

WINTER 2011

# CROSS SECTION

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Grant Charlick, an apprentice program graduate out of Laborers Local 1076 and an employee of Skanska, USA, considers MLTAI and the Construction Craft Laborer apprenticeship program an important part of his professional growth.

Charlick stated, "Having passed a college calculus class I expected that there was very little MLTAI could teach me about math, but with their unique approach to teaching I learned how the mathematic principles I learned in college apply in the real world. College didn't teach me that. Also, the wide variety of subjects taught at MLTAI as well as the variety of experience I've gained as a result of working for a general contractor has prepared me to take advantage of advancement opportunities that could come my way in the future."

Michigan Laborers' Training and Apprenticeship Institute provides training to apprentices and journey persons alike. Our instructors have a wide range of field expertise to provide our members with top-notch training using cutting edge technology. Our state-of-the-art training facilities located in the cities of Wayne, Perry and Iron Mountain accommodate on average 2,500 members annually. Courses range from 2 hours to 120 hours in length and include environmental training, construction training, life skills courses as well as on-line courses.

Graduates reaching Journey worker status can be granted college credits at virtually all of Michigan's community colleges.

MLTAI and the Construction Craft Laborers apprenticeship program produce Laborers skilled in their field, dedicated and trained. When Grant was asked what it takes to be a successful Laborer he said, "You have to show up every day in the right state of mind, with a proper attitude and be dependable, punctual and trustworthy. You have to bring your "A" game every day".

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Thank you for your help in this matter.

Bob Montel  
Safety Coordinator  
Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc.

Doug:

Thanks for setting us up with Dale. He is very informative and likeable. We appreciate the access to the professionals at MITA.

Joe Cook  
Pro-Tec Equipment

Dear Mike and Glenn:

Thank you for coming to my retirement party celebration. I also want to thank you for your help and cooperation over the years on the many things that we have worked on together. Your interest, knowledge of, and dedication to transportation has been outstanding and greatly appreciated by me, my staff and MDOT.

Wayne Roe  
MDOT

Dear Nancy:

Thank you for your great service to our Michigan team. Best wishes in 2011.

Beth Bywaters  
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## Underground Spotlight

# DNRE Announces Six New Revolving Loan Fund Projects to Aid Communities' Infrastructure

**T**he Department of Natural Resources and Environment recently announced six new loan commitments totaling \$23,190,000 from the department's revolving fund programs to aid communities throughout Michigan to make needed infrastructure improvements.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Strategic Water Quality Initiatives Fund (SWQIF) provide low-interest financing for local units of government to make needed improvements to wastewater collection and treatment facilities, while assistance from the Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) finances improvements to public drinking water systems.

"Communities across Michigan are making tremendous strides in protecting and enhancing Michigan's water resources by implementing these critically important infrastructure improvement projects," said DNRE Director Rebecca A. Humphries.

"These low-interest loans also bring new jobs through construction activity and help communities attract new business opportunities."

With loan interest rates well below those otherwise available

in the open market, funding infrastructure projects through the DNRE's programs allows communities to pass the savings along to users of their water and wastewater systems.

The funded CWSRF projects will see wastewater infrastructure improvements in four communities across the state totaling \$18,835,000. The SWQIF awarded a loan totaling \$365,000 and the DWRF loaned \$3,990,000.

The city of Lapeer's \$8,905,000 will be going towards improvements at the wastewater treatment plant, including work on the bypass pump station, head works, and secondary treatment equipment and construction of a new disinfection system.

Delhi Charter Township is receiving an \$8,400,000 loan to complete upgrades to a sanitary sewage pumping station and installing a new screening system at the wastewater treatment plant.

A \$305,000 loan to the city of Grand Blanc is for approximately 3,420 feet of storm water extensions located in the Reid Road Pumping Station area to allow footing drains to be disconnected from sanitary sewers, ending overloads at the pumping station.

Also, the CWSRF is providing a loan of \$1,225,000 to the city of Mt. Clemens for the replacement of structurally deficient sewers, as well as the replacement of the existing chlorine disinfection process with ultraviolet disinfection. The project will eliminate the potential for structural sewer failure and eliminate the safety hazards associated with the use of chlorine, as well as the production of chlorine by products in the Clinton River.

\$365,000 from the SWQIF program is being awarded to the city of Grand Blanc for the disconnection of footing drains for 61 structures located within the Reid Road Pumping Station area. Removing clear water from the city's sanitary sewer systems will prevent sanitary sewer overflows and basement backups. All SWQIF capital originates from the Great Lakes Water Quality Bond Fund.

The DWRF is providing a loan of \$3,990,000 to the city of Grosse Pointe Woods for installing water main on 11 streets and also for installing remote read water meters that transmit data to a central office.



**If you receive this magazine and are not a MITA member, here are plenty of good reasons to JOIN TODAY!**



*Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association*

## QUALIFICATIONS

MITA is a statewide construction trade association consisting of nearly 600 Michigan companies representing construction disciplines such as road and bridge, sewer and water, utility, railroad, excavation and specialty construction. The organization consists of 13 employees as well as a number of professional consultants all working to serve industry needs.

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- ◆ Facilitate industry's input on technical issues, developing specifications, and modifications to MDOT's Standard Specifications for Construction.

### MEMBER SERVICES

- ◆ Administer a statewide Best Practices Utility Contract, which helps companies with issues related to utility location.
- ◆ Provide statewide professional networking opportunities at Annual Conference/Trade Show, Winter Ski Weekend, Summer Conference, Golf Outings, Hunts and more.
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- ◆ Provide members with prompt/professional attention to any issues they face.

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- ◆ Represent the industry by promoting and protecting their interests in Washington D.C., Lansing and at the local level.
- ◆ Advocate for an increase in state funding for transportation/underground industries.
- ◆ Act as an advocate/watchdog for positive/negative legislation.
- ◆ With the strength of the MITA PAC, support legislators who support the industry.

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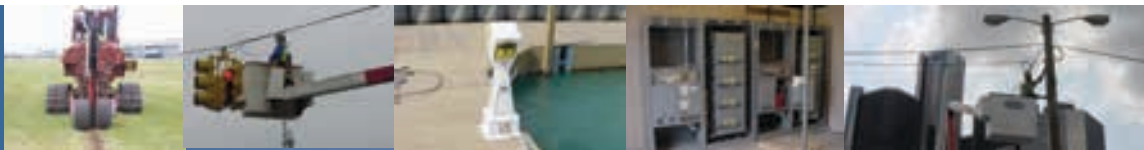
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# Member Profile



## Rauhorn Electric, Inc.

**R**auhorn Electric is far more than a traffic signal electrical contractor – and they view MITA as integral to their business.

The type of infrastructure electrical work that Rauhorn handles demands not only the obvious technical expertise, but also informational networking with MDOT/MISS DIG and others to stay abreast of current issues, such as those related to intelligent transportation systems (ITS). MITA provides that link through seminars, and meetings, according to Del Rau, who founded the company in 1980. (Originally, Rau had a partner named Victor Horn; thus the name Rauhorn.) Del's wife, Gloria, has been involved in the business since the start. Their son, Anthony, joined the company nine years ago and oversees manpower, the shop and the fleet of trucks and equipment; and their daughter, Andrea, recently came on board, with expertise in human resources.

The family business began in the Rau's humble apartment in 1980, and has grown into a new 34,000 square-foot office and shop, completed in 2004, on a 20 acre campus in Macomb Twp. There are currently over 100 talented full-time employees (electricians, engineers, accountants, office and field staff). Gloria handles accounts payable and jokes that she no longer has to balance two babies in her arms and answer the phone while employees come in and out of the home.

This union business is thriving through the continued hard work of their employees, in addition to pride, and enthusiasm for what they do, which is very apparent from the minute a visitor enters the parking lot. Replicas of antique light poles greet visitors near the parking lot, and a traffic signal flanks the company sign near the road. Inside the office, visitors are greeted by beautiful interior design – thanks to Gloria's talents – and unusual items from job sites, such as an antique inkwell and a light bulb full of water.



To further enhance a visitor's first impression, an entire hallway wall is completely lined with Rauhorn's project photos, which were taken proudly over the years.

"This year, one of our projects is with the City of Detroit Fire Department – a GPS transmitter installed in the emergency vehicle transmits its location to a receiver installed in the traffic signals controller," Del explains. "The controller then processes the information and gives a green light to the approaching emergency vehicle or fire truck, and a red light in all opposing directions. We are also handling a new technology speed warning project in metro Detroit."

The speed warning system is currently being installed at the I-75/9 mile curve. The sensors

Rauhorn installs detect air temperature, surface temperature of the pavement, and visibility. This information is transmitted real time to a computer that evaluates a multitude of road conditions such as icing, low visibility, and traffic conditions. Motorists are notified instantly via a roadside digital message sign displaying an appropriate warning message regarding road conditions, such as "Reduce Speed – Icing". Rauhorn recently completed a similar pavement sensor project on a taxiway bridge and two runways at Metro Airport.

Other interesting Rauhorn ITS projects this year include installation of video detection cameras in Macomb and Oakland counties. The cameras count traffic and monitor speed in order to look for traffic timing and spacing. The system automatically sends information to a local controller, then a traffic control computer, which can then change a long green light to a long red light, for example, to help avoid congestion and accidents. These are just







examples of the high-tech work Rauhorn is capable of doing.

"Some years ago we were involved with Oakland County and Siemens Corporation to help develop the GPS systems that are common now in autos," Del recalls. "I would carry a prehistoric GPS the size of a huge suitcase that would communicate with sensors on freeways – that big suitcase was a predecessor to current GPS systems."

This memory elicits another "I love what I do" sigh from Del. "I was an inside electrician and I was bored with the repetitive type of work. And how did I get into all of this? Someone asked if I could wire traffic signals, and I said, 'If it involves electricity, I can do it.' Our first job was at 13 Mile and Telegraph, and we lost money on it!"

Now, if you think all Rauhorn does is MDOT/municipal/airport, signal work, and ITS, think again. Their abilities and experience also include commercial and industrial electrical contracting, as well as design build projects. Over the past decade, Rauhorn has specialized in all areas of electrical infrastructure installation, Del's son, Anthony, explains. This includes underground work, such as jacking, directional boring and plowing for electrical and communication conduit, duct banks, trenching and light pole base installation, in addition to primary electrical service, pump station electrical and controls, transformers and switchgear, high voltage installations for Detroit Edison Company and the City of Detroit Public Lighting Department and lighting installations.

"We are a pre-qualified contractor with MDOT, and we currently do work in Kentucky and are pre-qualified in Ohio and Indiana," Anthony says. "We are also approved by the U.S. Department of Defense and Homeland Security as a specialty electrical contractor."

Every service Rauhorn provides is made possible by a loyal workforce, says Anthony's, sister, Andrea. "There is an extremely low staff turnover, and that is a real asset for this company."

