**, please make checks payable to **MITA, Inc.**, with the words **MITA Scholarship Fund** written on the memo line and mail it to:

MITA, Inc.
P.O. Box 1640
Okemos, MI 48805

For additional information, contact Director of Workforce Development Ken Bertolini at 517-449-0155, or kenbertolini@thinkmita.org. **CS**

APAM LAUNCHES NEW GROUP

The Asphalt Pavement Association of Michigan has teamed up with the Women of Asphalt to create a Women of Asphalt, Michigan Branch. The Women of Asphalt is a national coalition, which supports women in all aspects of the asphalt industry through mentoring, education and advocacy, and by encouraging women to seek careers in the asphalt industry.

Creating a Michigan branch allows women in our state to take full advantage of all that this organization has to offer. The Michigan branch will host events that allow the women of asphalt an opportunity to learn, network, have fun and grow. Planning for the first event is underway, and the details will be announced soon.

For more information, visit https://www.apa-mi.org/women_of_asphalt.php. **CS**

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THE NEW COVID-19 RULES

bodman

By Rebecca Seguin-Skrabucha, Associate,
Workplace Law Group, Bodman PLC

After months of relative consistency in administration of their COVID-19 processes, Michigan employers faced abrupt confusion when, earlier this month, the Michigan Supreme Court invalidated the Executive Orders issued by Governor Whitmer, including those addressing workplace safeguards.

Then, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") redefined what constitutes "close contact" with an individual symptomatic of and/or diagnosed with COVID-19, further muddying the safety procedures upon which employers have come to rely.

Thankfully, these seemingly foundational changes to public health orders and guidance can be accommodated with minor adjustments to employers' COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plans ("Preparedness Plans").

Public Health Orders

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services ("MDHHS") and the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("MIOSHA") took action to replace the Executive Orders.

MDHHS released several "Epidemic Orders," and MIOSHA promulgated "Emergency Rules," the components of which substantially mirror the former Executive Orders. Employers must implement Preparedness Plans, effectuate cleaning and disinfecting

practices, prohibit in-person work that can "feasibly be completed remotely," identify and isolate sick and exposed employees (e.g., daily health screenings, quarantine and isolation periods, trainings, notifications), and necessitate mask use and social distancing.

Construction-specific requirements are less detailed in the Emergency Rules than in the former Executive Orders, but construction employers still must conduct daily health screenings, identify and cure high-risk areas "where employees must stand near one another," and create protocols for the safe delivery of materials to worksites.

CDC Guidance

As part of the obligation to conduct daily health screenings and identify/isolate sick or exposed employees, employers generally must exclude from the worksite employees who have experienced "close contact" with a symptomatic/diagnosed individual. This exclusion should last 14 days, regardless of negative COVID-19 tests during the quarantine period.

The CDC has historically defined close contact as being within six feet of a symptomatic/diagnosed individual for 15 or more continuous minutes. On October 21, 2020, however, the CDC altered its guidance, interpreting close contact as being within six feet of a

symptomatic/diagnosed individual for 15 or more cumulative minutes over a 24-hour period.

Employers must redefine close contact in their daily health screenings and Preparedness Plans, specifically with regard to procedures responsive to an employee disclosure of a COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms. Instead of asking the symptomatic/diagnosed employee to identify any employees with whom they interacted (without social distancing) for 15 or more minutes, employers now need to determine if the aggregate of all interactions (without social distancing) with individual employees over a 24-hour period equates to 15 or more minutes.

Because this is challenging for employers to track and for employees to recall, employers may want to consider instituting policies that mandate social distancing at all times, or that limit situations where social distancing is difficult to five-minute intervals, making it less likely that employees will reach the 15-minute threshold in any 24-hour window.

Employers should ensure that their current COVID-19 policies and procedures comply with MDHHS's Epidemic Orders, MIOSHA's Emergency Rules, and CDC guidance. **Bodman's Workplace Law Group** can assist with any questions you may have. **CS**

Annual Conference Program Schedule

all sessions will be presented via Zoom

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

MITA Board of Directors Meeting

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

MDOT Leadership

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Work Zone Safety Task Force

Thursday, January 21, 2021

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

MIOSHA Hot Topics/Covid

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM – MPSC

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Technology - Unlock Key Steps to Your Cybersecurity Readiness

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

High Level Soo Locks/Line 5 Tunnel Overview

MITA Webinars

January 27, 2021

February 10, 2021

February 17, 2021

February 24, 2021

March 10, 2021

March 17, 2021

THE FFCRA HOW-TO GUIDE

By Rebecca Seguin-Skrabucha, Associate,
Workplace Law Group, Bodman PLC

Since its passage earlier this year, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act ("FFCRA") has required quick implementation and careful administration by employers.

