

# Georgia

## CONSTRUCTION TODAY



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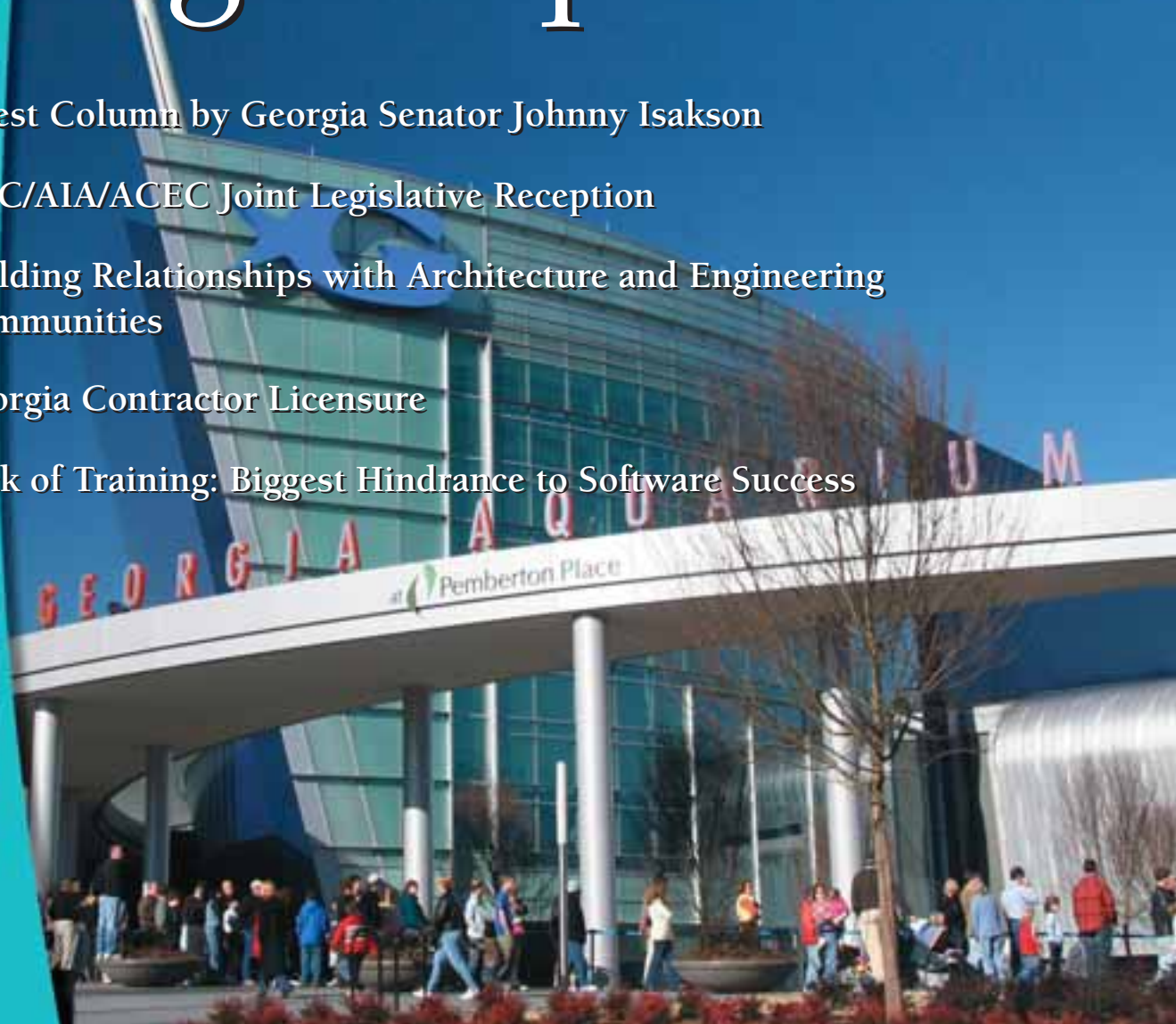
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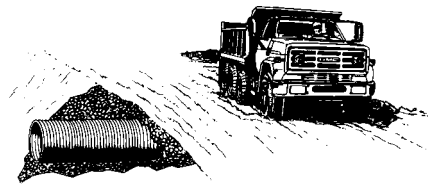
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## Investment is Well Worth the Return



Chris R. Sheridan, Jr., President  
Chris R. Sheridan & Company  
2005-2006 Georgia Branch,  
AGC President



I believe the words of the powerful Teddy Roosevelt ring most true for our industry and our obligations to it: *"Every man owes part of his time and money to the business or industry to which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere."*

If your staff is experiencing the same workload as ours at Chris R. Sheridan & Company, your office is extremely busy, and you are enjoying what 2006 has ushered in. As we all know, this success comes with the challenge of staying ahead of the curve. As I attend AGC functions this year, I particularly remember why I got involved in the AGC in the first place. For me, it was taught at home by my dad. He would often speak of the good of the AGC. But his words did not really mean so much until I became a truly active member. We all have heard the call to be active in this association, and I feel lucky to have been encouraged by my dad. I want to share what it means to me as a way to encourage your increased involvement:

- The AGC staff is part of my staff. How is this? Here are three of many reasons.
  1. On several occasions we have had questions that demanded a deep understanding of construction. A

call to the AGC staff has helped me immensely and saved time and money.

