

SUMMER 2026

# CROSSSECTION



***Featured Project:  
I-75 Bridge Reconstruction in Mackinac County***

***Legislative Q&A:  
2026 Candidates on Infrastructure***

***MITA Announces 2026 Scholarship Recipients***

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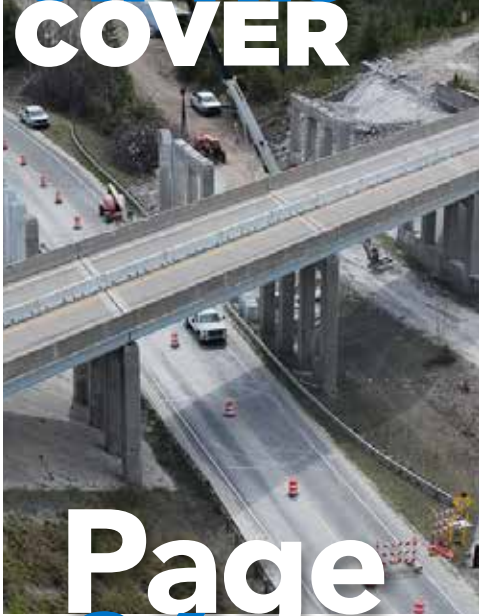
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## On The COVER



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Pier cap demolition and saw cutting the cap between the columns is under way on the Interstate 75 bridge reconstruction project over Cheeseman Road in Mackinac County.

Photos courtesy of Grand River Construction, Inc.

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## NEW MITA MEMBERS

### New Contractor Members

Springline Excavating, LLC  
Wilcox Contracting LLC

### New Associate Members

Pre-Construction Media  
Tractics  
Heavy Construction Systems  
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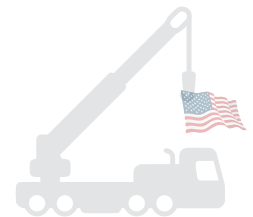
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# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!



**Rob Coppersmith**

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*MITA has been discussing water and sewer infrastructure issues with Legislators for decades, and has been churning the media with stories of beach closings and related issues dating back to the AUC days. Mother Nature's destructive power has also gotten our legislature's attention! And rightfully so, this spring it was one news story after the next, regarding near dam failures, a 42" water main break that left many without water. In short, these spring events emphasized the need to better understand our unseen infrastructure needs. I wrote the following press release in support of an effort that starts to direct funding where it is needed.*

## **MITA applauds introduction of Michigan Water Trust Fund legislation**

### **Senate Bills 950 and 951 would establish a dedicated funding source for water and underground infrastructure**

**LANSING, Mich.** — The Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association (MITA) expressed strong support for Senate Bills 950 and 951, introduced by Sen. Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), which would establish the Michigan Water Trust Fund, a dedicated, self-sustaining funding mechanism to address the state's pressing water and underground infrastructure needs.

SB 950 would establish the Michigan Water Trust Fund within the state treasury and create a grant program to distribute resources to communities, while SB 951 would generate revenue for the fund by requiring bottled water companies to obtain licenses and pay a 25-cent-per-gallon royalty on water withdrawn from Michigan sources. Estimates indicate the royalty structure could generate approximately \$300 million annually for water infrastructure investment.

Grant funding under the program would be directed toward a wide range of critical water infrastructure needs, including lead service line replacement, drinking water access for low-income residents, private well testing, stormwater and flood resilience projects, emergency bottled water assistance, and on-site wastewater systems. A seven-member Water Trust Fund Board, appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate, would oversee grant recommendations to ensure accountability and transparency.

“Michigan sits atop one of the world’s greatest concentrations of fresh water, yet too many of our communities are still struggling with aging pipes, lead contamination, and inadequate water systems,” said Rob Coppersmith, Executive Vice President of MITA. “While Michigan may have access to some of the world’s greatest freshwater reserves, those resources mean little if the systems delivering water to our homes, schools, and businesses are failing. Sen. Singh’s legislation takes a smart, sustainable approach, asking the companies that profit from Michigan’s water to help fund the infrastructure that makes that water worth protecting. We strongly encourage the Legislature to advance these bills.”

Michigan’s water and underground infrastructure face a significant and growing investment gap. Decades of deferred maintenance have left water mains, sewer systems, and drinking water treatment facilities in need of urgent repair and replacement. The Water Trust Fund would provide communities, particularly smaller and lower-income municipalities, with a reliable funding source outside of the annual appropriations process.

“MITA members are the ones called when a water main ruptures at two in the morning,” Coppersmith added. “They understand better than anyone what years of deferred maintenance ultimately cost, in emergency repairs, public health impacts, and lost confidence in basic services. The Water Trust Fund creates a sustainable funding source to help Michigan get ahead of these failures rather than perpetually respond to them. That means cleaner water, safer communities, good-paying construction jobs, and infrastructure built to last.”

The bills are designed as a linked package: SB 950 does not take effect unless SB 951 is also enacted, ensuring the fund’s revenue mechanism and grant program are established together. The fund is structured to grow responsibly, with spending capped at 70% of annual revenues until the accumulated principal reaches \$800 million, after which the principal must be maintained between \$750 million and \$1.5 billion.

The fact of the matter is that our state’s infrastructure is in short supply of being properly funded on many levels. \$3.9 was the number for roads, and our legislature fell way short of that. The water needs report being developed will also indicate billions of dollars in need. It is unclear to me how bad things have to get before infrastructure is properly funded. Until then, MITA will continue to “do what we do,” advocate, educate the legislature and the public on the needs, and provide potential solutions to getting where we should be. **CS**





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### **Why MITA Members Should Pay Attention to the “Money Out of Politics” Initiative**

The heavy construction industry in Michigan is a very politically active group. Through a variety of ways, Michigan contractors advocate for their businesses and employees at every level of government. One of the most common ways to be politically active is through financial contributions to specific candidates or to the MITA PAC.

Today, however, a new ballot proposal effort known as the “Michiganders for Money Out of Politics” initiative could significantly reshape how industries participate in Michigan’s public policy process. If passed, the MITA PAC would cease to exist, and MITA members doing any amount of state-funded projects totaling more than \$250,000 would be prohibited from contributing politically.

Transportation funding debates are highly technical and economically significant. Lawmakers often rely on input from contractors, engineers, county road agencies, municipal leaders, labor organizations, and industry associations to understand how the heavy construction industry works. Without that engagement, policymakers make uneducated and rash decisions affecting the industry.

Michigan’s heavy construction industry has spent decades building bipartisan relationships necessary to advance stable and predictable infrastructure investment. Those efforts have helped secure major funding packages, equitable regulatory structures, and long-term transportation improvements benefiting every corner of the state. Weakening the ability of infrastructure stakeholders to advocate effectively could make all our past efforts meaningless.

### **Understanding Michigan’s Citizen Initiative Process**

Michigan has one of the most powerful citizen initiative systems in the country.

Under Article II, Section 9 of the Michigan Constitution, advocacy groups can propose new state laws by collecting signatures from registered voters equal to 8% of the turnout in the last gubernatorial election.

For the current election cycle, organizers must gather roughly 357,000 valid signatures statewide within a 180-day period.

If enough signatures are validated, the proposal is sent to the Michigan Legislature, which has 40 session days to adopt or reject

the measure. If lawmakers decline to act, the proposal advances directly to the statewide ballot for voters to decide.

While the process is often described as grassroots democracy, modern ballot campaigns are typically highly organized and well-funded political operations involving paid signature-gathering firms, consultants, media campaigns, polling, and outside financial support. This initiative is no different, and most of the money supporting the campaign comes from out-of-state sources.

Michigan’s transportation contractors are not outside special interests.

Our industry consists of Michigan employers, union and nonunion skilled trades professionals, aggregate producers, engineers, equipment suppliers, trucking firms, and small businesses operating in communities across the state.

Transportation construction companies participate in the political process because infrastructure funding decisions directly affect:

- Public safety,
- Economic competitiveness,
- Workforce stability,
- Supply chain reliability, and
- Long-term transportation planning.

Advocating for sustainable road funding is not just about benefiting contractors. It is essential to maintain the infrastructure system that Michigan residents and businesses rely upon every day.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO:**

**Spread the word.** This is a huge election year that will inundate every voter with campaign materials for months this fall. When discussing the elections, tell your friends and family to vote “NO” on the “money out of politics” initiative. MITA will have informational materials throughout the summer that you can share with your employees and others.

MITA will be active with other groups impacted to try to fight against the proposal. The first step in that process is legally challenging the signatures that are being collected. If enough signatures are found to be fraudulent, the entire initiative is thrown out and will never see the ballot. If signatures are confirmed and the measure gets on the ballot, an expensive campaign to oppose will likely occur. **CS**



# Thank you to everyone who has supported the MITA PAC.

Your contributions are doing more than supporting candidates—they're helping secure the future of Michigan's infrastructure industry. Last year's nearly \$2 billion funding win didn't happen overnight; it was the result of sustained engagement, advocacy, and investment in the political process.

Infrastructure funding isn't guaranteed, and neither is our industry's stability. The PAC ensures our voice is heard where decisions are made. Your continued support helps protect jobs, create opportunity, and keep Michigan building.

As part of MITA's Long-Term Sustainable Funding Campaign, the PAC plays a critical role in advancing policies and supporting leaders who understand the importance of reliable, long-term infrastructure investment.

If you have any questions about how PAC contributions are used, please contact MITA Executive Vice President Rob Coppersmith or Vice President of Government Affairs Lance Binoniemi.





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Joel Smeenge	Give Em A Brake Safety, LLC	\$50
George Verscheure*	C. A. Hull Co., Inc.	\$110
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Scott Bishop	Z Contractors	\$250
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Zak Underwood	C. A. Hull Co., Inc.	\$5,000
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Todd Spina	Rauhorn Electric	\$200