Rauhorn's journeyman linemen, journeyman signal technicians and journeyman wiremen are members of the IBEW LU#17, LU#58, and LU#948, and they employ members of Operating Engineers Local #324 and Laborers Local #1191.

"Our personnel are enthusiastic, qualified and conscientious," Del explains in a letter that potential customers receive. "This gives us the ability to keep our standards high and our goals met."

MITA has helped the company meet their goals as well, Del says, in many ways, such as MISS DIG concerns, MIOSHA matters and legal issues and training. In return, Rauhorn is an asset to MITA according to Doug Needham, P.E., MITA's director of technical services.

"Rauhorn is an active member of the MITA Signal Group, and the MITA MDOT Signal Group," Doug says. "We discuss signal problems that are occurring, and a lot of issues get resolved. To their credit, Rauhorn has been phenomenal. They are a big part of our success."



## **Rauhorn Electric, Inc. Electrical Contractor**

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**MITA Member Since 2006**



# Associate Member Profile

## ALTA EQUIPMENT COMPANY

**A**lthough the Alta name may be new to some in the Michigan construction industry, the faces of Alta have been known for decades. While Alta originally made its name in the industrial sector as a material handling supplier, its construction division was born from the key employees of the former Wolverine Tractor and Equipment Company in January 2010.

“The name has changed,” agrees Ric Simon, President of Alta’s construction division and former President at Wolverine Tractor, “but the core group of dedicated and knowledgeable people remains the same. Most of our employees have been in the construction business for over a decade, so customers can count on us to understand their needs and offer real solutions.”

The products, too, have remained the same, as Alta distributes products formerly represented by Wolverine such as Volvo Construction Equipment, Link-Belt Cranes, Gomaco, Sennebogen, and Genesis. “We only carry high quality brands,” says Simon. “Volvo

articulated trucks, Link-Belt cranes, Gomaco pavers – these are some of the best known and most respected products in the industry, and we’re proud to represent them. Quality in products and service is one of the hallmarks of our company.” The company’s flagship brand is Volvo, which has come to be known for its extraordinary fuel economy and quality construction.

Alta Equipment Company was founded in Michigan in 1984 by Steve Greenawalt. Beginning with just one Yale lift truck store, Greenawalt built the company to its current size, now with 14 locations throughout the Midwest. “My philosophy has not really changed over the years,” says Greenawalt. “If you’re not the industry’s best service provider, the customer will eventually find the company who is. So my goal is simply to be the best. We stay ahead of the competition by investing in our people and our service infrastructure. That means constant employee training and upgrading service fleets and facilities.”





For example, Greenawalt explains, service technicians take at least 80 hours of training annually to stay on top of technological developments in the industry. Similarly, Alta's account representatives receive regular product and application training, giving them the tools they need to help customers make informed buying decisions. And the company has recently invested in new customer relationship management software to better understand its customers' needs and deliver solutions more efficiently.

"All together," explains Greenawalt, "we've invested more than 20 million dollars in the construction business over the past year. That includes expanding and upgrading our facilities throughout the state, growing our inventory to meet customer needs and training our employees. It's tempting in these economic conditions to freeze investment, but we have confidence that the Michigan market has stabilized and is growing stronger. We want to be ready to support Michigan contractors as they ramp up business in the coming months and years."

Included in the facilities upgrades is the complete renovation of two buildings in Wixom, which function as the corporate and construction headquarters. "In January, we moved our corporate headquarters to a newly remodeled 68,000 sq. ft. building on Beck Road, just off of I-96," says Greenawalt. "We built offices, added paint and wash bays, and installed new overhead cranes. Then we did much the same to the location we had vacated on Wixom Road, and that became the headquarters for our construction division."

In addition to its construction products, Alta offers a very wide range of material handling solutions, from lift trucks to fleet maintenance and even including warehouse layout and design. Alta sells, rents and services forklift brands such as Hyster, Yale and Combilift.

Alta Equipment Company is a proud member of MITA and a strong supporter of its indispensable work as an advocate for the construction industry in Michigan. Not only is MITA a powerful voice for the industry in the legislature, but it is also one of the key institutions that gives Michigan contractors and their suppliers a sense of community and common purpose. "This industry wouldn't be the same without MITA," says Ric Simon. "We're grateful to the MITA group for the work they do, and we look forward to many more years working with them and with the contractor members they represent."

#### **CONTACT:**

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## Did You Know?

MITA has been actively engaged in various forms of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Social media, if you are not already aware, are a group of Internet-based applications that allow the fun, and easy exchange of useful information, ideas, photos, videos and more. You can join the conversation about topics related to the construction industry by clicking on the following links.

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Mike Nystrom

## MITA's Passion for Service Continues to Thrive

**2**010 has been a year of significant change for the Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association (MITA). As an organization we have had our share of victories throughout the year while making progress in many areas, and yet much remains to be done.

Over the course of the past year, we have had a handful of staff changes. First of all on March 1, 2010, longtime industry leader Bob Patzer retired at which time the MITA Board of Directors put its faith in me to lead MITA into the future. I have made the internal decision to not fill my old position of Vice President of Government & Public Relations as a cost saving measure to reflect the challenges that are going on with our state economy and more directly, with our industry. However, we did add an Outreach Coordinator, Nicole Cook, who is helping to develop a more coordinated grassroots political effort that has been missing for years. We also replaced our Website Coordinator by hiring Anita Lindsay. This position is more important than ever as electronic communication tools become MITA's primary daily connection with the industry. In total, we have 13 dedicated, professional staff members, who stand ready to serve each and every member of the association with any needs that may arise.

MITA runs on a very well thought out, tightly managed annual budget, and I am happy to report that even with these challenging times, the association will end up with a small, yet positive bottom line "profit" in 2010. As a non-profit organization, it is not our goal to

have an exceedingly large bottom line, and as such, we are going into our 7th year in a row in 2011 without any dues increase for both the contractor and the associate membership categories. We as staff continue to be diligent in terms of collection efforts; and, yet, are holding relatively steady in terms our overall membership numbers,

having only fallen off by eight total companies in the past 12 months. We also continue to aggressively pay down the debt on the mortgage for the MITA building. At this time, we have a full house with three solid tenants in the Asphalt Paving Association of Michigan, the Michigan Concrete Association and the Greater Lansing Home Builders and Remodelers Association. We have worked hard to develop your trust and I feel that we spend the financial resources available to us in a very efficient and effective manner. You have my unqualified promise that this stewardship will continue in the future.

As staff we often say that we promote and protect the industry. This statement is literally a mission statement for each and every one of us at MITA. Adequate infrastructure investment has and will continue to be MITA's top priority, although unfortunately 2010 proved to be yet another challenging year in this area of effort. Once again, a legislature came and went without addressing an increase in transportation funding. Although the team at MITA has laid the groundwork and made the case that this needs to be a legislative priority, the anti-tax and anti-government spending environment that is being churned by tea-party conservatives continues to be an obstacle standing in the way of success. This is not only the case here in Michigan, but in Washington at the federal level and in many other states as well.

MITA continues to be a highly respected voice in the Lansing legislative community. As an industry, we did find success at the Capitol in 2010, most notably securing an additional \$250+ million, which will be spent on sewers across the state over the next three years. MITA staff also aggressively worked to promote several other legislative initiatives while at the same time working to oppose and ultimately kill several pieces of bad legislation.

MITA also has had numerous positive developments in the area of engineering and MDOT/local agency technical involvement. The organization also continues its tradition of leadership in construction safety and MIOSHA

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***A few examples of specific "return on investment" in 2010 were clearly visible:***

- MITA's unprecedented legislative outreach allowed not a week to go by without members and staff in direct contact with elected officials advocating for additional infrastructure investment.
- Updates to the MITA safety training program helped to educate hundreds of industry workers and make job sites safer across the state.
- Secured over \$1 million in grants that in turn are helping the environment and saving contractors thousands of dollars while they reinvest in their own equipment.
- Continued to aggressively represent the industry by pushing several positive technical and specification changes with state and local contracting agencies.

representation. MITA's new training program, where staff goes out to the membership rather than having just three regional super conferences, has proven to be successful beyond anticipation. And finally, by pursuing new ideas with regard to our social activities and services, your association continues to uncover new opportunities like the successful diesel grant application that happened in to 2010.

MITA staff will continue to passionately promote the best interests of the heavy construction industry here in Michigan by regularly looking into our crystal ball. We will also continue to strive to develop relationships with those individuals who are making decisions that might have an impact on your business. For instance, the state employees who may be moving up into new positions as a result of the recent early retirement at the State of Michigan and those newly elected state policymakers who will take office after the first of the year.

In the coming year, I will continue to meet with the members of MITA across the state. Please view my visit to your office as an opportunity to voice your questions, concerns and ideas in order for us to continually improve our representation of this great industry.

For any comments or questions, please contact  
Mike Nystrom either by email at [mikenystrom@mi-ita.com](mailto:mikenystrom@mi-ita.com)  
or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336.



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## Vice President of Membership Services



Rob Coppersmith

## MITA Provides Member Services and So Much More!

One of the most common barometers used to gauge an association is the numbers of members that it has. 2010 proved to be an interesting year with regard to this issue. It is no secret that many contractor and associate members have struggled through the past year and are transitioning their business to meet the needs of the current times. With all that said, the MITA membership has remained constant, which is a positive sign by all accounts. This has happened for a variety of reasons.

In trying times it is crucial to be up to speed on everything that can impact your business either positively or negatively. MITA has been a leader in this area for members. Regular bulletins, meetings and phone calls

have kept many a member in the loop regarding information that can impact the decisions they make pertaining to their businesses.

Staff involvement with members problems and issues has increased as the potential for any issue that could impact a members business draws an increased level of scrutiny, which has been only heightened by the razor thin margins of the day. Long and short of it: MITA continues to be a good gut check for many members facing difficult decisions.

MITA communications continue to improve and evolve. A great deal of time and energy has been expended on this area. A revamping of the MITA website will unfold

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## MITA Maintained a Strong Voice for the Industry in 2010

**A**lthough the economic turnaround for our state and industry didn't materialize in 2010 as we all hoped it would, perhaps some reflection on a few noteworthy accomplishments would be therapeutic as we close the books on a year that was politically and economically stressful, yet busy and productive. In maintaining our strong voice for the heavy construction industry in 2010, we were successful in achieving many significant accomplishments that include:

- Successful collaboration with MDOT in the development of a pilot program that allows the nighttime movement of milling equipment. Prior to this success, the movement of milling equipment (which is typically over-length) was restricted to daylight hours that significantly limited its efficient movement between projects.
- Continued in the leadership role of the Design Task Force, Utility Subgroup and facilitated its 2nd Annual Michigan Utility Coordination Conference, which was well attended by representatives from owner agencies, design firms, utility companies and construction companies. This collaborative subgroup is currently working on the development of the concepts for a future pilot project that will involve 3-D referencing of existing utility facilities.
- Continued focused efforts, in partnership with MDOT leadership, on positive enhancements to the MDOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program. Successes include the execution of pilot project initiatives, the development and implementation of a reality based algorithm for computing project specific participation goals, and the implementation of a timely and process specific goal modification/waiver procedure.
- Continued aggressive advocacy for the integrity of the competitive bid process with numerous local government jurisdictions that are considering or currently including a local preference criteria in their contract award decisions. MITA remains steadfast in its position that projects be awarded to the lowest, responsive, and responsible bidder.
- Facilitated the formal formation of the Joint Pipe Operations Committee, the Pavement Marking Operations Committee, and the Bi-Annual Work Zone Safety Meeting. These standing committees provide the specific industry disciplines a formal avenue

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Glenn Bukoski, P.E.