2. On occasion our firm has needed an introduction to someone at the capitol or some state agency. The AGC staff knows them all, and are always happy to make that introduction.
  3. Who else would you call to learn the dos and don'ts of the new licensing law? *I could list several more examples but they limit my space in this magazine!*
- The AGC saves me money and here are some examples of that. We need the training that the AGC has to offer. Starting with myself, all of our project managers and superintendents have taken the Leader's Course®. We even had a refresher course at our office for all personnel. We have all taken many other courses and the sessions offered at the Fall Management Conference, the Annual Convention and those at the Georgia Branch, AGC Training Center were all as good an

While Georgia Branch, AGC offers so much to our state's construction industry, as members, we are the force behind what they are able to offer us.


investment in time and money as I can imagine.

- And finally, the best example of the benefits to me in the AGC has been as a member of a peer group, an idea brought to me by Mike Dunham. There is no way to measure the benefit of meeting twice a year with eight to 10 non-competing contractors who are learning to bear their souls with each other for the benefit of us all. I am gaining lifelong friends and learning how to take our business to a new level. It is amazing how other company presidents can see through all our firms' messes! But they offer such good advice.

From the heart, I could truly go on and on but my point is this: *the dues investment I make to the chapter is well worth the return.*

I believe it is important for me to ask that you not lose sight of a key point. While Georgia Branch, AGC offers so much to our state's construction industry, as members, **we** are the force behind what they are able to offer us. As industry professionals, it is vital that we give back to our industry through this great association. While being a member is the first and most important step, I want to impress upon you the significance of keeping Georgia Branch, AGC a strong and respected organization. Some ways you can help give back to our industry beyond joining our state chapter are volunteering your time through committees and task forces, participating in networking to increase the value of the events for all, donating to the chapter's state and federal PAC funds and providing feedback when chapter staff is in need of it on key legislative topics.

I have always been a strong proponent of community involvement, and the construction industry is just one "community" to which I belong. I hope my sincere enthusiasm and dedication to continue growing Georgia Branch, AGC will inspire you to make a **late** 2006 New Year's resolution: to become even more involved in the industry that affords you your livelihood. ■



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# A Whale of a Tale

Brasfield & Gorrie help Bernie Marcus realize a dream with the Georgia Aquarium

By Vicki Gervickas



"When you get everybody on the team working toward a common goal, that alone is going to help ensure your success."

**BENEFACTOR** Bernie Marcus has compared the grand opening of the Georgia Aquarium to opening night of a Broadway play, in that those involved in the production keep things under wraps: the anticipation is part of the experience. Now that the 500,000-square-foot facility, situated on just under 10 acres in downtown Atlanta, has opened to the public, the wait was certainly worthwhile. The world's largest indoor aquarium is an unqualified success, exceeding expectations and promising to be a destination landmark for people around the globe.

For Atlanta's Brasfield & Gorrie, who served as general contractor on this massive job, the satisfaction is twofold: first, the team took a leap of faith with this project, given that the company had never done work of this type, and second, being part of such a high-profile venture, with an owner known for his exacting standards, is always a risk. But with its motto of "exceeding expectations, every day," Brasfield & Gorrie plunged right in, and have indeed delivered an exceptional product.

## Realizing a dream

For Bernie Marcus, co-founder and former chairman and CEO of The Home Depot, the Aquarium is the culmination of a dream he introduced in the fall of 2001, when he promised to donate the funds to make the project a reality. Chris Britton, senior project manager for Brasfield & Gorrie, says his firm was immediately interested in taking part in such a once-in-a-lifetime venture. "Our negotiated work is between 85 and 90 percent from return clients, so it wasn't that we needed the work, but we wanted to do a landmark job. And with Bernie's vision of this gift to Atlanta, we really wanted to be a part of that. We knew we could do the job and we wanted to do something that would really take us to the next level."

Though the company is well known for its work in healthcare, industrial, office, condominium, hotel, retail and water treatment, it had no experience with aquariums, and so undertook the very first challenge: learning everything they could about such facilities upfront. This included, says Britton, visiting a number of large aquariums, talking with



acrylic-panel manufacturers and educating themselves on the life-support systems required for the huge variety of marine life. "Though we relied on our experience with water treatment and process plants, we knew two of our competitors had done aquariums before, so our challenge was to show we could handle the work."

Ultimately, this "inexperience" was a plus. The team was awarded the contract in part because they had not completed this type of job, says Britton. "And Bernie, as you can imagine, as creative as he is and having done what he's done in his lifetime, he actually saw that as a benefit, that we hadn't done it and so would have no preconceived ideas on how it had to be done." That, and the fact, continues Britton, the firm had the capability to undertake such an effort. "A lot of this win also had to do with our self-perform capabili-



ties. The fact that we do our own concrete work, for example, so we would be physically building the tanks ourselves, rather than having a subcontractor do it was a huge element. And I think when they interviewed our team, they could see what we brought to the table."