The FFCRA creates eligibility for paid leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act ("EPSLA") and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act ("EFMLA"), both of which are designed to financially assist employees whose temporary absences are related to COVID-19.

Leave Reasons and Payment

Under the **EPSLA**, employees may seek up to two weeks (i.e., 10 business days) of paid leave for the following reasons:

1. Subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. Advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;

3. Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. Caring for an individual subject to a quarantine or isolation order or advised to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
5. Caring for a son or daughter whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions; and
6. Experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor. (Please note, the Secretary of Health and Human Services has not defined conditions which trigger this subpart.)

EPSLA leave for reasons 1, 2, and 3 is paid at the employee's regular rate of pay, capped at \$511/day. EPSLA leave for reasons 4, 5, and 6 is paid at a rate equivalent to two-thirds of an employee's regular rate of pay or minimum wage, whichever is greater, capped at \$200/day.

Under the **EFMLA**, employees may seek up to twelve weeks of leave to care for a son or daughter whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions.

Though the first two weeks of EFMLA leave are unpaid, they run concurrently with the EPSLA leave's Qualifying Reason 5, which allows for payment at a rate equivalent to two-thirds; the remaining ten weeks of leave are paid at a rate equivalent to two-thirds of an employee's regular rate of pay or minimum wage, whichever is greater, capped at \$200/day.

Covered Employers and Eligible Employees

Employers with fewer than 500 employees must provide eligible employees with FFCRA leave. However, employers with fewer than 50 employees may seek application of the small business exemption for leave related to child care (i.e., EPSLA Qualifying Reason 5 and EFMLA), if the provision of such leave threatens the viability of the business. All covered employers should display the FFCRA poster (see page 28) onsite and otherwise make a copy available to employees.

Employees are immediately eligible for paid leave under the EPSLA, with the exception of Qualifying Reason 5. Employees are eligible for paid leave under the EFMLA

Continued on page 29



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EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)** requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

► PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Generally, employers covered under the Act must provide employees:

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total;
- $\frac{2}{3}$ for qualifying reasons #4 and 6 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total; and
- Up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at $\frac{2}{3}$ for qualifying reason #5 below for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

► ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employers, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). *Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below.*

► QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19

An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to **telework**, because the employee:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2); | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. |
|---|---|

► ENFORCEMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has the authority to investigate and enforce compliance with the FFCRA. Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA, files a complaint, or institutes a proceeding under or related to this Act. Employers in violation of the provisions of the FFCRA will be subject to penalties and enforcement by WHD.



WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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WH1422 REV 03/20

Continued from page 27

and Qualifying Reason 5 of the EPSLA once they have been employed for 30 calendar days.

Employee Leave Request Form

The development and dissemination of an Employee Leave Request Form (the "Form") will simplify the FFCRA process. (The Form is available at www.thinkmita.org in the November 13, COVID-19 Updates bulletin.) The Form requires employees to identify the precise reasons for their absences and provide supporting documentation. This allows clearer approvals and denials, especially when an employee may be eligible for leave under multiple Qualifying Reasons.

When an employee fails the daily health screening, reports an absence related to a Qualifying Reason, or explicitly requests FFCRA leave, the employee should be provided copies of the Form and the FFCRA poster.

An employee need not submit a Form before leave begins, but the employee should return a complete Form by a reasonably determined deadline (e.g., within two weeks). Employees should include with their completed Forms documentation to substantiate their need for leave, where appropriate and feasible. For example, an employee who

is unable to work because of a selfquarantine order issued by a health care provider must include a copy of the order with the completed Form.

The Form is also designed to facilitate receipt of the IRS tax credit, which reimburses employers for any funds paid to employees under the FFCRA. The IRS requires that the request for leave be in writing and supported by documentation.