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Wendy Schnepf	Rauhorn Electric	\$250
Amber Hoch	Rauhorn Electric	\$10
Katie Gandy	Rauhorn Electric	\$50
Annette Miller	Rauhorn Electric	\$25
Phil Perry	Rauhorn Electric	\$50
Chris Drinkhorn	Rauhorn Electric	\$100
Greg Wojciechowski	Rauhorn Electric	\$50
Jake Hall	C. A. Hull Co., Inc.	\$100
Anthony Rau	Rauhorn Electric	\$3,850
Dan Flis	Alta Equipment Company	\$250
Alyssa Laforge	Alta Equipment Company	\$250
Josh DeYonker	Alta Equipment Company	\$500
Tony Maniscalco	Rauhorn Electric	\$200
Ugo Mancini	Rauhorn Electric	\$500
Tammy Dockham	Rauhorn Electric	\$25
Mike Locke	Rauhorn Electric	\$200
Hugo Gallegos	GM & Sons, Inc.	\$1,500
Dan Campo	Alta Equipment Company	\$1,000
Sean O'Leary	Rauhorn Electric	\$100
Scott Finkbeiner	Rauhorn Electric	\$2,500
Michele Darby	Rauhorn Electric	\$30
Chris Hudak	Rauhorn Electric	\$30
Tyler Ivezaj	Rauhorn Electric	\$40
Nick Safron	Rauhorn Electric	\$50
George Bremerkamp	Rauhorn Electric	\$100
Jake Eckhardt	Rauhorn Electric	\$100
Abe Mayfield	Rauhorn Electric	\$160
Chris Korte	Rauhorn Electric	\$200
Joe Scheuerman	Rauhorn Electric	\$200
Brad Davis	Rauhorn Electric	\$200
Josh Eckhardt	Rauhorn Electric	\$200
Justin Walter	Rauhorn Electric	\$200
Mike Chauvin	Rauhorn Electric	\$260
Ken Nowicki	M & M Excavating	\$3,500
Brandie Meisner	M & M Excavating	\$3,500
John Landrie	M & M Excavating	\$3,500
Luke Gordon	M & M Excavating	\$2,000
Mike Stutesman	M & M Excavating	\$750
Gabe Nowicki	M & M Excavating	\$750
Ryan Meisner	M & M Excavating	\$750
Andrew Albrecht	M & M Excavating	\$750
Joe Stutesman	M & M Excavating	\$750
Blake Sequin	M & M Excavating	\$250
Fred McNich	M & M Excavating	\$500
Mike Hetzel	M & M Excavating	\$250
Aaron Platt	M & M Excavating	\$250
Matt Southwick	M & M Excavating	\$250
Jake Blanzly	M & M Excavating	\$250
Kevin Tran	M & M Excavating	\$250
Brad Stover	Toebe Construction	\$2,500
Andy Stover	Toebe Construction	\$2,500
Carrie Pennington	Toebe Construction	\$2,500
Dave Fischer	Toebe Construction	\$1,000
Jason Fowler	Toebe Construction	\$1,000
Andy Thelen	Toebe Construction	\$1,000
Andrew Standhardt	Toebe Construction	\$1,000
Mark Johnston	Ajax Paving Industries	\$10,000
Rebecca Tchorz	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Karly Kappen	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Yousif N Khamis	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Rob Griggs	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Jerry Johnson	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Patrick O'Connor	Ajax Paving Industries	\$20
Sam Bishop	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Paul Selesky	Ajax Paving Industries	\$2,000

Name	Company	Amount
Christina O'Brien	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Dave Marshall	Ajax Paving Industries	\$2,000
Alex Vasquez	Ajax Paving Industries	\$2,000
Yvonne Kur	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Pamela Switek	Ajax Paving Industries	\$2,000
Stefany Dalpra	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Daniel David	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
John Duc Nguyen	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Jack Stevens	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Brian Borich	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Bashar Yohan	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Matt Whitaker	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Ryan Belanger	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Michael & Mary Ann Podsiad	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Sean Friel	Ajax Paving Industries	\$1,000
Sandra McMillan	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Philip Schuck	Ajax Paving Industries	\$1,000
Robert Liddell	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Jason Tapani	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250
Jason B Beem	Ajax Paving Industries	\$2,000
Patrick Wagoner	Ajax Paving Industries	\$400
Benjamin J Kohler	Ajax Paving Industries	\$2,000
Matt Payne	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Nick Stockwell	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250
Kathleen Anderson	Ajax Paving Industries	\$1,000
Pete Mann	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Paul Resky	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250
Michael Connelly, Jr.	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250
Brandon Fuller	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Andrew Vallance	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Josh Matuzak	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Chris Mondon	Ajax Paving Industries	\$1,200
Jenny Johnston	Ajax Paving Industries	\$350
Hugh R Luedtke	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Bryant Moorman	Ajax Paving Industries	\$400
Shawn Dice	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Ean Ridley	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Alexander C Poe	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Jerimah Wallace	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Leo Remijan, Jr	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250
Michael Reardon	Ajax Paving Industries	\$50
Jason Pestridge	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Tyler Grabowski	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Sean Roarty	Ajax Paving Industries	\$100
Ryan Crowley	Ajax Paving Industries	\$150
Spencer Lemieur	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Dylan Rakoczy	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Chris Edwards	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Tanner Jeska	Ajax Paving Industries	\$200
Brandon King	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Eric Trevino	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250
David Grabowski	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Kelly Schwall	Ajax Paving Industries	\$2,000
Tim Hay	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
Nicholas Schroeder	Ajax Paving Industries	\$500
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Donald Capeling	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250
Jonnie Williams	Ajax Paving Industries	\$250

## LOCAL PLANNING?



**Jeremiah Leyba, P.E.**  
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517-347-8336

Projects require long-term planning, insight, and ongoing care by all parties, but especially owners. Since incentives heavily favor rhetorical flair and intangible outcomes, the path of least resistance easily becomes the default choice. In practice, this often means waiting until the problem is too big to ignore. This is disappointingly often the true extent of planning for a large percentage of municipalities and some counties. A water main break, a closed bridge, a tragic accident on a city street due to deterioration and potholes are too frequently the impetus for any true movement.

The difficulty for our industry is that we produce tangible work in an era that increasingly values the intangible. Earth is moved, materials are made and procured, pipe is laid, traffic is diverted, and roads are paved. The results of our efforts are on full public display and are subject to judgment by virtually the entire community. The stakes are high, and there are few ways to hide. Compounding this is that our attention spans and political cycles last a few years at most, and infrastructure planning needs to span decades or more. It's little wonder that many local planners and politicians are not eager to embrace projects, no matter what they say publicly.

If you've ever attended a local city meeting, you know how this goes. An idea is proposed, briefly discussed, opened to public comment, and then voted on by council members. Truthfully, though, the matter had been settled days, weeks, or even months before the project was ever added to the city agenda. This is because the funding for our work at this level can be infrequent, competitive, and specialized. So if the city gets its hands on extra money for a specific project, it can become a use-it-or-lose-it scenario, regardless of council meeting formalities.

Today, winds are blowing hard on trendy favorites

like walkability, green spaces, new bike lanes, and mixed-use development. There's little enthusiasm for the ordinary stuff: new or repaired pipeline systems, connective roadways, or serious, lasting repairs to our aging roads. Responsible planners should see past the trends and take care of the fundamentals, and we should elect those who will. Trends are exciting, but

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**The difficulty for our industry is that we produce tangible work in an era that increasingly values the intangible.**

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just as in our personal lives, you've got to put in the drainage and a few sump pumps before you decide to remodel your basement, or you'll be very disappointed when heavy rains come.

This is where a properly managed municipality can make a difference and where true planning should occur. A city with a decent engineering and planning department should have drafts, rough outlines, and visions for its long-term infrastructure wants and needs. They can then strategically match those plans to funding sources as they become available, campaign for funding, and work with local businesses and residents to accomplish their plans. However, this isn't standard in many cities since effective future planning requires substantial civic effort, expertise, and political will. Instead, many don't actually plan and just react to emergency scenarios, clamoring for state or federal emergency funding. Some take their infrastructure funds and make unnecessary equipment purchases that they don't have the infrastructure or personnel to use efficiently, and still others will dump their funds into superficial pet projects.

The local level is a microcosm for how planning issues play out at all levels. The expensive basics are often neglected in favor of rhetorical and trendy issues. It is our job as an industry to point this out and remind the public, political leaders, and planners at all levels to cover the basics and to hold accountable those who don't. **CS**



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# ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BARRELS



**Greg Brooks**

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517-347-8336

**Editor's Note:** The following is reprinted from remarks delivered by Greg Brooks, Director of Safety & Compliance at MITA, at the National Work Zone Awareness Week Kickoff Event on April 20 at Dow Diamond in Midland, Michigan.

Good morning everyone.

**Thank you for being here today to recognize something that impacts every single one of us, and every single person in Michigan—whether you work in the industry or simply drive our roads—work zone safety.**

Every day across this state, men and women step into work zones knowing exactly what's at stake.

They're not just showing up to move dirt, pour concrete, or lay asphalt. They're stepping into environments so filled with hazards that it's hard for people in other industries to comprehend.

But here's what I want people to understand...

These workers and the companies they work for don't take safety lightly.

Before a single barrel gets placed on the road, before a machine starts up, our crews have already put in hours—days—years of training.

They are trained to recognize hazards and deal with them utilizing a hierarchy of controls. They are trained to communicate effectively, to protect one another, and to operate with precision in some of the most dangerous conditions in the workforce.

They attend safety meetings. They complete certifications. They run through all the different scenarios we can expect them to encounter. They plan their work, and they execute the plan.

And they do all of that for one reason—to go home at the end of the day.

Back to their families. Back to their kids. Back to their lives.

But here's the hard truth...

No matter how much training we provide... No matter how strong our safety culture is... There is one factor we cannot control.

And that's the drivers on the other side of the barrels.

That's where we need everyone's help.

When you see those orange barrels, cones, and signs—those aren't just traffic control devices. They are a line between a worker and a moving vehicle. They are a warning. They are a plea.

A plea to slow down. A plea to pay attention. A plea to put the phone down.

Because on the other side of those barrels is a person.

A laborer guiding equipment, who has two babies at home. An operator focused on their surroundings, whose daughter is expecting her first child. An entire crew—of loved ones—working just feet away from live traffic.

They are trusting that the drivers coming through that work zone will do the right thing.

And too often, that trust is broken.

Speeding. Distracted driving. Aggressive behavior. Driving under the influence.

These are the things that turn a normal workday into a tragedy.

So today, as we recognize National Work Zone Awareness Week, I'm asking for something simple—but powerful.

## Respect the work zone.

Slow down. Stay alert. Follow the signs. Give workers the space they need to do their jobs safely.

Because at the end of the day, this isn't just about construction.

It's about people.

It's about making sure that every worker who steps into a work zone has the same opportunity to go home safely as anyone else.

We're committed to doing our part—through training, planning, and accountability.

We just need the public to meet us halfway.

We don't want to just fix the damn roads—we want to build the best damn roads in the country. Michigan has a workforce with the knowledge, passion, and grit to do it. Just give us the space and the respect to do so.

**Thank you.**

CS



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# MITA ANNOUNCES 2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association (MITA) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2026 MITA Scholarship Fund. This year, sixteen outstanding students were selected from a highly competitive applicant pool, collectively receiving nearly **\$40,000 in scholarship awards**. These students represent the next generation of engineers, construction managers, civil engineers, and tradespeople who will help build and maintain Michigan's critical infrastructure for decades to come.

The MITA Scholarship Fund was established to support students

pursuing careers in the heavy/highway construction industry — an industry that demands skilled, passionate professionals at every level. Each year, a selection committee reviews applications and awards scholarships based on academic achievement, industry involvement, and demonstrated commitment to a career in the field. "We are so proud of each of these recipients," said Danielle Coppersmith, MITA. "The quality of this year's applicant pool reflects the strength of interest in our industry, and we look forward to seeing each of these students make their mark."

Recipients will be recognized at the MITA Wild Game Dinner & Scholarship Fundraiser on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at Palazzo Grande in Shelby Township. MITA scholarship recipients are also invited to volunteer and attend the MITA Annual Conference, taking place January 27-28, 2027, at the Amway Grand/DeVos Place in Grand Rapids — an ideal opportunity to network with industry professionals and potential employers.

For more information about the MITA Scholarship Fund or to support future recipients, visit [thinkmita.org](http://thinkmita.org) or contact Danielle Coppersmith at [daniellecoppersmith@thinkmita.org](mailto:daniellecoppersmith@thinkmita.org). **CS**



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## Named Scholarship Recipients

Two recipients this year were honored with named scholarships. Gabrielle LaCosse was selected as the recipient of the Jim Shea Memorial Scholarship, and Drake Leach was awarded the Dave Fons Memorial Fund Scholarship. These named awards carry special significance within MITA and recognize students who exemplify the values of those they honor.