### Conquering challenges

But, as everyone knows, getting the job and getting the job done are entirely different matters. By late 2002, the full project team was in place, and the site had been readied. Unfortunately, that site, for which the plans had been designed, was



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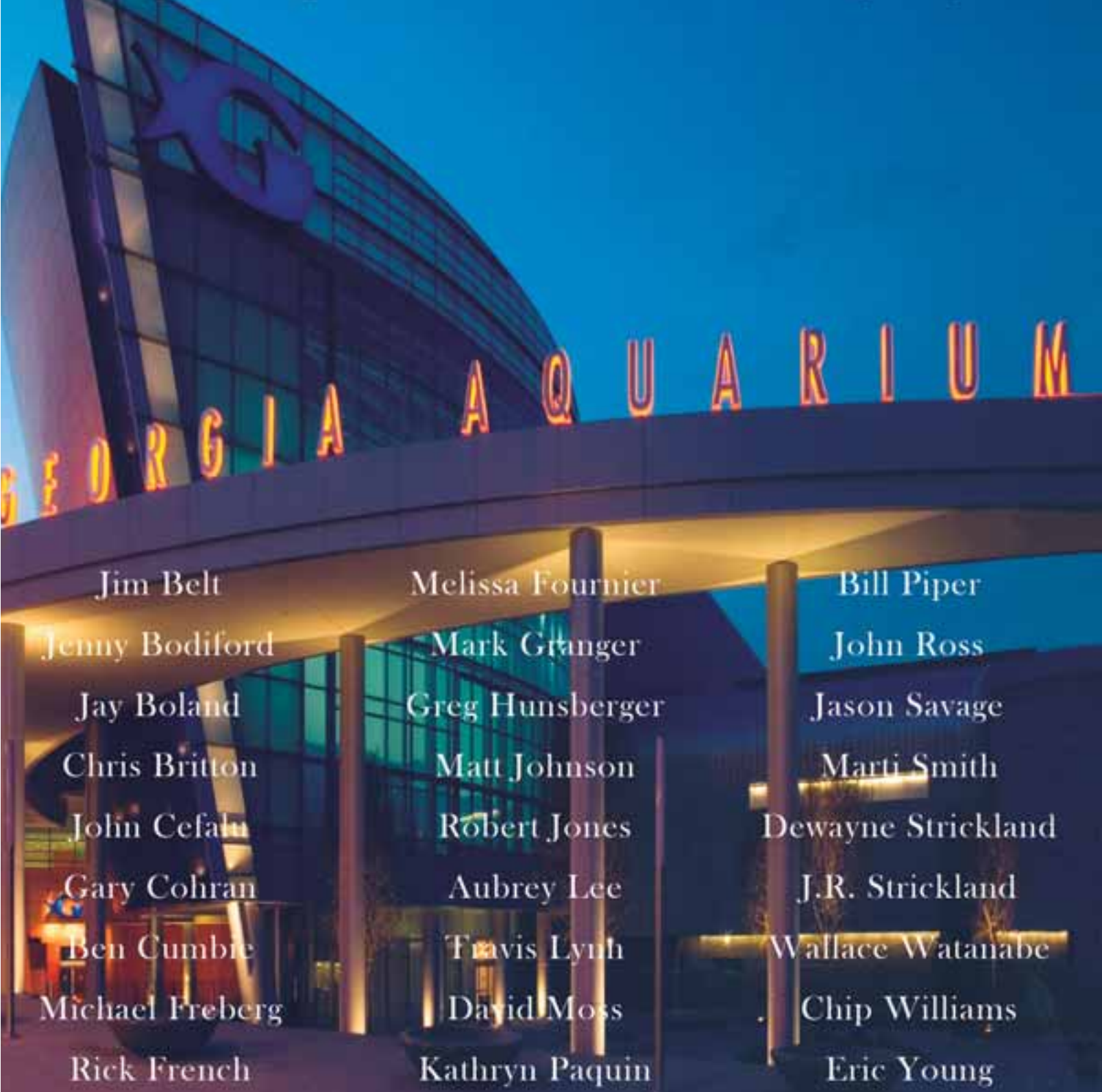
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Aquarium Showcase

Brasfield & Gorrie would like to thank  
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changed when The Coca-Cola Company donated nine or so acres of land for the project. Says Britton, "Once Coca-Cola did that, the entire venue changed and we were back to square one from a design standpoint."

Groundbreaking ended up taking place in May of 2003. Britton says, "For the architects to design an aquarium beginning in December of 2002, and have the drawings far enough along to actually start building the next May, that was an incredible feat in itself. We were literally putting foundations in the ground before the structure itself was completely designed."

And what a structure! The Aquarium's exterior was designed to look like a giant ship breaking through a wave. The facility houses more than 100,000 animals in 8 million gallons of fresh and salt water. As guests enter the huge atrium inside the

building, they are led into the facility by a "wall of fish" that guides them inside. Looking at it, no one would doubt that it is an engineering feat, but, continues Britton, everyone will probably be shocked to know it was still under construction in the spring

before the grand opening: "Bernie Marcus had been touring the world all these years, and had visited aquariums everywhere he went, looking for things he liked. One of those things was a wall of fish, where you walk in between two huge tanks that

"We were literally putting foundations in the ground before the structure itself was completely designed."



# Aquarium Showcase



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"We knew we could do the job and we wanted to do something that would really take us to the next level."

are packed full of fish swimming in the same direction. So, this feature had been designed, and the tanks were complete, the life support systems were complete, the acrylic glass from Japan was installed and sealed, they were done. And Mr. Marcus came in, and looked at them, and said he wanted them bigger. You can bet our mouths just dropped."

Understanding that they were working to fulfill a dream, the entire design/construction team came up with a solution that involved adding 120 square feet of viewing on each side of the wall. While waiting for the new acrylic panels to come from Japan, the team ripped out the 18-inch-thick concrete wall that went five feet below the slab-on-grade, and redid it. Amazingly, this work was completed without affecting the project's schedule.

