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# CONSTRUCTION

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OHIO VALLEY CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS COUNCIL

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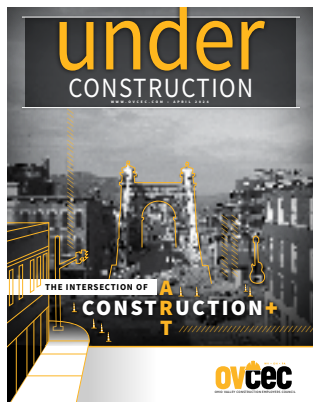
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## Cover Story

Ohio Valley  
Construction Employers Council  
The Intersection of  
Construction + Art

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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

I am thrilled to welcome you to the April edition of *Under Construction* magazine, where we explore the captivating theme of “The Intersection of Construction + Art.” As Executive Director, it gives me great pleasure to witness the culmination of the dedicated efforts of our team and contributors in bringing this issue to fruition.

This edition holds a special significance for me personally, as it delves into the symbiotic relationship between construction and art. From my earliest years, I found myself drawn to the captivating world of art and architecture. As a child, I spent countless hours sketching buildings, captivated by the marriage of form and function. Little did I know then that my passion for art would pave the way for a career in the construction industry, where creativity and craftsmanship converge in remarkable ways.

Throughout history, art and construction have been inseparable companions, each influencing and enriching the other. The structures we build are not merely utilitarian; they are expressions of human ingenuity and vision. From the grandeur of ancient monuments to the sleek lines of modern skyscrapers, architecture is a testament to our highest aspirations and it enriches our lives in ways we may not always realize.

Here in the Ohio Valley, we are fortunate to be surrounded by a wealth of breathtaking art and architecture, much of which has been brought to life by the talented members of OVCEC. From bridges to sculptures, our region is a testament to the skill and dedication of those who work in the construction industry. It is a privilege to showcase some of these remarkable projects in this issue, celebrating the beauty and diversity of our built environment.

As you peruse the pages of this magazine, I hope you will be inspired by the stories behind the structures that shape our world. Whether you are an architect, a builder, an artist, or simply someone who appreciates beauty in all its forms, I trust that you will find something to captivate and inspire you.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of *Under Construction* magazine. Your passion and expertise have brought these pages to life, and I am immensely grateful for your dedication.

In closing, I invite you to join me in celebrating the intersection of construction and art, a rich tapestry woven from the threads of creativity, innovation, and craftsmanship. Together, let us continue to build a world where beauty and utility go hand in hand.



# THE LIT RAL INTERSECTION OF ART TO ARCHITECTURE

*There is literally an intersection of art and construction happening in the Valley right now* – and it’s at Main and 10th in downtown Wheeling. Buildings on three corners are being repurposed and redesigned and a new space will be created on the fourth.

It is part of a resurgence of art sensibilities being built into the design of new construction projects including this specific intersection. According to Mike and Doug Carl, co-owners of the newly renovated Bridge Tavern and Grille, it is “art to architecture.” It all ties in aesthetically and brings a creative element of art as well as a historical perspective to all of the new construction.

“This intersection is going to be beautiful when it’s all done because all the buildings are being restored,” explained Mike Carl. “We’ve just finished the culmination of three years of indoor and outdoor updates matching art with architecture and revitalization.”






“Across the street, The Vineyard Church just bought the old Children’s Museum to become a daycare center with church offices. It was originally built in the late 1800’s. But there was an Art Deco remodel in the 30’s and that’s why it looks newer than it is. The plan is to keep the Deco look, do some resurfacing of the façade, and then put some LED lighting around the top. McKinley is the architect and Grae-Con is the lead contractor.”

On another corner across from the Bridge Tavern, owner CJ Kaiser will be remodeling the historic building at the corner of 1001 Main Street. This iconic location housed many businesses over the years, including Bill’s Hamburger Grill.

Carl continued, “When the hotel across the street is demolished, it will be the first time in over a hundred years you’ll be able to see the Suspension Bridge in total from the Wheeling side, not just the Island side. You’ll have an undisturbed view of the bridge in the evenings. And we are excited to see what gets built there as the welcoming structure for the city.”




