

under

CONSTRUCTION

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**Safety First,
ALWAYS:**

**OVCEC'S Collective
Commitment**

NWiR

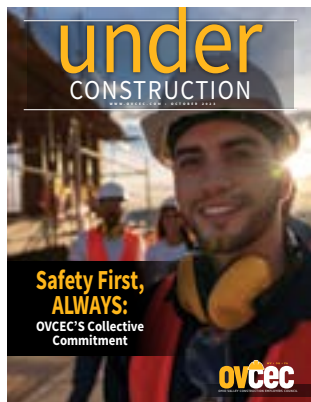
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Cover Story

Safety First,
ALWAYS:
OVCEC'S Collective
Commitment

MISSION

The Ohio Valley Construction Employers Council is the unified voice of best-in-class contractors, dedicated to providing quality and value, using the most professional, highly skilled workforce.

VISION

Elevating the construction industry to the highest standards, providing next generation opportunities, and building a more prosperous community.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Eric Starkowicz

Welcome to the October issue of *Under Construction Magazine*, where we explore the critical theme of “Safety First, ALWAYS: OVCEC’s Collective Commitment.”

As the Executive Director of the Ohio Valley Construction Employers Council (OVCEC), I am honored to address you in this special edition dedicated to the

core principle that underpins everything we do – construction safety.

At OVCEC, we firmly believe that safety is the one aspect of the construction industry where competition should have no place. The safety and well-being of every worker are non-negotiable priorities. Each day, we strive to ensure that every worker returns home safely to their loved ones. It is not a goal; it is an unshakable commitment, and we are united in this purpose.

In this issue, we delve into the essential aspects of building a culture of safety within the construction industry. This culture is not built on slogans or mere compliance, but on the collective belief that every individual’s well-being matters. Preventing accidents is a shared responsibility, and in this magazine, you’ll find invaluable tips and strategies for minimizing risks on construction

sites. We believe that through education and training, we can empower our members with the tools they need to protect their workforce. Together, we can ensure safer workplaces for everyone.

Safety is not just a guideline; it is a way of life, a shared philosophy that transcends organizational boundaries. OVCEC brings together the best minds in the industry to foster this collective commitment to safety. Our members, partners, and stakeholders work hand in hand to create a safer future for our industry.

In closing, we should do our best to keep at the front of our minds that our commitment to safety is not just about protecting the workforce; it’s about safeguarding families, dreams, and communities. Every decision we make in the construction industry should begin and end with the safety of our workers. We believe that together, we can achieve a future where every construction site is synonymous with safety.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to this cause, and for joining OVCEC in making safety our top priority. I invite you to read, share, and engage with this issue of *Under Construction Magazine*, as we collectively build a safer, more secure construction industry.

Safety First, ALWAYS!



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



West Virginia Tax Division Publishes New Personal Property Tax Rebate Guidance

As you will recall, Governor Justice signed House Bill 2526 into law on March 7, 2023. This legislation reduced the personal income tax in tax year 2023 by an average of 21.25%. The bill also provides for several refundable tax credits for the timely payment of property taxes. One of the most discussed aspects of this year's tax reform is the motor vehicle property tax adjustment credit. Beginning January 1, 2024, taxpayers are eligible to claim this credit on their 2024 West Virginia personal income tax return, filed in 2025, for all timely paid property taxes made on vehicles in the 2024

calendar year. The first motor vehicle property tax payment that will be eligible to qualify for the credit is the payment made for the second half of the 2023 property tax year and it must be timely paid between January 1 - April 1, 2024. Keep in mind that this credit does not apply to any property taxes paid during calendar year 2023. For more information about these credits and other aspects of recent tax reform, visit <https://tax.wv.gov/Individuals/Pages/PersonalIncomeTaxReductionBill.aspx> for updated guidance from the West Virginia Tax Division.

WV Governor Signs Infrastructure Bills

Governor Jim Justice recently signed numerous infrastructure funding bills into law. His signature now makes available surplus appropriations of \$150 million to the Division of Highways for secondary road paving and core maintenance equipment; \$125 million (for a total of \$250 million) to the General Services Division for construction of a consolidated state laboratory complex; \$45 million to Marshall University for the construction of a cybersecurity academic center building; \$85 million to the Governor's Civil Contingency Fund; \$25 million to the Department of Economic Development for the construction of an aviation maintenance technology training facility to benefit Pierpont Community and Technical College; \$3 million to the Division of Arts, Culture and History for the construction of Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations at the Culture Center; and \$4 million to the Division of Forestry for the purchase of new wildfire suppression equipment.