### 2026 Scholarship Recipients

Gabrielle LaCosse — Jim Shea Memorial Scholarship | Michigan State University

Drake Leach — Dave Fons Memorial Fund Scholarship | Michigan State University

Gavin Bebble — Michigan State University

Maxwell Bulthouse — Calvin University

Skyler Cooper — Lawrence Technological University

Ava Godlewski — Michigan State University

Grace Kidd — Northern Michigan University

Sarah Kirk — Michigan State University

Tyler Kleinsasser — South Dakota School of Mines & Technology

Noah Mathis — Adrian College

Paige Mattice — University of Michigan

Evan McColley — Lawrence Technological University

Ever Miller — University of Michigan

Brayden Morioka — University of Michigan

Brad Schmoekel — Hobart Institute of Welding Technology

Taylor Stenzel — Michigan State University



# GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE Q & A



Mike Cox



Chris Swanson

In Michigan and across the United States, we are approaching one of the most important and interesting elections of our time. Although it feels like we say that every election cycle these days. And it is true, every election we have more voters than the last, more money involved in politics, which means more television and radio advertisements, more fliers in your mailbox, and more candidates knocking on your door asking for your vote. It can be overwhelming to say the least. And it is very difficult to know where candidates stand on specific issues. This is an attempt to help with that.

There is a crowded field in the gubernatorial elections in November. Third-party candidate, Mike Duggan, has recently

dropped out of the race, citing no path to victory as his reason for quitting. Polls indicate that no matter who succeeds in the democratic or republican primary, it will be a very close general election.

MITA developed and distributed a candidate questionnaire focused on infrastructure and other key industry priorities and is publishing the responses received in the following pages. Certainly, this will not give you a complete picture of these candidates, and we encourage you to do some of your own research, but we hope this is a good start. Please use these responses to base your important decision on who to vote for this November.

## I. Vision and Leadership

**If elected Governor of Michigan, what would be your top three priorities during your first term, and why?**

### Cox

First, I will fix Michigan's broken education system which now lags behind most of the Nation. A common benchmark for measuring state education systems is an individual state's NAEP ("National Assessment of Education Progress) scores. The NAEP scores are also called the Nation's Report Card. The most important NAEP is generally considered to be 4th Grade reading scores for two reasons: first, fourth-grade reading scores test a student's ability to read at grade level, and two, reading is considered the gateway skill to future learning success in other subjects such as math, science, and social studies.

Michigan's fourth graders are tied for 44th in the Nation with four other states. Because only two states had lower scores, Michigan is essentially 48th.

As governor, I would ensure Michigan adopts the approach used by Mississippi. In 2013, Mississippi was 49th in 4th grade reading, and in response, its governor and legislature enacted literacy-based promotion legislation. That legislation focused on four fundamental concepts: requiring 3rd graders be able to read at grade level; teaching reading through evidence-based phonics

instruction; grading all schools; and providing tutors to students struggling to acquire literacy skills as early as kindergarten.

In the just 12 years, Mississippi moved from 49th in 4th grade reading scores to 9th, while Michigan dropped from a mediocre 31st to its current 48th ranking. Mississippi accomplished this while spending 40% less per student – and while Michigan grew education spending by 70%.

Fixing literacy in the primary grades also directly impacts Michigan's ability to produce a pipeline of future skilled trade, badged, and professionally certified candidates. My dad was a carpenter who left "formal" schooling at 13 to begin his apprenticeship: but to do so, he had to be able to read competently and have math competencies in angles, slopes, graphs, equations and other pre-trigonometry skills. Right now, 60% of Michigan's eighth graders are not proficient in reading and math which is causing a shortage in candidates for the skilled and other trades: a shortage that will be corrected when we ensure all students leave the 3rd grade with the ability to read.

Second, I will fix Michigan's economy by focusing on policies that work in other states, like Florida, Texas, and Tennessee, primarily the elimination of the state income tax. Of the 9 states that currently have no personal income tax, 5 of them rank amongst the top 10 states in terms of GDP growth over the past decade and 4 of them rank amongst the top 10 states in terms

*Continued on page 22*

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of net migration rates from other states. At the other end of the spectrum, high-income-tax states like California, New York, and New Jersey have suffered a population exodus as people vote with their feet and wallets.

Further, the income tax is the corporate state tax for Michigan's 900,000 small business owners who created 2/3s of all new jobs in Michigan and the United States. Eliminating the income tax would immediately put more money in the hands of Michigan's most dynamic job creators, free seniors from a tax on pensions, and give young couples the ability to save for the first house purchase here in Michigan.

Third, I will focus on governmental accountability. Governmental accountability has two aspects: rightsizing the size of government and ensuring government is delivering for its citizens. As Attorney General during the "Lost Decade", my office handles a workload increase of 10% due to the challenges of the time, while at the same time I had to reduce the staffing of the AG's Office by 21%. I literally did more with less – something I could only do by rightsizing our office and ensuring it was flexible, nimble and accountable.

As AG, I posted all our spending, including salaries, vendor contracts, and real time spending online through our website, trackyourtaxes.org, which put pressure on the whole office to follow an ethic of efficiency. I would adopt this for all of the state's departments and spending.

Related to this, our state departments have little focus on providing timely services, in everything from routine FOIA requests to permitting and licensing. I would adopt a shot clock for all permitting and licensing that would set time limits for decisions, or the department would have to return the permit or application fee. The embarrassment related to having to return a fee would drive timely review and decision making by state bureaucrats.

## Swanson

- Improve efficiency and fortitude of road funding.
- Use a line item to fund roads, bridges and dams in collaboration with legislators, Operating Engineers 324 membership, laborers, and contractors
- Focus on long term repairs in high traffic areas so as to lower lifecycle costs
- Improve coordination between State and Local projects
- More transparency to the public to ensure that michiganders feel their funds are being used wisely
- Invest in water related infrastructure such as dams, bridges, wastewater and stormwater sewer systems, and drinking water infrastructure. Many of those systems are further along in their design life and repair or replacement is needed.
- Maximize the use of existing financing tools such as special assessments and state/federal programs to fund stormwater and water systems while prioritizing the highest-risk and highest-impact projects.
- Increase replacement and modernization of drinking water systems to reduce health risks and ensure long-term quality, as seen first hand in the Flint Water Crisis.
- Upgrade wastewater treatment infrastructure to increase capacity, reduce discharges, and maintain environmental and health standards.
- Improving the quality and frequency of passenger rail service.
- This would expand opportunities for trade employment, increase economic connection within the state and with

our neighbors, and decrease wear and tear on our roads and thereby lower repair costs.

- Follow through on planned/potential routes
- North South Passenger Rail Project(Detroit to Petoskey/ Traverse City)
- Coast to Coast Passenger Rail Project(Holland to Detroit)
- Expand frequency of Amtrak service.
- Chicago to Detroit
- Chicago to Grand Rapids
- Chicago to Port Huron
- I would also work to expand regional passenger rail service through strategic partnerships with freight rail operators and federal transportation programs.
- Detroit to Toledo
- Detroit to Bay City
- Detroit Metro Airport to Detroit Downtown
- Michigan should also position itself as a leader in rail manufacturing and supply-chain development, creating new skilled trade and industrial jobs within the state.

## Michigan faces an increasingly polarizing political environment. How do you plan to work effectively with both Republicans and Democrats to advance your policy agenda and deliver results for residents?

### Cox

As a Marine non-commissioned officer, I had to build a team of Marines that focused on getting the mission done without regard to any Marine's political philosophy.

As a homicide prosecutor for 13 years, including two years as the chief of the Wayne County (Detroit) Prosecutor's Office, I had to focus on getting the job done for crime victims. Victims never cared about my party affiliation, nor did the juries who decided our cases. Indeed, the elected Wayne County Prosecutor, a 40 year partisan Democrat, appointed me to run the Office's most sensitive unit despite the fact I was a Republican. He did so because I got things done.

As Attorney General, I inherited a staff of 565 employees who were all hired by the Democrats who ran the office for the prior 48 years. Using common leadership skills and focusing on our mission – and instilling pride in what we did – I was able to lead that staff during the Lost Decade with a shrinking staff and accomplished more than any prior administration.

In my private business life, building a successful multimillion dollar business, I led diverse individuals by focusing on accomplishing the job at hand.

My approach is straightforward: start with clear priorities, negotiate honestly, and keep the focus on results. The same approach will guide my administration.

At the same time, bipartisan cooperation cannot mean abandoning core principles. My goal will be to find areas of agreement while remaining committed to policies that strengthen our economy, improve infrastructure, and respect taxpayers.

### Swanson

- I have shown I will work together with both parties to deliver results for Genesee County(5th largest county in the state) communities. I will do the same across Michigan by ensuring that I prioritize the benefit of all Michiganders no matter what party represents them and that requires working with both sides of the aisle in order to pass legislation.

Infrastructure and public safety projects affect communities regardless of political affiliation, and I believe focusing on measurable outcomes rather than partisan rhetoric is the best way to build durable coalitions. Safety and prosperity for all Michiganders should not be a partisan agenda.

## II. Infrastructure Funding and Policy

### **Infrastructure Funding Challenges**

**What do you believe is the single biggest challenge to properly funding infrastructure in Michigan today?**

#### **Cox**

The biggest challenge to properly funding infrastructure in Michigan is **how existing dollars are managed and prioritized**. By way of illustration, outside of the infrastructure bucket, the current Governor is proposing an \$88.1 billion budget – an increase of \$31 billion or 54% over the budget she assumed 7 years ago. Yet that increase – which is significantly over twice the inflation rate – has led to no identifiable new services or improvement in prior services.

This leads the average taxpayer to think state government squanders his or her tax dollars and colors everything state government touches – including infrastructure.

Michigan taxpayers see all government spending, including infrastructure dollars, as wasted or diluted by bureaucracy, administrative costs, or programs that have little direct impact on stated goals.

#### **Swanson**

- While there are limitations in funding, the biggest roadblock to properly improving infrastructure here is that the funding and decision systems are fragmented and lead to inefficiencies that make the dollars spent reach not as far.

### **Comprehensive Infrastructure Goals**

**What does your campaign seek to accomplish regarding infrastructure funding overall, including roads, water systems, and sewer infrastructure?**

#### **Cox**

My campaign's infrastructure goal is to ensure Michigan has reliable, modern infrastructure that supports economic growth, protects public health, and strengthens our communities.

That means maintaining and improving our road and bridge network, investing responsibly in water and sewer systems, and ensuring infrastructure planning focuses on long-term durability and economic impact. Michigan must prioritize projects that support commerce, connect communities, and improve safety.

Infrastructure investments must also be guided by transparency and accountability so taxpayers understand how their money is being spent and can see measurable improvements in the systems they rely on every day.

#### **Swanson**

- My campaign seeks to accomplish two main priorities—the first is establishing a more clear and modern methodology to be used going forward. The second is to address more immediate and pressing concerns, namely roads, dams, and bridges that are far along in their lifecycle and that also may be posing economic or physical harm to michiganders.

### **Transportation Department Reform**

**What ideas or reforms would you propose to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of the Michigan Department of Transportation?**

#### **Cox**

The Michigan Department of Transportation plays a critical role in managing taxpayer resources, and it needs more robust standards of efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

As Governor, I would support reforms that improve transparency in how projects are selected and funded, reduce delays in project delivery, and ensure infrastructure projects are completed on time and within budget. MDOT should work closely with local governments and private sector partners to improve coordination and maximize the impact of infrastructure investments.

Michigan residents deserve confidence that transportation funds are being managed responsibly and that projects are delivering real improvements to our transportation network.