Employee Protections

Employee requests for or utilization of FFCRA leave are protected. Employers cannot interfere with or retaliate against employees for engaging in this protected activity. In particular, placement on or continuation of unpaid leave or layoff is not permitted where an employee is unable to work for Qualifying Reasons, even if the employee is collecting unemployment compensation benefits. This is likely to constitute interference with employees' FFCRA rights.

Employers should also keep in mind that employees who exhaust their FFCRA leave entitlement may be eligible for unpaid leaves of absence, if they disclose COVID-19 symptoms and/or close contact with a confirmed case.

Continued on page 47

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The advertisement features a collection of heavy machinery against a purple background. At the top left, a yellow crawler crane is shown. Below it is a red crawler crane. To the right, a white truck-mounted crane is visible. In the center, a white truck with a knuckle boom crane is parked. At the bottom left, a yellow crawler crane is shown. At the bottom right, a blue pickup truck with a crane attachment is visible. The company logo, 'WALTER PAYTON POWER EQUIPMENT LLC', is in the top right corner, with '34' and 'SWEETNESS' written above it. Below the logo, the text 'SALES • RENTALS • PARTS • SERVICE' is displayed.

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PROBLEM SOLVER: NEW TRAINING OPTIONS

The upcoming winter training season will provide MITA with an opportunity to revamp our training methods. Due to the current COVID-19 situation in the state, and efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, traditional classroom style training may not be best in all situations. Although this may at first seem to be a major inconvenience, here at MITA we are seizing this opportunity to come up with new, creative and effective methods to provide vital and meaningful safety training to our membership.

During this past summer, MITA utilized what we called "Task Specific Training." Training and hazard recognition was performed on the job site, with minimal interruption to the work being performed. This proved to be extremely effective and we intend to continue this practice.

This training season MITA intends to utilize several different

training methods to meet the needs of our membership. Standard classroom style training will be done where proper social distancing of six feet can be maintained. Training using the Zoom video meeting platform will be available when an employer deems that to be the most practical method. MITA is also producing a series of Toolbox Talk videos that will be available to our membership to be employed as needed.

First Aid and CPR training will be performed in one of two ways. The presentation can be done via classroom style, or by utilizing a video provided by MITA. The hands-on portion must be done in person, with one person per mannequin and maintaining social distancing.

For more information, contact MITA's Director of Safety and Compliance Greg Brooks at gregbrooks@thinkmita.org or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336. **CS**



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\$500 MILLION INVESTMENT TO REBUILD MICHIGAN'S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ANNOUNCED

Governor Whitmer recently announced a \$500 million comprehensive water infrastructure investment in Michigan's water systems. This is a significant investment after decades of under investment in Michigan's underground infrastructure.