OSHA's Revised Recordkeeping Rule to Go into Effect January 1, 2024

OSHA has finalized its revised rule on submitting annual injury and illness data.

Starting on January 1, the agency will require establishments with 100 or more employees in certain high-hazard industries to submit data from Forms 300 and 301 – in addition to Form 300A – by March 2 each year.

OSHA Wants to Revise PPE Fit Requirements for Construction Workers

The “failure” of standard-sized personal protective equipment to fit smaller construction workers – especially women – has prompted OSHA to try to align the industry’s PPE fit requirements with other industries’ standards.

According to a proposed rule, OSHA’s construction standards – unlike its general industry and maritime PPE standards – don’t require PPE to fit the wearer. This, as well as “problems with access to properly fitting PPE, have long been safety and health concerns in the construction industry,” the agency says in a July 19 press release. “The proposed rule clarifies the existing requirement, and OSHA does not expect the change will increase employers’ costs or compliance burdens.”



“PPE must fit properly to provide adequate protection to employees. Improperly fitting PPE may fail to provide any protection to an employee, present additional hazards or discourage employees from using such equipment in the workplace.”

“If personal protective equipment does not fit properly, an employee may be unprotected or dangerously exposed to hazards and face tragic consequences,” OSHA administrator Doug Parker said in the release. “We look forward to hearing from stakeholders on this important issue as we work together to ensure that construction workers of all genders and sizes are fitted properly with safety gear.”



Strategies for Building a Culture of Safety

Today, safety is such a growing part of our field and integral part of our success. We see the value of consistently safe work, as it applies to that success. It's been said the most successful construction companies in the world all know one thing: The fastest way to go out of business is lack of a good safety program.

Safety First

According to Construction Dive, the best of the best in construction always place safety as a high priority. Some may believe that a company profits and prospers into being able to spend the time and money it takes to have a successful safety program, but it's the other way around.

When you invest in safety first, your employees know you care about them, and they know you won't tolerate unsafe practices. When safety managers test-fit workers for the right size harness, and hand them one that is not the cheapest on the shelf, but the one best-suited for their work, and give them the training and knowledge to be successful in safety, quality, and production, then your front-line workers are advocates for safety and produce high-quality work.

Safety starts at the top and although you have safety meetings and preach safety, if you go to jobsites and ignore safety violations while focusing solely on production, then you leave the safety issues that need fixed to become an issue and risk to your workers and your company. From basics such as getting workers to wear safety glasses up to complex safety issues, success starts when everyone is following the leader.

What Matters Most

In a 2022 survey of 263 safety industry professionals conducted by a third party organization sponsored by Red Wing For Business, insights were gathered from a diverse group of safety professionals regarding their major challenges, positive industry changes, and areas requiring improvement.

One of the major trends found is that more organizations are realizing the value of a strong safety culture. To quote one government survey respondent, “Safety has seen a renaissance, evident in growing options and features for personal protective equipment.”

Top Six Safety Challenges

No matter how well-managed the job site is, there are always areas for improvement. Among those surveyed, employees taking shortcuts, keeping them engaged in safety, and the skilled labor shortage top the list of the largest hurdles safety professionals face.

- Employees taking short cuts or ignoring rules
- Keeping employees engaged in safety
- Skilled labor shortage
- Budget constraints
- Employees not wearing (or not properly wearing) PPE
- Not enough upper management access/support

Importance of Construction Safety

In a 2023 article published by SafetyCulture, a key component of construction safety is described as compliance with the safety and health regulations of the region. It goes on to say, however, that while the initial reason for improving construction safety may be to comply with workplace safety and health regulations, there are many other benefits to prioritizing construction safety, such as lessening the number of safety hazards and incidents. This is vital because safety hazards and incidents weaken the company’s reputation among industry professionals and regulatory agencies and can incur huge financial costs for the company.

The article goes on to explain another benefit of prioritizing construction safety is helping strengthen the trust between workers, construction safety managers, and company executives. This higher level of trust leads to better communication across the company, resulting in fewer misunderstandings and clashes. Construction safety programs can also increase worker productivity and efficiency. Workers are more equipped to do their jobs effectively and safely when they are given adequate training and protection by the company.

“The biggest improvement is that leadership is more understanding that safe work isn’t something extra ... it’s just the way things have to be done. The cultural shift is a big deal.”