#### **Swanson**

- One change that is important to make is that much of MDOT's funding process and performance evaluation is driven by legacy funded formulas. Expand the use of independent and data driven evaluation within this system would better account for factors such as lifecycle costs, road condition, and usage.
- Another change that I would seek to make is the creation of a single statewide project delivery and accountability system. This would seek to centralize information about different projects from different levels of government(Federal, state, county, municipal) implement standard benchmarks so as to analyze performance, and create public dashboards where progress and efficiency can be tracked.
- A third change would be to improve coordination between state and local projects so as to maintain planning continuity and keep costs low.

## III. Economic Development and Fiscal Responsibility

### **Economic Development Initiatives**

**Economic development has been a major focus of state government for decades, and the funding of incentives remains a significant legislative debate. What are your ideas for attracting and retaining businesses in Michigan without reducing revenues needed to fund essential state services, such as infrastructure?**

#### **Cox**

Michigan should focus on creating a strong and competitive business climate rather than relying heavily on government incentive programs that attempt to pick individual winners and losers. If Wall Street banks, PE funds, and sophisticated market actors cannot consistently pick "winners" or "winning industries", it is delusional to think any governor can. Put differently, no governor or economic development official could have picked Nvidia in 1994 to become the world's largest market cap company when it was started by 3 friends in a garage, or the Musk brothers to create the first of their many

trillion dollar companies in their apartment in 1994 or Mark Zuckerberg to create Meta – a massive employer – when he started Facebook in 2004.

For too long, Michigan has relied on selective subsidies and incentive programs that benefit a small number of companies while shifting costs onto taxpayers and existing businesses. A stronger long-term strategy is to improve the overall business environment so that companies of all sizes can grow and succeed in Michigan. This economic gardening model recognizes that reducing costs and obstacles for Michigan's 900,000 small businesses who created 2/3 of all new jobs in Michigan - as opposed to subsidizing a small set of politically connected companies – is the best way to grow and diversify our state economy.

That means reducing unnecessary regulation, keeping taxes competitive, ensuring reliable infrastructure and energy, and supporting workforce development programs that prepare Michigan residents for in-demand careers. When Michigan creates a fair and competitive economic environment, businesses will choose to invest here without relying on government favoritism.

### Swanson

- The main way the state has gone about incentivizing economic development has also negatively impacted the tax base for the state and consequently the funding for infrastructure projects. Instead of creating individual incentives for specific companies, creating a state that is ripe for business at large through investing in infrastructure creates a more robust and long term viable environment for economic development and corporate retention.

## IV. Transportation Revenue Policy

### Road and Bridge Funding Models

**The most recent road funding package passed this fall shifted funding away from a traditional user-fee model and tied a greater share of infrastructure funding to the state's general fund. What are your views on funding roads and bridges as a general fund budget item versus relying on a user-fee-based revenue stream?**

### Cox

Infrastructure funding should primarily follow a user-based model in which those who use the transportation system help fund its maintenance and improvement.

User-based funding mechanisms provide transparency and accountability because drivers understand that the taxes and fees associated with transportation are directly connected to maintaining the roads and bridges they rely on. Relying too heavily on the general fund can create competition between infrastructure spending and other essential state priorities.

Michigan should pursue a balanced approach that prioritizes user-based funding while ensuring that infrastructure dollars are protected, managed responsibly, and directed toward projects that improve safety, mobility, and economic growth.

### Swanson

- The whole of the state benefits from the upkeep of roads and bridges whether or not an individual uses them directly. When public goods are not maintained properly, those that don't use them would still be negatively impacted. Working in conjunction with laborers, contractors, Operating Engineers 324 membership, and legislators on line item funding for roads, bridges, and dams.
- While user fees should still remain a percentage of funding for roads, being tied, at least partially, to the state's general fund would provide more secure results in the long term.

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# I-75 BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION COUNTY PROCEEDS

By Aram Kalousdian



Pier cap forming proceeds on the Interstate 75 bridge reconstruction project over Cheeseman Road in Mackinac County. Photos courtesy of Grand River Construction, Inc.



# IN MACKINAC



A \$9 million reconstruction of two bridges on Interstate 75 over Cheeseman Road in Mackinac County began in April 2025, and it is expected to be completed in November 2026. The work includes deck replacement, bearing replacement, pier cap replacement, substructure repairs, beam end repairs, steel cleaning and coating, and approach work. Grand River Construction, Inc., of Jenison, is the prime contractor for the project.

Weather was a challenge in the spring of 2025, but after several attempts, the contractor had adequate weather in order to setup traffic for the project.

“We are removing the railing and deck on each bridge. Then we are removing and relocating the steel beams off-site to clean and coat them after installing a few bolted repairs and new welded sole plates. During that process, we are replacing the pier caps and top portions of the abutments with new concrete. This process is becoming more common due to the efficiency and cost savings versus the traditional method of column supports working off of elevated or suspended platforms,” said Mark Price, vice president for Roads & Bridges at Grand River Construction, Inc.

“Once completed, we will put the steel beams back in place and proceed to construct the new bridge deck and railings. The approaches leading up to the bridge are getting new drainage structures and pipe work, along with some expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam block behind the abutment for lightweight fill. After we complete this on northbound and southbound I-75, we need to remove crossovers and restore the median with new cable rail and guardrail.”

Subcontractors on the project include Give ‘Em A Brake Safety (traffic control); Civil Coatings and Construction, of Valparaiso, Ind. (structural steel cleaning and coating); J & N Construction, LLC, of Gaylord (roadwork); Marshall Concrete Inc., of Charlevoix (concrete approach work), and Action Traffic Maintenance, Inc. of Grand Blanc (guardrail and cable rail).

Additional subcontractors include Pneumatic Restoration Inc., of Fenton (fiber-reinforced polymer [FRP] wrap and concrete coatings) and PK Contracting, Inc., of Troy (pavement markings). CS



Pier cap demolition and saw cutting the cap between the columns is under way on the Interstate 75 bridge reconstruction project over Cheeseman Road in Mackinac County. Photos courtesy of Grand River Construction, Inc.

# FROM A BASEMENT IN GRASS LAKE TO STATEWIDE REACH: THE MICHIGAN PIPE & VALVE STORY



Michigan Pipe & Valve Owners: (from l to r): Robert Kovich, Theresa Jaime, Jim Davis, Luke Fleischmann, Ben Brugger, Kyle Richmond, Jon Jaime, Tim Brugger, Justin Jaime, Mike Crowley Jr., Randy Sucharski, Chris Woolery, and James Cassel

It started in a basement. In 1992, Tom Ryan launched Michigan Pipe & Valve — Jackson from his home in Grass Lake, with little more than industry know-how and a willingness to outwork the competition. Few small businesses survive their first year; fewer still become the foundation for something much larger. But that modest beginning set into motion more than three decades of growth, resilience, and expansion that now stretches across the state of Michigan.

Today, Michigan Pipe & Valve (MPV) operates as a network of independently owned locations united by a shared name, shared values, and a deeply collaborative spirit. It is, in many ways, a uniquely Michigan story.

### Building Branch by Branch

The early years of MPV read like a series of handshakes and good timing. In 1995, Mike Kovich and Tom Ryan joined forces to open MPV – Flint. A year later, Gary Putrow came aboard and MPV – Lansing was established. By 1998, Jim Jaime and Art Valls had launched MPV – Saginaw, and in 2001, Mike Crowley and Tim Brugger brought MPV – Traverse City online. Within a decade of that basement startup, Michigan Pipe & Valve had become a multi-location operation spanning the state.

Growth, of course, is rarely a straight line. In 2016, the Flint and Lansing locations were sold, trimming the company back to three locations. But the pause was brief. By 2017, Saginaw and Traverse City had partnered to open MPV – Mt. Pleasant. Saginaw then teamed up with Robert Kovich to launch MPV – Genesee in 2018. Grand Rapids followed in 2019, founded by Luke Fleischmann in partnership with Traverse City. Holland came in 2023, Gaylord in 2024, and Kalamazoo — a partnership between Luke Fleischmann and Jim Davis — in 2025.

That same year marked the launch of MPV – HDPE Utility Services, a company-wide collaboration representing a new chapter in MPV’s service offerings. And in early 2026, Michigan Pipe & Valve returned to familiar territory: Chris Woolery, Kyle Richmond, and Brian Weisenberg opened MPV – Lansing, bringing the company full circle.

Ownership, too, has evolved organically over the years. In Saginaw, the next generation stepped in when Justin, Jon, and Theresa Jaime — children of founder Jim Jaime — took over in 2012. Traverse City has seen similar transitions, with Mike Crowley Jr. joining in 2014, Randy Sucharski coming on as an owner in 2022, and Ben Brugger acquiring his father’s shares that same year. In Jackson, Kyle Richmond and Chris Woolery recently assumed ownership.

### More Than a Distributor

Ask any of the owners what makes Michigan Pipe & Valve different, and a few themes surface consistently: responsiveness, relationships, and a genuine understanding of the work their customers do.

*“What sets Michigan Pipe & Valve apart is our industry experience, responsiveness, and ability to provide both material supply and hands-on service. We understand underground utility work from both the contractor and municipality side, which allows us to move quickly, solve problems efficiently, and provide dependable support from start to finish.”*

— Jon Jaime, MPV Saginaw

*Continued on page 30*



## 9 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

From our humble beginnings in Jackson over 20 years ago to nine locations spanning the entire state of Michigan, Michigan Pipe and Valve is dedicated to supplying residential, commercial and municipal clients alike with top quality products and customer service. Find the location nearest you and reach out to us so that we can help you fulfill your needs, large or small.

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That dual perspective — serving both contractors and municipalities — informs how every branch operates. MPV positions itself not just as a supplier, but as a problem-solving partner that shows up ready to work.

*“No job too big or small, we take pride in delivering excellent results for every customer. Our small business is built on hard work, trust, and quality service throughout Michigan. Our team is always available, dependable, and committed to being on time for every project.”*

— **Chris Woolery, MPV Jackson**

The decentralized ownership model — where each location is independently run but shares the MPV identity — is itself part of the company’s formula. Jim Davis of MPV Kalamazoo points to accountability and shared values as the connective tissue.

*“The keys to success for our company are directly related to our fiduciary responsibility and diverse individual ownership groups, and exceptional associates dedicated to doing what we say we are going to do when we say we are going to do it. Our relationships are based on trust, morals, and ethically sound principles.”*

— **Jim Davis, MPV Kalamazoo**

### A Project Worth Celebrating

MPV’s collaborative strength was on full display in the Thomas Township Sanitary Sewer Improvements project — a major undertaking in the \$5M–\$25M range that required tight coordination between MPV, Thomas Township, the Isabella Corporation, American Excavating, Spicer Group, and multiple vendors. The project was recently named “Project of the Year” by the APWA Michigan Chapter.

For Justin Jaime of MPV Saginaw, the recognition was a reminder of what’s at stake in the work they do every day. As Trevor Schultz of Thomas Township put it:

*“Strong infrastructure doesn’t happen by accident — it happens through partnership, planning, and dedication.”*

— **Trevor Schultz, Thomas Township**

“Seeing that project named ‘Project of the Year’ was a testament to how our logistics and product quality directly impact the health and growth of our local environment, as well as the strength of our infrastructure,” said Justin Jaime.

### Eyes on the Future

Michigan’s water infrastructure is aging — much of it more than 50 years old — and the funding gap to address it has been estimated at \$1.1 billion annually. For MPV, that challenge represents both a responsibility and an opportunity.