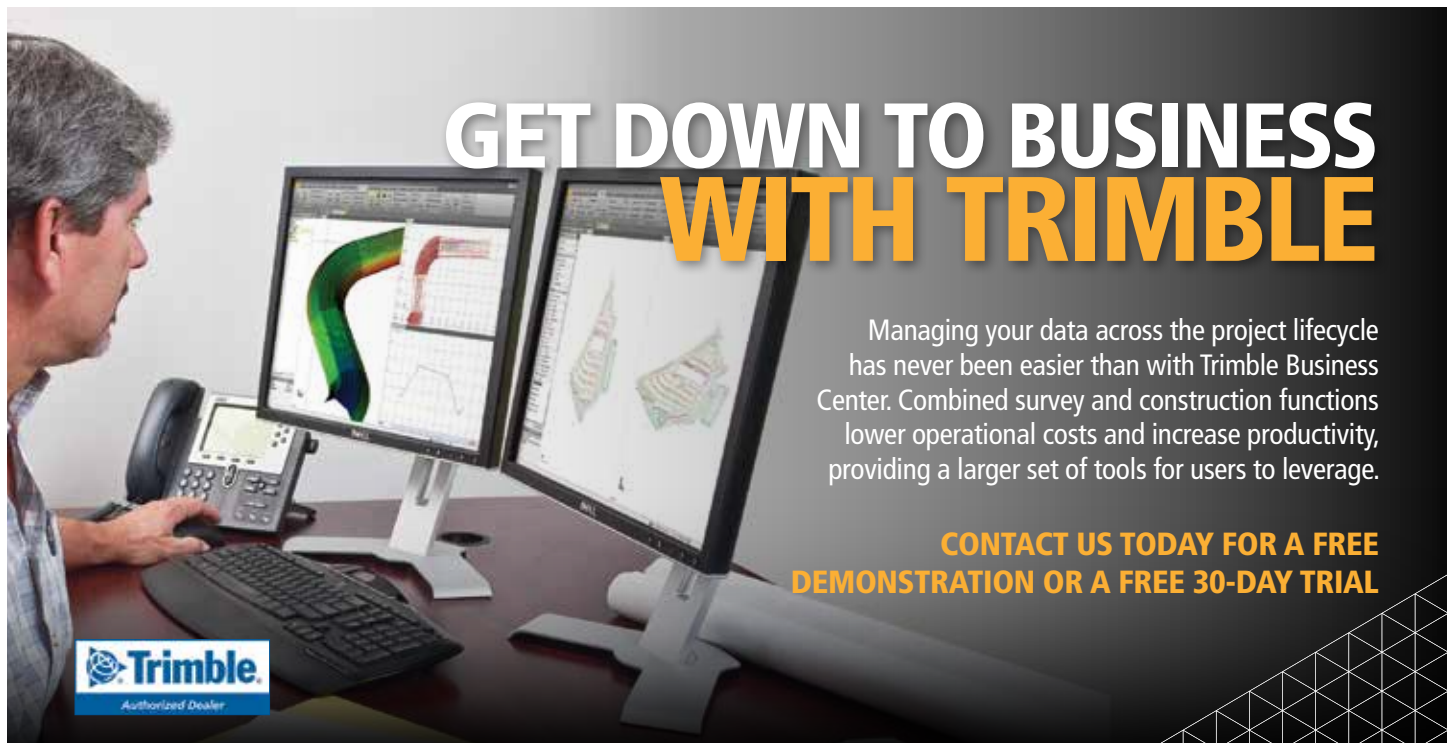
This investment confronts the large infrastructure issues that Michigan faces, such as lead-laden water service lines, PFAS contamination, undersized sewers, failing septic systems, unaffordable water rates and constrained local budgets. This initiative will allow communities to access needed funds for necessary and timely infrastructure projects.

This investment includes a proposal combining federal dollars for lead service line replacement in low-income communities (\$102.1 million) with bonding authority for water quality protection (\$290 million), one-time General Fund appropriation for drinking water infrastructure and innovation (\$105 million), and asset management grants

(\$2.9 million) to help communities develop, update, and improve their plans for wastewater and stormwater systems resulting in a comprehensive water infrastructure investment of \$500 million in Michigan's water systems. The MI Clean Water investment will be done without raising the taxes of Michiganders.

This is a bipartisan initiative that will need some minor legislative approval. MITA staff will be working closely with the Legislature and Governor to ensure that the necessary bills are passed so that this money can flow into communities for next year's construction season.


If you have any questions, please contact Mike Nystrom, Executive Vice President, at mikenystrom@thinkmita.org or Lance Binoniemi, Vice President of Government Affairs, at lancebinoniemi@thinkmita.org. They both can be reached at (517) 347-8336. **CS**



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MITA APPLIES FOR GRANTS TO HELP MEMBERS

MITA applies for grants that help its members in many ways, including: safety, personal company training, retention and recruitment. Recently, MITA received grants that help with safety training and another that provide for the development of a heavy equipment class in the Gaylord School District.

In November, the State of Michigan made available between \$1,500 to \$3,000 available per employee for companies to train new and existing employees. MITA offered to assist member companies in applying for this grant. Recently, MITA also co-applied for a grant that will change the way construction is taught and how school counselors educate students on career choices in our industry.

When we all work together as a group, we are able to accomplish so much more. Co-opetition is the combining of the words cooperation

and competition. Roughly defined, when competing entities join ranks to cooperate, greater things are accomplished, and all prosper.