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## Director of Safety & Workforce Development



Patrick Brown

# 2010 Year in Review: Safety and Workforce Development

## Training

2010 was a rollercoaster year in the safety arena. MITA expanded its scope of training to include OSHA 10 and 30 hour outreach programs along with the myriad of other classes already offered. Numerous MITA members are performing work in OSHA states, and some general contractors require outreach training to bid certain projects. MIOSHA offers a 10-hour class that does not meet the OSHA requirements. MITA staff traveled throughout Michigan training thousands of workers in construction safety and hazard awareness. We even ventured to Indiana and South Dakota, and MITA would like to thank those members who think so highly of our training services.

A MIOSHA Consultation Education and Training Division grant helped our efforts to promote job site analysis. MITA encourages its members to plan ahead to recognize, avoid,

control and eliminate any and all potential hazards.

Our focus in 2011 is to create a heightened awareness of health hazards that often go overlooked. Lead, silica and asbestos are on the MIOSHA radar, and MITA members need to be aware of the potential hazards associated with them.

## Enforcement and Appeals

MIOSHA appeals were at an all time high in 2010. With a full complement of safety officers in the field now, MIOSHA enforcement has been constant and regular with fewer citations per visit but higher penalties. Much of the attention is a result of an audit from federal OSHA on all state run programs. MITA has seen an increase in the number of serious citations and a significant rise in penalty amounts.

A staple of MITA is its MIOSHA appeals service. Exercise your right to appeal by sending any citation to the MITA office 517-347-8344 as soon as they arrive. It is important that the citation(s) are appealed within 15 days, otherwise they become final order and no changes or modifications can be made. MITA has and will represent its members in other states to the best of our abilities. Some states operate slightly different, but the 15-day window is the same for all.

Early retirement offered by the state has prompted changes inside MIOSHA. Most of the vacancies are at the supervisory level, which means a possible shift in operations. MITA strives to have a good working relationship with the department in an effort to assure the safety of all workers and the fair treatment of employers.

MITA was involved on several advisory committees that looked into changes to Part 10 (Lifting and Digging), Part 22 (Signs, Signals and Barricades) and Part 621 (Health Hazard Controls)

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# TOOL BOX TALKS

## Ten Tips On Tire Care

### Before you get started:

There are five basic safety tips that apply to the whole industry. If you practice these five tips, you can make a difference.

- KNOW YOUR JOB.
- BE ALERT.
- EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.
- USE GOOD JUDGEMENT.
- ALWAYS THINK SAFETY.

These tool box talks have been designed to include all of the information your company should be able to include in a five minute session. MITA suggests that you document this activity with the sign-in sheet provided and keep it on file for future reference.

We are always talking about various safety issues regarding underground, road and bridge construction. One of the most commonly overlooked items with regards to all types of construction is tires. Listed below are ten tips that relate to this often overlooked but very important issue.

### No. 1: Under Inflation

Under inflated tires wear faster and cause the vehicle to burn more fuel.

### No. 2: Tires Lose Air Without Leaks

A truck tire is expected to lose up to 2 pounds a month. Tires are made of porous material and lose air continuously.

### No. 3: Proper Pressure

Follow the manufactures' recommended pressure. Use load charts for multi-axel vehicles.

### No. 4: Pressure Checks

Seasonal is a minimum. Greater frequency would assure longer life of tire and possible cost savings. Check tires cold or 3 to 4 hours after use.

### No. 5: Rotate

Regular tire rotation prolongs the life of any tire. Quarterly rotations are recommended for regularly used vehicles.

### No. 6: Explosion is Possible

A radial tire that runs at less than 80% of its recommend pressure has the potential for "zipper rupture" when reinflated.

### No. 7: Temperature Factor

Tires will gain or lose a pound of pressure for every 10° difference in outdoor temperature. Think about that when you work all summer then plow snow in the winter.

### No. 8: Pressure Gauges

Gauges go bad. Its recommended to calibrate them regularly to ensure proper readings.

### No. 9: Visually Check

Preform a daily check for signs of wear, impaled objects, cuts, cracks, bulges or other abnormalities.

### No. 10: Repair

Patches and plugs are most common. Patch from the inside to avoid warranty issues. Monitor repaired tires more frequently.

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## Director of Legislative Affairs



Keith Ledbetter

## The Voters Have Spoken. Now What?

**B**y now you've heard that Michigan experienced a historic Republican sweep on Election Day. Voters elected Republicans to every statewide office, including the governor, secretary of state, attorney general, education boards and Supreme Court. In the state House, Democrats lost 20 seats including 9 incumbents, creating a 67-43 Republican advantage. In the Senate, Republicans gained a 26-seat supermajority. (More detailed information can be found by going to the MITA website and reading the post-election legislative bulletin.)

With the Republican takeover of the state capitol, how does this impact MITA's efforts to secure additional infrastructure funding?

### Road and Bridge Funding Prospects with New Legislators

On the road and bridge side, the push to get

increased funding got easier and more difficult at the same time. MITA staff has held almost 400 legislator meetings in the last four years to lobby for additional highway revenue. With 96 of 110 members of the House serving for two years or less beginning in January, most of the institutional knowledge literally just walked out the door. Regardless of party affiliation, new legislators must be educated for the first time. Inevitably, the first response from a newly elected legislator is that "now is not a good time to raise a tax". Once they are educated about the cost of delayed infrastructure investment and jobs that are being lost, their focus begins to shift from "yes" or "no", to seeking the answer to the question "how".

Last year, our focus was on garnering about a dozen Republican votes in the House of the 56 total needed to pass a bill and roughly 10 Republican votes in the Senate of 19 total



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yes votes needed. Ironically, internal vote counts seem to suggest that there were sufficient votes to pass some type of funding increase. Unfortunately, Republican leadership blocked a vote.

One of the biggest changes to the dynamics of a funding increase vote this term is that House Republicans will be required to contribute a majority of the votes in the House and because of a supermajority in the Senate, there will need to be more than a dozen Republican votes to get a bill passed in the Senate.

MITA staff hasn't been wasting time. We've already met with a handful of the new legislators in the waning days of 2010, even before they were assigned office space. MITA lobbying staff is poised to begin an aggressive legislator contact program in early 2011. We encourage those companies who met with their term-limited legislators last year to also schedule appointments with their newly-elected members early in the new year.

In the last legislative session, Republican leadership was the largest obstacle for getting a road funding plan approved. Their "no new taxes" mantra may play well to the voters, but ignores the stark reality that delayed infrastructure investment and maintenance means increased costs for taxpayers. Because Republicans controlled only one of three branches, they have been content playing the obstructionist role. Now that their party controls the House, Senate and governor, they must play a new pragmatic role of actually governing. Whereas split control created finger pointing on both sides in terms of who was responsible for a lack of progress, a system controlled by a single party means that accountability rests with one party.

Because a majority of the legislature will be new in 2011, the funding effort will require a major effort to educate the new elected leaders. As a result, MITA will continue our aggressive lobbying and public relations effort, with statewide press releases, social media and other traditional and non-traditional methods of communication.

Continues on pg. 39



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# MITA Looks Back at the 2010 Legislative Year

**T**he Lame Duck session came and went in 2010 without fixing our state's ailing road funding system. As a result, there is obvious disappointment when looking back at this year's legislative achievements. Because a highway-funding fix remains MITA's top legislative priority, it is easy to forget some of the notable successes of this past year.

## LEGISLATIVE

MITA successfully lobbied legislators to increase the highway construction budget to avoid losing federal highway dollars because of a lack of federal match money.

A legislative package pushed by MITA uses 2002 clean water bond money to increase SRF sewer projects from \$150 million to \$210 million this year. The bill ratchets up the funding to as much as \$350 million by 2013. The package (SB 1443 and HB 6416) also:

- Creates a \$40 million grant program for local communities in order to encourage greater immediate demand. These grants provide up to \$1 million for design and engineering of municipal sewer projects.
- For the first time ever, a state grant program was created that provides money not only for State Revolving Fund projects, but for any other sewer maintenance project regardless of the funding method. This proposal, authored by MITA, is a way to encourage greater sewer work even after the limited SRF money runs out.
- Formed a statewide task force in 2011 that will review long-term sewer infrastructure funding needs.
- Provides \$150 million in money for brownfield redevelopment over the next three years.

One bill sent to the governor would continue the funding of underground storage tank clean up efforts. Senate Bill 1267 would maintain the environmental protection regulatory fee of 7/8 cent on each gallon of refined petroleum products sold in the state in order to pay for the clean up efforts.

Many of the state's universities and community colleges got the go-ahead for infrastructure projects on their campuses partially financed

with state money as the legislature passed a bill (House Bill 5858) with nearly \$1 billion in projects.

Congress passed a jobs bill to allow companies to get tax breaks for hiring unemployed workers. A number of MITA member companies were able to take advantage of this provision when they were hiring back their workers for the 2010 construction year.

MITA successfully stalled efforts to eliminate or reduce the MBT Personal Property Tax Credit, Compensation Credit and the Brownfield Credit. Maintaining these credits meant big tax savings for companies in the heavy construction industry.

MITA staff stymied efforts to allow the state to debar contractors from doing work for the state if they had more than one MIOSHA or prevailing wage violation in the previous three years. (HB 4282)

MITA successfully opposed efforts to increase contractor fines and penalties through a new Michigan False Claims Act. (HB 4117)

MITA opposed provisions of the "Complete Streets" legislative package that would have required a certain percentage of road dollars go to pay for bike and walking paths. Ultimately, the legislation was re-written to require communities to consider these paths as part of their transportation plans, but there were no requirements for a certain amount of money to be used for those purposes.

## ADVOCACY

MITA made a renewed commitment to local industry advocacy efforts by hiring Nicole Cook as grassroots coordinator. The effect has been immediate and dramatic. Among MITA's advocacy achievements:

- Hosted a state legislative Lobby Day in May with over 400 attendees present, including approximately 175 MITA members that met with 69 different legislators.
- MITA staff met with over 80 legislators to discuss infrastructure investment.
- In addition to Lobby Day, MITA coordinated meetings for members with state legislators in their districts, including hosting a half-dozen "meet and greets" with legislators before the elections.



