

SPRING 2025

CROSS SECTION

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Inside this Issue:
Annual Conference Recap

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Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association

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On The COVER



The noise barrier subgrade on the Interstate 94 project in Berrien County. Photo courtesy of Adam Rochefort.

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NOW WHAT?

Dwelling on the past seldom yields anything but pain and continued suffering, but if you don't learn from it, you are often doomed to repeat it. Last fall's lame-duck session was a devastating process. It began full of promise and hope and ended with utter devastation. Why? Plain and simple, it was a lack of leadership on many levels. A Governor with no specific plan but plenty of options for the legislature to gravitate toward or embrace. A House of Representatives that were more concerned with their

own individual interests than our state as a whole. In short, priorities were set and ignored, which demonstrates a complete lack of respect for the process and the needs of our state. We must fix the infrastructure under our feet before we pay the Netflix subscription! The real question is, when will we hit the tipping point? When will our elected officials decide that it is in the state's best interest to put infrastructure at the top of the proverbial pile and actually do something other than talk about it?

Continued on page 8



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The Good News

Funding is being discussed at levels never seen before for a variety of reasons, including a strong PAC and the continued education of elected officials with real-time information concerning the needs communities are facing. But in typical legislative fashion, nothing seems to get done until we actually have a crisis. MITA has been working diligently for the past three years to get ahead of this curve. We are the car stuck in the mud spinning its wheels, and eventually, we will hit solid pavement and propel ourselves out of this mess. The real question is what toll it will take on the industry as we work through this quagmire of a process.

For the now what?

Speaker of the House Representative Matt Hall has developed a plan that could generate \$3.1B in additional revenue annually for Michigan roads and infrastructure without new revenue. This bold proposal does not require new revenue but a shuffling of the deck and a reprioritizing of current state revenues. The governor has also proposed a similar dollar figure for a road funding solution at \$3.0 billion, but it is vastly different in where the money comes from. Governor Whitmer's plan is to find new revenue from a variety of sources, including a marijuana tax, advertising taxes, and a corporate income tax increase. MITA has been agnostic on how we get to our suggested 3.9B

annual shortfall but will certainly weigh in with Speaker Hall and the Governor's team in an effort to facilitate a long-term stable funding solution. MITA is currently in the process of determining the potential job losses if we continue down our current trajectory. At first flush, the numbers are staggering. We will be using this information to further compel our elected officials to do the right thing for Michigan families. Our jobs provide good benefits and a real wage that can support a family. And a short ride or watch of the news will continue to demonstrate that we do have a statewide infrastructure problem.

MITA and industry partners will be launching a campaign to drive this and many other infrastructure-related points forward via a multimedia blitz funded by industry partners and MITA. What can you do? Continue to advocate for proper funding with your elected officials. Talk about the job losses headed your way if funding doesn't occur. Support the PAC. It is easy to get disenfranchised when you don't see a direct correlation between the spending and the results, but the PAC has kept MITA in the game when it comes to the funding discussion. In an era of so much noise, we are still being heard, so take some comfort in that.

Rob **CS**

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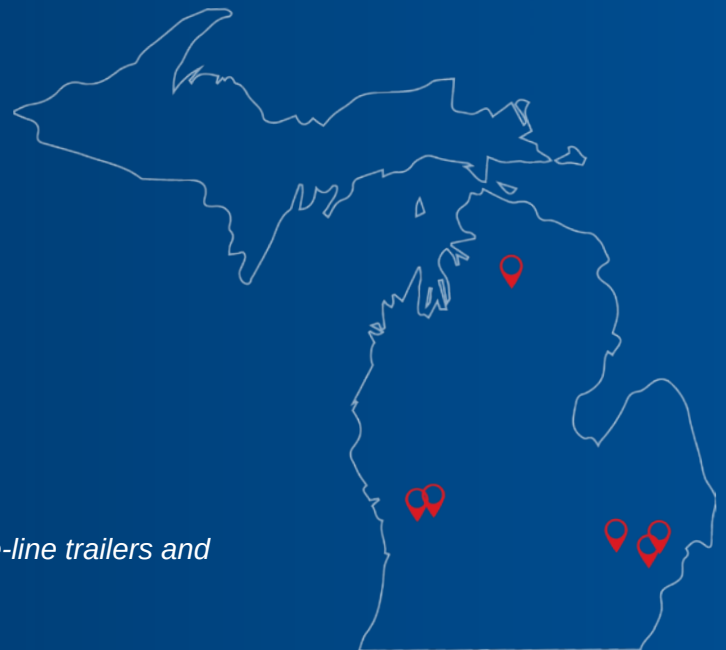
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THE ROLLERCOASTER OF ROAD FUNDING



Lance Binoniemi

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The rollercoaster of road funding in the Michigan capitol continues into February with some hope, but an eerie feeling still looms that has been present for decades. Seemingly, all politicians want to fix the roads and support infrastructure investments, but when push comes to shove, the Legislature fails to address the problem. The 2024 lame-duck session had moments of hope that something would get done but ultimately failed because of the weight of the issue. Governor Whitmer's attempts to keep the issue out of the public's view during the campaign season and through the elections meant that there was little time to come up with legislative solutions between the elections and the end of the year. It was a long shot and a Hail Mary that ultimately, we found the Governor didn't have the arm strength to reach the endzone.

And so we start with a new Legislature in 2025 with a new majority. Republicans won back majority in the November elections and elected Matt Hall as the Speaker of the House. During lame duck, then Minority Leader Matt Hall proposed a \$2.7 billion annual road funding plan that wasn't able to gain enough support prior to the 2024 session ending. His proposal and his idea of funding roads sustainably in the future is to use existing revenues in our current state budget and reprioritize that money towards road funding. Also included in the plan is a long-standing MITA priority to redirect every tax dollar spent on gasoline purchases toward improving our roads. Michigan is one of six states that assess sales tax on its motor fuel and uses none of that revenue to maintain and build our roads or bridges. Fortunately, one of the first proposals Speaker Hall introduced in 2025 was a \$3.1 billion road funding increase. Similar to the plan he presented in December 2024, his \$3.1 billion proposal uses mainly existing revenues from the state's coffers and a swap on the sales tax on fuel to increase the transportation budget.

As we had hoped, Governor Whitmer countered Speaker Hall's proposal with her own \$3 billion road funding plan. The Governor's plan contrasted the Speaker's plan in that it relies on about 25% of existing revenue and 75% new revenue. The administration's new revenue proposal comes from an increase in the state's marijuana tax, an increase in Michigan's corporate income tax, getting every tax dollar paid at the pump to go towards roads, and \$500 million in undisclosed cuts.