Bridge Tavern and Grille



The outside of the Bridge Tavern also received major attention in the form of a guitar-shaped LED sign, and a mural paying tribute to Wheeling's musical past painted by Drew Gonchoff.

Carl has found combining architectural changes with art influences creates a better ambient and aesthetic experience for his grille. He said, "It was important to us to open up the site line and lightplay through windows by expanding the reach of the windows vertically and horizontally. We kept exposed brickwork, and exposed columns – original structural columns, we decided to leave them open with the original rivets. We worked with Cattrell as the lead contractor and architect, Wendy Scatterday."



According to a March 2024 article in the *Wheeling Intelligencer*, "These updates were planned carefully by the brothers, who wanted the final product of the restaurant to serve as a hub for activity in their corner of Wheeling. With the Capitol Theatre across from their building, Doug Carl explained they wanted their restaurant to reflect the entertainment present in the city."

Inside, a mural painted by local artist Vondell Bell depicting the Suspension Bridge now stretches across one of the walls of the restaurant. *The Intelligencer* article continued, "We contacted Bell to create the mural, then attached a piece of the original steel cable from the Suspension Bridge, so it all blends in and gives it some context," explained Doug Carl. "We added the cable to the mural because we think it highlights that piece of history right across from us."

Mike Carl was a union contractor from 1996 until 2021. As an OVCEC member, he served on the Board of Directors and was a former president of the Council.



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# THE INFLUENCE OF ART AND ARCHITECT

Artistic expression in construction has the power to elevate architecture to new heights. In various degrees, architecture has always intersected with art in our area. The Upper Ohio Valley has a long history of incorporating elements of artistic expression into architectural design. This includes columns, reliefs, porticos, and cupolas, as well as buildings representative of several popular architectural styles from the early 19th century through the present including Greek Revival and Late Victorian.

In recent years, the connection of art and architecture locally is once again showing to be a captivating realm where architects and contractors are embracing their roles as artists, weaving together elements of imagination, aesthetics, and innovation to redefine the built environment. Sometimes with adornments, art installations, and murals, and other times with open sight-line concepts, geometric angles or curves, and utilization of the components found readily in our region, such as steel, glass, bricks, and metal elements.



# UTURE IN CONSTRUCTION



Federal Building

## **The Blending of Art with Functionality**

Architecture is a unique blend of art and functionality, where form meets function to create structures that are not only visually appealing but also serve their intended purpose effectively.

While functionality is more often prioritized in architectural design, significant architecture goes beyond mere utility to incorporate aesthetic elements that captivate and inspire.

Art in architecture allows individuals to tell a story through the built environment, inviting viewers to interpret and engage with the space in a meaningful way. By integrating artistic elements into architectural design, architects can create spaces that evoke emotion, spark creativity, and enhance the overall experience for occupants and visitors alike.



Fallingwater House



Burj Khalifa



### Unity of Art and Architecture Creates Inspiration

By pushing the boundaries of traditional design concepts, architects can create buildings that not only serve their practical purpose but also inspire and uplift those who interact with them. These structures become more than just physical spaces; they become symbols of innovation and creativity.

Architects, even locally, have the unique opportunity to shape the world around us through their designs. By incorporating elements that reflect culture and identity, they can create buildings that resonate with people on a deeper level.

There are many architectural marvels serving as powerful testaments and inspirations to construction designers everywhere. A few around the world include the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest structure standing in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain featuring a curvilinear titanium-clad exterior and innovative use of unconventional materials; and Fallingwater House in Pennsylvania designed by Frank Lloyd Wright as organic architecture that blends seamlessly with its natural surroundings. The house integrates a waterfall and locally-sourced stone and natural materials, blurring the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces.

### Construction and Art in Architectural Design

*“I believe it goes beyond embellishments like murals or installations. It involves thoughtful consideration of materials, shapes, spatial experiences, and other factors to create buildings that are functional yet considered works of art in their own right, even without extra adornments. As an artist myself, I do appreciate those ‘bells and whistles’ though, as they add character to any environment. A good mural can uplift a person’s attitude towards others, maybe even just for that day, because it has an emotional and mental ripple that extends beyond paint.”*

Drew Gonchoff – Artist for exterior Bridge Tavern Bar and Grille mural in downtown Wheeling

## The Benefits of Artistic Expression in Construction

This fusion of art and architecture has sparked a new wave of design possibilities, blurring the lines between traditional disciplines. Architects are no longer confined by rigid constructs but are encouraged to think outside the box and infuse their creations with artistic flair.