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- MITA organized a Washington DC Lobby Day, where meetings were set with every member of the Michigan Congressional delegation. In addition, MITA staff organized meetings with 7 different Michigan Congressional members in their districts over the summer break.
- MITA lobbyists conducted a presentation to the Freshman House Legislative Caucus with nearly 40 House members in attendance.
- Helped coordinate an online petition drive that garnered nearly 5,000 signatures. MITA staff also visited numerous member companies and introduced their employees to a toll-free phone calling campaign that generated roughly 1,000 calls to legislator offices.

## CAPITOL OUTLAY PROJECTS APPROVED IN LAME DUCK

- Central Michigan University bio-sciences building
- Grand Valley State University classroom/office additions
- Lake Superior State University School of Business building
- Michigan State University plant science facilities/ bioeconomy additions and renovations
- Northern Michigan University Jamrich Hall modernization
- Oakland University engineering center
- University of Michigan-Ann Arbor G.G. Brown Memorial Laboratories renovation
- University of Michigan-Dearborn science and computer information building renovations

- University of Michigan-Flint Murchie Science Laboratory Building renovations
- Wayne State University Multidisciplinary Biomedical Research Building
- Alpena Community College electrical power technology and training center
- Bay de Noc Community College nursing lab/lecture hall remodeling
- Delta College health and wellness F-wing renovations
- Gogebic Community College building renovation
- Grand Rapids Community College Cook Academic Hall Renovation
- Jackson Community College student services and instructional classrooms
- Lansing Community College arts and sciences building renovation
- Macomb Community College Health Science and Technology Building Phase II
- Mid-Michigan Community College Mount Pleasant campus unification
- North Central Michigan College Health Education and Science Center project
- Henry Ford Community College science building improvements project
- Monroe County Community College technology center project
- Ferris State University College of Pharmacy
- Detroit crime lab



*A group of industry leaders met with Governor Elect Rick Snyder and Lieutenant Governor Brian Calley October 12. Pictured from left to right are Evan Weiner, of E.C. Levy Co.; the governor; the lieutenant governor; and Mike Nystrom, executive vice president of MITA.*



*From left to right, Keith Ledbetter, MITA's director of legislative affairs; Rep. Lee Gonzales (D-Flint), chair of the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee; and Jim Shea of P.K. Contracting, Inc.*



## Director of Technical Services



Doug Needham, P.E.

## Remember: Retain your Project Records

**A**RRRA funding, although not the big shot in the arm we were hoping for, did put additional funding into Michigan's crumbling infrastructure (road, bridge, sewer, water, etc.) and put many Michiganders back to work. However, this infusion of money did come with many strings, one being the retention of project records.

By now most of the ARRA funded projects are wrapping up, final payment is being made and contracts are being closed. You may think that it's now time to move on to the next project.

But wait. Don't forget to retain your project files in a safe and secure storage area.

Record retention requirements were brought to the forefront on a couple projects this past

summer. It was apparent on those projects that when the files were readily available for inspection, the project audit went relatively smooth. However, when the files were not readily available, things turned sour very quickly.

As with all federally funded infrastructure projects, the prime contractor and each subcontractor is required to retain various project documents for a period of three years from the date of completion of the contract.

Standard contract provisions detail the specific retention requirements. However, the following is a quick glance at the information that both prime and subcontractors are required to retain on federal-aid projects:

Continues on pg. 39

The background of the advertisement features a scenic mountain landscape with snow-covered peaks and a clear blue sky. In the center, there is a logo for Pinnacle Insurance Partners, which includes a stylized mountain peak icon above the text "PINNACLE INSURANCE PARTNERS" and the tagline "A Better View." Below the logo, the text "Construction Industry Specialists" is prominently displayed in a large, bold, black font.

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**Construction Team:**

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**bradp@pipgrmi.com**

**Mike Poggi**

**mikep@pipgrmi.com**

**Penny Kirk**

**pennyk@pipgrmi.com**

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## Problem Solver

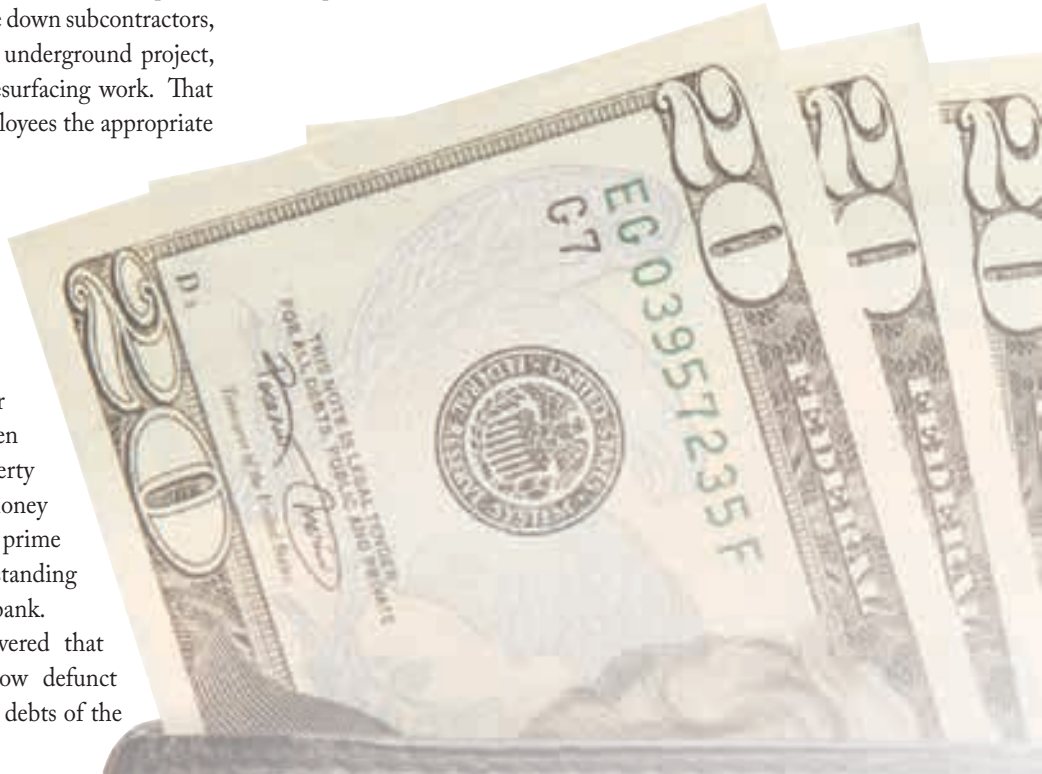
# When Subcontractor Goes Under, Who Covers Payroll?

In today's economic climate, it is certainly tough going for many of Michigan's heavy highway and underground contractors as they struggle to keep their heads above water. However, when prime contractors are on the hook for struggling or upside down subcontractors, it does not help. Case in point: during a recent underground project, a small paving subcontractor was hired for the resurfacing work. That subcontractor unfortunately did not pay their employees the appropriate wage rates and fringe benefits.

Shortly after a USDOL audit of the project, the prime contractor was informed they were responsible for restitution to the underpaid workers. Frustrated with the situation, the prime contractor contacted MITA. In looking into the matter, MITA learned that the subcontractor went out of business shortly after paying the project and that a blanket lien had been placed by the bank on all of the personnel property of the subcontractor. The lien required that all money owed to the subcontractor be paid to the bank. The prime contractor complied with the lien and paid all outstanding monies owed to the subcontractor directly to the bank.

During MITA's investigation, it was discovered that the bank, as the holding company for the now defunct subcontractor, was responsible for payment of the debts of the

subcontractor, which included proper payment to all of the workers. Ultimately, the bank made restitution to the underpaid employees and not the prime contractor.



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# Welcome to the New MITA Website!

**WWW.**

MITA is pleased to announce the upcoming launch of our new website, still located at [www.mi-ita.com](http://www.mi-ita.com). The new site has been redesigned with a dynamic, new look and has been updated with information about our latest resources and events. The new site will continue to provide member support and information with the latest industry news. The launch is scheduled for early in the first quarter of 2011. Stay tuned to your MITA e-bulletins for details.

## **Fast Event Signup**

*The new event section will be a one-stop shop for MITA event signup. No need to return a faxed form.*

## **Easy Access Bulletins**

*The new bulletin sections will allow visitors to view multiple bulletins on one screen, easily print them from the same screen, and sign-up for RSS feeds right to your inbox.*

## A Few Highlights

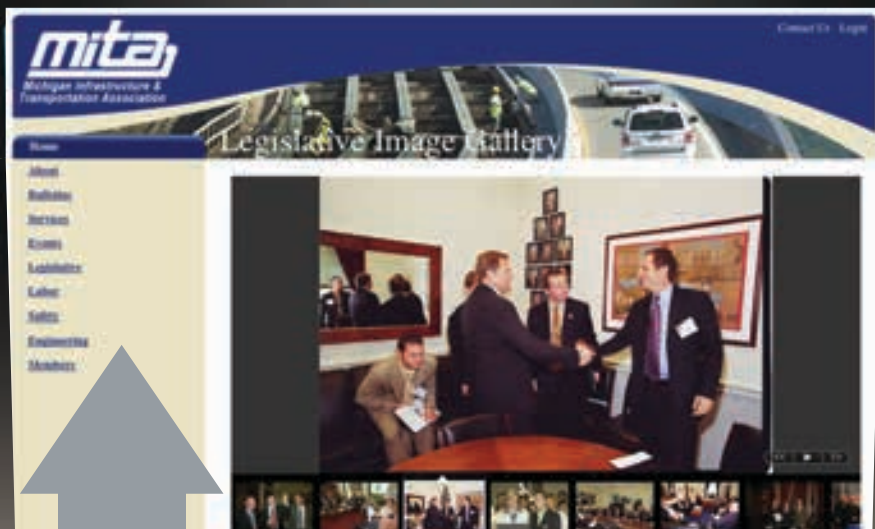
- Separate and unique passwords assigned to each MITA member allows each member to receive instant notification by email, if they forget their password or choose to reset it.
- Online event registration forms allow members to register on the website for all scheduled events, an easy alternative to the fax machine while reducing the use of paper!
- MBE/WBE/DBE Solicitations are more user friendly, with the ability for members to sort ads by title or date, and to search postings by title, date range and categories.
- The current issue of *Cross Section Magazine*, which is featured on the home page, allows the ability to read the magazine online, and displays pages in a traditional print-style, page flip with the feel of it in your hands.
- New content areas, dynamically generated menus, member login and extensive search capabilities enable members to locate the information they need with ease.
- The news feed module offers more features and flexibility, including categorized feeds, filtering, sharing, and printing.
- New interactive slide shows, videos and photos provide member access to online training videos and photos of what the industry has been up to.