It is good to have competing proposals from competing parties; there is no question about that. And, by the way we read it, the Governor and Speaker Hall have agreed to \$1.5 billion already with the sales tax on fuel swap which brings in \$1 billion annually and \$500 million in undisclosed cuts. This a good starting point and I sincerely hope that when this article comes out, a plan will have already been passed. Revenues for this year's budget and next year's starting on October 1 are relatively flat, and the big drop off will come in fiscal year 2026 / 2027, which starts October 1, 2026. Things couldn't be more urgent as momentum is at an all-time high, and it just takes legislative leaders and the governor to sit down and hash their differences out if, in fact, they all support increased infrastructure investments as they have all stated in the past.

The Governor is scheduled to give her State of the State address on February 26, 2025, and it is anticipated that she will lay some groundwork on a potential long-term, sustainable road funding solution. After that, the major focus of the Michigan government will be the state budget, and road funding could see its way into that debate. Regardless, the heavy construction industry must continue to fight for long-term funding by supporting the MITA PAC, reaching out to lawmakers through phone, mail, or email, or inviting them out to a job site when they become active. **CS**



Be a part of the solution! Last year, the MITA PAC raised over \$500k and propelled MITA into the limelight in Lansing. To be effective with our legislative efforts, we need to maintain the momentum. We've got the legislature's attention.... now we need to keep it!

But more importantly, the dollars raised allowed for epic pre-election spending last September, putting our and the state's funding issues on every lawmaker's radar.

A big thank you to those of you who donated! **CS**

Name	Company	Amount
George Verscheure*	C. A. Hull Co., Inc.	\$110.00
Ken Wolverton*	Give 'Em A Break Safety	\$50.00
Jeff Irvin*	Action Traffic Maintenance, Inc.	\$125.00
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Joe Goodall	Dan's Excavating, Inc.	\$500.00
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James Doescher	Dan's Excavating, Inc.	\$1,000.00
Patty Meyer*		\$25.00
Justin Peyerk	Dan's Excavating, Inc.	\$2,500.00
Chris Woolley*	C. A. Hull Co., Inc.	\$50.00
Will Morrison*	Give 'Em A Brake Safety	\$50.00
Jack R Dykstra II	Dykstra Realty 1, LLC	\$1,000.00
Timothy Peake*	Action Traffic Maintenance, Inc.	\$125.00
Michael Kalin*	Kalin Construction Company	\$100.00
Brian Mayer*	Ajax Paving Industries	\$50.00
Gerald Kalin*	Kalin Construction Company	\$250.00
Jay Desai*	C. A. Hull Co., Inc.	\$85.00
Dave Terbeek	AIS Construction Equipment	\$1,000.00
Jennifer Slater*	Action Traffic Maintenance, Inc.	\$50.00
Ron Acciavatti	Pamar Enterprises Inc.	\$2,500.00
Tom Rizor	Hoffman Bros., Inc.	\$2,500.00

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the MITA PAC this year. The money raised will be spent judiciously with input from the MITA PAC Board and also the entire MITA Board of Directors.

MITA PAC funds are given to political candidates who support initiatives that are important to the heavy highway/underground industry and to combat those candidates who are against our goal of long-term, sustainable infrastructure funding. The more these funds are targeted to the right candidates, the more our industry will thrive.



If you have any questions about how your PAC contributions are being spent, feel free to email MITA's Executive Vice President Rob Coppersmith (roboppersmith@thinkmita.org), or MITA's Vice President of Government Affairs Lance Binoniemi (lancebinoniemi@thinkmita.org).



Long-Term Sustainable Funding Campaign 2025

The MITA Political Action Committee (PAC) is a strong contributor to the overall political voice of Michigan's heavy construction industry. MITA PAC is the most effective tool our industry has to support candidates who will fight in favor of contractors in the Michigan legislature. Your personal financial support of the MITA PAC gives all of us who care about the future of heavy construction the opportunity to have a strong influence in the political process.

ENGINEERING

FHWA RESCINDS LONGSTANDING WAIVER FOR MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS: WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE INDUSTRY

In a significant move that could reshape the landscape of highway construction, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has officially rescinded its longstanding waiver for manufactured products used in transportation projects. This decision is expected to have a ripple effect on how materials and products are sourced and used in federal highway and infrastructure projects across the United States.

Effective March 25, 2025, the FHWA released the final rule amending their Buy America (BA) regulation by terminating the Manufactured Products General Waiver, which has been in place since 1983. The General Waiver allowed for the exemption of a wide variety of items used on federal-aid highway projects – including electronics, ITS hardware, electrical equipment, signal boxes, pumps, and many more – from provisions mandating that they be produced in the United States. Under the final rule, a manufactured product is defined as an article, material, or supply that has been processed into a specific form and shape or combined with other articles, materials, or supplies to create a product with different properties than the individual articles, materials, or supplies.

The FHWA is applying a phased-in approach to this implementation. Under the revised rule, beginning with federal aid projects obligated on or after October 1, 2025, manufactured products must be assembled (i.e., no requirements related to the source or origin of the components) in the United States. After that, projects obligated on or after October 1, 2026, more than 55 percent of manufactured product components (by cost) must be made in the United States.

The FHWA was made aware of strong industry opposition of rescinding the General Waiver, including from MITA and ARTBA. During the open comments period, MITA sent a letter strongly opposing the termination of the General Waiver. The letter made clear that MITA is not necessarily opposed to working towards the expansion of America's manufacturing capacity and promoting





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domestic economic and domestic job growth, but MITA feels very strongly not only that the justification for granting the original waiver still applies, but it is essential to avoiding significant cost increases and project delays or cancellations for items of minimal significance.

The FHWA acknowledges that the revised Final Rule is expected to increase material costs for manufactured products used in federal-aid highway construction projects, but it may trigger *Continued on page 53*

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THE IMPORTANCE OF HANDLING A MIOSHA INSPECTION THE RIGHT WAY



Greg Brooks

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MIOSHA inspections are a part of the job; they are unavoidable and will happen.

Over recent years, MITA members have received additional citations, avoidable citations, and even arrests because they did not know how to handle these inspections.

In many trainings, I cover what to expect, what to do, and what not to do during an inspection, but if you haven't been able to attend a training, I will review some of it now.

MIOSHA is an enforcement agency that aims to identify hazards during an inspection that could harm workers and issue citations to the employer for non-compliance. The hope is that the employer will be more likely to have those and other issues identified and corrected regularly. The flaw is that MIOSHA has up to 90 days to issue the alleged violations. Can you see the disconnect? MITA always suggests that you attempt to correct any hazard a safety officer identifies during an inspection, whether you agree with their assessment of the situation.

The Inspection Process

- 1. Notification and Arrival:** In most cases, MIOSHA inspections are unannounced. Generally, the safety officer will find an employee and introduce themselves. Either by design or maybe it's just Murphy's law, the first contact always seems to be with the newest employee. The safety officer will use that first contact to identify who the competent person is. It generally makes things smoother if ALL employees can direct the safety officer to the competent person.
- 2. Opening Conference:** The safety officer meets with the employer and/or their designated competent person to discuss the scope of the inspection. This meeting helps clarify the inspection's goals and gather background information on the workplace. The safety officer will show their credentials; it is essential to verify the validity of the officer, as there are scammers out there.

