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Georgia

CONSTRUCTION TODAY



Where Will You Find Your Future Workers?

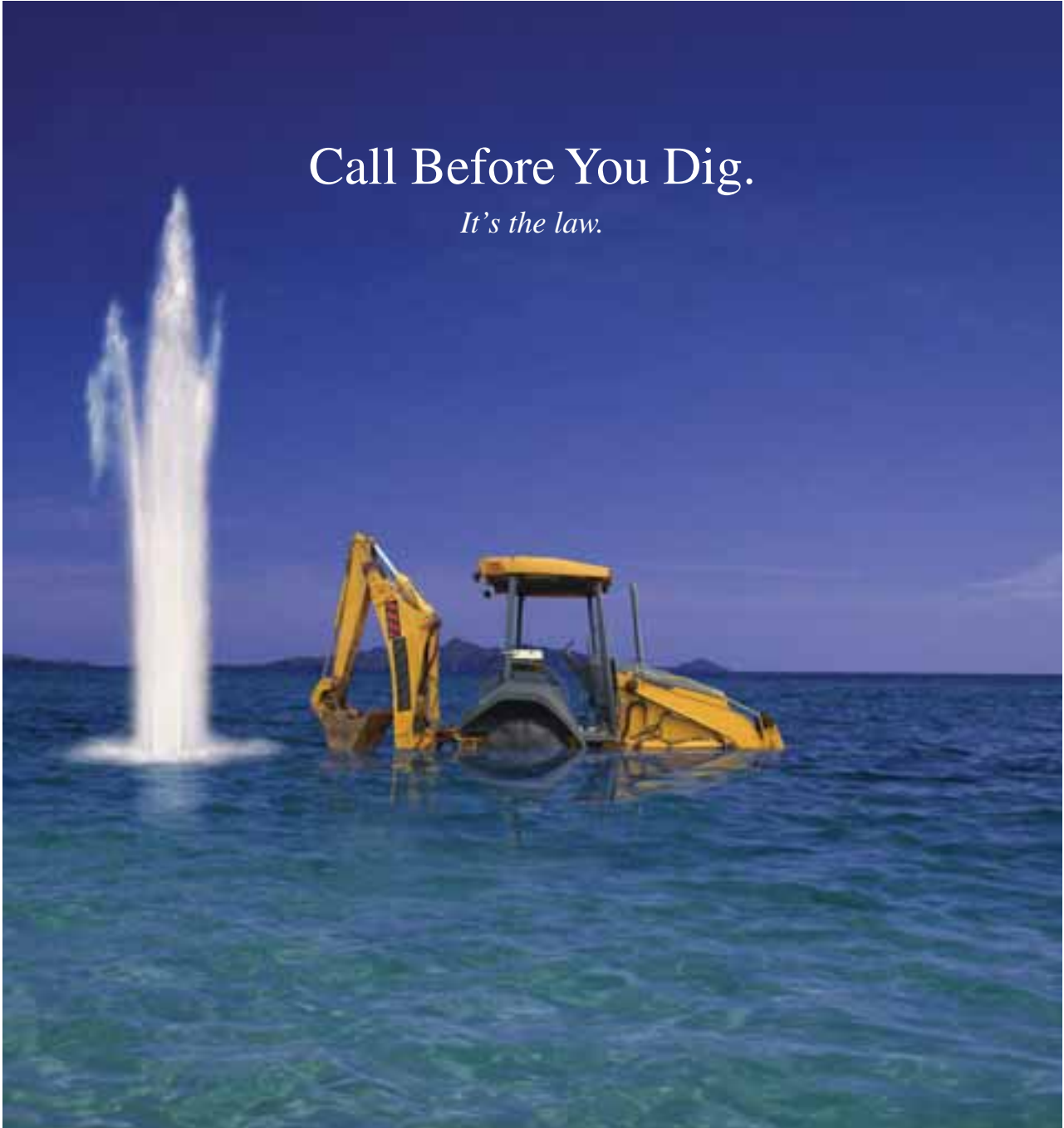
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Georgia Construction Today is published for Georgia Branch, Associated General Contractors of America, Inc.
1940 The Exchange
Atlanta, GA 30339
Tel: 678.298.4100, 800.203.4629
Fax: 678.298.4101
www.agcga.org

Executive Vice President:
Michael T. Dunham

Published by:



Naylor, LLC
5950 N.W. 1st Place
Gainesville, FL 32607
Tel: 352.332.1252, 800.369.6220
Fax: 352.331.3525
www.naylor.com

Publisher: Kathleen Gardner
Editor: Robin Lamerson
Project Manager: Tom Schell
Sales Manager: Tara Hoffman
Advertising Sales: April Bass, Shirley Bennett-Kaoui, Jennifer DiCapua, Shaun Greyling, Steve Hall, Erik Henson, Rasheed Johnson, Harry Neill, Patricia Nolin, Marjorie Pedrick, Christine Ricci, Rick Sauer, Paul Walley, Jamie Williams
Marketing: Courtney Wegelin
Layout and Design: Dave Reimer
Advertising Art: Christina O'Connor

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Published March 2007/GGC-B0107/5801



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message from the president

Addressing Georgia's Shortage of Skilled Construction Workers



Dave O'Haren,
Executive Vice President
Holder Construction Company
2006-2007 Georgia Branch,
AGC President



During the last eight months of touring our state, there has been one consistent message in every region: There is a shortage of skilled construction workers in Georgia. While many of our local construction markets are growing, the entry of new construction workers is not keeping pace. Additionally, the skilled workforce is aging, and we are facing an ever-increasing retirement rate of our skilled tradesman.

Our industry has consistently worked on improving our image and becoming a more attractive industry for new workers. For those who work for a construction firm, they quickly see that our industry is a great place to grow your career. In fact, compared to other industries, construction provides one of the best long-term career earning potentials of many other industries.

Despite our industry being a great place to build a construction career, we are still faced with construction worker shortages in Georgia. The Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA) quotes statistics that estimate the shortage of construction workers in Georgia for 2007 will be 6,800 workers. Nationally, the shortages of construction workers will approach 100,000 workers.

Contractors are talking about the problem, and many are beginning to do something. CEFGA has been

focused on the shortage for the last 10 years and Georgia Branch, AGC is proud to support their mission. It is also up to Georgia's construction companies to address the shortage of skilled construction workers.