— Red Wing For Business sponsored survey

“Biggest improvement: Recognition that safety and health are key business drivers and contribute to not only an injury-free workplace but also robust financial results.”

— Vice President – HSSE/Energy



Tips for Promoting Worker Safety and Worker Well-Being

How safe your employees feel at work matters. So building a safety culture in your business is important. If an employee doesn't feel safe, their families might encourage them to find a different job. We need to inspire, educate, and build relationships with all employees and field workers in relation to a commitment to safety.

1. Put Safety First

Let your teams know you will not sacrifice safety for quality or production. Focus on the value of consistently safe work, as it applies to success. Not only does construction site safety protect your workers and decrease the risk of injuries to the public, but it also reduces the risk of work-related injuries and accidents.

In addition, safety is a vital part of finishing your project on or under budget. Downtime is costly, as is finding replacement workers when someone cannot do their job after an accident. Worker's compensation claims and lawsuits can drive up your insurance costs. Focusing on safety helps keep your costs lower.

2. Ten General Safety Rules

1. Create a culture of safety
2. Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
3. Use the right equipment for the right task
4. Do pre-checks on tools and equipment
5. Have an emergency response plan
6. Limit crowd sizes in work areas
7. Keep work areas tidy and clear
8. Be mindful and follow signs
9. Use best practices for safety
10. Keep a communication device on hand

3. Make Your Safety Meetings More Engaging

- Avoid day-long sessions. Cover the information you need to. Then get back to work.
- Get employee feedback. Stay away from reading off of slides. Ask your employees questions. See what they know. They usually know when something on the job isn't quite right. Make time in your meeting to find out if they have questions or suggestions.
- Have reliable workers share experiences. Hearing from an older co-worker can often help younger employees.
- Recognize employees. Look for and find employees following safety rules. Use them as examples in your safety meetings.
- Include management. When managers or supervisors sit in or lead a meeting employees see that the whole company values safety.

4. Safety Training Benefits

Ultimately, your team will need some training. Safety training program benefits can include:

1. Promoting safety culture through peer training
2. Trainers can tailor the training topics based on specific needs
3. Training emphasizes the value of safety and health to workers, including young workers
4. Developing and implementing plans to reduce the probability and/or severity of injuries, illnesses, losses, or environmental damage from potential exposures, accidents, and loss events
5. Developing methods that integrate safety performance into the goals, operations, and productivity of the organization and management
6. Measuring safety performance and human behavior
7. Outreach training can be available in languages other than English
8. Trainers can focus on safety leadership and providing solutions, not pointing fingers
9. Anticipate, identify, and evaluate hazardous conditions and practices from experience, historical data, and other information sources

“When looking for a safety training program, a company should consult with an outside team that has competency from formal training in various disciplines such as industrial toxicology, design of engineering hazard controls, fire protection, safety and health program management, accident and incident investigation and analysis, product safety, construction safety, as well as education and training methods for the adult learner. The EHSS team has the experience to customize a program specifically for any construction company’s needs.”

– Matt Koon, President,
Environmental Health & Safety Solutions



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Local Company Offers Construction Medical and Safety Services With National Impact

For over 33 years, NCI-Nursing Corps has specialized in construction medical services, including safety-related offerings within the construction industry. The company is currently working in 26 states and has performed work in every state except Alaska.

Presently, the business has over 60 workplace medical stations across the country providing primarily workplace medical testing services such as drug-free workplace programs, respirator qualifications, wellness programs, and case management to numerous clients.

Director of Operations, Andy Powell explained that injury treatment and medical testing isn't the only tool they have adapted to meet the changing needs of the construction industry. "The nature of the construction industry is that many employees work long hours and work away from home. They are less likely to take care of themselves physically and the stress of the hours and solitude can lead to mental anxiety. Suicide in the construction industry is four times greater

than the national average, so now we have our nurses take suicide awareness training to help recognize any potential issues," says Powell.

Also, over the years the company has developed wellness programs that have identified numerous previously undiagnosed diabetics, those with blood pressure issues, and other health concerns. Any of these non-work related health issues can be a serious workplace risk. Wellness programs can cost next to zero or can be very elaborate. "It's simple math, healthy employees are less likely to get injured," added Powell.

It all started in 1990 when Babcock & Wilcox (B&W) and American Electric Power (AEP) hired what later became Nursing Corps to provide on-site medical services at the AEP Cardinal Plant to care for its workforce and reduce offsite medicals.