*“We are particularly excited about the continued advancement of trenchless technology and the growing market for HDPE and domestic products. These materials*

*offer incredible longevity and safety for our water systems. We’re also keeping a close eye on smart water technology — the integration of metering, valves, and hydrants with data to help cities manage their resources more efficiently and sustainably.”*

— **Justin Jaime, MPV Saginaw**

MPV sees itself squarely in the middle of that transition — supplying the materials and expertise needed to rebuild Michigan’s underground infrastructure with an eye toward longevity and efficiency.

### What’s Next

From a single basement operation to more than a dozen locations spanning Michigan, Michigan Pipe & Valve has grown by doing things the old-fashioned way: showing up, building trust, and delivering. New locations are already in the works, and the expansion into HDPE utility services signals that the company is thinking well beyond traditional distribution.

As the team puts it themselves, the journey has involved “a lot of blood, sweat, and tears” — but Michigan Pipe & Valve continues to prevail. For MITA members who work alongside them on projects across the state, that’s probably no surprise at all. **CS**

*Michigan Pipe & Valve is an Associate Member of MITA. For more information, contact your local MPV branch.*

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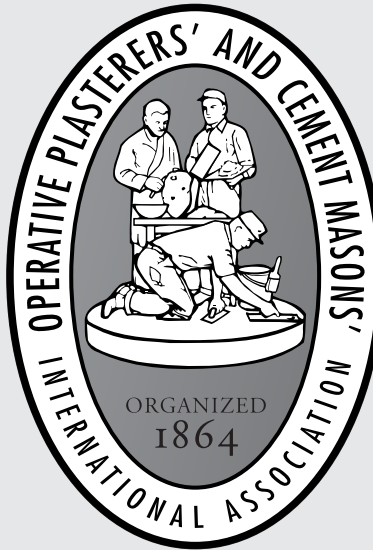
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MITA is accepting nominations for foremen and crew leaders who have gone two or more years without an at-fault utility strike. Those selected will receive a recognition shirt and be featured in MITA social media and this magazine. MITA will also spend a few minutes with each honoree to capture what's working on their jobs—insight that can help the rest of the industry.

***If your company has someone who deserves this recognition, contact [Greg Brooks at gregbrooks@thinkmita.org](mailto:gregbrooks@thinkmita.org). CS***



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# MITA SAFETY RESOURCES HELP KEEP JOBSITES SAFE AND COMPLIANT

Safety remains one of the most important priorities on any construction jobsite, and MITA continues to provide its members with practical tools and resources to support safe, efficient, and compliant field operations.

MITA offers a variety of safety products, field guides, educational materials, and jobsite resources designed to help contractors, supervisors, and crews stay informed and prepared. From trench safety education to field reference materials and compliant jobsite signage, these resources serve as valuable tools for day-to-day operations.

**Available MITA products include:**

- MITA Safety & Health Field Book – Digital PDF – \$250
- MITA Safety & Health Field Book – \$14
- Trench Safety Handbook – \$5
- Trench Safety Handbook – Digital PDF – \$100
- MITA Damage Prevention Field Guide – \$20
- Penetrometer – \$75
- Best Practices Field Card – \$2
- Danger/Counterweight Signs – \$2.50
- Jobsite Poster (MIOSHA & MDOT Compliant) – \$85



In addition to safety products and field materials, MITA also offers free onsite Toolbox Talks for members. Toolbox Talks provide crews with valuable safety reminders, best practices, and practical discussions tailored to field operations.

For Toolbox Talk scheduling, members may contact:

**Greg Brooks – gregbrooks@thinkmita.org**  
**Matt Moody – mattmoody@thinkmita.org**

**Scan the QR Code to order safety resources and jobsite materials:**



Please note that shipping costs are not included in the listed prices and will be added separately if applicable. Customers may also choose to pick up orders directly from the MITA office.

For questions regarding ordering, shipping, or pickup, please contact Sarah Alex at sarahalex@thinkmita.org. **CS**

## MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES



*Pictured left to right: Mark Johnson, Mike Horan, Jamie Jacob and Jim Friel.*

AJAX Paving Industries, Inc. is marking its 75th anniversary, celebrating a legacy that began on April 19, 1951, and grew from a small Michigan paving operation into one of the state's leading heavy civil construction companies. Over the past seven and a half decades, AJAX has helped shape the transportation infrastructure through major highway, airport, and industrial projects.

Founded by Herbert Jacob, the company started with a modest fleet and a focus on paving commercial parking lots. From those early years, AJAX steadily expanded its capabilities, project scale, and operational reach throughout the regions, building a reputation for quality work, innovation, and long-term investment in its people and equipment.

Over the past 75 years, AJAX has built its legacy through disciplined growth, long-term investment, and a commitment to doing the work the right way. Under the leadership of Chairman of the Board James "Jamie" Jacob, the company has continued to grow and adapt while remaining rooted in the values that have defined AJAX for generations. "Doing good quality work has always been part of our DNA. It is actually more work to do a bad job. You just have to do it right the first time, and then keep doing it right."

AJAX's growth has been closely tied to the growth of Michigan itself. One of the company's early milestone projects was the Southgate Shopping Center in 1956. In the years that followed, AJAX expanded through new plant operations, strategic acquisitions, and continued reinvestment that positioned the company to take on larger and more technically demanding work across the state.

Innovation has remained a constant throughout this history. In the late 1970s, AJAX modified a paver to run 36-feet wide so it could pave a stretch of I-94 near Detroit Metropolitan Airport in a single pass. Decades later, the company continued pushing into specialized work, including the 1993 European Concrete Project from I-375 to I-94 and the Ford Dearborn test track, where work on a 40-acre pad with parabolic curves helped open the door to racetrack projects beyond Michigan.

The company also built a strong presence at Detroit Metro Airport (DTW), including work tied to the midfield terminal project, which became one of the largest successful private bids in the

company's history. More recently, AJAX demonstrated its scale by simultaneously managing major interstate work on I-275, I-696, and I-96.

Company leaders say that AJAX history is about more than equipment and project volume. They point to a culture that has helped AJAX maintain continuity across generations of employees. "When you started here at AJAX, you knew you were immediately becoming a part of a family," notes Mike Podsiad, Project Manager. "Everybody immediately took you in and made sure you were able to come home safely that day."

That family atmosphere, along with a strong emphasis on safety and accountability, has helped define the company for decades. AJAX leaders describe safety, quality, and production as a three-part foundation that guides every job and every decision. Jacob said that commitment is central to the company's identity and long-term success.

"There is no job more important than going home to your family at the end of the day," Jacob said. "If you can't do it safely, you shouldn't do it at all."

For longtime leaders, the company's endurance ultimately comes down to people. "Anybody can go buy millions of dollars' worth of equipment, but if you do not have the right people with the right skill sets, the right attitudes, and the right safety mindset, you are not going to be around for 75 years," said Paul Selesky, Vice President.

AJAX executives also credit the company's longevity to the strength of its relationships, both within the organization and across the industry. "Relationships are one of the most important attributes we have here at AJAX. If you cultivate those relationships as AJAX has through its history, you're going to be really successful," notes Mark Johnston, CEO and President. Johnston said that the combination of trust, continuity, and teamwork has helped make AJAX a respected name among employees, customers, consultants, public agencies, and project partners throughout Michigan.

As AJAX enters its next chapter, the company says the values that defined its first 75 years will continue guiding its future. "Customer focus, teamwork, innovation, and safe work practices will still be true in 75 years," Jacob said. **CS**

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# MITA JOINS MICHIGAN PARTNERS FOR NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK KICKOFF



*Speakers and safety officials pose for a photo at the National Work Zone Awareness Week kickoff event at Dow Diamond in Midland on April 20. (Photo courtesy of MDOT)*

Michigan’s construction industry, state agencies, and safety partners gathered at Dow Diamond in Midland on April 20 to kick off National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) 2026. The annual event brought together officials from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Michigan State Police (MSP), MIOSHA, ATSSA, Dow Chemical, the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, and MITA to elevate public awareness around work zone safety—and to honor those lost.

This year’s event carried added urgency: in 2025, 25 people lost their lives in Michigan work zones—22 motorists and 3 construction workers—with approximately 6,000 work zone crashes recorded statewide. A memorial display honored the victims, underscoring why the week’s theme, “Safe Actions Save Lives,” resonates far beyond a slogan.

MITA’s Director of Safety & Compliance, Greg Brooks, delivered remarks that put a human face on the numbers. Brooks acknowledged the industry’s rigorous safety culture—the training, certifications, safety meetings, and meticulous planning that crews complete before a single barrel is placed—but was direct about the one variable no amount of preparation can eliminate: the driver. “There is one factor we cannot control,” Brooks told the crowd, “and that’s the drivers on the other side of the barrels.”

His message was a straightforward ask to every Michigander behind the wheel: slow down, stay alert, put the phone down, and respect the work zone. “We don’t want to just fix the damn roads—we want to build the best damn roads in the country,” Brooks said. “Michigan has a workforce with the knowledge, passion, and grit to do it. Just give us the space and the respect to do so.” **CS**

For more information on Michigan work zone safety, visit [Michigan.gov/WorkZoneSafety](https://Michigan.gov/WorkZoneSafety).

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# Top Engineering and Surveying Projects Honored at 2026 ACEC/Michigan Excellence Awards Gala

Michigan's most innovative engineering and surveying achievements were celebrated on March 7, 2026, as the American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan (ACEC/Michigan) recognized standout projects and professionals at its annual Engineering and Surveying Excellence Awards Gala. Held at The Fillmore Detroit, the event highlighted the year's most impactful infrastructure improvements and design solutions delivered by ACEC/Michigan member firms.

"The infrastructure improvements engineered by ACEC member firms significantly improve the daily lives of Michigan residents and visitors," said Ronald Brenke, PE, ACEC/Michigan Executive Director. "Their talent and expertise were on display at the Gala as various types of projects were recognized and celebrated."

## Engineering Eminent Conceptor Award

**NTH Consultants** (Northville) received the evening's highest engineering honor for the Large-Diameter Sewer Rehab – A Liner Pilot Study for Oakland Macomb Interceptor Drain Drainage District (OMIDDD). The North Interceptor–East Arm rehabilitation restored a failing 17.5-foot sewer serving 800,000 residents. By installing and testing three lining systems side-by-side, the project delivered real-world performance data, overcame extreme corrosive conditions, and set a global model for sustainable, data-driven infrastructure renewal.

## Surveying Eminent Conceptor Award

**Nowak & Fraus Engineers** (Pontiac) earned the top surveying award for the Aloha State Park LiDAR Survey and Study for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Through advanced LiDAR data acquisition and analysis, Nowak & Fraus Engineers and Soils & Structures identified sources for poor surface drainage and high groundwater conditions that led to the creation of sustainable solutions to restore safe, reliable operations to 290 campsites at Aloha State Park.

## Honorable Conceptor Awards

Eight engineering projects received Honorable Conceptor recognition, including:

- **DLZ Michigan** (Waterford) – Aspen Meadows Well House Improvements for White Lake Township
- **Fleis & VandenBrink** (Grand Rapids) – Barry Street Realignment: A Safer Connection project for City of Hudsonville
- **Jones & Henry Engineering** (Kalamazoo) – Tertiary Treatment Process Upgrades for City of Kalamazoo Water Reclamation Plant
- **Prein&Newhof** (Grand Rapids) – Hoffmaster State Park Overlook Replacement for State of Michigan DTMB and DNR
- **Tetra Tech of Michigan** (Ann Arbor) – 8 1/2 Mile Drain In-System Storage Device for Macomb County Public Works
- **Wade Trim** (Taylor) – Chapaton RTB Canal Rehabilitation for Macomb County Public Works
- **Wade Trim** (Taylor) – US-24 Renewal & Diverging Diamond Interchange for Michigan Department of Transportation

A Surveying Honorable Conceptor Award was presented to **Fleis & VandenBrink** (Grand Rapids) for the Preserving the Past: Cemetery GIS Integration project for Cedar Creek Township.