3. Walkaround: The safety officer then conducts a walkaround of the site to identify potential hazards. This includes examining equipment, reviewing safety practices, and observing employee tasks. During this phase, the officer may take photographs, collect documents, and interview workers about their safety concerns. During the walkaround, employers and employees have the right to have a representative accompany the compliance officer.

4. Closing Conference: After the inspection, the compliance officer meets with the employer to discuss the findings. If violations are found, the officer will provide recommendations for corrective actions. Employers are typically given a timeline to address any issues identified during the inspection. This may happen on-site, but most likely over the phone at a later date.

5. Citation and Penalties: If violations are discovered, MIOSHA may issue citations outlining the specific issues and propose penalties. Employers are allowed to contest the citations or negotiate a settlement. The severity of penalties varies depending on factors such as the nature of the violation, whether it was willful or repeated, and the company's history with OSHA.

To further motivate employers to provide workers with a safe work environment, MIOSHA dramatically increased its fine structure last year! This is a move motivated by the Federal Government but one that will surely open your eyes when you receive your next certified mail from them!

Ensuring job site safety isn't just about compliance—it's about protecting your team and keeping your projects running smoothly. That's why MITA offers Job Site Inspections, providing a second set of eyes to identify potential hazards before MIOSHA does. By taking advantage of this service, you can address issues proactively and reduce the risk of costly citations. To schedule an inspection, contact me at gregbrooks@thinkmita.org.

Continued on page 54



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The Value of MITA Membership

As a proud member of MITA, Doyle & Ogden values the opportunity to network with construction companies across Michigan. Being part of MITA allows them to stay connected with industry professionals, understand emerging challenges, and provide essential insurance solutions to help businesses thrive.

For more information, visit Doyle-Ogden.com or contact their Grand Rapids office at 616-949-9000. **CS**



The Doyle & Ogden Team from L to R: Nick VanDenburg, Joe Creedon, Shannon Heads, Penny Overholt, Pat Eaman, Mike Wilder, Vince Owen and Ian Mowery.

ROBOT LAYS OUT LANE LINES AND ASPHALT JOINTS ON I-94 PROJECT

By Aram Kalousdian

An approximately 8-½ mile-long \$204 million reconstruction project on Interstate 94 in Berrien County began in July 2023 and it is expected to be completed in May of 2028. The project includes cold milling, hot mix asphalt (HMA) reconstruction, reconstruction of four bridges, rehabilitation of nine bridges, installation of three box culverts and installation of four sections of noise barrier. Rieth-Riley is the prime contractor on the project.

A TinySurveyor robot manufactured by TinyMobileRobots is being used for laying out the lane lines and asphalt joints. The TinySurveyor eliminates the need for string and nails as it marks everything out using a global positioning system (GPS). It's also faster than laying out by hand and safer when laying out near traffic.

Subcontractor Kalin Construction Co. Inc., of Sodus, is doing excavation, subgrade, aggregate base, and pipework on the project. Kalin Construction Co. Inc. is utilizing 3D earthwork. The GPS technology keeps equipment moving efficiently as the

road is built.

"3D earthwork begins with building a digital 3D model using the provided plans to create a finished design. We use Trimble Business Center to create the model," said Matt Kalin, project manager for Kalin Construction Co. Inc.

"When our design is completed, the next step is to calibrate the site. This is completed by setting up a GPS Base

Station and shooting local coordinates provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation. Once we have the project designed and calibrated, we can put the design files into the equipment and begin working. Our automated grading fleet consists of Trimble Earthworks. We have Trimble Earthworks equipped dozers, excavators and graders. This equipment gets local radio correction information from our internet Base Station that communicates via cell signal. This has been a recent change and has dramatically increased system uptime in comparison to using standard 450 MHz radio waves to communicate.

"With the correction information from our Base Station and the sensors/software provided by Trimble, we are able to achieve a GPS vertical tolerance of 0.08 feet on average. For more critical precision work, we use the SPS-930 Robotic Total Station and a Trimble MT-900 Machine Prizm. Using Total Station, we can achieve 0.05 feet or better tolerance. We primarily use GPS to get the grade close and then fine grade using the Total Station. The operator inside the cab of the equipment is able to manipulate the vertical offset from the design surface in order to build the different road sections (clay grade, sand subbase, and aggregate base layers). The operators

Continued on page 22

The TinySurveyor works on the Interstate 94 project in Berrien County. Photo courtesy of Adam Rochefort.



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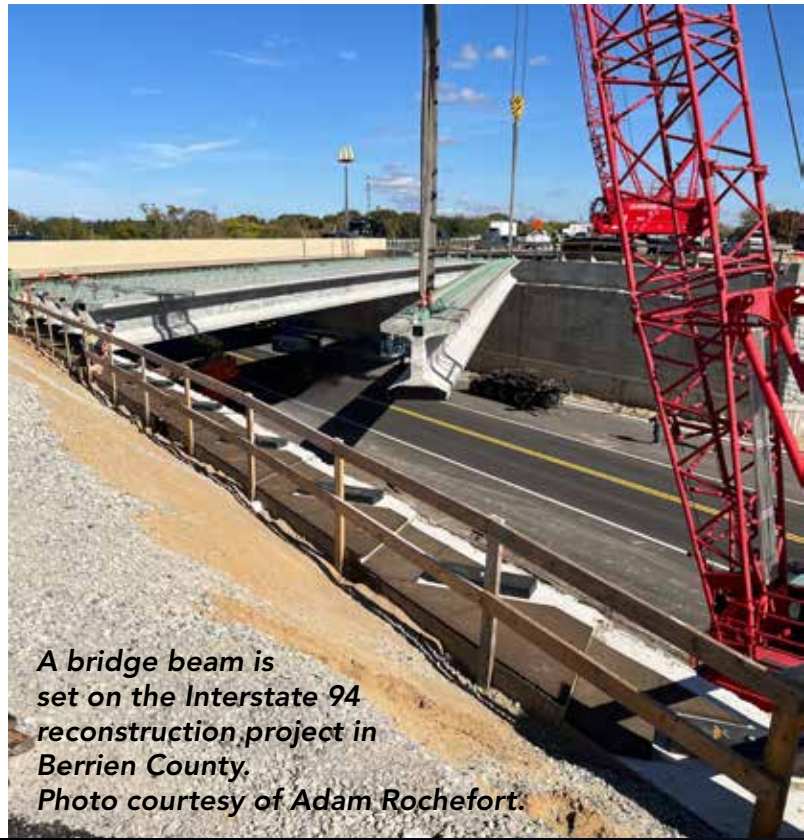
MEMBER PROJECT PROFILE

Continued from page 20

are also able to see a plan view and select line work in order to make sure they are cutting to the required width. Using 3D grading has allowed us to increase productivity, tighten material yields, and produce a smoother, more accurate road surface.”