From that incredible wall of fish, visitors to the aquarium then have the choice of entering five galleries. Each gallery is easily identified by an icon and signage at the entrance: Georgia Explorer has a lighthouse; River Scout displays a cascading waterfall; Cold Water Quest has an ice-covered cliff; Ocean Voyager offers a peek window into a huge habitat; and Tropical Diver has two video screens displaying the perspective of a fish on a reef. Guests enter

each gallery and then return to the main atrium before entering the next gallery.

### Ensuring success

With this kind of project, extra hours are a given. To put it into true perspective, though, consider that Chicago's Shedd Oceanarium, which is half the size of the Georgia Aquarium, took three-and-a-half years from groundbreaking to completion, rather than the two-and-a-half this team needed. Working on such an accelerated schedule took more than 4,000 people, some 1,200 of whom were sometimes onsite at the same time. Along with sheer person-hours came many time- and labor-saving techniques.

To cite just one example, Britton points to a waterproof structure the team designed for one of the shark tanks that allowed the tank waterproofers to do their work before the roof was even on the building. With the 60 habitats on view at the Aquarium comes 12,000 square feet of viewing windows. The acrylic panels used to create those windows weigh a total of 328 tons, and every bit of this acrylic required waterproofing. Unlike for other smaller aquariums, where the panels can be brought in after the roof goes on, says Britton, "we had to install the

panels prior to the roof going on the building, otherwise you would have never been able to get them in. The waterproof structure we built for the big shark tank allowed the waterproofers to apply the waterproofing before the roof went on, which in turned allowed us to deliver the tanks earlier."

With all the planning and all the hours now behind them, Britton points to one thing that was the true key to success on this project: teamwork. The other principals at work were: Heery International, Inc. acting as the program manager; Peckham Guyton Albers & Viets, Inc., exhibit design company and Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates, Inc., architects. "We had put a lot of hours into our pre-planning on the job, so we felt good about our schedule," Britton concludes. "And we knew that not finishing on time was not an option. Though Bernie did not announce his opening day until the middle of last year, we knew all along that opening in time for the Thanksgiving holidays was his plan. Though we couldn't talk about it, we knew we were going to make those deadlines, and it took a true commitment from everyone on the team. Everyone was on board: the architect, the program manager, the 'fish guys,' everybody. When you get everybody on the team working toward a common goal, that alone is going to help ensure your success. And it just turned out to be awesome." ■







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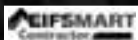


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## Illegal Immigration

By Georgia Senator Johnny Isakson

**THE** single largest domestic issue facing the United States today is also the one we are just beginning to address with federal legislation – illegal immigration.

Being a second-generation American myself, I love our legal system of immigration and the fact you can come to this country and become a citizen. But we have been flooded over the past decade by a tremendous influx of illegal immigrants, many who have snuck in across our southern border. We have delayed for so long in securing our borders and enforcing legal immigration that the American people have lost confidence in the government to do what the Constitution requires.

In campaigning for the Senate, I promised to support a complete overhaul of our nation's immigration system. Since taking office in January 2005, I have made numerous speeches, supported, co-sponsored and offered my own legislation on this important issue.

I believe any reform must begin with strict border control and better enforcement of current laws. We must enforce the laws on the books before we can attempt to make any meaningful immigration reform. To be truly effective, we must also demand support from our border neighbors. We have a great trading partner to the south and a country



**I believe any reform must begin with strict border control and better enforcement of current laws. We must enforce the laws on the books before we can attempt to make any meaningful immigration reform.**

that shares many common interests. We have a country that we enjoy as

our neighbor. But we must insist that the government of Mexico be our partner in seeing to it that the border we share is secure and that those who come here are crossing legally.

We must also empower our state and local law enforcement agencies by giving them the authority to help the Department of Homeland Security enforce the nation's immigration laws, including the ability to deport illegal aliens who have been ordered to leave the country. I introduced a bill in last year's session to directly address this problem, called the *Homeland Security Act of 2005* (S. 1362), with Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Al.). This bill would add critically needed federal immigration detention facilities and bed space so that illegal aliens, once apprehended, are not released because of a lack of space.

There may be disagreement as we proceed with this important reform, but the most important thing is that we begin the debate. Any further delay in dealing with the difficult issues of comprehensive immigration reform will do great harm. We no longer have the luxury of waiting. Our states, our school systems, our justice systems, our hospitals and our people no longer have the luxury or the patience for us to delay any longer. ■



# AGC/AIA/ACEC Joint Legislative Reception

## Architects, Contractors and Engineers Working

**THE** concept was talked about for many years – every once in a while, the leadership of the organizations would hold a meeting, but never did the architects, engineers and contractors make it a priority to work together on legislative and governmental issues for the betterment of the design and construction industries.

That was *then*, this is **now**!

It's not often that architects, engineers and contractors can all be in the same room and come to an agreement on any given topic, but ever since the late 90s, the staffs and volunteer leadership of the American Institute of Architects of Georgia (AIA); American Council of Engineering Companies of Georgia (ACEC); and the Georgia Branch, AGC have teamed up to work through important issues affecting members of the three respective organizations, and the results have been tremendous! Our groups' efforts are improving Georgia's economy, and demonstrating the true power of the construction and design communities to the state's leaders. We are an economic engine that is building Georgians' quality of life!