At Holder Construction Company, we have been actively involved in promoting construction learning in metro Atlanta area high schools. We have worked with both South Cobb and McEachern High Schools,

providing training, project tours and informational sessions. Holder associates have found the experience both rewarding and fun. The high school students are full of energy and optimism.

In addition, Holder has actively participated in CEFGA's Construction CareerExpos and the SkillsUSA contest, in which we have provided training and judging for the competitions. Each of these opportunities allows us to spend personal time with the students and get to know them. This personal relationship is the best way to attract students to our industry.

I encourage all companies to get involved and be a part of making our industry an attractive place for new workers to start their career. It only takes a little exposure to fall in love with construction as a career. Let's help our next generation of workers find that exposure. ■



It only takes a little exposure to fall in love with construction as a career.





feature

Where Will You Find Your Future Workers?

Construction Companies Follow Football's Approach to Recruiting Talent



MIKE DUNHAM, executive vice president of the Georgia Branch, AGC, says it best: "It is hard to go anywhere in our state and not hear contractors talking about labor shortages," he says.

So it is, and there are three reasons:

1. There is, in fact, a shortage of skilled workers at a very busy time in commercial construction. Supply is low, demand is high. Georgia's construction industry will need at least 6,800 new skilled workers in 2007; despite a slowdown in residential construction, the commercial industry is as busy as ever. (Source: Georgia Department of Labor)
2. The first crop of baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) began retiring in 2006, and the construction industry is full of them. Forty-nine percent, approximately half of our current work force, are baby boomers. (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics)
3. There is a mood in our country right now that is decidedly anti-illegal immigrant. It is difficult to find actual numbers of these workers in the construction industry. And, it varies considerably based on individual trade. Suffice it to say, they make up a large percentage and attempts to clamp down on illegal immigrants are making and will continue to make the labor shortage worse.

Contractors are talking about the problem, and many are beginning to do something.

There was an article during college football season that talked about USC coach Pete Carroll and how he does such a great job recruiting talent for their football program. USC has had the No. 1-ranked class of high school recruits for three of the last four years. That's remarkable, considering how competitive college recruiting is. Of course, that's

a big reason why they field such a good football team each year.

The headline read, "Local recruiting is key to USC's national prowess." So, what is the key to their success in local recruiting? Carroll and his coaching staff "scour the local high schools" in Southern California. They build relationships with the high school coaches; they keep in touch no matter what, whether the school has a top prospect or not; and they are aggressive about building relationships; "they recruit and build relationships like they are a 1-10 team."

Construction industry leaders see a parallel in Georgia. They need talent. Georgia has 172 high schools that teach basic construction skills, and another 100 that teach basic drafting and pre-engineering skills. What if they scour these high schools? What if they build relationships with the construction teachers, graduation coaches and guidance counselors? What if they keep in touch no matter what? What if they are aggressive?

Chances are companies that follow this model will lead the construction industry in recruiting talent, just like USC and coach Pete Carroll lead the NCAA in recruiting top players.

Indeed, there are model partnerships already underway in Metro Atlanta and in Central and Southwest Georgia, where AGC members are getting involved with local high school construction programs. They are not just recruiting, but building

relationships with local construction teachers and supervisors.

Through organized activities like jobsite tours and guest speakers, Georgia Branch, AGC members like Greene & Associates are building relationships and making students aware of career opportunities in construction. Chip Greene, owner of



TOP: Tony Pellicano, president of Georgia Branch, AGC member firm Pellicano Company, talks with Monroe High School metals teacher Ray Dell about partnership opportunities in Southwest Georgia.



ABOVE: Members of the AGC/CEFGA Southwest Georgia Workforce Development Taskforce, which includes teachers and industry leaders, discuss partnership opportunities at a recent meeting in Albany.

The first crop of baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) began retiring in 2006, and the construction industry is full of them. Forty-nine percent, approximately half of our current work force, are baby boomers.

Greene & Associates, gave a presentation to students at Upson-Lee High School, and they are planning a job-site tour of a local hospital project.

"The people we have who are capable of running the larger jobs – they are all in their late 40s and 50s. We don't have any new young talent coming into the industry," says Chris Burkhalter, a project manager with Greene & Associates. "We hope to change that, and if we can hire just

one good young candidate through this effort, it will be worth our time."

Georgia Branch AGC member Chris R. Sheridan & Company donated lumber and plywood to the construction training program at Westside High School in Bibb County. And Piedmont Construction Group, another Macon-based general contractor and AGC member, donated lumber to Mary Persons High School and two cubes of brick to Jones County High School.

"Like everyone else in construction, we need qualified people right now, and we will need them in the future," says Christy Kovac, chief estimator for Chris R. Sheridan & Company. "We believe partnering with high schools is a great way to get young people interested in construction as a career."

If you would like more information on building relationships with your local high schools, contact CEFGA at 678-889-4445. ■



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CEFGA is a non-profit foundation supported and governed by leaders in the construction industry. CEFGA works to connect the construction industry and the education system, with a goal of building world-class construction training programs and a reliable feeder system of trained and informed students for Georgia's construction industry. For more information, go to www.cefga.org.

Georgia Branch, AGC members currently partnering with local high school construction programs or working on local partnership alliances include:

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- Albany Electric
- Artesian Contracting Co., Inc.
- Boyd Brothers Construction Co., Inc.
- Garbutt Construction Company
- General Steel Company
- Greene & Associates, Inc.
- Holder Construction Company
- Jones Construction Company
- MaconPower
- Manhattan Construction Company
- Massee Builders, Inc.
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- New South Construction Company, Inc.
- Parrish Construction Company
- Pellicano Company, Inc.
- Piedmont Construction Group, LLC
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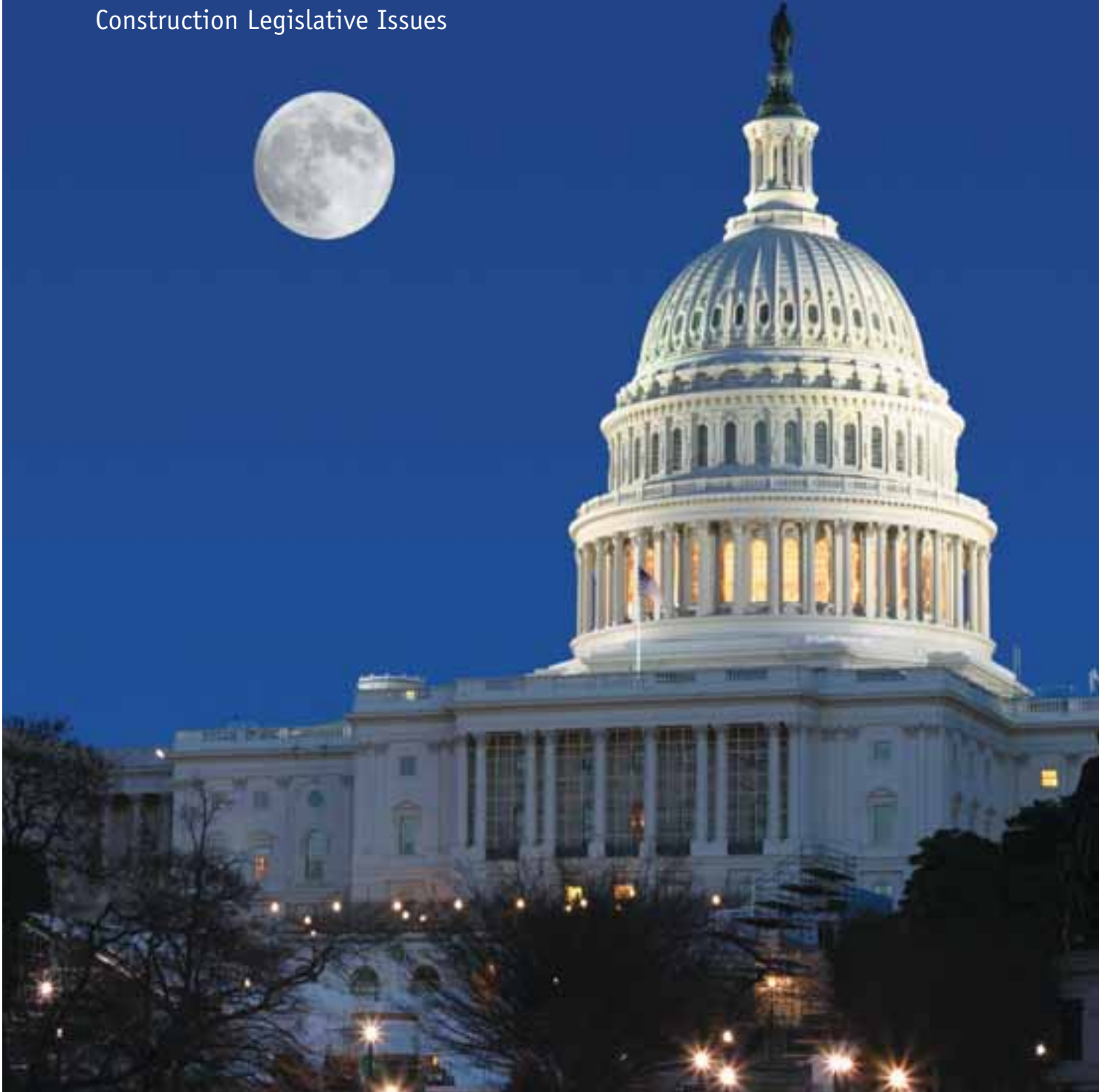
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feature

Congressional Power Shift

Changes in the Nation's Congress Will Impact
Construction Legislative Issues



CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES to be one of the most heavily regulated industries in America. The construction industry's issues are numerous at the national level, and AGC of America is positioned to represent your interests. With the shift in the nation's political landscape, it is important now, more than ever, for AGC to be engaged in the legislative process. The following are summaries of how each of these topics will be impacted by the 110th Congress.

Immigration reform

The Democratic victory in the House is expected to result in real immigration reform beyond just building a wall. The Democratic leadership is more open to establishing a guest worker program and finding a constructive way in dealing with the undocumented. AGC will be actively involved in working to form a legislative vehicle that keeps the construction industry's needs in mind. AGC will closely monitor issues such as how employers should use wage determinations to figure out the pay of a guest worker.

In the Senate, the bipartisanship that created this bill is expected to continue into 2007 on the immigration issue. AGC will closely watch certain provisions that were in the 2006 bill that were not in agreement with its goals and will work to educate senators and their staff on the negative impacts those provisions could have on the construction industry.

Tax and fiscal affairs

The shifting of members and parties will have little effect on the overall goals of AGC and the Finance and Ways and Means Committee over the next two years. Fundamental tax reform continues to be a top priority because of the yearly specter of the Alternative Minimum Tax. This tax, which was intended only for the wealthy, has steadily crept into the lower tax brackets each year. It may become the default tax code if Congress doesn't act to repeal it. The tax is flatter than the current tax code and will be incredibly expensive to repeal at once, which requires that any proposal be bipartisan, supported by Congress and the president.

The rest of AGC's tax priorities are set to expire in 2011, including: the repeal of the death tax, the marginal rate reductions of 3 percent for both individuals and corporations, and the marriage penalty. Also set for implementation in 2011 is the new 3 percent withholding on all government contracts. This perfect storm of tax

increases will also require bipartisanship to repeal and will likely be addressed within fundamental tax reform.

Because none of the expiration dates are scheduled for the next two years, it is unlikely that Congress will satisfactorily address these issues until a new president is elected in 2008. Nevertheless, AGC's priority will be to continue to educate all members of Congress on the importance and looming deadline of the issues to the construction industry in order to ensure construction has a voice during the coming debate.

Environmental

It is unlikely that legislation reforming environmental laws will be successful with Democrats taking control over Congress. As a result, efforts in recent years to reform laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act have likely ended. It is more probable that Democrats may attempt to tighten environmental laws that may impact the construction industry. Democrat-led panels may also increase oversight over federal environmental agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Credit: ©www.istockphoto.com/Duncan Walker

Environment: In the Senate, Democrats are expected to set an ambitious agenda, which may include efforts to move legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions. They may also take a strong interest in water-related legislation, particularly measures addressing California's water needs, and measures to accelerate clean-up of brownfields and Superfund sites.