# ACEC

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*of Michigan*

## Merit Awards

Engineering Merit Awards were presented to:

- **Fishbeck** (Farmington Hills) – M-30 over Tobacco River for Michigan Department of Transportation
- **Fishbeck** (Farmington Hills) – Unified Sports & Inclusion Center for Special Olympics Michigan
- **Fleis & VandenBrink** (Kalamazoo) – Watermain Key to Regional Economic Catalyst for Emmett Charter Township
- **HDR** (Ann Arbor) – Erickson CCR Impoundments Closure for Lansing Board of Water & Light
- **Hubbell, Roth & Clark** (Bloomfield Hills) – Waldon Road Paving for Road Commission for Oakland County
- **OHM Advisors** (Livonia) – The Rink at Stine Community Park for City of Troy
- **Somat Engineering** (Detroit) – Potomac River Interceptor Crossing for District of Columbia Water & Sewer Authority
- **Spicer Group** (Saginaw) – Ives Drain Improvement Project for Mecosta County Drain Commissioner
- **Spicer Group** (Saginaw) – St. Mary's Gardens Improvement Project for Patrick Lewis, P.E., Director of Engineering and Public Services, City of Monroe
- **Tetra Tech of Michigan** (Ann Arbor) – MIDDD Odor and Corrosion Control Design for Macomb County Public Works
- **Tetra Tech of Michigan** (East Lansing) – WRRF Clarifier & Aeration System Improvements for City of East Lansing
- **Wightman** (Benton Harbor) – KRESA Career Connect Campus for Kalamazoo RESA
- **Wightman** (Benton Harbor) – Whites Road Improvements for City of Kalamazoo

A Surveying Merit Award was presented to Wightman (Benton Harbor) for Niles Area Transmission Improvements for American Electric Power.

The **Board Design Award** went to **Wade Trim** (Taylor) for their board designed to tell the story of the Chapaton RTB Canal Rehabilitation project.

## Professional Honors

- The **Vernon B. Spalding Leadership Award** was presented to **Mark K. Kramer, PE**, President and Chief Executive Officer of **SME** to honor his outstanding leadership roles in ACEC and several community organizations.
- The **Felix A. Anderson Image Award** was presented to **Laura J. Mester**, former Chief Administrative Officer, **Michigan Department of Transportation**, for her actions and contributions to enhance the image of the profession.

## National Competition Eligibility

Eminent and Honorable Conceptor award winners are eligible to compete at the National ACEC engineering competition in Washington, DC.

For more information on award-winning projects or ACEC/ Michigan, visit [www.acecmi.org](http://www.acecmi.org) or call **517.332.2066**. **CS**



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# ACEC/Michigan Honors OHM Advisors and Williams & Works as 2026 Firms of the Year

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan (ACEC/Michigan) recognized two standout member firms with its prestigious 2026 Firm of the Year awards during the Engineering & Surveying Excellence Awards Gala on March 7 at The Fillmore Detroit. The awards honor firms that demonstrate exceptional leadership in professional practice, industry involvement, and community service.

The Firm of the Year program is ACEC/Michigan's highest organizational honor and the only award that recognizes firms for advancing both the business of engineering and the broader profession. Selection is based on a firm's commitment to progressive management practices, leadership in ACEC/Michigan initiatives, and meaningful contributions to communities across the state.

## ACEC/Michigan Large Firm of the Year: OHM Advisors

OHM Advisors, headquartered in Livonia, earned the Large Firm of the Year award for its extensive leadership at the state and national levels. The firm's contributions include:

- **National and state leadership roles**, with CEO Jon Kramer serving as Michigan's National Director and Alumni Committee Chair, and Firm Principal Matt Parks leading the Water/Wastewater Committee.
- **Strengthening industry collaboration**, including active involvement in the Engineering & Surveying Excellence Awards and the Transportation Committee, supporting coordination with MDOT.
- **Commitment to mentorship and industry growth**, demonstrated through participation in the MDOT Mentor-Protégé Program and support for emerging firms.
- **Community engagement and volunteerism**, supported by a firmwide culture of service and a Volunteer Service Leave Program.
- **Advocacy for infrastructure and engineering policy**, with firm leaders participating in state legislative events and national summits.
- **Investment in future talent**, including scholarships, internships, K-12 partnerships, and the innovative GIS Pathways Program. Jon Kramer also is an instructor on leadership for the Emerging Leader's Program.
- **Recognition for technical excellence**, including multiple project awards and maintaining Esri Gold Partner status.

Through leadership, advocacy, and a sustained commitment to developing the next generation of professionals, OHM Advisors exemplifies the values of ACEC/Michigan.

AMERICAN

**ACEC/Michigan Small Firm of the Year:  
Williams & Works**


Williams & Works of Grand Rapids was honored as the Small Firm of the Year for its leadership, innovation, and service to both the profession and the community. Highlights include:

- **Active engagement in ACEC/Michigan governance**, with Nathan Breese serving as an Observer on the Board of Directors and Brandon Mieras as a graduate of the Emerging Leaders Program. Brandon Mieras has contributed for many years having served as chair of the ACEC/USDA RD/EGLE/MEDC Committee.
- **Advocacy for the engineering profession**, including legislative outreach and client education on critical funding opportunities and technical engineering issues.
- **Technical innovation**, most notably presenting Michigan's first Aerobic Granular Sludge (AGS) plant and collaborating with EGLE on groundwater management and well construction policy discussions.
- **Recognition for project excellence**, including an Honorable Conceptor Award for the Cutler Road Bridge and additional recognition for the Greenville wastewater project.
- **Deep community involvement**, from sponsoring local events and supporting scholarships to participating in volunteer efforts such as the Amway Riverbank Run and mentoring students through internships and the MDOT TRAC Design Bridge Build Contest.

Williams & Works demonstrates how small firms can drive meaningful impact through leadership, innovation, and community commitment.

**Learn More**

Information about OHM Advisors, Williams & Works, and other ACEC/Michigan member firms is available at [www.acecmi.org](http://www.acecmi.org). **CS**

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# DATA CENTERS AREN'T MICHIGAN'S PROBLEM — THEY'RE ITS OPPORTUNITY

*A civil engineer makes the case for welcoming the data center boom before neighboring states do*



By Mark Smolinski | G2 Consulting

*Mark Smolinski is a civil engineering professional at G2 Consulting, where he specializes in infrastructure planning and environmental compliance. He writes on issues at the intersection of engineering, economic development, and public policy.*

Data centers are the topic of conversation du jour in Michigan, as many of the largest and most sophisticated operators eye the state for massive financial investments. Yet some people remain skeptical and are less enthusiastic about the opportunities data centers bring. As an civil engineering professional motivated by the best interests for our shared environment and economy, I'd like to offer my perspective.

Much of today's debate centers on the pros and cons of data centers as physical buildings with significant infrastructure demands. Far less attention is paid to the broader value of having these centers located here.

While AI's eventual and inevitable impact is still not fully understood, it's clear that artificial intelligence will fundamentally change how we live, work, and play. With that in mind, wouldn't Michiganders prefer that this transformation be anchored close to home, and that the state becomes a hub of the next economy?

The moment is reminiscent of when the automotive industry found its footing in Michigan, sparking the growth of hundreds of related suppliers and businesses. We now face a similar opportunity, one that deserves serious consideration.

Unlike the early days of large-scale manufacturing, Michigan today is well prepared to manage and mitigate environmental impacts through the robust framework of regulations governing large properties that have been developed over the past one hundred plus years.

A common concern is that data centers are massive consumers of water and electricity. While they do require both, the picture is not nearly as bleak as critics suggest. Many facilities use closed-loop water cooling

*“The moment is reminiscent of when the automotive industry found its footing in Michigan—we now face a similar opportunity.”*

systems that dramatically reduce replacement needs. In fact, most proposed centers would consume far less water annually than a typical golf course. Michigan has hundreds of golf courses and only about 70 data centers, suggesting ample capacity for responsible growth.

*Continued on page 46*

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Continued from page 44

Energy demand is also frequently cited. However, a 2024 law prevents utilities such as DTE and Consumers Energy from passing increased energy costs related to data centers onto consumers. Moreover, many large operators invest heavily in renewable energy sources to offset their power use. And, data centers energy needs aren't substantially different than the manufacturing sites that call Michigan home.

Nearby residents of data centers worry too about noise, but testing at existing facilities shows that sound levels at property lines are comparable to those of a lawn mower. This is a relatively modest impact and one that can be further mitigated through intelligent landscaping and buffering. Michigan's zoning regulations are already at work protecting residential neighborhoods.

Michigan is particularly attractive to data center operators for good reasons. FEMA and NOAA data consistently rank the state among the safest from natural disasters. The state avoids hurricanes and

earthquakes, experiences few tornadoes, and benefits from the Great Lakes basin that helps prevent flooding. Cooler average temperatures further enhance efficiency, as data centers perform best in moderate climates.

Finally, Michigan scores highly in market accessibility. It's close to major population centers across the U.S. and Canada, a critical advantage in data infrastructure planning.

As a state built on manufacturing and innovation, we've navigated transformations before, and we know how to do it responsibly. These innovations bring opportunity, and by welcoming data centers within our established and evolving legal and regulatory systems, Michigan can strengthen its economy, support technological leadership, and ensure long-term prosperity. I believe Michigan will ultimately be better served by working to attract these investments than by watching them choose neighboring states. **CS**

# Is Your Insurance Coverage Ready for a Renewable Energy Future?

By Jay Sawmiller

*Jay Sawmiller is a Property and Casualty Sales Leader for global insurance brokerage HUB International Midwest out of the Detroit metro area. He holds licenses for Property and Casualty, Employee Benefits/Life and Accident, Excess and Surplus Lines and Licensed Insurance Counselor. He also holds the Certified Insurance Counselor designation. Jay has over 35 years of industry experience including 14 years as a company underwriter. His primary practice area is Construction and Real Estate, including large builders risk projects and real estate in the city of Detroit and surrounding communities.*

Whether driven by the desire for energy cost savings, the need for greater resiliency or increasing municipal regulations, the construction industry is seeing a significant shift toward green-built structures and supporting renewable-energy infrastructure.

In emerging market cities alone, investments in green construction projects are projected to hit **\$24 trillion by 2030**. Michigan is one of the states to recently **pass new laws** establishing a clean energy standard and renewable energy use targets. This month, the Michigan Public Service Commission also **announced** nearly \$5 million in grants for renewable energy and electrification projects, including carport solar arrays, town-level solar storage, a resiliency center and EV charging stations.

Construction leaders involved in or planning to expand into green building and renewable energy

projects must not only shift their approaches to design and product specification, but also consider the unique exposures these technologies bring and adjust their insurance and risk management strategies accordingly. As just one example, consider retrofitting a 100-year-old courthouse building with solar panels; the process isn't plug-and-play, but likely requires structural and design considerations to maintain the integrity of the roof and its warranty and to mitigate potential fire hazards.