After being an active participant in Georgia's General Assembly for more than 10 years now, Georgia Branch, AGC Governmental Affairs Director Mark Woodall believes a quote by Mark Twain is perfect to describe the legislative process. "No man is safe while the legislature is in session." Due to this environment, Georgia Branch, AGC is proud to have



*Rick Allen, R.W. Allen & Associates, Augusta catches up with hometown Representative Sue Burmeister.*



*Felicia Morris and Janet Drosky, Sign-A-Rama/Morrow enjoy the view into the beluga whale tank as one comes to greet them at the glass.*



*Bill Clark (second from left), an AIA member, networks with representatives of Cork-Howard Construction including, Gene Cork, Mark Williams and Brandon Cleghorn.*



*The Marks! (l-r) Mark Massee, Massee Builders, Fitzgerald; Speaker Pro-Tem Mark Burkhalter and Mark Woodall, Georgia Branch, AGC met up during the reception to talk about the issues of the day.*



*Pictured center is Representative Gerald Greene (Cuthbert) with local constituents Tony Pellicano, Pellicano Co., Inc., Albany; and Trey Anderson,*

# Together at the Georgia Aquarium



Ricky Powell, Powell & Sons Equipment; Sid Davis, F & W Construction Foundation Division and Justin Armstrong, Powell



Roger Huggins, (l) Rogers Construction Co. and Dave O'Haren, (r) Holder Construction Co. meet with Representative Richard Royal (Camilla) and Representative Johnny Floyd (Cordele).



Inside the Ballroom area of the Georgia Aquarium, guests were treated to a view into the Whale Shark tank.



Representative John Heard (Lawrenceville) discussed business with Randy Foster, Foster & Company G.C., Inc. and John Wyle, Rosser International and AIA President.

Young Leader members had a strong showing at the networking reception and the following are shown enjoying dinner; Shawn Holland and Brantley Madebach, White House Advisors and



Speaker of the House Glenn Richardson (second from left) attended the 6th Annual Building Georgia Legislative Reception, along with dozens of other members of the General Assembly. Pictured with Speaker Richardson are Mike Dunham, (l) Georgia Branch, AGC's EVP, Mark Woodall, AGC's Governmental Affairs Director and Tom Leslie, Executive Director of the ACEC. Photo provided by Equal Business Construction Review.

developed such a well-respected and widely-recognized partnership with AIA and ACEC. Having friends you can look to for input and trust to reach solutions on issues concerning each of our memberships is invaluable when you are working within the parameters of the any General Assembly.

As a way to broaden this formalized partnership and allow our members to benefit first-hand, the groups organized a networking event. No one knew how receptive the architects would be to mingling after-hours with the contractors and so forth, but the first-ever joint Building Georgia Legislative Reception was held in February of 2001, and it was a success. Event planners invited all members of the Georgia General Assembly, representatives from State Offices, liaisons from industry-related State Agencies, along with the members of the AIA, ACEC and AGC, and hoped everyone would get along! This first event drew more than 350 participants and now it is in its sixth year and growing strong.

The Sixth Annual Building Georgia Legislative Reception was held on February 7, 2006 at the new Georgia Aquarium. More than 500 people attended to get a look into the amazing new venue, but to also meet-up with industry colleagues and take the opportunity to discuss local issues with those State Representatives and State Senators that were in attendance. With 2006 being an election year for all state offices from Governor on down, members were able to meet with many elected officials who were present to celebrate the constant success of the design and construction industries. ■

## Engineers and Contractors: Building New Relationships



By Bruce A. Moulds, P.E.,  
Vice President, HNTB Corporation  
President, American Council of  
Engineering Companies/Georgia (ACEC/G)

**AS** a president of the association that represents the interests of consulting engineering firms throughout Georgia, my contact list contains a substantial number of names of public infrastructure representatives. It is these owners that the private engineer has courted for decades in search of civil, structural, geotechnical, M/E/P, and other design opportunities. Over the last ten years, this contact list has grown to include a number of contractors and exemplifies a shift in the market for engineering firms. This change has been brought about by a number of different factors, but most importantly, by implementation of new procurement methods for large infrastructure projects.

In the era of design-build, public-private partnerships, and other innovative delivery methods, the relationship between engineer and contractor has changed. Once predominantly on the side of the owner as its design representative, the engineer has moved to the other side of the table and now represents the contractor in true design-build collaboration. From an engineer's perspective, the creativity and innovation required in these new types of business ven-

tures is refreshing and in contrast with the sometimes procedural standardization of traditional design-bid-build. Conversely, the inherent risk, financial and otherwise, with design-build procurement is difficult for the engineer to accept under the traditional margin of engineering services. With any new relationship, this cultural shift is still evolving as the two professions learn to understand and adapt to the other's needs, processes, priorities and limitations.

In addition to a growing direct working relationship, the engineering community has been, and remains to be, a valuable ally to the construction industry. Engineering associations, such as the American Council of Engineering Companies, exert their increasing and considerable influence on politicians and agencies responsible for defining and funding major construction programs. Examples at the national level include ACEC's efforts on Capitol Hill to help secure introduction of the Clean Water Trust Act of 2005, authorizing \$37.5 billion for clean water infrastructure; \$2.8 billion in U.S. Department of Transportation funding for recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast; and pas-

sage of the \$286.2 billion SAFETEA-LU transportation infrastructure bill. Locally, ACEC Georgia is a partner with AGC on the annual Building Georgia Legislative Reception and the Georgia Partnership for Transportation Quality (GPTQ) initiatives; provides individual and PAC contributions to legislators that best support the built environment; provides input to the new GSFIC State Construction Manual and advice to other state agencies on construction code and environmental related matters; and promotes the development and enhancement of the overall engineering profession.