MITA staff will now have a more comprehensive way to manage all on-going functions of the website, including content, page structure, traffic reporting, security, and more. Overall, this site offers visitors ease of use and comprehensive information on MITA's considerable array of resources.

The website navigation has changed only a minor amount, so the same general website functions that MITA members have become accustomed to are present.

"Overall, our new and improved website is a much more accurate representation of the increasing quality of the services we provide to MITA members," said Mike Nystrom, MITA's executive vice president. "We will continue to update the site on a daily basis, and make additional improvements to better serve our members."

If you have comments, suggestions, or questions about the website, please contact Anita Lindsay, MITA's Website/Data Coordinator, at [anitalindsay@mi-ita.com](mailto:anitalindsay@mi-ita.com), or by calling 517-347-8336.



## Fun Image Galleries

*This new section will allow you to view photos from virtually all areas of the association, from legislative meetings, safety/engineering seminars, and networking events, such as the annual conference and golf outings.*

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## Meet Our Partners

# Michigan Public Transit Association

It may seem counterproductive to the cause of increased road and bridge transportation funding to have the Michigan Public Transit Association be a part of the Michigan Transportation team.

But the MPTA is an important, very active participant in the coalition, which has not given up on the fight for a stable source of transportation funding for Michigan. According to Clark Harder, the association's executive director, the MPTA believes that "all modes of transportation are in this fight together; and, we will not be able to achieve success for future expanded funding for any one of us unless we are all working together for the benefit of all of us. For that reason we have been pleased to participate as an active member in the Coalition and intend to continue our efforts; and, if anything, expand upon what we've been trying to do to rally the public transportation advocates to our cause."

Harder has been executive director since 1999. Prior to that, he was a Michigan legislator, and chair of the appropriations committee on transportation. Harder now leads an association, with three additional staff members, which advocates on behalf of the state's public transportation providers, industry suppliers, and riders. MPTA offers training and educational resources for its members to better advance the availability, quality, and effectiveness of public transportation for Michigan residents and visitors. MPTA is a resource for legislators, MDOT, transit operators, the media, and advocates interested in public transportation's demonstrated impact as an essential part of Michigan's infrastructure.

MPTA is the state's oldest and largest public transportation association, representing over 50 urban systems, rural dial-a-rides and specialized service providers throughout the state. Their membership also includes approximately 50 state and international companies that provide goods and services to the public transportation industry.

*Michigan Public Transit Association  
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# MITA Member Project Highlight

## G2 Consulting Group: Canadian National Railroad Bridge

[www.g2consultinggroup.com](http://www.g2consultinggroup.com)

G2 Consulting Group recently prepared and supervised the implementation of a mass concrete temperature control plan for eight large drilled concrete piers for a new Canadian National railroad bridge in Grundy County, Ill.

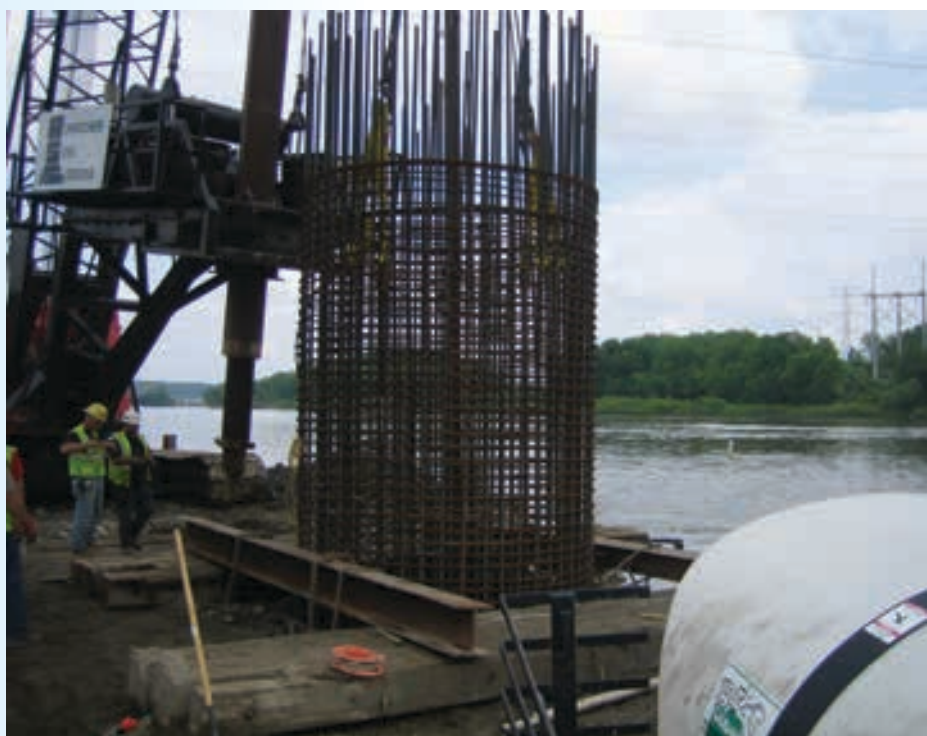
G2's work kept the concrete within 10-foot 4-inch diameter piers within specified temperature range during curing. Mass concrete placements like this are challenging, because the outer edges can cure faster than the center and lead to cracks. In this instance, the piers on the bridge's south side were located in the river, where cool river temperatures made it even more challenging to maintain a sufficiently consistent temperature.

Engineers from G2 used sophisticated software and computer simulations to determine the best concrete mix, proper conditions for placing the concrete; and, for the piers in the river water, recommended insulating the upper portions and a cooling system for the centers.

G2 installed concrete temperature/maturity loggers manufactured by Engius on the drilled pier reinforcing cages to monitor the concrete temperature at the outer edge and center of the piers during curing. The loggers were set up to take temperature readings every hour and the information was downloaded and data analyzed. G2 was also on site during the concrete placement operations to check fresh concrete temperatures as it was delivered to the site.

The new Canadian National railroad bridge is being built in conjunction with alterations to the Elgin Joliet and Eastern Railway line and replaces an existing railroad bridge deemed "obstructive to navigation" by the U.S. Coast Guard under provisions of the Truman-Hobbs Act.

For more information regarding G2 Consulting Group, visit [www.g2consultinggroup.com](http://www.g2consultinggroup.com).



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## Vice President of Membership Services Continued from pg. 22

in the very near future. Some of the changes will seem minor, but readability and information protection were at the forefront of some of the decisions. All of the MITA staff participated in the website decisions at some level. This input will keep MITA at the pinnacle of industry sites. Visit [www.mi-ita.com](http://www.mi-ita.com) for the full effect.

MITA continues to provide members with mini seminars with regard to changing regulatory issues. What has come to be known as "Obama Care" and many pending tax related issues were discussed at several MITA seminar type meetings. MITA and a few of our associate members provided needed explanations regarding the issues members were facing, gave direction on the ones that were a done deal, and pointed out which ones would continue to linger. All in all this effort helped members in the decision making process with regards to purchasing employee benefits; and, it provided fodder for discussions that should occur with their accountants.

### Future Leader Development Program

The second group of Future Leaders completed a six-day program in 2010. MITA continues to get a lot of interest in this new program. Participants in the program were exposed to a number of interesting and topical issues. The focus of the program is to develop the leaders within member companies so they can be a better employee and advocate for industry issues. The core curriculum covers areas regarding: health care, human resource and labor issues, legislative

processes and emerging issues. Students also attend MITA Board of Directors meetings and get a private session with the Keynote speaker at the MITA Annual Conference. The program continues to evolve and change to meet current industry issues and is well received by all. Please consider the individuals working for you for future classes.

### MITA Events

Electronic lettings served greatly to the diminishment of personal relationships. When one is required to be present to submit a bid or get a "#," the reason for being gone from home was apparent and acceptable. MITA understands this social issue and has provided members with a multitude of events that include focus on issues, family and industry advocate involvement.

The ski-weekend and summer conference continue to be preferred family events. The regular golf outings, industry nights and European pheasant hunts tend to give associates and contractors additional opportunity to network. MITA is always looking for cost effective ideas to continue to provide new and different opportunities for members to network. Please feel to contact the office with any that you may have in mind.

While the events are well attended, members who do not attend should consider getting involved. The development of relationships is critical to the industry.

### Clean Diesel

In 2009, MITA formed a partnership with Heavy Equipment Distributors, then applied and successfully obtained a grant from the EPA. The focus of the grant was the repowering of off-road diesel equipment, thus lowering emissions by bringing the tier level of aging equipment up. To date numerous MITA members have benefited from the program.

2010 was no different. This same partnership is resubmitting a proposal for continued funding of the program. Notification of award or non-award is not anticipated until spring of 2011. If successful, many more should benefit from the program as well as Michigan's environment. This is a very big win, win.

To contact Rob Coppersmith, e-mail him at [roboppersmith@mi-ita.com](mailto:roboppersmith@mi-ita.com) or call the MITA office at 517-347-8336.



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## Vice President of Engineering Services

Continued from pg. 22

for presenting, discussing, and resolving technical matters.

- After years of discussion, successfully negotiated the format and venue MDOT would use to highlight addendum changes. Based on the feedback from a set of pilot projects in the November 2010 lettings, a plan for further implementation of the change highlighting methodology will be developed.
- Facilitated and coordinated the industry review of MDOT's draft 2010 Standard Specification for Construction. A special "thanks" to all MITA members who contributed their time and energy to this very important effort by participating on one (or more) of the industry review committees.

In closing, we want to acknowledge the dedication and service of the 331 MDOT employees who retired from state service between November 1 and Dec. 31, 2010. In particular, we extend our best wishes to those retirees who have worked in close partnership with MITA.

---

To contact Glenn Bukoski, P.E., e-mail him at [glennbukoski@mi-ita.com](mailto:glennbukoski@mi-ita.com) or call 517-347-8336.

## Director of Safety & Workforce Development

Continued from pg. 24

for Specific Equipment and Operations) of the Construction Safety and Health Standards.

Significant changes were made in Part 10 requiring crane operators to become certified crane operators. The committee spent almost two years reviewing the federal standards that took effect November 8, 2010, and made some changes to keep with the as effective clause that MIOSHA has to have when adopting rules. The new MIOSHA Part 10 will take effect February 9, 2011. MITA has the new standard posted on its website and will assist contractors who need help getting up to speed. There is also a requirement to have qualified riggers and certified signal persons within the standard. The training for these respective duties can be done in house or through a third party qualified person as long as all requirements of the standard are met.

The Part 22 advisory committee is scheduled to meet in early 2011 to review the standard for possible changes as a result of the 2010 version of the Michigan Manual for Uniformed Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD). Minimal changes are expected.