## Unique challenges for green building projects – and potential risks

A combination of economic, environmental and logistical challenges can magnify the risks of green projects, and project owners and contractors should review coverage areas for potential gaps.

- **Material sourcing disruptions and price differences**  
Tariffs on solar components and other green technologies can force shifts in the supply chain, driving up costs or delaying progress. In addition, some green technologies and techniques cost more than the traditional material they replace.

*Potential coverage implications:* Traditional builder's risk policies may not cover delays and additional costs for green building practices and the use of renewable materials and technology.

Continued on page 48

# CONSTRUCTION'S FATAL FOUR

**PROTECT YOURSELF ON THE JOB**

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**ELECTROCUTION**



• **Equipment shortages**

Specialty HVAC systems, transformers and other electrical components may require increased lead times.

-: Your underwriter could impose delay in start-up (DSU) coverage terms to protect against project delays and interruptions.

• **Theft and exposure**

High-value sustainable materials and building equipment stored in outdoor yards are susceptible to theft or weather damage may not be covered under traditional builder's risk policies.

*Potential coverage implications:* Consider Equipment coverage to protect the equipment in the building or renegotiate or procure additional coverage designed specifically for green construction projects. for this scenario and others.

In addition, as weather-related damage claims continue to increase, policies will become more restrictive or exclude coverage of micro-fractures impacting specialized, high-cost glass and solar panels. Review policy deductibles and buyback options carefully.

• **Environment & pollution**

Pollution and contamination are already a potential issue for construction projects, but green projects may have higher-risk sustainable BESS and HVAC components or other materials with new or unique environmental factors.

*Potential coverage implications:* Pollution and contamination exposures are generally excluded by standard policies, which is why contractors' pollution liability coverage is critical for any construction project. As you expand into sustainable projects, evaluate if you need extensions to existing risk coverage.

• **Expanded project teams**

Sustainable building projects often require the involvement of multiple outside consultants and contractors during each phase, increasing the risk of costly design and installation errors.

*Potential coverage implications:* Specific endorsements, as well as contractors professional liability (CPL) and errors and omissions (E&O) policies can protect against errors by third-party contractors.

**3 strategies to help reduce risk**

A proactive, strategic approach to risk management and insurance is key to navigating the added challenges that may arise with green construction and protecting your projects from beginning to end. Consider these tips:

1. **Use contracts wisely:** Ensure the roles and responsibilities of all third parties are clearly defined, communicated and documented for each stage of the green building project. This will help determine liability in the event of a delay or loss.

2. **Protect roof warranties:** Install solar systems only after written approval from the roof membrane manufacturer and the original roofing contractor to ensure the proposed installation design won't compromise the roof warranty. In addition, building owners should consult their property insurer to ensure the design meets their requirements and protects coverage of the overall asset.

3. **Leverage technology:** Use techniques such as thermal imaging, pre- and post-CAT inspections and drones to detect issues early and provide documentation to support claims or coverage negotiations.

**Work with a knowledgeable broker**

You're not alone in these efforts. Engage with a specialized construction and renewable energy risk team at the earliest stages of design and procurement to help prevent coverage gaps, timeline complications and compliance concerns. And continue to communicate throughout the project and as new ones are added.

A broker with proven experience and expertise in the realm of renewable energy can provide advice and hands-on support to both optimize building performance and help mitigate emerging profitability threats. **CS**



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# STATES ADDRESS AGING BRIDGES

By Dr. Alison Black, chief economist, ARTBA

Bridges continue to be a focus for some state highway programs, with over 27,000 structures across the U.S. being repaired or replaced using federal dollars. States are able to leverage their core highway program funds, discretionary grants, and the new bridge formula program to support these investments.

## How it works

States currently have access to the full \$26.5 billion in federal bridge formula program funds that were part of the 2021 infrastructure law. Unlike the core highway program, agencies have four years to commit these funds toward eligible projects.

As of March 2026, states have committed \$16 billion towards over 7,700 projects, over 60 percent of available funds. And, as

projects get underway, states have been reimbursed for \$9.4 billion in work completed.

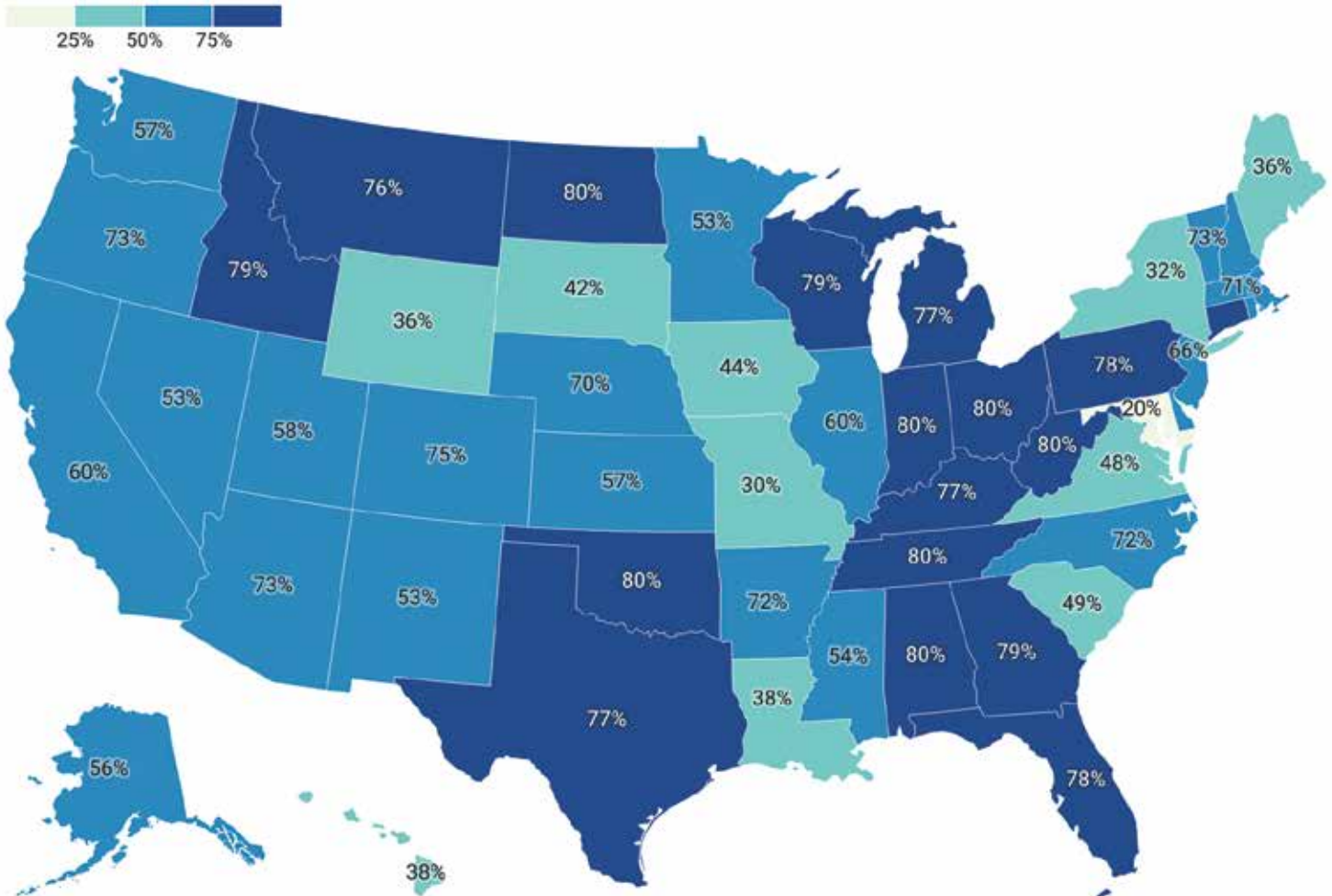
Michigan has access to \$608 million in bridge formula program funds and has committed \$467 million towards 325 projects. So far, the state has been reimbursed for over \$313 million in work supported by the bridge formula program.

## Which states are making progress

Seventeen states, including Michigan, have committed 75 percent or more of their funds, led by: Alabama, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia, Idaho, Indiana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

## Percent of Bridge Formula Program Funds Committed by Each State

As of March 2026. States currently have access to the full \$26.5B in Bridge Formula Program funds. Unlike the core highway program, states have four years to commit these funds.



Map: ARTBA • Source: U.S. Department of Transportation data. • Created with Datawrapper

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Major projects receiving bridge formula funds include: the New Bedford Bridge Replacement (Massachusetts); replacement of one of the two I-270 bridges over the Mississippi River (Illinois); the Haverhill-Methuen Bridge Replacement (Massachusetts); the Port Allen Canal Bridge Replacement (Louisiana); and the Route 23 Bridge over the Pequannock River (New Jersey).

***In Michigan, the major bridge projects receiving federal bridge formula funds are four bridges along I-75 in Detroit, US-131 over Amtrak and KL Avenue, M-13 over the East Channel of the Saginaw River, I-696 over Pebble Creek, and deck replacement and repairs on 16 bridges on I-69.***

While the 2021 infrastructure law provides long-overdue investment, one in three bridges still need repair or replacement. This includes many bridges in Michigan. Of the 11,397 bridges in the state, 1,250, or 11.0 percent, are classified as being in poor condition. This means one of the key elements is in poor or worse condition.

## What's next

Congress has the opportunity to build on this recent momentum in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill due Sept. 30.

A bipartisan bill emerged from the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee in May. The BUILD America 250 Act puts an emphasis on bridges, investing \$9.2 billion annually, boosting resources by \$1 billion per year over current law. It would provide \$46 billion in total bridge investment over the life of the bill.

Under the proposal, the annual bridge formula fund apportionment for Michigan would increase from \$121.6 million in FY 2026 to \$163.3 million in FY 2027, an increase of 34 percent.

The House bill also creates a new competitive Bridge Completion Grant Program to devote \$2 billion annually for major bridge projects on the National Highway System. Minimum awards would be \$50 million and states, MPOs, and other local entities would be eligible recipients.

The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee is planning to release its own reauthorization bill this summer. Like the House, the EPW Committee has been taking a bipartisan approach to new legislation.

ARTBA will work closely with our partners at the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association to advocate for timely renewal of robust surface transportation funding before the spending authorization expires. **CS**

## MEMBER NEWS

# AJAX PAVING ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP PROMOTIONS

Ajax Paving Industries, Inc. recently announced a series of leadership promotions across its organization, recognizing the contributions of several team members.

**Jamie Jacob** has been promoted to Chairman of the Board, and **Mark Johnston** has been named Chief Executive Officer and President. **Jason Beem** has advanced to Executive Vice President of Ajax Paving Industries.



### Additional promotions include:

- Alex Vasquez to Director of Asphalt Operations
- Tye Tignanelli to Director of Concrete Operations
- Ben Kohler to Director of Asphalt Estimating
- Chris Mondon to Director of Concrete Estimating
- Rob Liddell to Senior Project Manager/Senior Estimator
- Nick Schroeder to Senior Project Manager
- Christina O'Brien to Human Resources Manager/EEO Officer

These promotions recognize the individuals' contributions to the company and their continued leadership within the organization. **CS**

Ajax Paving recently celebrated the retirement of two longtime team members, Chris Poe and David Cowper. Chris dedicated 36 years of service to the company, while David gave an incredible 39 years. We wish them both a well-earned and wonderful retirement! **CS**



*Pictured left to right: Jim Friel, Chris Poe, Dave Cowper, Jamie Jacob, and Mark Johnston.*



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# G2 CONSULTING GROUP PROMOTES THREE TEAM MEMBERS TO MANAGING PRINCIPAL

G2 Consulting Group, a Troy-based leader in geotechnical, environmental and construction engineering services, has promoted three longtime team members to the newly created position of managing principal.