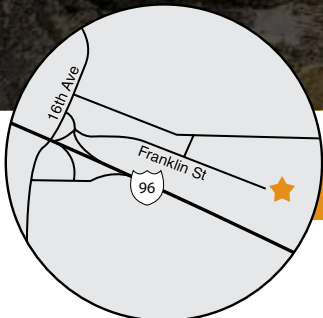
If you have questions regarding grants, contact Director of Workforce Development Ken Bertolini by emailing him at kenbertolini@thinkmita.org, or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336. **CS**



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MEMBER PROJECT PROFILE — FAIRVIEW PUMP STATION BYPASS, DETROIT

MITA Members Mersino and Weiss Construction have been involved with the largest bypass to date in all of North America located at the Fairview Pump Station in Detroit.

The 120 million gallons per day (MGD) project began in mid 2019, and is slated for completion by late 2021. Once on site, Mersino was asked about the feasibility of providing a much higher volume system capable of approximately 200 MGD or, more realistically, the largest system that could be provided in the limited-sized gate structure that was located upstream of the work area. Mersino designed and proposed multiple upgrades to achieve this desired new duty point. In late 2019, Mersino was given the green light to begin installing the larger system, now consisting of a seven-pump system versus the original five pumps.

Weiss Construction updated many elements of the existing pump station structure, so that this system will be newly designed to bypass incoming wastewater flow from the Detroit River Interceptor (DRI) to the Fairview Pump Station. The new design will now be able to pump from the 33-foot-deep gate structure upstream of the work area and temporary bulkhead, returning flows to the DRI through the north stop log chamber, located downstream of the pump station approximately 80 feet away. **CS**



View from the last pump base plate porthole before the 7th and final pump was installed into the bypass pumping structure (Gate House Shaft).



Just a small portion of the team involved in making this huge system work. Gino Mersino (CEO), Jeff Dinnan (VP of Service), Rich Eady (Project Manager), Mike Medling (Fusion Operation Manager), Joe Cherluck (Lead Engineer), Ryan Fuller (Site Foreman), Tim Liley (Design), in addition to all Mersino Dewatering Operators and Global Pump Design & Engineering Teams.

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INDUSTRY WORK ZONE SAFETY DIALOGUE CONTINUES



This is a memorandum that MITA's Executive Vice President Mike Nystrom sent to MITA members following the tragic loss of lives at a work zone in November.

In early November, our industry was once again sadly reminded that construction work zone safety is one of the biggest challenges that contractors face on a daily basis. The tragedy of two lost lives in a single incident, on top of numerous other industry losses in the last few years, has significantly heightened that awareness. Contractors and their

employees from across the state have been reaching out to MITA staff with a passionate call for action that change needs to occur immediately.

As driver mobility concerns have grown along with the amount of work being performed across the state, so too have the number of work zone incidents. MITA staff, along with industry representatives of the Work

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Zone Safety Task Force (WZSTF), will be engaging in high level discussions with MDOT leadership to propose significant specific safety related changes that need to occur in work zones. However, input is needed from all of industry in order to make changes that are ultimately impactful and long-lasting.

We recognize that what might work for one sector of our industry, may not work for another, so we are not looking to offer broad stroke suggestions, but rather targeted ideas that will offer real change. We have heard from a variety of companies thus far, such as patching and CPM contractors, mainline paving (asphalt and concrete) companies, bridge builders as well as traffic control and pavement marking representatives.

Many ideas have been offered, including the elimination of nighttime

work in certain categories, full closures/detours, added barriers and increased police presence, to name a few. **To have your voice heard, please reach out to a MITA senior staff member.**

One lost life in a work zone is too many; and, therefore, it is time for our industry to work together with MDOT to make thoughtful, yet substantive change. **CS**





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MIOSHA RELEASES EMERGENCY RULES

In October, MIOSHA recently released a set of Emergency Rules to establish requirements for employers to control, prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The most notable sections should be Rules 10 and 11 that pertain to training and recordkeeping requirements.

Despite a plethora of conflicting information, guidance and recommendations from a number of sources (federal, state and local Agencies), MITA maintains that the industry should adhere to the CDC's guidance. Doing so will maintain compliance and protection; and, most importantly, keep the workforce strong, safe and healthy.

If you have any questions, please email Director of Safety and Compliance Greg Brooks at gregbrooks@thinkmita.org or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336. **CS**

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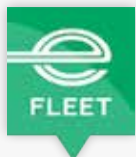
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MDOT CHIEF BRIDGE ENGINEER RECEIVES AWARD

Matt Chynoweth, the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) chief bridge engineer, has been named one of the American Segmental Bridge Institute's (ASBI) 2020 Leadership Award recipients for outstanding career contributions.