In the Senate, Democrats are expected to set an ambitious agenda, which may include efforts to move legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions. They may also take a strong interest in water-related legislation, particularly measures addressing California's water needs, and measures to accelerate clean-up of brownfields and Superfund sites. In the House, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has indicated that it will make the passage of WRDA a top priority. The committee may also push an effort to redefine federal jurisdiction over wetlands.

AGC and its members may have to play a more defensive role in reaction to the Democratic agenda on environmental policy, while playing an offense with respect to increased funding for environmental initiatives.

Health care

While the takeover of the House by the Democrats does not mean a quick return to the push for a national government-run health insurance program, AGC believes that there will be interest in exploring the idea of employer mandates once again. Ideas such as the AGC-supported Association Health Plans (AHP) legislation are not likely to gain much traction. The Senate is expected to focus on drug importation, prescription drug prices and expansion of federal control in health care. As with the House, employer mandates will be on the table.

Labor and workforce

The Education and the Workforce Committee is expected to have a much more activist approach to labor and safety issues. For example, while raising the minimum wage has been first on the agenda for the Democrats, "card check" legislation will not be far behind. This legislation will seek to forgo secret ballot union

elections and replace them with card check agreements. In addition, AGC expects to see more legislation increasing the reach of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on job sites, including criminal penalties for individuals whose company is found to be in violation of OSHA laws. In addition, attempts to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act and legislation to ban genetic discrimination will be made.

Clean water trust fund

This AGC-backed bill to establish a trust fund (nearly \$38 billion over five years) to finance clean water projects received hearings in the 109th Congress and gained bipartisan support and co-sponsors. AGC will aim in the 110th Congress to get this bill reintroduced, highlighting the environmental and job-creation advantages of this legislation.

Federal construction funding

Federal construction funding may be more generous under a Democratic-controlled Congress, particularly for environmental-related construction accounts, such as the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) program. While support for increased funding for the Clean Water SRF program has been bipartisan, fiscal conservatives have been successful in limiting appropriations for the program in recent years. Other programs with environmental benefits may also see increases, such as those which fund environmental restoration and clean-up activities.

Further, there is no indication that a Democratic-controlled Congress will propose funding cuts for other important federal construction accounts, including the federal-aid highway program, public transportation, aviation and the Civil Works mission of the Army Corps of Engineers. However, it is more uncertain what changes will be made to defense construction accounts should the Democratic Congress shift direction in Iraq and the war on terrorism.

Waterways infrastructure funding

If Congress does not address WRDA during the 2006 lame duck session, it is hoped that the new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate would move to quickly approve WRDA early next year. AGC will continue to monitor, comment and engage with all appropriate players in the Congress and at the U.S. Corps of Engineers (USACE) on both WRDA Reauthorization and funding for the USACE (Civil Works) program on behalf of its members.

Pipeline safety act reauthorization

In the new Democratic Congress, AGC will build on success from the 109th Congress that included securing



Funding: Federal construction funding may be more generous under a Democratic-controlled Congress, particularly for environmental-related construction accounts, such as the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) program.

Credit: ©www.istockphoto.com/Pavel Losevsky



Credit: ©www.istockphoto.com/Alexandra Dubowski

Health care: While the takeover of the House by the Democrats does not mean a quick return to the push for a national government-run health insurance program, AGC believes that there will be interest in exploring the idea of employer mandates once again.

provisions eliminating criminal penalties, establishing equitable enforcement of damage-prevention laws for all stakeholders in the one-call process and funding for critical technology and awareness programs in three versions of reauthorization legislation. It is questionable whether Congress can reconcile these different versions and vote for passage in a lame-duck session. Pipeline Safety Reauthorization will likely need to wait until next Congress to achieve passage or be re-examined. Regardless of when Congress acts, AGC has done a lot of critical groundwork on both sides of the aisle in preparation.

Small business agenda

Despite one-party control of the Congress in recent years, party leaders have not been able to successfully pass legislation reauthorizing the Small Business Act or enact any substantial reforms to the small business program. AGC worked to see legislation introduced during the 109th Congress that calls for reform of the HUB Zone program, addresses how subcontracting goals are calculated and allows construction contracts to be reviewed for bundling. It is also expected that the Democrats will move to “set aside” more federal contracting opportunities for small business and work to revamp the administration of the 7a small business loan program.

Government reform agenda

Democrats are expected to reform federal acquisition practices by promoting competition, limiting the use of abuse-prone contracts, increasing contract oversight and disclosure of overcharges, and preventing contractor conflicts of interest. AGC will continue to advocate for reform of the federal procurement process, asking that the system recognize construction’s unique melding of industry sectors while ensuring the government uses the most cost-effective method of procurement.

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feature

It Pays for Contractors to Know the Georgia Sales & Use Tax Law

By Mark S. Woodall

Georgia Branch, AGC's Director, Governmental Affairs

OVER THE LAST several years, Georgia Branch, AGC has been very involved in helping reform Georgia's Sales & Use Tax law to reflect a fairer and more equitable approach for contractors and subcontractors. More changes are sure to come as a result of the work by the joint House and Senate Tax Study Committee. Our current law has become quite cumbersome because of years of tweaks and revisions without a comprehensive rewrite. The study committee has met numerous times around the state to gather information on possible changes for future consideration.

Listed are some of the changes that have been recently made to the Georgia Sales & Use Tax Law that impact the construction industry:

In 1999/2000, Georgia Branch, AGC introduced and passed HB 592, which substantially changed the Department of Revenue's (DOR) notice and withholding requirements on construction contracts. Prior to the passage of HB 592, general contractors were required to notify and withhold on all contracts between general contractors and subcontractors to ensure sales and use tax payment of the subcontractor, regardless of the size of the contract. HB 592 changed the

law to only apply to subcontracts in excess of \$250,000 and changed notice requirements to only require a single notification to DOR, if the subcontractor had secured an annual sales and use tax bond.

In 2005 Georgia Branch, AGC introduced and passed HB 306, concerning equipment and material purchased by governmental entities tax exempt, but installed by private contractors.