A 2023 article from the Utilities One website outlines the benefits this spark of creativity brings to our communities:

- **Enhanced aesthetics:** Architectural designs that incorporate artistic expression add beauty and visual appeal to our surroundings, making cities more vibrant and inspiring.
- **Increased cultural significance:** Iconic architectural structures that showcase artistic flair become symbols of cultural identity, attracting tourists and generating economic benefits for cities.
- **Improved well-being:** Artistic elements in construction have been shown to positively impact our well-being by creating a sense of joy, inspiration, and connection to our environment.
- **Promotion of creativity and imagination:** The integration of art in construction encourages architects, builders, and designers to push the boundaries of their creativity and create truly innovative and unique structures.
- **Community engagement:** Artistic expression in construction projects fosters a sense of community pride and involvement as people connect with the beauty and creativity of their built environment.

In conclusion, the role of art in architecture is essential for creating meaningful and inspiring spaces that transcend mere functionality to become works of art in themselves.



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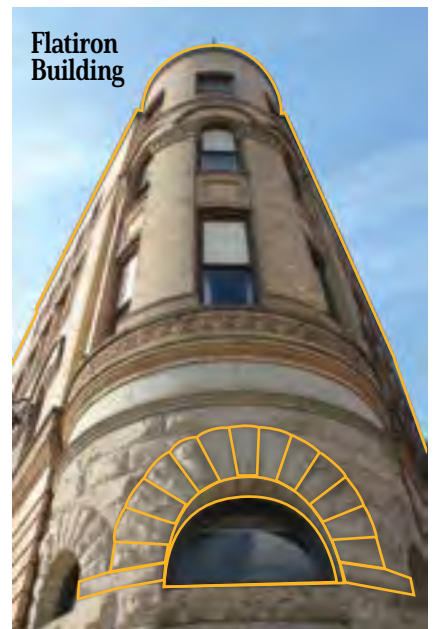


# THE MERGING OF ART WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Where is the intersection of art and architecture? Is it found in creative installations, murals, and art reliefs or is it in structures featuring interesting angles, lightplay through windows, and exterior aesthetics? Perhaps it is a dedicated concept for designs found either outside or inside buildings.

Or both. Designs are intended to invoke feelings when you experience the outward appearance of the edifice, as well as concepts that affect your senses when you are inside. There are indeed many opinions about the convergence of architectural functionality and artistic harmony.

Recently, we interviewed several local architects and artists to ask for their opinions and musings about the merging of art with architectural design. The group includes Christina Schessler, AIA, Senior Architect, McKinley Architecture and Engineering; Dan Grant, AIA, Vice President M&G Architects & Engineers; Victor Greco, AIA, NCARB, Principal Architect, Mills Group; Mindi Yarbrough, Senior Art Director, Beyond Marketing, studio and mural artist; Drew Gonchoff, Graphic Designer, studio and mural artist; and Scott Hagan (“The Barn Artist”), traveling, mural and studio artist. Here are their thoughts and responses:



*“There has never been a line between architecture and art – they are one in the same. The profession as a whole has always incorporated art in its work as that is the process of design.”*

— Ms. Schessler

*“Art has always been intrinsically linked to the practice of architecture. All you have to do is walk around (our communities) and take the time to stand back and look up at the buildings you walk by every day.”*

— Mr. Grant

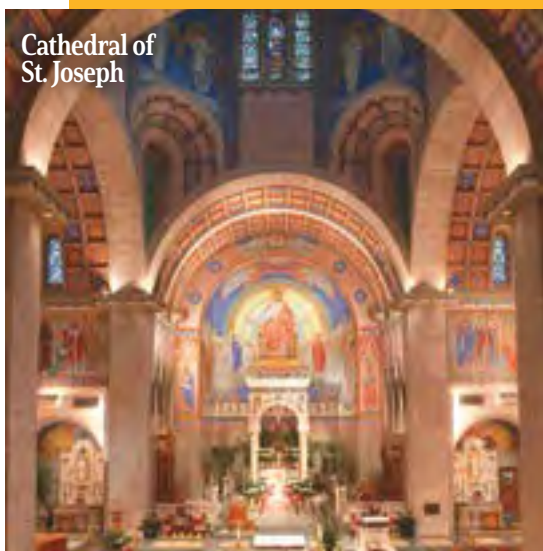
*“I think the power in art and construction is to be found at the convergence of functionality and beauty. The power to communicate without language and to provide an atmosphere that amplifies our well-being and productivity while improving our quality of life.”*