Chynoweth, a 17-year veteran of the department, is director of the department's Bureau of Bridges and Structures (which develops statewide policy for design, construction, maintenance and operation of the state's 11,218 bridges) and serves as the Michigan bridge lead for the Gordie Howe International Bridge. He oversaw a complex bearing replacement project on the I-75 Zilwaukee Bridge (also known as the Z-Bridge) in 2013 and 2014.

"I'm not a big fan of awards or

personal recognition, but to have a group like that think that way of me is very humbling," Chynoweth said of the award, announced Nov. 4 at ASBI's 2020 Virtual Convention.

State Transportation Director Paul C. Ajegba said that recognition is well-deserved.

"Michigan is so fortunate to have Matt's nationally recognized expertise here at MDOT, providing direction and oversight for all public bridges," Ajegba said. "Under his leadership, the Bridges and Structures team works every day to keep our bridges safe and passable."

A new video posted to MDOT's YouTube channel features Chynoweth's career at MDOT, the benefits membership in ASBI brought to the

Zilwaukee Bridge project, and his affinity for the Z-Bridge.

"This bridge is just my favorite because, quite frankly, I don't think many people consider it their favorite," Chynoweth said of the Zilwaukee Bridge, which was one of the largest concrete structures in the United States when it was completed in 1988. "Just the sheer size and complexity of this bridge just makes it my favorite."

The Zilwaukee Bridge is the largest post-tensioned segmental concrete bridge in Michigan. This type of bridge construction (also used in building the US-131 bridge over the Muskegon River and M-39 southbound ramp to eastbound I-94) offers benefits that include efficient construction and durability. **CS**



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Continued from page 5

rules and regulations. Two Legal Issues articles on page 25 and 27, provided by Bodman PLC, offer you the latest guidance on public health orders, CDC guidance and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, contact the MITA office at 517-347-8336.

*Best wishes to all of you for a happy holiday season and a prosperous new year! **CS***

Continued from page 16

Lame Duck session officially begins after the election and lasts until the end of this year. The Legislature will go on break for a week for hunting season and also a week for Thanksgiving. The first few weeks of December should be where most legislative movement may occur.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Nystrom, Executive Vice President, at mikenystrom@thinkmita.org or Lance Binoniemi, Vice President of Government Affairs, at lancebinoniemi@thinkmita.org, or call 517-347-8336. **CS**

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The MITA Association Health Plan: No Price Increase for 2021

Salus Group, in cooperation with MITA, recently completed the Association Health Plan annual loss ratio review with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan and is pleased to announce a ZERO percent price increase, effective January 1, 2021.



This is the 30th consecutive month of no Association Health Plan rate adjustments, and the rates are guaranteed through December 31, 2021. Salus Group representatives are available to assist with any open enrollment needs that MITA members may have, and are prepared to review ancillary and other Association Health Plan 2021 enhancements.

For more information about the Association Health Plan, please contact MITA's Vice President of Membership Services, Rob Coppersmith, at roboppersmith@thinkmita.org, or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336. You may also contact Salus Group representatives. Their contact information is listed below.

Mike Buck, mbuck@thesalusgroup.com, 586-817-0833
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Continued from page 19

requester during the evaluation process. Once evaluated, a product is determined to be either accepted, rejected, or needs further study, and the outcome of the evaluation is recorded and communicated. If a product is accepted, steps towards implementation will follow.

This process may sound involved depending on the request and timing of things, but it is the process MDOT will adhere to in order to be fair, clear, and consistent for all of industry. MDOT has noted that in the past some requests for the use of new/alternative materials on specific projects have come through at the project level, or have been made during MDOT's project advertisement phase, through the Notice to Bidder Inquiry Process. MDOT has advised industry that they will only be approving alternative materials that don't meet current specifications through the New Materials and Qualified Product Evaluation Process described here, and not by any other means. For this reason, it is recommended that new materials be submitted as soon as possible so any benefits can be realized as quickly as possible.