Under Georgia law, a private contractor assumes the "sales and use" tax liability (technically the "use" tax) on the fair market value for equipment or material purchased by a tax-exempt governmental entity if they install such equipment or materials on behalf of the governmental entity, *unless the equipment/material is part of a gas, water or sewer project*. Therefore, even if the public owner is tax exempt and makes the purchase on a tax-exempt basis, the contractor receiving and installing the owners' furnished materials or equipment becomes the consumer of the materials and becomes liable for payment of the tax if the purchasing entity did not pay the "sales" tax. This law has never been clearly understood among the public owner, designer or contractor community.

For years, many of these groups have incorrectly assumed the tax exemption flowed down to the contractor installing on behalf of the governmental entity for all public works construction projects, not just water, gas or sewer projects.

HB 306 allows governmental entities to continue purchasing equipment and material tax exempt. However, if the public owner furnishes the equipment or material to the contractor to install on their behalf which will be "used up and consumed" in the performance of and "physically incorporated" into the work, and no prior tax has been paid, the public entity shall issue advanced written notice to such contractor of the amount of tax owed for such tangible personal property. **The failure of the governmental entity to advise the contractor of this tax liability shall render the governmental entity responsible for the tax.**

In 2006, the General Assembly passed HB 111, which became a vehicle to entice the world-famous Cabela's Sporting Goods Company to bring a facility to Georgia. In addition, it added to the effort Georgia Branch, AGC initiated in 2000 (HB 592), providing additional

sales and use tax withholding relief for Georgia subcontractors and general contractors. The legislation AGC introduced eliminated the paperwork and withholding requirements for subcontracts of less than \$250,000. HB 111 exempts ALL withholding requirements for Georgia businesses and only requires general contractors to withhold on non-resident (out of state) subcontractors. This change also eliminates the need for Georgia subcontractors to obtain their annual Sales & Use Tax Bonds.

There is one area of the sales tax law that has not changed for a number of years, and contractors would be well advised to be familiar with it. Local jurisdictions (cities and counties) routinely have sales tax referendums on their respective election ballots. These referendums are voted on and passed at various election timeframes and have varying tax implementation dates. Contractors that are bidding on and constructing projects in these jurisdictions will be required to pay the new sales tax rates that are in place in these jurisdictions.

There is however, an exception to this rule. If a contractor has submitted a bid/proposal for a project in a jurisdiction that has recently increased its tax rate, the contractor is not obligated to pay the additional tax increase, **if** the project was advertised prior to the approval of the new tax levy, and a bid was submitted as a result of that advertisement.

However, if a project was advertised and bid after the approval of the tax increase, but before the new tax implementation date, the contractor will still be responsible for the new tax levy. Listed are examples of when the contractor is, and is not, obligated for the new tax.

Examples: Two counties listed in this example have SPLOST Tax

Referendums on the ballot that will increase the sales tax in their counties by one cent. Both counties passed these referendums on their respective November 1, 2006, ballots and have a January 1, 2007, effective date. However, the project in County A was advertised prior to the passage of the referendum, i.e. October 1, 2006, and the project in County B was advertised after the passage of the Referendum, i.e. December 1, 2006.

COUNTY A

SPLOST Referendum on November 1, 2006, Ballot – Passed Effective Date of New Tax is January 1, 2007

A contractor that submits a bid for a project on November 15, 2006, that was advertised for bid on October 1, 2006, **is NOT** responsible for the additional one cent sales tax.

COUNTY B

SPLOST Referendum on November 1, 2006, Ballot – Passed Effective Date of New Tax is January 1, 2007

A contractor that submits a bid for a project on December 1, 2006 that was advertised for bid on November 15, 2006, **IS** responsible for the additional one cent sales tax, even though the bid occurred before the effective date of the new tax.

The Department of Revenue has information on all county tax rates, but the information provided only reflects the rates as of the effective date, not the passage of the tax. Therefore, depending on the date of the voter approval of the tax increase and the project advertisement, the rate listed may not reflect your actual sales tax obligation. The only way to be absolutely certain of the rate you will be responsible for is to contact the county directly to verify your tax obligation in that jurisdiction. ■

If you have further questions pertaining to how these laws impact your firm, please contact Mark Woodall, Georgia Branch, AGC's Director of Governmental Affairs, at woodall@agcga.org or 678-298-4116.



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“Surfing the Net” for a Competitive Advantage

“In our first year of using the iSqFt’s Private Construction Office, our printing and distribution costs were reduced by over 50 percent. Equally as important is the tremendous efficiency of distributing bid solicitations, addenda notifications and miscellaneous correspondence during the bid process. The ability to distribute information efficiently allows our preconstruction department more time to learn the drawings and coordinate scopes of work. We would highly recommend iSqFt to any contractor looking to become more efficient in the preconstruction process and to save money in their overall estimating costs.”

– Doug Davidson, president, New South Construction Co., Inc.

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The Internet has provided us with a wealth of information and conveniences that leave us wondering how we ever had time to get everything done before. Put simply, it has changed the way we view and interact with the world.

The construction community is not immune to this phenomenon – and as margins shrink and competition grows, more and more contractors are turning to the Internet to give them an extra edge to help increase their chances for success.

One area in which use of the Internet has proven measurable success is during the preconstruction and bidding phase. In fact, Georgia Branch, AGC partners with a firm that provides contractors, subcontractors and suppliers around the country with online applications that improve efficiencies, reduce costs, foster growth and bring all participants in the construction process together in one place to do business.

iSqFt, a construction technology firm based in

Cincinnati, provides the most comprehensive preconstruction/bid-management applications currently available to the construction industry. A national strategic partner of the Associated General Contractors of America, a unique differentiator for iSqFt is its ability to provide each participant in the construction process with value.

Through its Private Construction Office, iSqFt caters to the extensive preconstruction and bidding needs of general contractors, while the Internet Plan Room assists the subcontractor/supplier community with efficiency and growth. Together they create the iSqFt Construction Network – bringing everyone together on a common platform to do business.

The Private Construction Office

The Private Construction Office (PCO) provides general contractors with a secure, online collaboration, invite-to-bid, plan distribution and preconstruction management business service designed to assist with efforts throughout the preconstruction window. The PCO has allowed general contractors around the country to streamline their efforts while helping them to realize the goal of actual hard-dollar cost savings.