On the health front, Part 621 was opened last summer as result of special interest groups wanting to ban the process of dry cutting silica containing materials. A ban would have burdened contractors with costly upgrades to equipment and procedures. Changes that were made still allow for dry cutting, but employers will have to monitor closely the potential for excessive exposure and implement controls or work practices to protect employees.

### Workforce Development

The 3rd Annual Michigan Construction Career Days, held in Oakland County, was a huge success. Over 1,300 middle and high school students were able to experience what it's like to work in construction for a day. The main attraction of this event year after year is the heavy equipment. Students are able to operate equipment under the supervision of an experienced operator. MITA would like to thank some of its members for participating, because we could not have pulled it off without you. The following MITA members donated equipment and/or staff for two full days: Adamo Demolition, AIS, Ajax Paving, Alta Equipment, C.A. Hull, Dan's Excavating, Fisher Companies, Kaltz Excavating, MCM Management, Michigan CAT, and R.L. Coolsaet Construction.

MCCD committee members are in the planning stages for the 2011 event and look forward to working with past participants as well as getting more involved.

2011 looks to be a challenge on many fronts. Have faith that your association will be prepared to provide members the direction to keep them on the right path.

---

For more information, contact Pat Brown by e-mail at [patrickbrown@mi-ita.com](mailto:patrickbrown@mi-ita.com) or call 517-347-8336.

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## Director of Technical Services Continued from pg. 30

### Non-Discrimination – EEO Requirements

- The number of minority and non-minority group members and women employed in each work classification on the project;
- The progress and efforts being made in cooperation with unions, when applicable, to increase employment opportunities for minorities and women;
- The progress and efforts being made in locating, hiring, training, qualifying, and upgrading minority and female employees; and
- The progress and efforts being made in securing the services of DBE subcontractors or subcontractors with meaningful minority and female representation among their employees.

### Payroll Records

- Payrolls and basic records for all laborers, mechanics, apprentices, trainees, watchmen, helpers and guards working at the site of the work.
- The payroll records shall contain the name, last four digits of the social security number, and address of each such employee; his or her correct classification; hourly rates of wages paid; daily and weekly number of hours worked; deductions made; and actual wages paid.

### Apprentices

- Contractors or subcontractors employing apprentices or trainees under approved programs shall maintain written evidence of the registration of apprentices and trainees, and ratios and wage rates prescribed in the applicable programs.

We want to stress that both the prime contractor and any subcontractor are required to make these records available for inspection, copying, or transcription by an authorized representatives of MDOT, the FHWA, or the USDOL.

If the contractor or subcontractor fails to submit the required records or to make them available, MDOT, the FHWA, or the USDOL may initiate action to suspend payment on any active project. Furthermore, failure to submit the required records upon request or to make such records available may be grounds for debarment.

So, remember: as you close out your ARRA or other federally funded project, make sure you place your records in a safe, dry and secure place for a period of three years. This simple step has the potential to save headaches in the future.

To contact Doug Needham, e-mail him at [douglasneedham@mi-ita.com](mailto:douglasneedham@mi-ita.com) or call 517-347-8336.

## Director of Legislative Affairs

Continued from pg. 27

### Key Year Ahead for Water and Sewer Spending

In the world of underground investment, there are some new opportunities on the horizon in 2011. MITA staff worked long and hard last year on an initiative to spend some of the clean water bond money approved by voters in 2002 for the State Revolving Fund. The legislation provides a major source of funding for brownfield cleanups over the next three years, but the brownfield money is contingent on spending extra dollars on sewer improvements across the state. While legislation can never bind a future legislature or governor to appropriate dollars, there is strong incentive that they do so. MITA will continue to monitor the status of the clean water bond money and push the new administration and Department of Environmental Quality for increased sewer investment.

MITA staff will also be requesting a slot on the new water infrastructure committee that was created as part of the water and sewer bills that were passed in lame duck. The committee is charged with looking at the long-term funding needs for our underground infrastructure and MITA hopes to play a key role in this effort.

### How You Can Help

One of the significant lessons learned this year was just how valuable our industry grassroots efforts can be. Many MITA members met with their legislators to press them for

Continues on pg. 41

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# Member Outreach Spotlight

**H**ow do you know whether a member is committed to the association's outreach and legislator education initiative? They volunteer to host a meet and greet for their elected official, with less than four weeks to plan and organize, and without having a dedicated attendance list. In addition, he and his staff took on the main brunt of recruiting individuals to attend the event resulting in a broad spectrum of attendees.

As it happened, an idea was conceived to hold a breakfast meet and greet for State Representative Jase Bolger (63rd House District). Quickly that idea developed and on his own initiative, Ed Davids from member company Hoffman Bros., Inc. volunteered to host this meet and greet at the company's office. As if that wasn't enough, he also agreed to outreach to other member and non-member companies in the area, local government officials, county road commission officials, and MDOT employees, and he invited those individuals to attend the meet and greet all within a period of less than a month.

Due to his efforts, he was able to secure 15 individual constituents to attend. Below is a list of those in attendance at the meet and greet for Representative Jase Bolger:

Hoffman Bros., Inc.	Dan Ericksson, Ed Davids, Mike Mallos, Bill Rizor, and Jesse Pero
Lakeland Asphalt	Tom Carr
Carr Bros.	Bill Carr and Naomi Carr

Mich Paving	Greg Finnila
MDOT	Greg Perry
Chapman Landscape	Doug Chapman
Calhoun County Road Comm.	Kevin Henning
Kalamazoo County Road Comm.	Joanna Johnson
PK Contracting	Kurt Shea
Local Farmer/ Developer	John Sackrider

The event was well attended, and Representative Jase Bolger was made thoroughly aware of the issues facing his constituents as a result of a lack of adequate transportation funding in his district and throughout Michigan.

Representative Bolger was recently elected by his peers to become the next Speaker of the House for the 96th Legislative Session. While this may or not may help advance MITA's position on transportation funding, with continued communication between Representative Bolger and the attendees, this meet and greet is a platform to continue developing a meaningful and lasting relationship with Speaker of the House-elect Jase Bolger.

If you want to become more involved in legislative outreach, but need help getting started, please contact Nicole Cook, MITA's outreach coordinator, at [nicolecook@mi-ita.com](mailto:nicolecook@mi-ita.com) or call her at 517-347-8336.

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# A Fresh Look at the Prospects for Transportation in the New Congress

By C. Kenneth Orski  
Transportation Issues Blogger

[www.innobriefs.com](http://www.innobriefs.com)

[korski@verizon.net](mailto:korski@verizon.net)  
Phone: 301-299-1996

In October 2010, we conducted an informal survey among colleagues in the transportation community about the outlook for the federal surface transportation program in the year(s) ahead. ("Prospects for Transportation Legislation and Other Infrastructure Ventures," InnoBriefs, October 29, 2010). One comment from a veteran transportation insider summed up concisely the collective mindset: "There will be nothing 'transformational' about the future program," he opined. As more details begin to emerge about the Republican strategy in the next Congress, his observation is proving to be right on target. What follows is a fresh look at the prospects for the transportation program in the 112th Congress, based on new information – and in some cases, speculation from congressional and other Washington-based sources.

## "Stabilizing" the Highway Trust Fund

Among the preliminary recommendations of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, (the "Deficit Commission"), there are two proposals that pertain to the federal surface transportation program. One proposal is to gradually raise the gas tax by 15 cents beginning in 2013; another proposal is to limit transportation spending to existing revenue collections and prohibit general fund bailouts of transportation trust funds. While the first recommendation is widely considered as going nowhere in the next Congress, the second one stands a good chance of being embraced by the fiscally conservative lawmakers taking charge in January.

As one senior congressional aid told us, "predictable revenues rather than undocumented 'needs' will dictate the level of the transportation budget in the next Congress." The practical implications of this policy will be a significant reduction in the scope and reach of the federal surface transportation program. If spending is to be limited to existing revenue collection, the highway program can expect to be reduced by \$7-8 billion/year and the transit program by \$3 billion/year from the current (FY 2010) level. (These estimates assume future Highway Trust

Continues on pg. 55

## Director of Legislative Affairs

Continued from pg. 39

action. While the legislators ultimately did not act in the final days of 2010, legislators were far more sympathetic to our road funding issue, thanks to over 100 legislative contacts last year. It's critical that members ramp up those efforts by agreeing to meet with your legislators early in the new year. MITA would be happy to assist in setting up those appointments. Feel free to contact Nicole Cook or myself and we will help get the meeting set up.

To contact Keith Ledbetter, e-mail him at [keithledbetter@mi-ita.com](mailto:keithledbetter@mi-ita.com) or call 517-347-8336.

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## Member Voice

From time to time we ask MITA members questions about issues of importance to the industry. Some of the answers are then published in this magazine.

**What else would you like to see MITA do to better serve the industry? Please feel free to provide your positive thoughts and ideas about additional member services, publications, training and events or anything you think MITA can do on behalf of the industry to make us even stronger.**

Do a better job of educating the public and contractors on how the road funding actually works.

Mike Peake  
*Action Traffic Maintenance*

Work with legislators, MDOT, police agencies, unions, and contractors to decrease construction zone intrusion and the prosecution for any intrusion under Andy's Law or other laws. If the law cannot be enforced, change it. We are having close calls on a daily basis. When accidents occur, tickets are not written that they occurred in construction zones. What is it going to take to wake people up, more deaths? In years past the weekends and night work were the worst for impaired drivers. Now it seems to be an issue 24 hours a day.

*Michigan Paving and Materials*

There is one topic that is at the top of priorities to make our industry stronger. Funding! MITA needs to take a fresh approach on how to push for new road funding solutions, since our representatives in the House and Senate refuse to take a vote on the proposals to address the issue.

Mike Mooney  
*Give 'Em a Brake Safety*

With the new concrete PWL specs, I think one benefit MITA could provide would be seminars on understanding the spec and providing MDOT with the thoughts of producers in reference to the spec.

Also, some seminars on doing business with MDOT contractors and subcontractors. Explain to producers/suppliers what steps are necessary to ensure payment

and to protect our rights. Take this through the process of liening a bond. How do we know the bonding company? How do we attach a bond? How are we protected?

Jim Vaughn  
*Modern Concrete*

Online training to reduce traveling expenses.

Eileen Smith  
*Florence Cement Company*



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# Member News

## Association Benefits Company

[www.association-benefits.com](http://www.association-benefits.com)

Association Benefits Company co-sponsored seminars across the state, including one at the MITA office October 15, to discuss Health Care Reform and New Health Insurance Plans. The other seminar sponsors were Bodman Attorneys and Counselors, and UHY LLP Certified Public Accountants. Attorney Steve Fishman from Bodman discussed health care reform and its effects on plan design. With more than 40 years of experience in all facets of labor/employment law, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce rates Steve "one of the most knowledgeable employment attorneys ... a top source for employment law information." He is listed in "The Best Lawyers in American 2010" under Labor and Employment Law.