Chris Nicol, P.E., Amy Schneider, P.E., and Jason Stoops, P.E., have each spent the majority of their professional careers with G2 and will take on expanded leadership responsibilities as managing principals. The new role reflects the firm's continued growth and commitment to developing leadership from within.

"These promotions recognize the expertise, dedication and leadership Chris, Amy and Jason have demonstrated throughout their careers at G2," said Mark Smolinski, P.E., founding principal of G2 Consulting Group. "Each of them has played an important role in building our reputation for delivering exceptional service to our clients through our 'Smart. Results. Fast.' approach. As managing principals, they will be instrumental in guiding the next phase of our growth."

Nicol, based in G2's Troy office, joined the firm in 1995 as one of its earliest employees. In addition to managing projects, he oversees information technology operations across all G2 offices. Nicol helped launch the firm's Chicagoland office in 2000, and has extensive expertise in foundation testing, geotechnical instrumentation and construction monitoring. A graduate of Michigan State University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, Nicol has long focused on using advanced technologies to improve efficiency and deliver value engineering solutions to clients, partners and project teams.

Schneider is also based in the Troy office and joined the firm in 1998. She manages geotechnical engineering and construction testing services for projects across Southeast Michigan and beyond, including high-rise buildings, manufacturing facilities, schools, bridges and commercial developments. She also has extensive



*Chris Nicol, P.E.*



*Jason Stoops, P.E.*

experience in telecommunications infrastructure, having managed thousands of communication tower projects across the U.S. involving soil analysis and foundation design. Schneider earned her civil engineering degree from Tri-State University.

Stoops, who leads the firm's Ann Arbor office, has more than 20 years of experience delivering geotechnical engineering services for a wide range of developments throughout Southeast Michigan. His portfolio includes office, retail, educational, student high-rise and data center projects, along with complex building additions and infrastructure improvements. Beyond his project work, Stoops is actively engaged in advancing the

profession, serving on the Board of Directors for the Geoprofessional Business Association (GBA) and as an adjunct professor at Lawrence Technological University, where he teaches foundation engineering. He holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from the University of Michigan and is active in numerous professional organizations, including the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Urban Land Institute.

G2, which is consistently named on the Zweig Hot Firms list, recently acquired Construction Testing Services, a respected engineering services provider located in Flint with more than 40 years of experience serving clients across Michigan's Bay Area and Thumb region.

"As G2 continues to increase its geographic footprint and employee base, it was important to develop our next generation of leaders," said Mark Smolinski, P.E. "Having worked with Chris, Amy and Jason for decades, we are entirely confident that they are the right people to help drive G2 forward." **CS**



*Amy Schneider, P.E.*



MITA member Florence Cement Company, Inc. has achieved a significant milestone, earning certification as a Women Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) through the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

The Shelby Township-based heavy civil and infrastructure contractor is recognized as the first women-led, WBENC-certified civil construction firm in the region — a distinction that reflects both the company's leadership and its commitment to breaking new ground in the industry.

To receive the certification, a business must be at least 51 percent owned, operated, and controlled by a woman chief executive officer.

CEO Doreen Lanni shared her thoughts on the achievement: "Receiving this certification is deeply meaningful. As a woman who leads in a traditionally male-dominated industry, this recognition is both personal and powerful. I hope this achievement encourages more women to believe in their potential and to pursue careers and leadership paths in industries they may not have considered before, proving that passion and perseverance can open doors anywhere."

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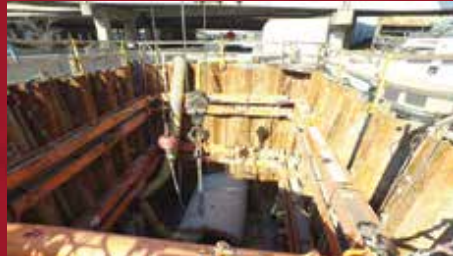
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## MEMBER NEWS

# RAUHORN ELECTRIC BRINGS THE FUN TO PAC EDUCATION

When it comes to educating employees about the importance of political advocacy in the construction industry, Rauhorn Electric Inc. took a refreshingly festive approach — swapping the conference room for a parking lot party.

The Bruce Township-based electrical contractor marked Cinco de Mayo by hosting an employee appreciation event with a purpose, bringing staff and their families together for an afternoon of tacos, lawn games, and good company. Vice President Scott Finkbeiner helped spearhead the gathering, which was designed to create a relaxed, family-friendly setting where employees could learn more about MITA and the role of political advocacy in protecting the industry they work in.

A taco truck anchored the celebration, while

cornhole, spoon races, and a piñata kept the energy lively throughout the afternoon. Informational displays about MITA and the PAC were posted throughout the event space, along with QR codes in multiple locations for those who wanted to learn more or contribute online. Employees could also make personal contributions by check.

The MITA PAC is the political voice of Michigan's heavy construction industry, supporting legislators who champion contractor-friendly policies, fair bidding practices, and robust infrastructure funding. Rauhorn's event is a great example of how member companies can build awareness from the ground up — making it easy and approachable for their teams to get involved. **CS**





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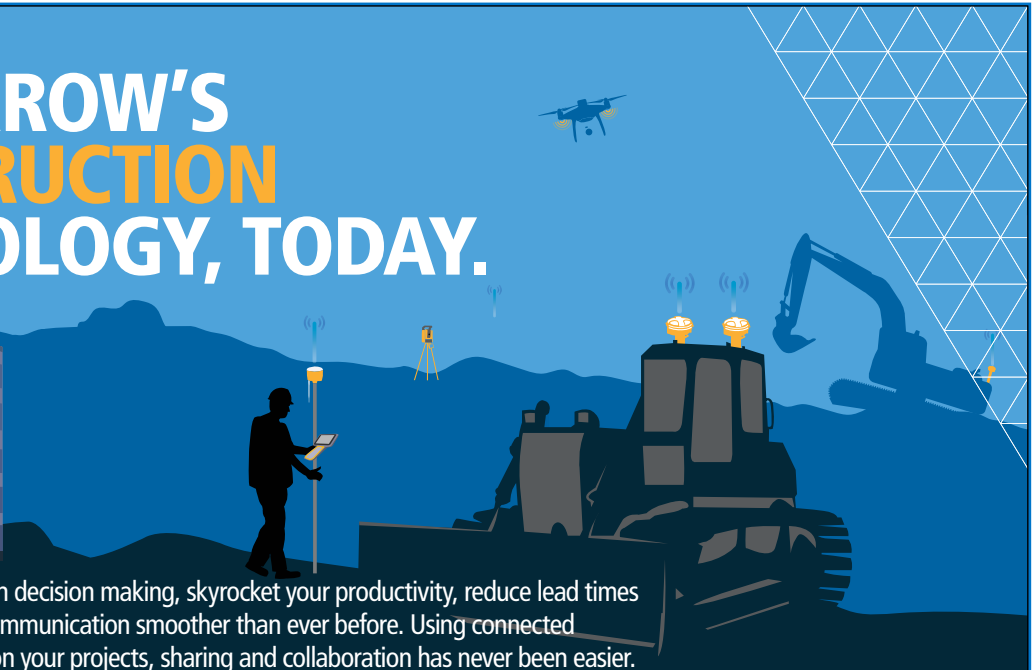
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# MITA MEMBERS ANSWER THE CALL AT CHEBOYGAN DAM



When rising floodwaters threatened the Cheboygan Lock and Dam Complex this spring, MITA members were among the first to respond.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer declared a state of emergency on April 10, 2026, as record snowfall and rainfall drove water levels at the Cheboygan Lock and Dam Complex to dangerous heights, putting surrounding communities at risk.

Fisher Contracting Company mobilized that first Sunday to assist the State of Michigan with flood mitigation efforts, bringing with them fellow MITA members J. Ranck Electric and Darrow Brothers Excavating. Mersino Dewatering (operating as IRONCLAD Powered by Mersino) rapidly deployed pumps,

equipment, and personnel to help stabilize operations and support recovery efforts — work that earned the company a Special Tribute from the State of Michigan. AnLaan Corporation rounded out the MITA response, completing the emergency reinstall of the Cheboygan Dam gates, restoring stability to the structure and protecting the surrounding infrastructure from further impacts.

The State Emergency Operations Center was deactivated on May 8, 2026, bringing a successful close to a weeks-long emergency. We are proud of these five members for their swift action, tireless crews, and commitment to serving the people of Michigan when it mattered most. **CS**





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**WHERE HAS MITA BEEN LATELY?**

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From job sites to boardrooms, training days to legislative halls, MITA is always on the move – and always working for you. Each issue, this page captures a snapshot of where our team has been, who we’ve been connecting with, and how we’ve been advancing the interests of Michigan’s construction industry.



**West Michigan Safety Day**



**MPSC Training**

**MITA Superior Region Meeting**



**Construction Career Days 2026**



**STIC Meeting**



**MITA Management Conference**



**Construction Season Kickoff**

**NWZAW**



**MISSDIG Safety Event**



**MITA Board Meeting**





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- ✓ Existing drainage repairs



## UTILITY & CABLE INSTALLATION

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# 2026 Events Calendar

June 10

Western Golf Outing  
Boulder Creek GC, Grand Rapids

July 15

Metro Golf Outing  
Twin Lakes GC, Oakland

July 29-Aug 2

Summer Conference  
Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island

August 26

Central Golf Outing,  
Hawk Hollow GC, E. Lansing

September 10

Northern Golf Outing  
Otsego Club, Gaylord

September 23

Wild Game Dinner  
Palazzo Grande, Shelby Twp.

December 11

Central Holiday Party  
Joe's on Jolly, Okemos

December 15

Western Holiday Party  
The BOB, Grand Rapids

December 17

Metro Holiday Party  
Somerset Inn, Troy

For the most up to date event details and registration information visit [thinkmita.org](http://thinkmita.org)



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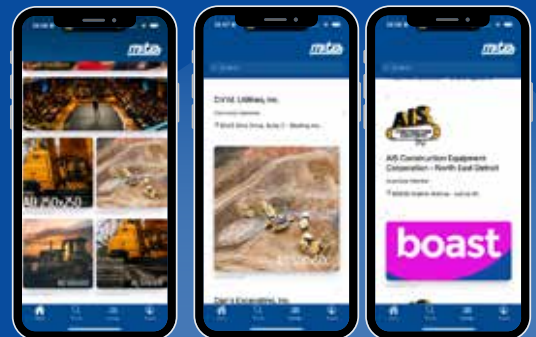
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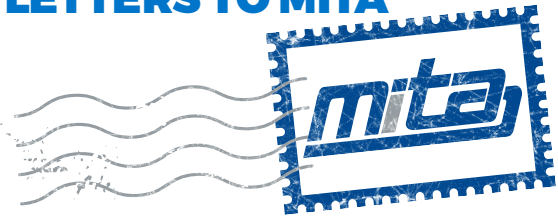
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# LETTERS TO MITA



Dear Greg,

Thank you for all your assistance, time, energy, and expertise in making our spring kickoff a great success this year. Your training sessions were greatly appreciated and very impactful to our entire team, and you're a great mentor for our industry to grow and learn from. Thank you for all you do and for a strong partnership.

Sincerely, Megan Chartier



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