Perhaps once viewed as white-hatted, white-shirted antagonists, today's diverse consulting engineering professionals share many of the same goals and concerns as our professional counterparts in the construction industry. (Note: blue shirts are also now acceptable attire.) While we may have yet to fully appreciate our different cultures, business philosophies, and execution strategies, the partnership and alliances we create can only lead to the quicker attainment of our mutual goal – a strong investment in necessary, sustainable, and quality infrastructure. ■



## Architects and Contractors: Working Together



By John Wyle, AIA  
Vice President, Rosser International  
President, AIA Georgia

**ARCHITECTS** and contractors make an incredible team focused on the built environment. In Georgia, we have joined forces in the workplace, but we have also joined forces to address many local and state issues that affect our industry.

As the 2006 president of the Georgia Association of the American Institute of Architects, I have become ever more aware of the powerful voice that those of us who *build Georgia* really have. In 1999, AIA Georgia and the Georgia Branch, Associated General Contractors joined with the ACEC to create the Liaison Group, a close knit group of architects, general contractors and engineers who saw the need to combine efforts and talents to make a difference in our state. The result has been a continual dialogue of respect and education between our associations. In addition, we have been able to grapple with problems and issues that affect us all, while at the same time supporting each other's individual challenges.

Due in large part to the support of AGC, architects in Georgia saw the passage of our first Practice Act revision in twenty years. Without the collaboration of our contractor friends (specifically the support of the AGC officers and directors), the legislative efforts of AIA Georgia might have been a lost cause.

In 2001, we saw the first of our now annual AIA/AGC/ACEC *Building Georgia* Legislative Receptions. It only took one year to see the power and strength that we held together as a legislative force. Legislators, government officials, architects, contractors and engineers all joined for fellowship and a shared sense of commitment to state building proj-

ects. Last year, we were successful in passing tort reform that eliminated joint and several liabilities, a monumental accomplishment that serves us all.

In addition to state activities, I have seen this collaboration at the regional and national levels of our associations as well. Over the past several years, the national presidents of AIA and AGC have formed strong alliances in the work of our professions. It only makes sense that we work together in our associations as we do in the workplace.

I look forward to strengthening and increasing our joint efforts to better our state and our professions. ■

Over the past several years, the national presidents of AIA and AGC have formed strong alliances in the work of our professions. It only makes sense that we work together in our associations as we do in the workplace.



feature

# Georgia Contractor Licensure Definitions and Criteria:

## Which Category Best Fits Your Firm's Work?

**GEORGIA** Branch, AGC helped lead the fight for the passage of legislation enacting a Residential and General Contractor Licensing law for Georgia for many years. The final passage of SB 124 during the 2005 Session "sealed the deal," and licensure became a state law as of July 1, 2005. While the law will not be enforced until the summer of 2007, Georgia Branch, AGC is working to inform its members about the different application phases that are available between now and the ultimate licensure date. From January 1-June 30, 2006, all contractors who meet the board's criteria for examination exemption can submit their application for licensure. **This is a one time opportunity; at no other time in the future will an examination exemption application period be offered.** All contractors who are not eligible for examination exemption, but are eligible to take the examination and meet all other requirements, will be able

to begin submitting their applications for licensure as of July 1, 2006.

This article includes an "elevated" look at the definitions of the three types of licensure that are available and the criteria that are needed to qualify for each. This is a very brief overview and we encourage anyone looking for more details and even exemptions to the law, to visit our home page [www.agcga.org](http://www.agcga.org) and click on the Frequently Asked Questions link.

### Overview of Residential and Residential-Light Commercial

OCGA 43-41-2 (9): Residential Contractor means any contractor who may contract for, undertake to perform, submit a bid or a proposal or otherwise offer to perform, and perform any activity or work as a contractor requiring licensure under this chapter for a fixed price, commission, fee, wage, or other compensation or who undertakes any activity or work on his or her own behalf or for any person or business organization that is not licensed as a licensed residential contractor pursuant to this chapter where such activity or work falls into the category of residential-basic contractor or residential-light commercial contractor as defined in this Code section and where the total value of the work or activity or of the compensation to be received by the contractor for such activity

or work, whichever is the higher, exceeds \$2,500.00. The term 'residential contractor' shall include both a residential-basic contractor and a residential-light commercial contractor, except where otherwise expressly stated. The work or activity performed by a residential contractor may include within its scope any work requiring licensure under Chapter 14 of this title; provided, however, that any work contractually undertaken by a residential contractor in the nature of electrical contracting, plumbing, conditioned air contracting, low voltage contracting, or utility contracting which falls within the licensing requirements of Chapter 14 of this title may not be performed by the residential contractor but shall only be performed by a person who is duly licensed to perform such work under Chapter 14 of this title.

### Residential-Basic Contractor Category

OCGA 43-41-2 (10) Residential-basic contractor – means and encompasses a person who performs contractor work or activity relative to detached one-family and two-family residences and one-family townhouses not over three stories in height and their accessory buildings and structures.