Kurt A. Siebnaller, CPA and principal from UHY, discussed how health care reform might affect your tax status. With a



concentration in the construction industry, Kurt is a member of the firm's Corporate Tax Group. John J. Gallo, CPA and senior manager from UHY, also contributed to the discussion.

*Sherrian Greenwood from Association Benefits Company introduced representatives from UHY LLP Certified Public Accountants during a health care seminar October 15 at MITA. John Gallo (left) and Kurt Siebnaller, spoke during the seminar, along with Attorney Steve Fishman of Bodman Attorneys, who is pictured in the background to the right of Sherrian.*



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## Balkema Excavating Incorporated

Balkema Excavating Inc. of Kalamazoo is proud to announce that they are celebrating their 65th anniversary. Congratulations!





Staff and family members from P. K. Contracting, Inc., and Give 'Em a Brake Safety gathered at the MITA office Nov. 10, before visiting their legislators in Lansing to discuss transportation funding.

Continues on pg.46



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# Member News

Continued from pg. 45

## G2 Consulting Group

[www.g2consultinggroup.com](http://www.g2consultinggroup.com)

*G2 Consulting Group is a full-service engineering firm providing geotechnical, environmental and construction engineering services to Fortune 500 companies, major utilities, property owners, government agencies and leading architectural, engineering and construction firms across*

*the United States.*

G2 Consulting Group of Troy, Mich., is providing geotechnical engineering and design services for two Michigan interstate highway construction projects.

In Warren, G2 provided geotechnical engineering and foundation design services for the widening of the two existing turn-around bridges located east and west of the Hoover Road Bridge over I-696.

The turn-around bridges are being widened to provide improved turning clearance for larger trucks. The two widened bridges are part of a larger project to rehabilitate seven additional bridges along I-696 in Macomb County. Construction is expected to begin this fall and should be completed in 2011.

In Lansing, G2 is providing geotechnical recommendations for design and construction of roadways, bridge widening, ramps, retaining walls, signs and signals related to the rehabilitation of seven miles of I-96 and intersecting roads from south of Saginaw Highway to west of Wacousta Road. Construction has begun and is expected to last through fall of 2011. D.J. McQuestion & Sons Company of LeRoy, Mich., is the prime contractor for the design/build team, and Alfred Benesch & Company of Lansing, Mich., is the prime engineering firm on the team.

**Kotz, Sangster,  
Wysocki and Berg, P.C.**  
[www.kotzsangster.com](http://www.kotzsangster.com)

Kotz, Sangster, Wysocki and Berg, P.C., has opened offices in Grand Rapids, Mich., to better serve its western Michigan clients. Tom Ryan and Linda Ryan, who both specialize in labor law, have joined the firm and will practice in the Grand Rapids location.

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Kotz Sangster is a full service construction and business law firm that employs 34 attorneys in five locations: Detroit, Birmingham, Buchanan, and Grand Rapids, in addition to its satellite location in Orange County, Ca.

Kotz Sangster's lawyers are recognized experts in the field of construction law and have experience in providing legal counsel to clients on virtually every type of heavy or infrastructure construction project, including highways, airports, underground utility projects (including both open cut and pipe jacking operations), dam and hydroelectric facilities and wastewater treatment facilities.

The firm is adept at helping construction industry clients with all of their contract drafting and negotiations, employment and labor disputes (including elections and collective bargaining), claims and corporate transactions. Kotz Sangster represents contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and owners in many states across the country, and various Kotz Sangster attorneys are admitted to practice in several states. Kotz Sangster is a "go to" law firm for the construction industry.

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## Michigan Paving and Materials Co.

Michigan Paving and Materials Company – Globe Construction Division in Kalamazoo hosted Michigan Senate Candidate Tonya Schuitmaker on Sept. 11. Representatives of various road construction businesses in southwest Michigan were represented as well as MDOT, county road commissioners and city engineers.

The goal of the event was to stress the importance that road building has on Michigan's economy and the need to find appropriate funding sources both short term (user fee, gas/diesel fuel tax increase) and long term (major shifts in revenue sourcing). Discussions emphasized the loss of jobs over the last several years, and the need to increase funding, which in turn translates into immediate job creation.

During the meeting with Schuitmaker, Michigan Paving's Rusty Stafford discussed job creation. Steve Thomas of Consumers Concrete told Schuitmaker that they have

reduced their plant operations and employment by nearly 50 percent. Kalamazoo County Road Commission (KCRC) Managing Director Joanna Johnson and Commissioner Kent McCauley pointed out how decreasing revenues have negatively impacted the KCRC's ability to maintain roads while costs increase.

## NTH Consultants, Ltd.

[www.nthconsultants.com](http://www.nthconsultants.com)

NTH Consultants, Ltd., of Detroit, headed a team of various agricultural groups and state government to make improvements to a device designed to directly measure the environmental performance of existing waste impoundments. The funding is provided through the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Services.

Some of the benefits of the device include the following:

- Provides an option to existing, conventional methods of performing destructive sampling to test liner integrity.
- The process is cheaper and less disruptive from a structural and operations perspective.
- The device is more accurate because it measures the response of the entire system; and, therefore, does a better job at protecting natural resources.

For more information, contact Tim Krause, P.E., at [tkrause@nthconsultants.com](mailto:tkrause@nthconsultants.com).

Continues on pg.48



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## Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment, Inc.

[www.ohm-advisors.com](http://www.ohm-advisors.com)

*Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment, Inc. (OHM) is an award-winning architectural, engineering and planning firm committed to "Advancing Communities." OHM was founded in Livonia in 1962, with additional offices throughout Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee. Nearly 200 employees dedicate their time and talents to OHM including architects, engineers, planners, surveyors, LEED accredited professionals and information technology experts. OHM is a national Top 50 Civil Engineering firm, an Engineering News Record Top 500 firm, and has been named a top 10 Best & Brightest Company by the Michigan Business & Professionals Association for four consecutive years.*

Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment, Inc. (OHM), an architectural, engineering and planning firm committed to advancing communities, announced that William W. Anderson, P.E., has joined the company as vice president.

Anderson brings more than 20 years experience in professional services, real estate development and municipal government. As a principal with Bowman Consulting Group and Atwell Hicks, LLC, Anderson led national expansion efforts and mergers/acquisitions, as well as managed those firms' largest clients.

He is a licensed professional engineer and has a master's of business administration and bachelor's of science degree in civil engineering from Michigan Technological University. He lives in Ann Arbor with his wife and two children.

## Second Schripsema Joins OHM

**Craig D. Schripsema, P.E., has joined OHM as a senior project manager.**

Schripsema, a licensed professional engineer and a trained land surveyor, has 16 years experience in the consulting engineering industry. Most recently, he managed a satellite operation for a leading consulting firm. His specialty, developed over the last six years, is working with colleges and universities to provide design services and project management. He has bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and land surveying from Michigan Technological University, and he lives in the Mount Pleasant area.

Schripsema follows in his younger brother Andy's footsteps in working for OHM. Andy Schripsema has been OHM's lead office technician for survey for three years.



Craig D. Schripsema

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*Testing Engineers & Consultants, Inc. (TEC) provides client support from property acquisition through construction, renovation and restoration. Expertise includes environmental and geotechnical engineering and consulting as well as facilities engineering, construction materials testing, indoor air quality and asbestos, lead and mold management services. Founded in 1966, TEC has offices in Troy, Ann Arbor and Detroit.*

Steven K. Cretsinger, an accredited environmental professional with 13 years experience, has joined TEC's Industrial Hygiene Services Department as a senior environmental health and safety consultant. His expertise in managing environmental projects and excellent client retention reputation will compliment TEC's strategic plan for growth.



Steven K. Cretsinger

Continues on pg.50

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# Member News

Continued from pg. 49

**Brad Poggi** (left) of **Pinnacle Insurance Partners, LLC.**, won the 50/50 raffle at MITA's West Michigan Holiday Party December 1. **Rob Coppersmith**, MITA's vice president of membership services, made the payoff.



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## News from Michigan CAT

### Michigan CAT's Repower Program

By Mike Lazzara, Michigan CAT

The construction industry is facing a "green" tsunami. Many states are in the process of adopting stringent regulations with steep penalties similar to those in California, and contractors are finding an increasing number of construction projects requiring information about the contractor's equipment fleet "average Tier level." Even if the construction project requirements don't call for emissions or Tier levels, the state or local agencies may require it. In either situation, it's the responsibility of the equipment owner to comply with emission requirements.

Contractors moving throughout their own states or crossing state lines in order to keep employees working have complicated the task of compliance. But those with an emissions reduction strategy for their fleet may have a competitive edge and find this can make the difference between being awarded the job – or not.

In January 2009, Michigan CAT launched an Emissions Repower program to help its customers stay as competitive as possible. The dealership starts by performing an emissions fleet analysis to establish the current average Tier level of the fleet. After the emissions fleet analysis, they target specific machines to repower with a Tier 1 or higher engine. Caterpillar currently has a significant number of replacement emissions engines available, with many more in the pipeline. Repower solutions often encompass a variety of complexities, including: a new radiator, after cooler, fan, sheet metal fabrication, engine-mounting modification and electrical harnesses. The dealer's trained technicians perform all installations to ensure all systems are operating correctly.

Michigan CAT also offers financial assistance toward completing an emission repower. Michigan CAT successfully formed a coalition with a nonprofit association, Clean Energy Coalition, to use EPA grant money toward qualifying repowers. These funds help offset much of the cost of emissions upgrades.

The Washtenaw County Road Commission took advantage of the program and upgraded a 1994 140G motor



grader that has more than 14,000 hours on it.

"This machine had a transmission failure in October 2008," said Bob Berger, equipment supervisor for the Washtenaw County Road Commissions. "We knew that we had to put this piece of equipment back into the fleet, so I contacted Michigan CAT to find out what it would cost to do an upgrade of the transmission. This is something we had budgeted for. We have

Continues on pg.52



Gary Beard of Edw. C. Levy Co., received the first EPA Grant check for a completed Repower from Rob Coppersmith of MITA.

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# Member News

Continued from pg. 51

Out with the old in with the new. Two Michigan CAT representatives stand next to and ET. MacKenzie Repower.



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a diminishing capital budget for equipment just like most agencies. We did not anticipate this expense. But we had an essential piece of equipment that had a transmission failure and we needed to do a significant repair. We knew that we had other deterioration in the power train and the last thing we wanted was to replace an expensive transmission, put it back in service and then have a major engine malfunction.

“Two of the goals of the Washtenaw County Road Commission Board of Commissioners are to be good stewards of the public’s money and to be sensitive to the environment. The board is quite committed to improving our cost effectiveness and reducing our impact on the environment anywhere that we can.”

The commission worked in conjunction with Michigan CAT to bring a cost comparison forward to its board, looking at the repair, upgrade and purchase options.