The experiment proved so successful they asked founders John and Judy Schmidt to arrange the same coverage at other projects

throughout the AEP system. Soon other contractors and owners realized the benefit of workplace medical services, including the reduction of OSHA recordables, lost time injury rates, and reduced workers' compensation costs; and the list of clients, locations, and services grew.

"We've grown and expanded so much over the years and are also really proud to say that we have worked uninterrupted for AEP since day one," said NCI-Nursing Corps Director of Operations, Andy Powell.

In addition, NCI-Nursing Corps works on several multi-billion-dollar projects nationwide. This includes numerous megasites like EV battery plants and Data Centers. According to Powell, "We do have large, high-profile, nationwide projects, but we are also fully committed to providing the same quality services to our local contractors and employers, unions, and labor-management organizations."

In fact, the medical services business performs thousands of drug tests and educates thousands of union members on substance abuse throughout the local area. Powell continues, "Contractors and employers, whether locally or across the U.S., have extensive responsibility for medical aspects of the workplace. That's the space NCI occupies. Given the special needs and demands of the construction industry such as respirator qualifications and fits, urine drug testing, breath alcohol testing, blood testing, etc., NCI understands the construction industry and its medical needs. We are a comprehensive provider of all things medical to construction and industry."

Over the years, hospitals, clinics, and other smaller companies have entered the medical services area for the construction industry, but very few remain, even less after COVID. The hospitals and clinics that do remain have different incentives than NCI Nursing Corps.

"Our success depends upon meeting our clients' needs and limiting off-site medicals and OSHA recordables. Our business model is simple, we bill an hourly rate and then for any ancillary services. We do not have any vested interest or financial incentives in ordering additional expensive medical testing like MRIs, X-rays, etc., like hospitals and clinics," explains Powell.

With their longevity, NCI-Nursing Corps has learned the key to success is twofold. They strive to continuously sharpen their focus on the specific needs of clients and projects, while providing a highly qualified office support staff. The core management members have over two decades each of construction medical experience and most of NCI's corporate office staff have 16+ years' experience. As an additional source of pride and stability, the business is founded by family and remains family owned.

Says Powell, "Our nurse manager, Mindy Vargo, is a Certified Occupational Health Nurse (COHN) and has decades of experience. Our physicians are certified Medical Review Officer (MRO), and the physician that we primarily use for OSHA recordability written opinions is Board Certified." Many field employees have worked with the company for over 10 years.

"It's simple math, healthy employees are less likely to get injured."

— Andy Powell



"We also know every project is unique and requires a flexible medical provider ready to meet the special challenges of construction. Anybody can hire a nurse – we deliver a nurse with expert medical administrators and back-office support at a price much lower than expected."

When asked about the highlights of working in this industry, Powell responded, "We are hired to treat injuries and help manage our clients' OSHA recordability rate, and every recordable we help save is a huge win and very satisfying. I have sat in meetings with owners and insurance companies and have heard of the millions of dollars they estimated we have saved on projects. And these are highlights of our success. However, as cliché as this may sound, the biggest highlights are the lives we have saved on job sites and are by far the most fulfilling. Whether it be the employee who goes down with a heart attack, or the employee we stabilized after a fall or the employee we helped identify as having cardiac issues or even the employee we trained in CPR and they saved someone else."

Who would have ever thought 33 years ago that a small business startup in Wintersville, Ohio, would work on billion-dollar projects and for some of the largest companies in the world including Microsoft, Amazon, American Electric Power, Southern Company, Chewy, Marathon, Hyundai, and even would have a job on the back side of the Daytona Speedway.

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SAFE +
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Week August 7-13, 2023



OVCEC participated in Safe + Sound Week from August 7-13. The campaign offered resources on mental health and well-being. We asked our members to challenge their colleagues, suppliers, and partner organizations to be #SafeAndSoundAtWork.



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 2024

Tuesday,
February 20,
2024

**Place:**

Oglebay Resort - West Ballroom

465 Lodge Drive
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Times:**

7 a.m. Coffee & Conversation
7:45 a.m. Breakfast Buffet
8:15 a.m. Presentations/Guest Speakers
10 a.m. Program Concludes

Event:

Join us for a morning of networking and breakfast as we provide updates from the OVCEC and host a panel of guest presenters (to be announced soon).

This is an event you won't want to miss!