### Education and/or Experience Requirements

A person shall be eligible for licensure as a residential-basic contractor by the residential contractor



division if the person:

- 1) Has at least two years of proven experience working as or in the employment of a residential contractor, predominantly in the residential-basic category, or other proven experience deemed substantially similar by the division; **and**
- 2) Has had significant responsibility for the successful performance and completion of at least two projects falling within the residential-basic category in the two years immediately preceding application.

#### **Financial and Insurance Requirements:**

- Applicants must have their bank submit a credit reference form
- Applicants must provide copy of an insurance certificate showing proof of workers compensation insurance as required by Georgia law and liability insurance in a minimum amount of \$300,000
- There are no individual project size limitations.

### **Residential-Light Commercial Contractor Category**

OCGA 43-41-2 (9) Residential-light commercial contractor – means and encompasses a person who performs any contractor work or activity performed by a residential-basic contractor and, additionally, shall include such contractor work or activity related to multifamily and multiuse light commercial buildings and structures, and their related accessory buildings and structures, which are less than four stories in height; less than 25,000 square feet in aggregate interior floor space, except as otherwise provided in this chapter; and are constructed of wood or light gauge metal frame, brick veneer, prefabricated, or manufactured type of construction; or are preengineered steel buildings not exceeding 50,000 square feet of inte-

rior floor space; provided that such buildings or structures are not of the type of building or structure that would constitute a special hazard to property or to life and safety of persons as defined in subparagraphs (A), (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), (G.1), (H), (I), and (J) and subparagraph (B), as it applies to a building of four or more stories, of paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of Code Section 25-2-13. ***Please see our Frequently Asked Questions through [www.agcga.org](http://www.agcga.org) and then Group C questions for a link to 25-2-13.***

#### **Education and/or Experience Requirements**

Applicants can qualify to practice as a Residential Light-Commercial Contractor either through formal education or through practical experience, or a combination of the two.

*The options are as follows:*

- 1) Has received a baccalaureate degree from an accredited four-year college or university in the field of engineering, architecture, construction management, building construction, or other field acceptable to the division and has at least one year of proven experience working as or in the employment of a residential contractor, general contractor, or other proven experience deemed substantially similar by the division; **or**
- 2) Has a combination acceptable to the division of academic credits from any accredited college-level courses and proven practical experience working as or in the employment of a residential contractor, general contractor, or other proven experience deemed substantially similar by the division equaling at least four years in the aggregate. For purposes of this subparagraph, all university, college, junior college, or community college-level courses shall be considered accredited college-level

courses; **or**

- 3) Has a total of at least four years of proven active experience working in a construction industry related field, at least two of which shall have been as or in the employment of a residential contractor, or other proven experience deemed acceptable by the division; **and**
- 4) The applicant must have had significant responsibility for the successful performance and completion of at least two projects falling within the residence-light commercial category in the four years immediately preceding application.

#### **Financial and Insurance Requirements:**

- Applicants must have their bank submit a credit reference form
- Applicants must provide copy of an insurance certificate showing proof of workers compensation insurance as required by Georgia law and liability insurance in a minimum amount of \$500,000
- There are no individual project size limitation

### **General Contractor Category**

OCGA 43-41-2 (5) General contractor - means a contractor whose services are unlimited as to the type of work which he or she may do and who may contract for, undertake to perform, submit a bid or a proposal or otherwise offer to perform, and perform any activity or work as a contractor requiring licensure under this chapter including within its scope any work requiring licensure under Chapter 14 of this title; provided, however, that any work contractually undertaken by a general contractor in the nature of electrical contracting, plumbing, conditioned air contracting, low voltage contracting, or utility contracting which falls within the licensing requirements of Chapter 14 of this title may not be



performed by the general contractor but shall only be performed by a person who is duly licensed to perform such work under Chapter 14 of this title. The construction of all private, commercial, institutional, industrial, public, and other buildings and structures under contract with or engagement directly by an owner shall be undertaken by a general contractor, except as otherwise expressly set forth in or excluded from operation of this chapter.

#### Education and/or Experience Requirements

Applicants can qualify to practice as a general contractor either through formal education or through practical experience, or a combination of the two.

*The options are as follows:*

- 1) Four-year degree from an accredited college or university in engineering, architecture, construction

management, building construction or related-field acceptable to the Division and one year of work experience as or in the employment of a general contractor or other proven experience deemed substantially similar by the Division; **or**

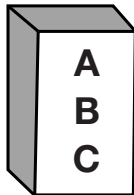
- 2) Combination of college-level academic accredited courses and proven practical experience working as or in the employment of a general contractor or other proven experience deemed substantially similar by the Division equaling at least four years in the aggregate; **or**

- 3) Total of at least four years of proven active experience working in a construction industry related field, at least two of which shall have been as or in the employment of a general contractor, or other proven experience deemed

acceptable by the Division and at least one of which shall have been in or relating to administration, marketing, accounting, estimating, drafting, engineering, supervision, or project management, or functions deemed substantially similar by the Division.