— Ms. Yarbrough



*“Most ornament on buildings has a purpose. The brackets supporting the edge of a Victorian roof are supporting the roof edge – they aren’t just pretty. The decorative glass on the Federal Courthouse in Wheeling is pretty, but it also allows light into an interior transition space between the old wing and the new wing.”*

— Ms. Schessler



Cathedral of St. Joseph



Sarah's On Main

Photo provided by Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

*“The more traditional buildings are more literal art expressionistic, such as the Cathedral, the Federal Office Building, and the Capitol Theatre. The more contemporary Health Plan building is a combination of materials found in Wheeling, ‘collaged’ to form a whole as well as its setting to form a park.”*  
— Mr. Greco

*“The most successful construction projects provoke the desire to look, visit, and experience. They can make a difference in a desire to improve how to work, play, and worship.”*  
— Mr. Greco



The Health Plan

*“Murals, public art, and creative architecture generate cultural currency. They reflect the personality of a place, its ideas, heritage, and imagination. Unique and creative projects spark interest in the tourism and economic realms as well as serve as a focal point of local pride, community engagement, and identity of a city.”*  
— Ms. Yarbrough

Santiago Calatrava architecture in Valencia, Spain



***“For me, architecture is an art the same as painting is an art or sculpture is an art. Yet, architecture moves a step beyond painting and sculpture because it is more than using materials. Architecture responds to functional outputs and environmental factors. Yet, fundamentally, it is important for me to stress the art in architecture to bring harmony.”***

Santiago Calatrava — visionary architect, structural engineer, sculptor, and painter based in Switzerland. In his world-renowned architecture, he has merged advanced engineering solutions with dramatic visual statements.

(Submitted by Ms. Schessler) Photo credit Timothy Vollmer

*“Architectural design and quality construction have the unique power of influencing the built environment and by extension, improving the daily lives of everyone who works, plays, and lives in these structures.”*

— Mr. Grant

*“The artist’s work is on full display. For me, the country is my canvas, and I’m sure it’s the same for any builder. Our portfolio isn’t just in a folder or a computer file, it’s visually scattered all over the landscape!”*

— Mr. Hagan

*“We should aim to make buildings that inspire and connect people to their environment. This overall enhances the happiness of people who work around and in the buildings. I believe people would be happier in environments that are fabricated to create beauty.”*

— Mr. Gonchoff





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OHIO VALLEY CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS COUNCIL

**ANNUAL  
MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING**



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Brian Hendershot, Nathan Butts



Bruce Wilson, Bill Storm



Teresa Michaels, Bill Busick



Matt Steele, Donald Gianni, Jr.



Mike Price, Todd Dei, Keith Hughes, Amanda Lengyel



Terry Lavorini, Mikey Mickler



*From left to right: Nick Preservati, Joelle Moray, Eric Starkowicz, Mitch Carmichael, Jim Ambrose*

## **OVCEC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The 2024 OVCEC Annual Membership Meeting was held on Tuesday, February 20, at Oglebay. The meeting featured several notable speakers, including Nick Preservati, Director, WV Office of Energy; Mitch Carmichael, Secretary, WV Department of Economic Development; Jim Ambrose, President, Tipping Point; and Joelle Moray, Workplace Wellness.

Following the Coffee & Conversation networking and breakfast, OVCEC Executive Director, Eric Starkowicz kicked off the program by providing updates on the significant progress that OVCEC has made on the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

Next, Joelle Moray discussed the importance of mental and physical health in the workplace. The topic is especially relevant for the construction industry where the potential for physical injuries due to both accidents and repetitive use exists. Additionally, mental health in the industry ranks among the lowest. The topics Joelle covers and offers coping strategies for are worthy of serious consideration.