The I-94 project includes 7-½ inches of 3EMH base course, 3 inches of 3EMH leveling course, and 1-½ inches of 5EMH surface.

The project has limited access points and space for staging. Access needs to be determined prior to starting a stage of construction. With four bridges being demolished and reconstructed and nine bridges being rehabilitated, continuing road reconstruction between these structures is challenging. There is constant communication between contractors in order to make sure access isn't hindered. The project also has many operations happening simultaneously. The schedule is constantly being updated and revised in order to keep the project moving as issues arise. Work activities are planned weeks in advance between all of the contractors in order to make sure that everyone is aware of whatever challenges are present at that point in the project.



A bridge beam is set on the Interstate 94 reconstruction project in Berrien County. Photo courtesy of Adam Rochefort.



Concrete is poured on a bridge deck for the Interstate 94 reconstruction project in Berrien County. Photo courtesy of Adam Rochefort.



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Continued from page 22

Subcontractors on the project include Milbocker & Sons, Inc., of Allegan (bridge reconstruction, bridge rehabilitation, box culvert installation, cofferdams and noise barrier); Martin J. Concrete, Inc., of Coopersville (concrete curb, concrete approaches, single face barrier wall, concrete shared use path) and PK Contracting, Inc., of Troy (pavement markings).

Additional subcontractors include Give 'Em A Brake Safety (traffic control devices); Action Traffic Maintenance, Inc., of Grand Blanc (guardrail, cable barrier rail, and permanent signs); Heinz Tree Service & Landscaping, Inc., of Saginaw (tree removal and

clearing) and Lois Kay Contracting, of Saginaw (cold milling).

Subcontractors also include Grand River Construction, Inc., of Hudsonville (bridge rehabilitation and poured-in-place noise barrier); Diane Dukes, Inc., of Big Rapids (slope restoration); Hasse's Towing & Crane Service, of Benton Harbor (wrecker service) and Wolverine Sealcoating, of Jackson (asphaltic mastic and crack filling).

Additional subcontractors include S Hayes, Inc., of LeRoy (underground videoing) and Wright Electric, of Marquette (electrical work). AECOM is the design firm for the project. **CS**



Paving operations are underway on the Interstate 94 project in Berrien County. Photo courtesy of Neil Garner.

MAJOR CASES IN FEDERAL COURT

Last year, the court gavel stifled several federal agency actions in judicial courts nationwide. While legal challenges are not atypical two recent rulings have an outsized impact on how our industry operates. Given that courts and the legal process can take inordinate amounts of time to deliver substantive results, we have these major federal legal cases on our watchlist. We will be monitoring all new developments and assessing how state and local agencies here in Michigan respond to them.



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DBRA 2023 Rule Making

Associated General Contractors vs. U.S. DOL

The early months of 2024 were spent grappling with U.S. DOL rule changes to the Davis Bacon and Related Acts that occurred in 2023. In particular, truck driver provisions and material supplier exemptions which lacked clarity and in some interpretations could cause incoherent and detrimental harm to industry trucking. AGC filed suit and sought to challenge several parts of the 2023 updates to DBA alleging that U.S. DOL had exceeded its authority. The suit challenged the expansion of DBA to truck drivers, expanded coverage of certain material suppliers, and application of DBA by operation of law. The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas granted the plaintiff's preliminary injunction in full, halting the enforcement of the contested updates. In response, MDOT ceased implementing changes it was planning for truck drivers and has issued guidance that DBA implementation will remain as historically practiced. At this time there doesn't seem to be motivation by U.S. DOL to appeal the injunction and things remain status quo. MITA will continue to monitor this case as it continues through the system and alert members of important updates.

DBE Program

MAMCO, Bagshaw Trucking Inc. vs. U.S. DOT et al.

This is one of the more impactful cases on our watchlist and is already redefining how industry approaches the DBE program. The two contractor plaintiffs in the case allege that the DBE program as constituted is ultimately discriminatory and violates the Constitution's racial equality provisions. The plaintiffs sought a permanent injunction and a declaratory judgment to end the DBE program. The result of the case was a preliminary injunction out of the Eastern District Court of Kentucky. This injunction showed that while the court agreed with the plaintiffs, it would not unilaterally end the DBE program. Instead, the injunction, with subsequent clarification, allowed solely for the plaintiffs in the case to be relieved of the DBE program requirements in any state where they bid for federally funded contracts. With the help of the Department of Justice, the USDOT and the plaintiffs arranged a schedule to accommodate state agencies in removing DBE program requirements from any bid that the plaintiffs indicate they are likely to pursue. Currently, state agencies are amending bidding contracts with DBE percentage requirements to 0% when either of the plaintiffs is deemed eligible and interested bidders through a list mediated by the DOJ. All other components of the DBE program remain in place. With the change in administration, it seems unlikely the U.S. DOT will be seeking an appeal to this ruling anytime soon. MITA will continue to alert members of important changes to the DBE program as the subject matter of this case continues to unfold **CS**





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A N N U A L

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2025 MITA Annual Conference! With over 1,400 attendees, this year's event was our biggest yet, bringing together industry professionals, insightful speakers, and top-notch exhibitors to connect, learn, and grow.



MITA EVP, Rob Coppersmith joins Bob Adcock of Angelo lafrate at the podium to celebrate his well-earned recognition as this year's Honorary Member Award recipient.



Congratulations to Matt Gillette on taking home a prize from the Mount Carmel Stabilization Group exhibit booth! Pat Creel was all smiles presenting the prize.



Inspiring Excellence— Keynote Speaker John "Gucci" Foley delivered a powerful message that had the room engaged and motivated. His "Glad to be Here" mindset resonated with all, reminding us to lead with purpose and gratitude!



The Future is Bright! – Congratulations to Jordan Kaltz of Kaltz Excavating on her well-earned recognition! She is one of nearly 30 future leaders who participated in MITA's Future Leaders Development Program, helping to shape the next generation of industry leadership.



Building Connections, Building Success – Mike Podsiad from Ajax Paving Industries, Inc., Lisa Natschke from Egis, and Christopher Honore from Fort Wayne Contracting connect at one of the many networking opportunities.



Speaker of the House, Matt Hall, addressed a packed room during the SBP/DBE Reception, sponsored by AIS/ CRC, discussing the looming funding cliff and his plan to secure sustainable funding for the future of our industry.



Keynote speaker Justin Ganschow of CAT Safety Services presenting on The 4 Domains of Safety Leadership. A powerful session on building a culture of safety and leadership within our industry!