General contractors who utilize the Private Construction Office have reported a number of beneficial results, including:

- **Reduced printing and distribution costs** – The availability of online distribution and viewing of plans, specs and addenda and the ability to perform on-screen takeoffs or download and print to an in-office printer or plotter has in many cases significantly reduced or eliminated the need for paper prints.
- **Expanded bidder's list** – The ability to choose from a list of verified subcontractors and suppliers in a particular area when sending out invitations-to-bid, providing access to more and more qualified bidders. This has increased the number of bids received from qualified bidders who are willing to participate online.
- **Reduced IT costs and experienced technical support** – The project data for the PCO is hosted and maintained on iSqFt's servers, providing secure 24/7 access to all participants while removing IT requirements from the contractor and eliminating costs for maintenance and upgrades – and experienced technical support is there to provide guidance as necessary.

These benefits provide answers to many of the issues that general contractors face to improve their effectiveness, but they are quick to point out that if their bid-

ders aren't willing to go online, the effort is destined to fail.

Contrary to these nearly universal concerns, iSqFt users quickly come to find a completely opposite reality. In one year alone, the equivalent of 52 million blueprint pages were viewed, downloaded or printed by subcontractors throughout the iSqFt network. This has given even the most skeptical general contractors tangible proof that not only are subcontractors willing to utilize an online solution, but many invite the opportunity as an efficient way to aid their growth.

The Internet Plan Room

Through strategic partnerships with organizations such as the Associated General Contractors of America, and Georgia Branch, AGC, iSqFt operates the Internet Plan Room (IPR) in areas around the country, including coverage in Georgia through the Georgia AGC Internet Plan Room. The Internet Plan Room provides subcontractors/suppliers and general contractors looking for work with a readily accessible source for finding new projects – creating a nearly endless supply of opportunities for growth on a local, regional or even national level.

Contractors have found that with a few simple clicks, the online world opens up a whole new world of

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efficiencies and opportunities that allow them to provide more competitive bids and, in turn, win more work.

Some of the notable features of the Internet Plan Room include:

- Convenient 24-hour access to project information, including online plans and specifications
- Highly compressed files that make plans and specs consistent and quick to download, even using a dial-up connection
- Keyword searchable specs that allow users to quickly narrow opportunities to only those projects that fit their criteria
- The ability to perform online estimates, download the files to print to a local printer or plotter, or even

General Contractor Successes Utilizing the iSqFt Network

A \$300 million design-build contractor in Texas recently bid a large medical center project across the country from their local market. Based upon its previous success using the PCO, plans were not printed and distributed to subs for the project. Based upon the size and scope of the project, the company expected to receive 120 to 130 subcontractor bids. ***“We were pleasantly surprised to receive over 200 qualified bids for this project on bid day without distributing paper drawings!”*** The company’s actual total of 209 bids received was a company record – and it now mandates use of the PCO for all of the projects it bids.

The PCO has demonstrated that significant cost savings can be achieved. One large national contractor was pleased to learn that ***“on the very first project using the PCO we are on track to save at least \$200,000 from the dramatic reduction in printing and distribution costs”*** associated with providing plans and specs to its subcontractors.

Subcontractor/Supplier Successes Utilizing the iSqFt Network

One subcontractor refers to iSqFt as the best thing to ever happen to their bidding process. They state that, ***“We never have to leave the office to get plans for jobs and the iSqFt toolbox has cut our take-off time in half – leading to a higher production rate for our estimators.”***

Another subcontractor related that after using their previous estimating system for more than a decade, they recently switched to the iSqFt network – and the difference in production and cost has been dramatic. ***“The total cost is less than half our previous system, and our production has increased more than 35 percent.”***

order paper prints through the easy-to-use included paper ordering system

- With your IPR subscription you also are placed in front of iSqFt general contractors at the time they are sending their invitations-to-bid, giving you the most direct and powerful marketing tool available in the market today.

The iSqFt network

While this program has been nationally accepted, Georgia Branch, AGC serves as the groundbreaking chapter that introduced the product to the industry. In 1996, chapter leadership saw a need to bring the industry in line with the growing technology of the Internet, and formed a vision of one-day sharing construction documents online, and thus, the Internet Plan Room (IPR) was born. This software serviced many southeastern states from 1997-2000, and when word spread and iSqFt surfaced, the programs were merged under iSqFt’s corporate name, Construction Software Technologies.

Today, iSqFt hosts an online network of construction industry partners, general contractors, subcontractors and suppliers that has transformed what had been a traditionally paper-based approach to preconstruction into a quick and cost-efficient undertaking.

This rapid evolution has provided a competitive advantage for those who have embraced it. Even without taking into account the tangible evidence that the service pays for itself and then some, in real hard-dollar cost savings – each day more and more construction industry professionals are learning that they can’t afford not to investigate what online technology can do for their businesses.

Technology in construction is here...experience the iSqFt difference for yourself. ■

About iSqFt: Founded in 1993 as Construction Software Technologies, Inc., Cincinnati-based iSqFt is the construction industry’s leading provider of online bid solicitation and preconstruction management services. In late 2004, the company achieved the #1 ranking in the construction industry category and 50th overall in Inc. magazine’s “Inc. 500” listing of the fastest-growing privately held companies in the United States. The company repeated this feat with a presence on the list as released at the end of 2005. The company continues its efforts today to provide thousands of companies across the U.S. with the tools they need to find work, reduce costs and increase efficiency.

For more information about the iSqFt Construction Network and the Private Construction Office/Internet Plan Room applications, visit www.isqft.com or call your local representative, Scott Thompson, at (404) 799-9417.



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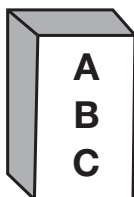
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feature

So You're Planning to Retire – Now What?

A Tale of Two Contractors

By Wayne Rivers, President, The Family Business Institute, Inc.



TWO NOTABLE CONTRACTORS, John and Will, have been friendly competitors for the last 30 years. Their stories are uncannily similar, and they are successful businessmen by almost anyone's measure. Here are a few of the things they have in common: they are both 65 years old, they graduated from the same university with engineering degrees, they're both commercial builders, their companies each perform about \$50 million in volume per year, and they have net profit margins between 2 and 4 percent.

Another important thing they have in common is they're dreaming of the day when they can take more time off and eliminate the feeling that they're shackled to their desks. In this respect, John and Will differ quite a bit.