MDOT has committed to a transparent process, and to make any requests and their status available to all through an external facing website. The innovation website will serve as an external interface tool demonstrating department accomplishments in deploying innovations statewide. Although the New Materials and Qualified Product Evaluation Process is fully implemented, the new website is still being developed and MDOT anticipates it will be available publicly by early 2021. **CS**

Continued from page 29

Conclusion

In summary, employers must:

- Inform employees of their rights under the FFCRA;
- Advise employees on how to request FFCRA leave;
- Approve leave and payment when employees timely submit completed Forms and supporting documentation;
- Continue employees' health insurance benefits during FFCRA leave;
- Retain documentation;
- Process the IRS tax credit;
- Reinstate employees to their same or similar positions; and
- Ensure employees are not subject to interference or retaliation.

Employers should review their FFCRA processes and procedures for compliance. **Bodman's Workplace Law Group** can assist with any questions you may have. **CS**



KEEP GOING STRONG

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MITA's major focus on safety encompasses regular training, informational updates and regular job site inspections to ensure that member companies are compliant with keeping the workforce and motorists safe when work is being done.

MITA staff is now available for inspections upon requests and will comply with company and government-related COVID-19 policies and procedures on your jobsite.

For more information, to schedule a job site inspection, or to set up a job training session (on site or via Zoom), please contact:

Greg Brooks
Director of Safety & Compliance
Phone: 517-507-2531
gregbrooks@thinkmita.org

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Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association (MITA)
Published by Nancy Hale Brown · October 30 at 10:51 AM ·

MITA Member **Give Em A Brake Safety** is proud to be a Visionary of Hope Sponsor for such an amazing organization - Hand2Hand. And we are proud of **Give Em A Brake Safety**!!

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Hand2Hand
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Thank you to some of our generous and compassionate Visionary of Hope Sponsors! With their help, we have a goal to enter 31 new schools this school year to reach more students that suffer from weekend food insecurity. Thank you Visionary of Hope Sponsors! #WeAreHand2Hand #LetHopeFly



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VOTERS APPROVE RECORD 94 PERCENT OF TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT INITIATIVES TOTALING \$14 BILLION

SUPPORT HITS 20-YEAR HIGH

By Dr. Alison Premo Black, ARTBA Chief Economist

In the November election, voters in 18 states have approved a record 94 percent of state and local ballot initiatives to date, providing an additional \$14 billion in one-time and recurring revenue for transportation improvements throughout the country, according to an analysis by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA).

Results are still pending for 13 measures, but the analysis by ARTBA's Transportation Investment Advocacy Center™ (ARTBA-TIAC) indicates voters Nov. 3 approved 303 of 322 initiatives, the highest approval rate in the 20 years ARTBA has been tracking initiatives. Visit <https://transportationinvestment.org/research/election-reports/ballot-measures/> for details.

"More than ever before, these results prove that improving transportation infrastructure is something Americans voters strongly support," said ARTBA Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Alison Black.

Among the notable findings:

- Arkansas voters approved the renewal of a half-cent sales tax increase by a 55 percent to 45 percent margin. The measure, originally approved by voters in 2012, is projected to raise approximately \$205 million annually for state highways and \$44 million annually for localities.
- In Austin, Texas, more than two-thirds of voters endorsed a \$7.1 billion transportation bond, approving it by a 67 percent to 33 percent margin. Revenue raised

by the bond offering will fund the initial and ongoing costs of Project Connect, a transit plan anchored by two high-capacity light rail lines serving the city's densest neighborhoods.

- Voters in Portland, Oregon rejected a 0.75 percent payroll tax on employers that would have funded a \$7 billion transportation plan comprised of safety and transit projects.

Historically, most transportation measures are placed on the ballot in even-numbered years when congressional or presidential elections drive higher turnout. This year, the impacts of COVID-19 caused several notable measures to be dropped. These included measures in the California's Bay Area, Sacramento, and Riverside counties that were expected to raise over \$100 billion in revenue over the next 40 years. Proponents are expected to try again in the next election cycle.

The approved 2020 measures will support \$12.7 billion in new transportation investment revenue and \$1.3 billion in continued funding through tax extensions, renewals or protections.

ARTBA's Transportation Investment Advocacy Center™ (TIAC) is an educational and informational resource designed to help private citizens, legislators, organizations and businesses successfully grow transportation investment at the state and local levels. It is a signature initiative of the Transportation Makes America Work (TMAW) campaign. **CS**



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