Registration:
\$40 per person

To Register:**Email:**

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OVCEC Steak Fry

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the OVCEC Steak Fry on August 24, at Oglebay Park! From the sizzle of the grill to the laughter of friends, it was an event to remember. It was wonderful to see everyone come together for the event. We appreciate the tremendous support of our sponsors and the many companies who donated raffle prizes.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



JD&E Construction Services performed structural repairs at existing Fire Stations No. 2 (North Wheeling) and No. 10 (Edgwood) in Wheeling. All work was completed on time and within the project budget.

At Station No. 2, work included selective demolition, temporary shoring, and protection of existing utilities; installation of new structural concrete topping of existing garage floor precast deck system; complete removal and replacement of the existing exterior concrete entrance apron; installation of remedial wind/seismic wall-tie system at east and west walls; and the removal and replacement of suspended ceiling systems to allow access for wall tie-back work.

At Station No. 10, work included demolition of ambulance bay concrete and structural steel, and protection of existing utilities; installation of structural steel framing, decking, and new concrete floor; and the complete removal and replacement of the existing exterior concrete entrance apron.

JD&E would like to thank the City of Wheeling, **M&G Architects & Engineers**, and Fire Department personnel for their help and coordination efforts to allow for continued use of the fire stations during the construction process.



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Dick Building Company was founded in 2009 by Alexander and Douglas Dick to continue to serve a range of mostly private clients in the commercial, institutional and health care markets. We combine the experience and resources of a large and tenured construction firm with the commitment and customer service of a family owned and operated business.

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WITTS Services is a custom welding and fabrication shop owned and operated by David Raveaux. We are conveniently located at 553 County Highway 59, Bergholz, OH 43908, and centrally located between Amsterdam, Bergholz, and East Springfield.

WITTS Services offers custom and/or pre-designed welded fabrications. Our customer base consists of residential, retail, commercial, construction manufacturing, and agricultural. WITTS Services offers a wide range of fabrication solutions designed to meet your needs, whether you are looking to improve product flow or just need a custom piece of art. Everything is made and purchased in the tri-state area.

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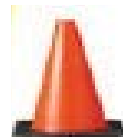
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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



James White Construction Co. Bank Street Water Main Improvements

Wheeling City Council has authorized the city manager to hire **James White Construction Co.** of Weirton for water main improvements along Bank Street. The project is being paid for with funds from the city's 2021-A bonds. James White Construction was determined to be the lowest and best bidder for the project.



Waterfront Hall in Wheeling

Waterfront Hall is one of Wheeling's many historic buildings. **Cattrell Companies Inc.** renovated and preserved the three-story building which began opening in phases in early August.



Market Street Parking Garage Keeps Inching Skyward in Downtown Wheeling

Crews from **Carl Walker Construction** have been on the site of the new downtown parking structure for several months since ground was first broken on the \$12.3 million project in April of last year. The six-deck parking garage at the corner of Market and 11th Streets is expected to be completed by the end of this year.



Construction Commences on \$8.9 Million Marshall County Health Department Facility

The Marshall County Health Department is getting a new building. The general contractor, **Grae-Con Construction**, is already three weeks ahead of schedule on the \$8.9 million project. The old health department building and former Journal office were demolished to make way for the new building.



JD&E Construction Services has made several upgrades at WesBanco Arena to enhance the fan experience, including a larger kitchen and a new suite on the main floor.



McKinley Architecture and Engineering Earns National Recognition

While the work of **McKinley Architecture and Engineering** is recognized locally in its design of buildings, the firm has now received national recognition by earning the Professional Services Management Journal Resource's 2023 Circle of Excellence Award and their 2023 A/E/C Employer of Choice Award.



McColloch's Leap Monument in Wheeling Restored, Relocated

Thanks to crews from **Savage Construction** and **Top Notch Landscaping**, the McCulloch's Leap Monument has a fresh new look and a much more accessible home atop Wheeling Hill, not far from the spot where it stood marking the historic National Road site for more than a century.



Grae-Con Construction on Track at Steubenville High School's STEM Center

A multi-million-dollar investment in education in Steubenville has seen great progress in recent months. The construction of Steubenville High School's \$20 million STEM Center is right on schedule.



Kalkreuth Roofing & Sheet Metal, Inc. held their Vendor Invitational and Amateur Golf Championship this summer at Oglebay. The proceeds from these events are donated to Easterseals Rehabilitation Center WV. Over \$320,000 has been raised since the first tournament in 2015!



Kalkreuth Roofing & Sheet Metal, Inc.

This project involves the development of the new headquarters for the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology - a non-profit institution known for creating educational resources and hosting live events and digital media programs.

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