John works about 65 hours per week, while Will has been able to cut back to about 35. John has one key manager while Will has a team of four. John rates his quality of life at five on a 10 point scale, while Will rates his quality of life at nine. Will has plenty of time to play golf, volunteer at church and travel with his family; John feels like he's working harder than ever and, as his customers grow and the economy strengthens, he sees no end in sight. Another substantial difference between these two businessmen is that Will belongs to an AGC CEO Roundtable, while John doesn't.

What is an AGC CEO Roundtable? It's a gathering of seven to 10 CEOs where, with



What is an AGC CEO Roundtable?
It's a gathering of seven to 10 CEOs where, with the assistance of professional facilitators, non-competing leaders can openly review their companies in a focused effort to build breakthrough success for themselves, their employees and their customers.



the assistance of professional facilitators, non-competing leaders can openly review their companies in a focused effort to build breakthrough success for themselves, their employees and their customers. The mission of the Roundtable Program is to help contractors improve their businesses with the goals of making more money in less time with fewer headaches and a higher quality of life.

Will recognized that, while very successful, he didn't have all the answers. He knew that business succession planning was quite challenging, fraught with difficulties and required a long time horizon to maximize the chance for success. He read books, talked to consultants and attended speeches and workshops. However, he always felt most comfortable talking with other contractors when he had problems to resolve, and he yearned to find a format where he could meet in a focused, intense, small group setting with his peers on a regular

basis. He contacted the AGC CEO Roundtable via the Georgia Branch, AGC, joined a group, met with peers with whom he felt an instant bond, and began to visit with the group regularly for mutual learning.

When it was Will's turn to host the group, he assigned them the task of helping him identify the barriers that he'd have to break through in order to create a successful business transition strategy. The group spent two days meeting with Will's team and evaluating his company from bottom to top. By the end of the session, they had given him a set of five specific recommendations in order to hit his targets of being largely free from his company by the time he was 65 years old. At subsequent meetings of the group, they checked in with Will to make sure he was still on target and to answer any questions he had about possible changes in course or direction. He's not quite there yet, but he is happy to report he no longer works 60-hour weeks, and the com-

pany is far less dependent on him than it was three short years ago. Will credits his Roundtable group with helping him crystallize his thinking and creating a workable plan of action to help him get closer to his dreams of owning a company which is well-positioned for the future. He's now able to function as an investor and an executive rather than a project manager, estimator, business developer or CFO.

What about John? He keeps promising himself, his wife and his senior staff that he'll get a transition plan in place, but there just never seems to be enough time to sit down and plan it all out... ■

About the author: Wayne Rivers is president of The Family Business Institute, Inc., which runs the Roundtable Program on behalf of the Georgia Branch, AGC, as well as, more than 20 other AGC chapters around the nation. You can reach Wayne at 877-326-2493 or wayne.rivers@familybusinessinstitute.com.



Succession Planning Tips

- Plan well in advance; the best succession plans allow about 10 years from beginning to end.
- Distinguish between *ownership succession* and *management succession* in your thinking and planning.
 - Search inside your company for your successors; construction companies tend to be very difficult to sell to outsiders.
 - Undertake annual strategic planning to benefit you and your successor management team.
 - Create a sound business development plan; most construction companies are dependent on the "old man" and his Rolodex of business contacts for new jobs. Make sure your successors have a sound plan for how they'll get new business as you gradually decrease your time at work.
- Join and utilize your AGC CEO Roundtable to help plan your succession as well as to address virtually any other issue that may challenge or confound you as an executive.



feature

New Milestones Reached by Chapter's Young Leadership Program

One Hundred of the Industry's Most Talented Young Professionals Pave the Way for the Future of the Association

"The AGC Young Leadership Program is a significant vehicle in the continuing development of our industry's future leadership. My involvement has afforded me the opportunity to develop many new relationships and gain valuable knowledge that has proven critical to my company and my career."

*-Calvin Pate, vice president, Harrison Contracting Company, Inc.
2006-2007 chairman of the Young Leadership Program*

IN 1996, under the leadership and vision of then Chapter President Raymond Moody, who currently serves as president and COO of Batson-Cook Company, Georgia Branch, AGC, assembled a group of young and talented industry professionals for a meeting that would in turn kick off a broader effort of involving these future leaders in the association's work and seek their fresh perspective on issues and topics.

Moody and members of the board of directors were purposefully absent from the group's development meetings, thus providing them the freedom to formalize the group as they saw fit. The members coined the name Young Leadership Program and began working on their own vision of the group's future.

While chapter leadership invested resources toward making the program a success and hoped the small membership in the program would grow as the years passed, no one could have imagined how important



Building relationships is an important part of building a career. YLP members are encouraged to participate in quality networking events, such as this one held at the bowling lanes at 300 Atlanta in February 2007.

this program would become in the creation of the industry's and association's future leadership.

Now 100 members strong, the Young Leadership Program and its members are a great sounding board for the chapter as it moves forward on its multi-year strategic plan. Just as important, the program has resulted in significant benefits to

the member firms that have enrolled employees in the program.

Members of today's Young Leadership Program are actively participating in chapter board of director's meetings, serving as liaisons and ambassadors for the association at outside industry functions, surpassing the group's annual philanthropic goals and developing a broader knowl-



The Young Leadership Program recently completed a strategic planning session. Pictured are Jay Wicklund, J. M. Wilkerson Construction; Calvin Pate, Harrison Contracting and Doug Hunter, Holder Construction Co.

edge of the industry through business development opportunities, which provides a tremendous value to each member's employer and co-workers.

While the program has come a long way in both participation and member benefits over its 10-year history, program leadership and chapter staff see an even bigger role for the group in the coming years. The Young Leadership Program is

governed by a group known as the Council. These members are working with the chapter's strategic planning consultant to develop their own strategic plan that will allow the program to expand on its past successes, as well as issue new challenges to help them better prepare tomorrow's leaders.