Rich Juliano from ARTBA presents a vital update on Transportation Construction Advocacy, keeping us informed and ready to advocate for the future of infrastructure.



The industry reception, sponsored by Michigan CAT, was packed with professionals eager to connect and share insights.

CONFERENCE



Conference attendees listen intently to the keynote speaker, in the entertainment hall.

Passing the Torch – Celebrating leadership and legacy at the President's Breakfast as we honor our outgoing Board President, Jack Dykstra (center), and welcome our new one, Mike DeFinis (left).



The Perfect Chord – A big thank you to Alta for making sure our event hits all the right notes!



Connecting & Consulting – Ross Koella, G2 Consulting, sharing expertise and solutions.



Team EJ in Action! – Adam Gorney, Sharon Zalewski, and Kevin Spyhalski representing EJ at the MITA Conference.



Leaders at Work – MITA's Executive Board focused and engaged, making decisions that drive our industry forward.



Two MSP Motor Carrier Division representatives join the Safety Directors Roundtable, sharing valuable insights and expertise to help enhance safety across our industry.



Robin Meram of FDM Contracting takes the podium as a presenter for the "Navigating the Sale of Your Business" session alongside Lazear Capital Partners, sharing valuable guidance on planning for the future.

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TIM ANDERSON AWARDED MDOT AND MITA 2025 PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Tim Anderson, a senior transportation technician with the Bay City TSC, has been awarded the MDOT and Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA) 2025 Partnership Award.

This award recognizes the exceptional accomplishments of an MDOT employee who embodies the essence of fostering engagement and collaboration with peers to bring about a constructive influence on projects.

- MITA and MDOT collaboratively select the award recipient each year.
- Tim was selected due to his commitment to his role and dedication to collaborating with others in the industry.
- Those who have worked with Tim are familiar with his fitting catchphrase, "In the spirit of partnership." Tim started his MDOT career in 1996 as an intern before later working as a construction inspector and senior transportation technician.
- He's held roles in several TSCs across the department and has been in his current position at the Bay City TSC since 2014.
- Tim has worked on several notable projects throughout his career, including the current I-475 Rebuilding Michigan project in Genesee County and the M-13/M-84 (Lafayette Street) bridge replacement in Bay City.
- Tim has demonstrated exceptional dedication to his role and the department, earning the prestigious Director's Award, the department's highest honor, in 2016.

Congratulations Tim! **CS**



*L to R:
MDOT COO
Gregg Brunner,
MITA VP of Engineering
Rachelle VanDeventer,
MDOT Senior Transportation Tech
and Partnership Award recipient Tim Anderson,
and MDOT Director Brad Wieferich.*



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FEDERAL HIGHWAY INVESTMENTS HELP DRIVE CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS

BY DR. ALISON PREMO BLACK

ablack@artba.org

From the replacement of the Calcasieu River Bridge in Louisiana to the I-15 Express Lanes in California, states across the country are ramping up investment in projects that expand capacity or provide new roads and bridges, according to ARTBA’s analysis of data from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The value of capacity expansion projects has risen since Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, along with the number of projects, roadway miles, and bridges being upgraded.

While major reconstruction and repair remains the primary focus of the Federal-Aid Highway Program—historically representing about half of all construction project costs—states are expanding investments in projects that add new capacity to the highway and bridge network.

Of the new federal-aid highway projects with construction work authorized in FY 2024, capacity improvements or new infrastructure accounted for 33 percent of total project value.

This is up from 24 percent in FY 2022 and 22 percent in FY 2023. By comparison, these projects accounted for an average of 26 percent of federal-aid project costs under the previous federal law, known as the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) between 2016 and 2020.

States that received the green light to advance major capacity projects last year included Massachusetts, Louisiana, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Texas, Arizona, South Carolina, Idaho, Illinois, and Washington. Capacity improvements accounted for 40 percent or more of approved federal-aid highway construction project costs in these states.

Such projects could include adding a turn lane, improving interchanges, widening the roadway, or building a new highway or bridge where a structure did not exist before, such as the new interchange at I-95 and Pioneer Trail in Volusia County, Fla. Some may include both adding capacity and new construction, along with additional spending on planning and design work and safety measures.

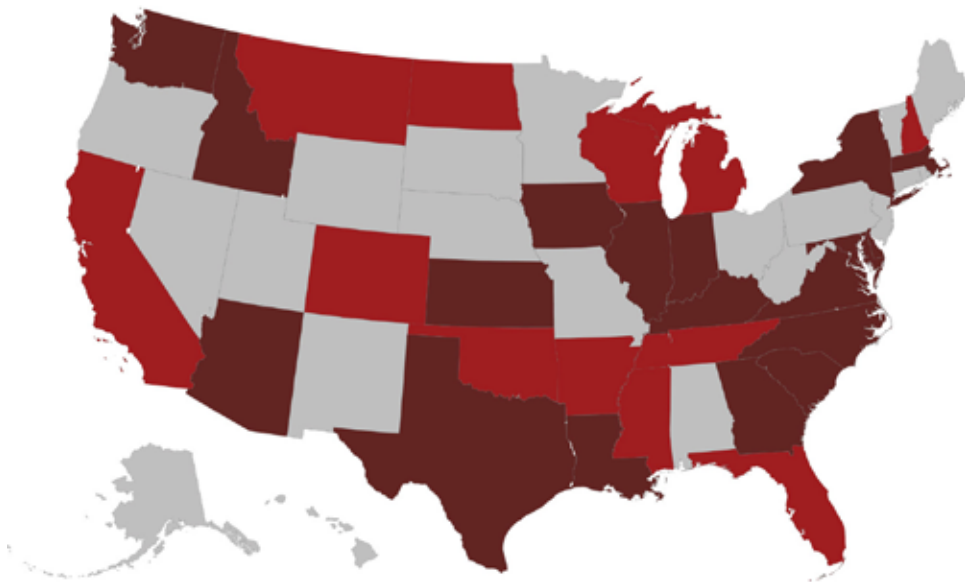
In addition to federal-aid highway funds, states are leveraging their own state funds and, in some cases, additional private dollars to pay for the capacity projects.

Projects Coast-to-Coast

The number of projects expanding capacity work or new construction

Continued on page 34

Share of New Federal-Aid Highway Construction Project Costs for Added Capacity or New Construction, FY 2024



Source: ARTBA analysis of FHWA data for FY 2024. Data is based on fiscal year that funds for construction were appropriated. Does not include projects without construction activity.

Added Capacity/
New Construction
is 33% or more
of all federal-aid
project costs

Added Capacity/
New Construction is
19% to 33%
of all federal-aid
project costs

Added Capacity/
New Construction is
less than 19%
of all federal-aid
project costs

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Continued from page 32

between FY 2022 and FY 2024 has grown compared to previous years, with over 4,175 projects authorized to move forward. This compared to 2,750 projects receiving the go-ahead under the first three years of the FAST Act, between FY 2016 and FY 2018.