Jim Ambrose gave an enlightening talk on the unique approach that Tipping Point takes to speculative development projects. His talk was refreshingly optimistic and provided a great case study on their 1400 Market Street project. It will be interesting to see this come to fruition, along with several other opportunities that they are involved with in the area.

We welcomed Mitch Carmichael back this year and he was happy to share several updates on the state's economic development successes and shared many slides packed with great news for West Virginia that will hopefully translate to more companies relocating here. As always, his talk was highly engaging and uplifting.

Finally, Nick Preservati detailed the role that the WV Office of Energy plays in supplying energy to the state, region, and nation. Additionally, he shared details of the highly anticipated Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (ARCH2), which is expected to have multiple nodes in our region.

We would like to thank all the speakers and attendees for making the OVCEC Annual Membership Meeting such a success. It was great to see so many members come together to learn, share ideas, and network. We look forward to seeing you soon at one of our future events.



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*Nathan Butts*

### PROJECT BEST NAMES NATHAN BUTTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nathan Butts, a Shadyside High and West Liberty University graduate, has been named new executive director at Project BEST.

Project BEST is a nonprofit entity that combines labor and management in the construction industry. Prior to joining Project BEST, Butts spent the past eight years in the Ohio Workers Compensation industry working for The Health Plan, ProMedica, and most recently Minutemen HR Management Services.

In those eight years, Butts has assisted a large portion of local Ohio Valley contractors with their workers compensation administration on the managed care side with The Health Plan and ProMedica, as well as the third-party administration side with Minutemen HR.

“I am very excited and honored for the opportunity to lead Project BEST and advocate for union work throughout the local area,” Butts said. “I look forward to making new connections as well as working with some familiar faces as well. I would like to thank the Board of Directors and both co-chairs, Justin Klempa and Doug Giffin, for giving me a chance to be part of this organization.”

As executive director, Butts will work closely with the Project BEST Board of Directors and staff to oversee the organization’s community involvement and continue to adapt to serve the Ohio Valley’s construction labor and management teams.

Butts is currently on the Board of Directors for the Ohio Valley Energy Association and the Shadyside Local School District Board of Education. He and his wife, Nikki, reside in Shadyside with their four children Karson, Ella, Jordan, and Joanna.

“We are very pleased to have found Nathan as we feel he is the perfect fit to fill this role, and is a proven leader in past roles,” said Giffin, who added that Butts “is a lifelong Ohio Valley resident and we ask the community to take the time to reach out and get to know him.”



# OVCEC Networking HAPPY HOUR

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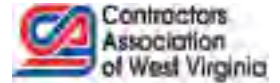
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# MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



**Landau Building Company** announced the promotions of Jennifer Landau, Christopher Priest, and Jeremy Bowlby to key executive roles. Their leadership journey continues, shaping an exciting new chapter for the Landau Team.



**Grae-Con Construction, Inc.** has made significant progress at the Marshall County Public Health Department, despite challenging weather conditions over the last month.

**Quality Steel Erecting, Inc.** is preparing to set decking on the 2nd floor and roof. Steel and decking were provided by **Mazzella Welding & Fabrication, Inc.**



**Cast & Baker Corporation** is transforming the entrance to the Wilson Lodge at **Oglebay**. They are also making major improvements to Wheeling Park's Stifel Playground.

# MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



Photo by Eric Ayres

**Savage Construction Company Inc.** began work on the new splash pad project at Heritage Port near Wheeling Heritage Trail and WesBanco Arena. City officials are anticipating the new attraction will be able to open shortly after Memorial Day weekend.



**East Coast Metal Systems** was recently featured in a video for Yes WV.

The video explains how **East Coast Metal Systems** serves as a trusted partner for all architectural metal and exterior envelope system needs. As a full-service fabricator, the company possesses the expertise, resources, and capabilities necessary to guide projects from concept to completion seamlessly.



Photo by Derek Redd

**Guntry Construction Progressing At The Highlands**  
**Jarvis Downing & Emch, Inc.** construction crews work on the property that will soon become the new Guntry gun training and shooting center at The Highlands. They are on target for a fall opening.



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