A few of the key goals the group is looking to achieve through their strategic plan include:

- Increasing participation in the program among firms located outside the metro Atlanta area
- Further developing interaction between the entire Young Leadership Program and the chapter's Board of Directors
- Learning about and participating in state government
- Forming relationships with local collegiate construction programs to spread the word about great career opportunities within the commercial construction industry and offer the program's members as resources for the students during their studies
- Creating a culture in which members seek to do business with other members
- Offering a greater number of educational opportunities specifically geared toward the program's members that will help inform them of the industry's hottest and most pressing issues

- Reaching out to the association's general contractor firms to impress upon them the strength of this program and the value of encouraging their young employees to participate
- Providing quality networking opportunities
- Building relationships with industry press to deliver the message of the program's great benefits to a broader audience
- Making a larger impact both financially and publicly with the program's Charitable Works Fund.

While all of these goals are very ambitious, there are several avenues already in place that the group can use and build upon.

The group has a very successful educational offering known as Roundtable Discussions. These quarterly luncheons are free for all association members to attend and offer leading speakers on industry topics. Feature presentations from previous speakers included Employment and Immigration Laws; the niche of Finding and Keeping Clients; Staying on top of Ever Changing Building Codes; Leadership Training in Soft Skills; and Hard Dollars.

Program leaders are looking to expand these meetings, while providing equally important and valuable social time to members where they can network with others in the program to develop lasting business contacts. Young Leader members believe in mixing fun with work, and in recent months, they have hosted networking events at such places as the 755 Club at Turner Field to take in a Braves game, at a whirlyball facility to try their luck on the court, at Fox Sports Grill at Atlantic Station and at Chops Lobster Bar.

As for making a greater impact with their Charitable Works Fund, the first step is to develop a first class fundraising program. The group is on their way to doing this at their 8th Annual Young Leadership Pro-

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gram Charity Golf Tournament on May 9, 2007. In recent years, the tournament has had a great following, but the large participation created a slow pace of play, and at one time participants were asked to be divided between two golf facilities to complete the day's tournament. All of these concerns have been solved by moving the tournament to a larger facility. Plan to join the Young Leadership Program this spring at Orchard Hills in Newnan on its 27-hole championship layout.

The money raised at this annual tournament is used to support all the program's philanthropic efforts for one year. In the past, the group has gone as big as asking for matching funds from chapter members to complete a Habitat for Humanity home in LaGrange during a Jimmy Carter Work Week blitz. They are also advocates of supporting small and large charities that make a difference. During Christmas of 2006,

the members allocated more than \$7,500 of their fund's money to continue a three-year tradition of providing a cheerful Christmas Day to more than 80 patients in the care of Hillside Hospital, which provides quality, cost effective treatment and education to severely emotionally disturbed children, adolescents and their families.

Since the program's council members created the fund in 2000, it has contributed more than \$120,000 in monetary and in-kind donations to other charities and industry organizations, including the Georgia National Guard Family Support Foundation; CHRIS Homes, Inc.; the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA); AGC of America's Education Scholarship Fund; Katrina Disaster Relief; American Red Cross; FOCUS; Operation Homefront; Toys for Tots; Atlanta Community Food Bank and Camp Sunshine.

The group has plans to again put

their construction resources to work and build another home for a worthy family. They are in the research stage of determining a time-table and worthy cause that would benefit from their time and effort. Look for more information in coming months.

If you do not have at least one employee enrolled in the Georgia Branch, AGC's Young Leadership Program, you are missing out on one of the best resources the chapter has to offer our industry's young talent. While the program has an enrollment fee of \$500, if a participant was to take advantage of every opportunity afforded to them through this membership, it would well surpass a \$1,200 value; now that's a deal worth investigating! ■

For more information on the Young Leadership Program, please contact the group's staff liaison, Machell Harper, Director of Member Services, at 678-298-4108 or harper@agcga.org.



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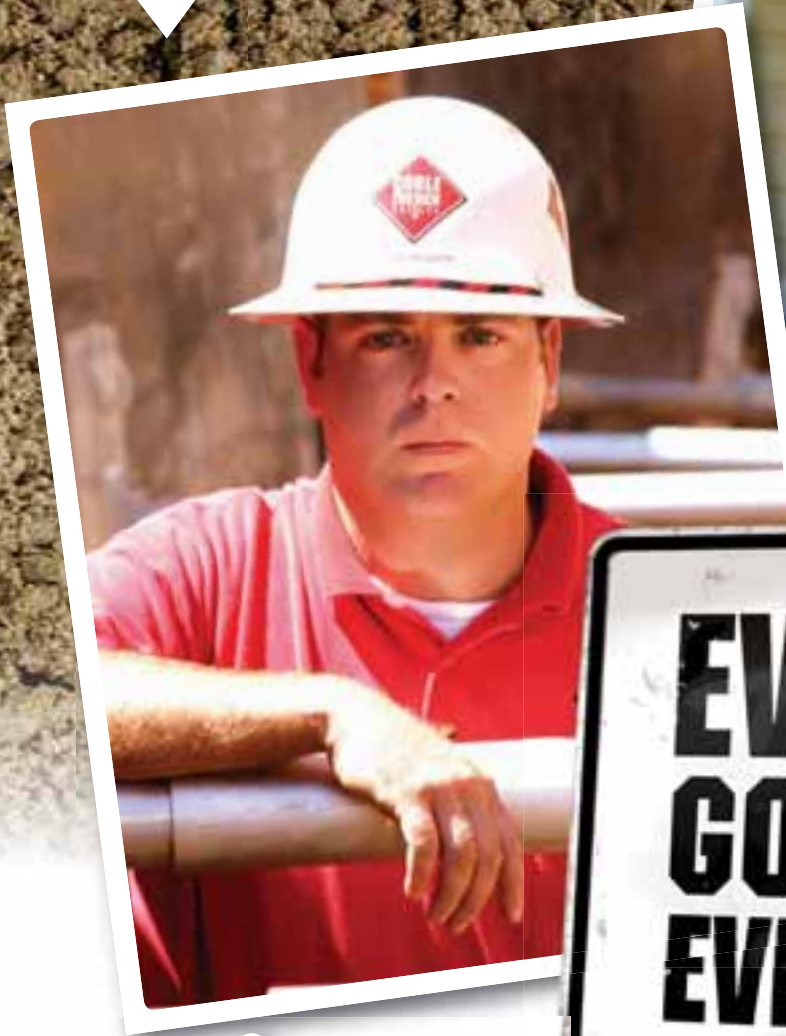
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