Every state has had at least one federal-aid highway project that includes expanding capacity since FY 2022, according to the data. This could range from adding a left-hand turn lane as part of Route 1 intersection improvements in Westport, Conn., to construction funding for interchange improvements and widening on I-285 in Georgia.

In FY 2024, states with the most projects that included additional capacity were Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, California, Kansas, and Texas.

According to the data submitted by state transportation departments, projects approved since FY 2022 that include some work related to new capacity or construction are expected to improve

nearly 7,140 miles (over twice the width of the United States) of roadway overall and 3,800 bridges. In contrast, projects approved between FY 2016 and FY 2018 supported upgrades to just under 5,400 miles of roadway and 2,100 bridges.

Planning & Design Work Points to More Construction

States continue to leverage federal-aid highway funds to prepare projects for construction, with over 20,000 projects receiving approval to commit federal funds to the planning and design (P&D) phase of a project. This is in line with the number of P&D work on projects in the first three years of the FAST Act (19,850 projects) and significantly more than was approved in the previous three-year period, FY 2019 to 2021 (16,400 projects).

It is common for states to receive approval for P&D work for a project and then construction work in the same year or soon after. The uptick in the number of P&D projects is a sign of more work

to come over the next few years as construction activity gets underway.

Based on the P&D work approved in FY 2024, bridges will continue to be a top priority, with major P&D commitments for work on the I-95 Bridge Group 4R in Rhode Island, the new Francis Scott Key Bridge in Maryland, the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor in Ohio and Kentucky, the Columbia River Interstate Bridge between Washington and Oregon, and the rehabilitation of the Calumet River Bridges in Illinois.

Dr. Alison Premo Black is ARTBA chief economist.

Editor's Notes

ARTBA analyzed the flow of federal-aid highway program funds tracked in FHWA's Financial Management Information System with a focus on the date that projects received the agency's sign-off for construction or planning and design work. While the federal government

Continued on page 54

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EXECUTIVE ACTION EXPRESS:

TRUMP'S NEW ERA OF RAPID POLICY SHIFTS

By Rich Juliano And Beth McGinn

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President Donald Trump has wasted no time implementing his policy agenda since taking office. Within 24 hours of his Jan. 20 swearing-in, he signed 26 Executive Orders (EOs).

Some have been typical of an incoming administration, such as freezing all new or pending regulations for review by a Trump appointee. Other actions represent stark—and in some cases explicit—changes in direction from the Biden administration. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy followed up Jan. 28 by issuing three of his own directives, hours after taking office.

ARTBA has communicated with the new administration and reported these developments to our membership on a daily—and sometimes hourly—basis.

As a snapshot at the time this issue went to publication, here are key highlights so far:

Greenhouse Gas Mandate: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is moving to rescind the Biden-era rule requiring states to incorporate greenhouse gas (GHG) measurements in project planning. ARTBA had flagged this as a priority for Secretary Duffy's transition team, noting 22 states were successfully challenging the mandate in federal court, with ARTBA filing an amicus brief.

NEPA: Trump revoked a Carter-era EO which empowered the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to issue regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The CEQ chair is now tasked with organizing a work group to expedite and simplify the permitting process through more consistent and improved agency-level NEPA regulations.

DBE Program: U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) officials have been directed to "identify and eliminate all Biden-era programs, policies, activities, rules, and orders that promote climate change activism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, racial equity, gender identity policies, environmental justice, and other partisan objectives." It's important to note that the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program remains part of federal law. However, these DEI-related principles will likely shape the new administration's approach to litigation, challenging the program and perhaps leading to major changes.

Funding: Appropriate for winter weather, there's been continued talk of funding "freezes," followed by clarifications, legal challenges, and "thawing" in some cases. A Jan. 20 EO and Jan. 27 memo from the White House Office of Management & Budget appeared to pause disbursement for all federal-aid highway and transit dollars, among others. Upon further review, however, the bulk of these funds have continued to flow.

Discretionary grants without signed agreements, and new grant announcements, appear to be on hold for now.

Secretary Duffy issued an order detailing U.S. DOT's principles for "grantmaking, lending, policymaking and rulemaking," prioritizing projects relating to a "proper Federal interest," rather than "local political objectives." Other preferred attributes will include strong co-funding brought by states and localities, limited duration of federal funding, user pay principles, compliance with Buy America and immigration enforcement, communities with higher marriage and birth rates, local opportunity zones and prohibition of mask and vaccine mandates.

EV Charging Stations: In an example of a Trump administration target, FHWA is holding all unobligated funding from the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) formula program until the agency revises its guidance to reflect new policies.

DOGE: The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a reform initiative led by Elon Musk, has been established as

Continued on page 54





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G2 CONSULTING GROUP SELECTED FOR ROAD COMMISSION ‘AS-NEEDED’ CONTRACT

AGREEMENT PAVES THE WAY FOR G2 TO PARTICIPATE ON FUTURE OAKLAND COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) has named G2 Consulting Group, a nationally recognized, Troy-based geotechnical, environmental and construction services firm, as one of its pre-approved engineering teams through a two-year “as-needed” indefinite service contract.

G2’s selection for the 2025-2027 RCOC agreement is a result of the company’s past performance on projects and its design and geotechnical engineering capabilities in service areas deemed critical for future planned projects. Road reconstruction in Michigan has become a top priority for the state’s leadership team and has been accelerated by additional funding via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. With more than 2,700 miles of roadways, RCOC is the largest county road system in Michigan.

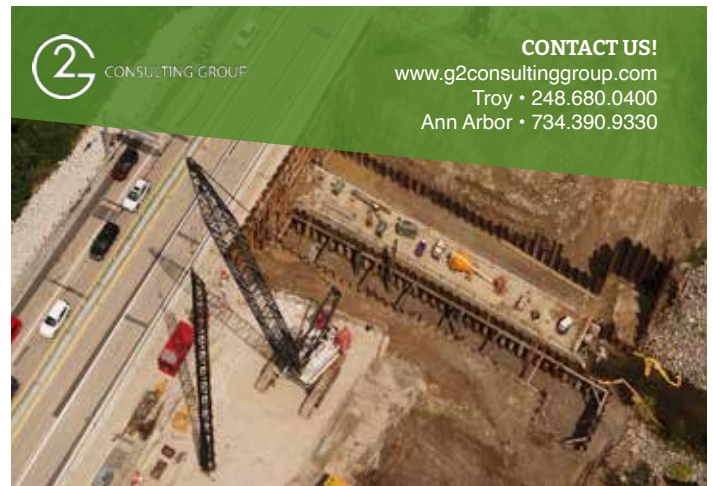
“We have the know-how and capability to bring real added value to road design and construction,” says Mark Smolinski P.E., G2’s president. “With all the construction projects and all the roadwork being done in Michigan these days, we welcome this opportunity to contribute.”