“At the end of the day, the power train rebuild program was the most economical solution for our agency, and our board unanimously approved it,” said James D. Harmon, P.E., director of operations, Washtenaw County Road Commission.

# MITA New Members

## New MITA Contractor Members

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Don Meeks Construction LLC  
Benton Harbor, Mich.

RAM Construction Services of Michigan, Inc.  
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Teton Contracting  
Holly, Mich.

Eastern Michigan Kenworth  
Dearborn, Mich.

Soils & Structures, Inc.  
Muskegon, Mich.

## New MITA Associate Members

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## **MDOT News**

### **Detroit to Host ITS World Congress and AASHTO Annual Meeting**

**M**DOT recently announced that Detroit has been selected to host two high-profile transportation meetings: the 2014 Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) World Congress and the 2011 annual meeting of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Detroit will welcome more than 10,000 international members of the transportation technology industry in October 2014 as a result of Michigan's winning bid to host the ITS World Congress. The five-day event will take place at Cobo Conference and Exhibition Center and several adjacent facilities, and will be hosted by ITS America and ITS Michigan.

James Barbaresso, vice president for ITS for the engineering firm HNTB and former president of ITS Michigan, chaired a committee that worked to get the event to select Detroit. The committee included representatives of MDOT, the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Road Commission for Oakland County, the city of Detroit, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, PRC Associates and HNTB.

ITS Michigan represents numerous public and private sector organizations involved in transportation technology in the state.

AASHTO's annual meeting comes to Detroit October 13-17, 2011 at the Marriott Downtown in the Renaissance Center.



*Michigan Infrastructure &  
Transportation Association*



# A Fresh Look at the Prospects for Transportation in the New Congress

Continued from pg. 41

fund income, including tax revenues and interest, of approximately \$35 billion/year in the highway account and \$5.5 billion/year in the transit account, as projected by the Congressional Budget Office.)

Most likely victims of the fiscal retrenchment will be programs that are not deemed of federal interest or national significance and are primarily of benefit to local communities. These include various "transportation enhancement" programs and "livability" initiatives such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, acquisition of scenic easements, historic preservation, rails-to-trails, and highway beautification. Such programs will be considered as prime candidates for devolution, to be funded at local discretion by state and local authorities.

Another possible victim of a budgetary retrenchment could be the "executive earmarks" such as the popular (at least with their recipients) TIGER grants. The next Congress is expected to rein in administration authority to make discretionary grants, both to save money and because lawmakers have grown to distrust the TIGER project selection process as lacking in transparency.

Will the Democratic majority in the Senate go along with the new Republican House policy of fiscal retrenchment? With a reduced Democratic majority and as many as 23 Senate Democrats running for reelection in two years, it will be difficult for Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid to keep his troops in line, a senior Senate aid speculated. A certain number of defections will be inevitable, especially when matters of "runaway spending" and deficit reduction are concerned.

## Better Leveraging of Existing Resources

To compensate for reduced revenue and to make up for the dwindling revenue-raising power of the gas tax, the next Congress is expected to try to better leverage existing revenue sources. It might do so by seeking to facilitate public-private partnerships; encourage the use of tolling (but not on existing interstates); and expand opportunities for innovative financing such as state infrastructure banks, TIFIA, and Private Activity Bonds.

Expected to fall out of favor with the lawmakers is the National Infrastructure Bank (NIB). As proposed by the Obama Administration, the NIB is not a true bank but a semi-autonomous entity with powers to make grants as well as loans. As such, the proposed "bank" runs into bipartisan Senate opposition because lawmakers do not want to cede the power to make public investment decisions to an "unelected body of bureaucrats" over which they would have limited oversight.

Also expected to meet with disfavor is the proposed Office of Public Benefit, a brainchild of Congressman Oberstar, who wanted the federal government to exercise closer control and supervision over state-initiated toll concessions and other public-private arrangements. Such an office would be opposed by many Republican lawmakers and by the National Governors Association who do not wish to throw obstacles in the way of closer public-private cooperation and greater participation of private investors in funding public infrastructure. Neither the Infrastructure Bank nor the Office of Public Benefit are

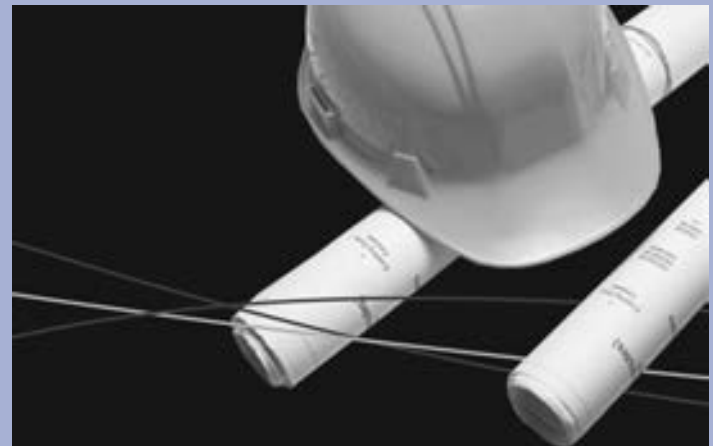
expected to be part of any future congressionally sponsored surface transportation legislation.

Also hanging in the balance is the future of another administration financial initiative, the "Build America Bonds" (BABs). BABs are taxable bonds that offer a federal interest rate subsidy to the issuer to reduce borrowing costs. Authority to issue these bonds is set to expire at the end of this year unless it was permanently extended during the lame duck session. Concern has been expressed that BABs could become a new federal bailout and add to the budget deficit.

## Cancelling and/or Reprogramming Uncommitted Stimulus (ARRA) Funds

House committee leaders in the next Congress are likely to come under strong pressure to retrieve whatever remains of the unspent and uncommitted stimulus funds. The prospective Republican Appropriations Committee chair, Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA), introduced a bill (H.R. 6403, the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Rescission Act") that would rescind any unobligated ARRA funds and return them to the U.S. Treasury. Lewis warned that he will reintroduce his bill in the new Congress, if necessary. Even already obligated funds

Continues on pg. 60



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*The MITA hat, actually many MITA hats, went to Orus, Kenya with MITA Member Kurt Poll of Kamminga & Roodvoets, Inc., in Grand Rapids. Kurt visited Africa during a church mission trip in November 2010, and commented that it was “quite the experience,” because of the lack of nearby power and water, the influence of witch doctors, and other cultural issues. More details and photos from his mission trip will be provided in an upcoming issue of Cross-Section Magazine.*

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# Where's Your MITA Hat Been?

The MITA hat has gone halfway around the globe and back! From Oxford, Mich., to Africa and back to again to Lake City, Mich., in the USA! Where were you and were you wearing your MITA hat? Send your photos to [nancybrown@mi-ita.com](mailto:nancybrown@mi-ita.com).

*From left to right Gary Putrow, Michigan Pipe and Valve; and Tom Micho, retired from Michigan Pipe and Valve, during a hunting camp in Lake City, Mich.*



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*MITA hats made it to the October 2010 board meeting at the Hunt Club in Oxford, Mich., and many of them stayed after the board meeting for the hunt. The hats and the "hatless" pictured here include MITA board members, several participants from the MITA Future Leader Program, and a few MITA staff members.*



*Doug Kaltz, of Kaltz Excavating, during a successful hunt.*



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## A Fresh Look at the Prospects for Transportation in the New Congress

Continued from pg. 55

may not escape rescission. Congressional GOP aides are reported to be closely reviewing agency records to identify particular stimulus-funded projects that could still be “reasonably” halted because work on them is only beginning.

The Lewis bill is the strongest signal yet of how the new House Republican majority intends to use its legislative power of the purse to nullify elements of the Obama transportation agenda. Acting on this strategy, the future chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, John Mica (R-Fl), has announced that he will revisit all pending high-speed rail (HSR) projects, and refocus the unspent and uncommitted money on high-speed rail “where it makes sense.” “The last thing we want is to build a dog that has to be highly subsidized by taxpayers,” Mica said, in reference to the Florida Tampa-to-Orlando HRR project and indirectly casting doubt on dozens of other HSR grants.

According to a Wall Street Journal analysis, of the \$4.6 billion in stimulus funds originally allocated on transportation, around \$6.3 billion (14 percent) still remain unobligated and \$24 billion (52 percent) have not been paid out (WSJ, “Unspent Stimulus Dollars,”

November 20). Most of the unobligated transportation money is in the high-speed rail program. These funds have been released slowly because of delays encountered in concluding cooperative partnership agreements between states and the freight railroads. De-obligation of the grant awards to Wisconsin and Ohio will further increase the savings. Meanwhile, Florida’s Governor-elect Rick Scott is not making a final decision on the Tampa-to-Orlando project until he determines how much of a fiscal burden the high-speed rail project would impose upon the state. He has been reported to be concerned that the line could be more of a liability than a benefit to the taxpayers. The lack of a transit distribution system at either end of the high-speed line compounds the questionable natural of the investment.

Also risking cancellation is a \$2 billion grant to California’s high-speed rail line, according to press reports (“GOP House aims to take \$2 billion back from California high-speed-rail,” The Mercury News, November 22). In sum, as one editorial observed, “the high-speed train appears to be stuck at the station.”



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## A \$4.3 Billion "High-Speed Train to Nowhere"

In the meantime, the California High-Speed Rail Authority announced on November 24 that the first 65-mile leg of California's high-speed rail line will be built from Fresno (pop. 505,000) to Corcoran (pop. 14,500) in Central Valley. The staff recommendation follows a directive by the Federal Railroad Administration that the federal funding awarded to the project must be dedicated to a single section of the project in the Central Valley. Roelof van Ark, the authority's CEO, said this segment "would make the best use of the \$4.3 billion currently available construction funds." But if Congress fails to authorize future funds to extend the line, the money would be largely wasted.

The project was quickly dubbed by critics as "a high-speed train to nowhere." If confirmed by the authority board, the decision to spend \$4.5 billion on an isolated route not serving any large population concentration could become a huge embarrassment for the administration and undermine the credibility of the entire high-speed rail program.

## FY 2011 Appropriations and the Surface Transportation Program Extension

Two immediate decisions are facing Congress during the lame-duck session: to keep the money flowing and to extend the existing SAFETEA-LU authorization, which will expire on December 31.

Funding for the surface transportation program expires on December 3 with the termination of the continuing resolution. Congress is expected to pass another short-term extension of the continuing resolution at fiscal year 2010 funding levels. Early in 2011, the new Republican House of Representatives is expected to address the funding for the remainder of FY 2011.

As for the surface transportation authorization, congressional leaders are discussing the possibility of a six-month program extension. Early in the next session, Rep. Mica plans to hold a series of listening sessions, following which he is expected to introduce a multi-year authorization bill. If a bill is not passed by the end of 2011, it will likely be delayed beyond the next presidential election.

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