#### Financial and Insurance Requirements:

- Applicants must have a minimum net worth of \$150,000
- Applicants must have a Line of Credit minimum of \$50,000
- Applicants must have a CPA submit a reference letter/form attesting to either a review or audit
- Applicants must provide copy of an insurance certificate showing proof of workers compensation insurance as required by Georgia law and liability insurance in a minimum amount of \$500,000
- There are no individual project size limitations. ■



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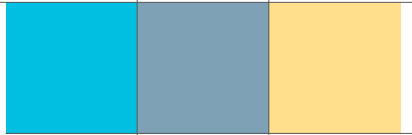


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feature

# Lack of Training: Biggest Hindrance to Software Success

By Randy Collins,  
President, The Strategies Group



**I**n an industry crazed with training, certifications and continuing education, contractors often fall short with regard to internal processes, including software. Contracting firms may be good at allocating dollars to maintain professional licenses or keeping up with the latest OSHA requirements, but they often overlook the need to train accounting and estimating personnel. The software these professionals use can easily be considered the backbone of a contractor's business. By realizing the importance of training these employees and by understanding how to implement an appropriate training program, firm owners can reap the rewards of more effective employees and a more profitable bottom line.

## Disproving the myths

One of the biggest mistakes owners

make is not providing adequate training for accounting, estimating or CAD software systems. This lack of training often occurs due to misconceptions about the software. For instance, many people mistakenly believe training isn't necessary to operate the software. Approximately 30 percent of the companies evaluating software ask if training on a new system is an option. The answer is (and always should be) a resounding "No!"

Some companies may train employees when a new software system is installed, but fail to train new employees when turnover occurs, believing that current employees can adequately train new hires. While this appears to be a frugal option, it most often fails. The people who are originally trained in the software may only remember 70 percent of its functions. These current employees train new users based on what they

remember about the program, and over time, many of the software's functions and features get lost and unused.

Similarly, contracting firms often provide initial training when the software is installed but then offer no new training on the latest features in the new version. Again, in this situation, the user is not operating the software to its full potential and is not entirely effective. However, if contractors comprehended the dollars that are missed due to inadequate training, they would soon realize that training easily pays for itself.

## Looking at the numbers

Though a training class can seem expensive when compared to the amount that can be saved by increased efficiency, the cost is negligible. For example, consider the case of an estimator who has received inadequate training for his estimating software. If this estimator's salary is \$80,000 per year, by the time benefits are included, the company may be spending close to \$100,000 per year on this employee. At 40 hours a week for 50 weeks a year, the estimator earns approximately \$50 per hour.

If the estimator attends a \$400 training class, he can increase his efficiency by a conservative estimate of 20 percent. The company gains roughly 300 hours – or \$15,000 – of his time throughout the year. Plus, the estimator can use his extra time throughout the year to work on culling new business for the firm. The cost of the class quickly pays for itself.

When the numbers are considered, training becomes a no-brainer. And once firm owners make a commitment to providing adequate software training, they must also be able to implement an effective training program. To get the most out of a train-

ing program, firm owners need to ask the following questions:

- When should I provide training for my staff?
- Who should provide the training?
- How should the training be delivered?
- How much training is necessary?

### Training success factors

Initial training for staff should always be performed as close to the "go live" date as possible. Training completed too early in the implementation process will be forgotten by staff members who must keep the company's current system running while implementing the new and improved solution.

A firm that knows not only the software, but also the challenges of the specific industry, will be the best training provider. Training that involves only an explanation of which buttons to push without an understanding of why they are being pushed has proved very limited in its success.

Training can be delivered in several different ways. Not every method of delivery is right for every training need. The least expensive method is remote, Web-based training. This training is valuable when a small amount of information needs to be delivered to the end-user. The next most cost-effective method of training is classroom-style training.

This method gives students hands-on experience during the session, as well as the ability to interact with others learning the same thing. Classroom training is usually a fairly effective way to communicate basic concepts to the end-user. Finally, the most expensive method of training is on-site training, which consists of an instructor dedicated to training your staff at your location. However, the obvious benefits are individual attention to your staff and the ability to use your data, both of which increase retention of the concepts taught. New software implementations should employ a variety of these techniques to maximize your training investment.

### How much training is necessary?

The necessary amount of training ranges dramatically, depending on the type of system purchased and the ability of the staff to grasp the concepts being taught. The best way to plan for this expense is to prepare a training plan jointly with the software provider. This training plan should take into consideration the staff's knowledge of basic industry concepts and willingness to learn new concepts, location of classroom training and costs associated with travel, cycle time of the implementation (can the "go live" date be altered to allow on-site training with converted data?), and the company's

computing and training space, if on-site training is necessary. With this plan in place, training budgets should be fairly accurate.

### Find a long-term partner

As contracting firms plan for software-training programs, it is vital that they partner with service providers who are interested in a long-term relationship. In order to manage the long-term needs of the client, many innovative service providers are allowing companies to register a position, not a person, for the company's training needs. For example, if the controller leaves the company, the new controller may receive training for free. This type of plan allows contracting firms to have easy and economical access to training throughout the life of the software.

Firm owners must realize that purchasing software is just the beginning of the financial commitment to its use. When making such a critical investment, it is simply foolish to think it's a one-time purchase without any ongoing investment. Firms should budget for software training when preparing annual budgets and then follow through by providing the appropriate training – training that will help them become the most effective employees that they can be. ■

**About the author:** Randy Collins is President of The Strategies Group, a leading provider of software and hardware business solutions for the construction, real estate and A/E industries. Collins applies his diverse background in commercial and residential construction lending as well as serving as a CFO of a residential architectural firm to members of the A/E/C industry through The Strategies Group. Collins can be reached at 678-684-1170 or [rc@strategiesgroup.com](mailto:rc@strategiesgroup.com).



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