G2 has worked on major infrastructure projects for three decades including geotechnical engineering and materials testing on hundreds of public and private infrastructure projects. The Company has seen a rise in innovative intersection configurations, including increased roundabouts and newer “diverging diamond” interstate highway interchanges. G2 has also been involved in many notable bridge projects and is engaged in significant culvert updates and replacements throughout Oakland County.

“With RCOC and all of our public and private clients, our goal is always to help get the job done smarter and faster,” says Smolinski. “We work with our partners to do whatever’s required to assure that our part of the job goes smoothly and stays within budget. That’s what our clients expect from us, and we pride ourselves on delivering on our promise – Smart. Results. Fast.”

G2 was recently named to Zweig Group’s “Hot Firms” list for 2024 recognizing the fastest growing architecture, engineering, environmental, planning, construction and related professional services firms.

For more information on G2 Consulting Group, visit www.G2consultinggroup.com. **CS**



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HARDMAN CONSTRUCTION ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

NEW ROLES UNDERSCORE COMPANY GROWTH AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Hardman Construction, a leader in the geotechnical construction industry, announces key leadership changes to strengthen its executive team and ensure continued success.

- Todd Schrader, who has led as President and CEO since 2012, will now serve exclusively as CEO.
- Joe Rogers has been promoted to President.
- Marty Gamble continues in his role as Vice President.
- Dave DeClerck has been promoted to Vice President of Geotechnical Services.
- Nicolle Sheafor has been named Chief Financial Officer.

These changes reflect Hardman Construction’s commitment to growth, innovation, excellence in client services, and dedication to remaining in the Ludington community.

Now celebrating its 46th year in business, Hardman Construction is one of the largest privately-owned geotechnical contractors in the Midwest. Hardman specializes in an array of foundation piling, earth retention, rigid inclusions, ground improvements, as well as bridge and marine construction. **CS**



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DIAMOND CONCRETE SAWING EXPANDS WITH NEW LOCATION IN FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN

Diamond Concrete Sawing, a leader in the concrete cutting and subsurface utility locating industries, has opened a new location in Farmington Hills, Michigan. This expansion strengthens the company's ability to better serve clients across Michigan's eastern side, enhancing response times and delivery for projects in the region.

"As Diamond continues to grow serving clients from Saginaw to northern Ohio, expanding our operations was essential to meet the increasing demand for concrete cutting and locating services," said Ed Drozdowski, Diamond's Chief Operating Officer. "From this new location, Diamond Concrete Sawing will provide our full range of concrete cutting services and subsurface utility

locating through our Diamond Locating Services division. This expansion allows us to continue delivering high-quality service while maintaining our commitment to safety, innovation, and customer satisfaction."

Founded in 1974, Diamond Concrete Sawing is an industry pioneer known for its superior service, technological leadership, and dedication to safety across the Midwest. With five decades of experience, the company has built a legacy of excellence by utilizing innovative processes, state-of-the-art equipment, and OSHA-certified technicians to deliver exceptional results across a wide range of markets. **CS**

ACEC/MICHIGAN PRESENTS "FIRM OF THE YEAR" HONOR TO SPICER GROUP, INC.

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan (ACEC/Michigan) recently presented the 2025 member "**FIRM OF THE YEAR**" award at the Engineering & Surveying Excellence Awards Gala held in Portage on March 8, 2025.

The Firm of the Year award is the highest ACEC/Michigan honor bestowed and the only award program instituted to recognize ACEC/Michigan member firms for their leadership in professional practice and community service. Recognition is based on actions taken by a member firm to progressively develop its management practices and for assuming leadership roles in community outreach activities and ACEC/Michigan programs that strengthen the profession for all members.

This year's recipient stands out for its dedication to advancing the engineering profession and supporting ACEC initiatives. Spicer Group, Inc. (Spicer) plays a vital role in ACEC/Michigan, with Eric Barden serving on the Board of Directors and Phil Westmoreland, Jen Garza, Darrin Wilson and others leading key committees. Spicer

has had several employees complete the Emerging Leaders Program and regularly submits projects into the Engineering & Surveying Excellence program.

Spicer is supportive of ACEC advocacy efforts, contributing to the ACEC PAC and participating in ACEC/Michigan's Congressional Fly-in to address critical issues like Infrastructure Funding, R&D tax policy and workforce development. Spicer is helping to attract talent to the profession through various programs like the Construction Science Expo, MDOT TDRP, and the TRAC Bridge Builder program.

Nationally recognized for excellence, Spicer has earned the PSMJ Circle of Excellence Platinum Award. Their community impact is equally impressive, with employees leading STEM outreach, river cleanups, and charity fundraisers – efforts that earned Dennis Louney the Volunteer of the Year Award.

Spicer truly embodies what it means to be ACEC/Michigan's Firm of the Year. **CS**



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FISHER COMPANIES CELEBRATE 100 YEARS

HONORING A CENTURY OF TRADITION, WHILE EMBRACING THE FUTURE



February 2025 marks the 100th anniversary of The Fisher Companies; a family-owned group of businesses that has grown from humble beginnings into a diversified, multi-million-dollar enterprise. Founded by Ralph and Zelda Fisher in 1925, the company's journey is rooted in the principles of hard work, determination, unwavering faith, and community — values that continue to drive the company forward as it enters its second century of success.

What began as a small sand and gravel operation in Midland, MI, has since evolved into a diverse group of companies, covering a wide-range of industries and geographic regions. Today, The Fisher Companies span multiple sectors, including heavy civil contracting, concrete, asphalt, heavy haul transportation, aggregate production, diesel engine systems, freshwater ports, and even a championship golf course. With operations now extending across the Midwest and Southeastern United States, The Fisher Companies are still managed by the third and fourth generations of the Fisher family.

"Looking back over the past century, we are incredibly proud of how far we've come," said J.W. Fisher, President of Fisher Contracting. "Our continued success is a testament to the vision of my grandparents, Ralph and Zelda Fisher, and to the dedication of every person who has contributed to this journey. As we celebrate 100 years, we are more committed than ever to upholding the values that made our company strong and we're looking forward to the next century

of growth and innovation."

To celebrate this milestone, The Fisher Companies have planned a year-long series of events and initiatives, including:

Creating Four Endowed Scholarships: To financially assist future generations pursuing careers in construction, endowed scholarships have been created in Michigan at the Midland Area Community Foundation, the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation and the Bay Area Community Foundation. In Kentucky, a scholarship has been created at the Community Foundation of South Central Kentucky.

Continuing a Legacy of Community Support: For the past century, supporting community organizations and initiatives

has been a cornerstone of Fisher Companies' values. As the company embarks on its second century of business, this commitment to the community and its people is being proudly renewed.

Client, Employee, Public Celebrations: A series of special events and appearances are being planned to honor the companies' employees, clients, and industry partners — all of whom have been integral to the companies' century of success.

Additionally, Fisher Companies will continue to focus on innovation and strategic growth, ensuring that its second century will be defined by the same entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence that has always been a hallmark of the Fisher name. **CS**



The original Fisher Sand & Gravel plant on Jefferson Road, in Midland, MI.

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The MITA Directory App is now available for download on both Apple iOS and Android devices. However, due to Apple's restrictions, iOS users must use the QR code below to download—the app is not searchable in the App Store.

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iOS Users:



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Logging In & Keeping Your Listing Updated

Once installed, simply log in using your MITA website credentials. If you don't have login details, contact Sarah Alex at sarahalex@thinkmita.org for assistance.

After logging in, we encourage all users to review their company's listing for accuracy. If you spot any errors or need updates, send a request to Sarah Alex to ensure your information is correct.

MITA updates the directory regularly, but changes do not update automatically in the app. To download the latest directory data:

1. Open the app and tap the Profile Icon
2. Select "Download Latest Directory Data"

This ensures you always have the most current member information.

MITA's Directory is Also Available Online

Prefer using a desktop? The MITA Membership Directory is also available via a web version on the MITA website, offering the same robust search functionality. The web version updates automatically when MITA uploads new content.

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For any app-related questions or advertising inquiries, contact Danielle Coppersmith, MITA's Manager of Communications & Events, at daniellecoppersmith@thinkmita.org. **CS**



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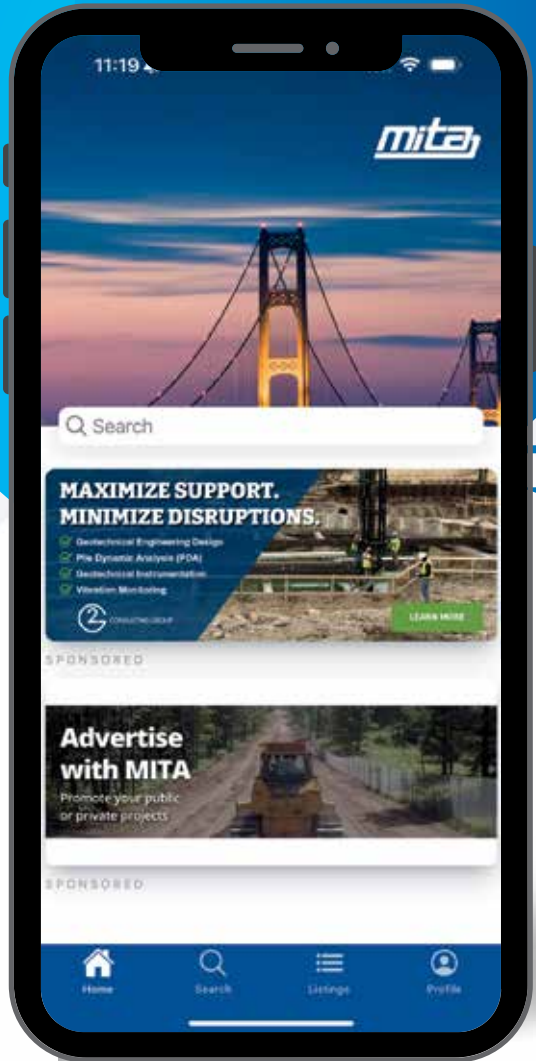


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Continued from page 12

project delays and increase the administrative costs to FHWA and recipients of FHWA financial assistance. The FHWA has published that they estimate the 10-year cost of this rule to range from \$545 million to \$8,466 million at a 2 percent discount, with annualized costs of \$61 million to \$942 million. The FHWA moved forward with the waiver elimination based on the expected benefits that include protecting and expanding domestic manufacturing, increasing supply chain resiliency, and increasing consistency in applying domestic content procurement preferences for manufactured products between FHWA and other Federal agencies that are subject to the requirements of Build America, Buy America Act (BABA).

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has notified MITA that they are currently working with the FHWA to evaluate updates to their special provisions to comply with the Final Rule, and they are working to identify which items may be difficult to procure. The changes likely could create a paperwork and compliance nightmare for some products. MITA will continue to work closely with MDOT to help identify products of concern, knowing that there may be items for which there are no BABA-compliant options available.

One important point MITA continues to stress is that contracts should only be advertised if the terms and requirements of

the contract are able to be fully met. A significant concern is that contracts may be let with BABA requirements that are not possible to be met with the contractor assuming all the risk. It is MITA's position that it is critical that an owner agency include only materials and products that have BABA-compliant options in their federal-aid contracts.

The waiver elimination was enacted under the Biden administration, which had emphasized "Buy American" policies across various sectors of the economy, including transportation infrastructure. Some have questioned whether changes may be coming with the change to the Trump administration, but it is hard to predict that industry will see that since, during its first term, the Trump administration also strongly supported domestic preference requirements and may likely do so again.

Again, there are legitimate concerns that federal-aid projects could be advertised for bid with requirements for meeting BABA, but in some cases, those requirements are not possible to be met (i.e., the domestic products do not exist, or the demand is much greater than the supply). As the industry adjusts to these new requirements, MITA will work to keep members informed about any developments. **CS**

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Continued from page 34

does not select projects, they do review projects to ensure they are eligible for the Federal-Aid Highway Program. Projects related to other eligible highway-related expenditures, such as debt service, inspections, research, environmental assessments, or right of way purchases, were excluded.

For this analysis, ARTBA did not include projects that received federal funds as part of COVID or emergency relief. Totals in this article may differ from state-by-state information on ARTBA's website, which includes all types of federal-aid projects. **CS**

Continued from page 36

a temporary entity within the White House. It will focus on "modernizing Federal technology and software to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity," with representatives dispatched to each agency, although it appears President Trump has given Musk a wider portfolio.

Secretary Duffy is building out his team of Trump appointees, including senior officials requiring Senate confirmation and others who will start work immediately. ARTBA will continue working to ensure federal transportation dollars are moving, while sharing details of our regulatory reform priorities with administration officials.

Two things are certain: You don't want to miss any new developments from D.C. as they happen. And ARTBA's advocacy team will be here to tell you about them.

Rich Juliano is ARTBA general counsel.

Beth McGinn is ARTBA vice president of communications. **CS**

Continued from page 14

If you receive a MIOSHA citation, don't navigate the process alone. Send a full copy of the citation immediately to both me (gregbrooks@thinkmita.org) and Sarah Alex (sarahalex@thinkmita.org) so we can begin the appeals process. Remember, you only have 15 working days to file an appeal, and challenging citations can result in the reduction of classifications, penalties or even complete dismissal.

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