# CONSTRUCTION

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Preparing for Winter:
CONSTRUCTION STRATEGIES
FOR THE COLD MONTHS

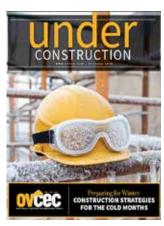
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PREPARING FOR WINTER: Construction Strategies for the Cold Months

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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

# Members Across the Ohio Valley Prepare for the Unique Challenges of Winter Construction



Eric Starkowicz

As autumn settles in across the Ohio Valley, we can already feel the shift on our jobsites. Mornings start cooler, daylight hours grow shorter, and the first hints of frost appear. For those of us in construction, these changes are more than just a sign of the season. They are reminders that winter challenges brings unigue that require preparation, planning, and a commitment to safety and quality.

Winter conditions can slow progress, introduce hazards, and test both equipment and crews. Yet, they also offer an opportunity for our members to demonstrate the skill, adaptability, and professionalism that set them apart. Over the years, I have seen how the most successful companies are not those that simply react to winter conditions, but those that prepare for them well in advance.

"The most successful companies are not those that simply react to winter conditions, but those that prepare for them well in advance."

Some members begin their preparation months ahead, reviewing equipment maintenance schedules, investing in heated enclosures for sensitive work, like concrete pours, and providing crews with new cold-weather gear before the first frost hits. Others adjust their project timelines to maximize productivity during daylight hours and build in contingency plans for weather delays. These proactive steps help keep work

moving, protect project quality, and ensure crews remain safe and productive even in challenging conditions.

This issue of *Under Construction* is focused on sharing practical, timely strategies that you can put into action this winter. Inside, you'll find guidance on cold-weather safety protocols to protect your workforce, best practices for working with concrete and asphalt in freezing conditions, tips for winterizing equipment to avoid costly downtime, and advice on adjusting project schedules to account for unpredictable weather. Our goal is to give you tools you can use immediately, no matter the size or scope of your projects.

Cold weather construction is not without risk, but with the right preparation, those risks can be managed effectively. Safety is always our first priority, and in winter, it requires even more vigilance. From preventing slips and falls on icy surfaces to guarding against cold stress injuries, every precaution matters. Your crews rely on leadership to set the tone, provide the right equipment, and make smart decisions when conditions change.

Finally, project planning in winter demands flexibility and clear communication. Adjusting schedules to account for weather delays, prioritizing tasks based on conditions, and keeping clients informed are essential for maintaining productivity and trust. While some winter days will inevitably slow progress, careful planning can help you make the most of favorable conditions and keep projects moving forward.

I encourage you to read through the articles in this issue and consider how these strategies might apply to your own operations. And just as importantly, I invite you to share your own winter best practices with OVCEC. We will feature member insights in our weekly newsletter, giving all of us the opportunity to learn from one another. With preparation, teamwork, and a focus on safety, we can meet the challenges of winter head-on and continue building with confidence.



# WINTER SAFETY Keeping Crews and Jobsites Protected

# Preventing slips and falls is a daily priority in cold weather.

Winter weather brings a unique set of hazards to the jobsite. Ice, snow, freezing rain, and cold temperatures not only increase the risk of injuries, but also make it harder to keep projects on schedule. Proactive safety measures and a culture of constant vigilance can make all the difference.



# 1. Address Cold Stress Early

Cold stress includes hypothermia, frostbite, and trench foot — conditions that can develop faster than many realize. Even temperatures slightly above freezing can be dangerous when wind and moisture are present. Crews should be trained to recognize early symptoms such as shivering, numbness, slurred speech, or confusion. Heated break areas, access to warm beverages, and shorter rotation times for outdoor tasks help reduce these risks.



# 2. Prevent Slips, Trips, and Falls

Ice accumulation on scaffolding, ladders, and walking surfaces is a leading winter hazard. Salt or sand should be applied regularly to walkways, and standing water should be removed before it freezes. Site supervisors should ensure guardrails, netting, and fall arrest systems are inspected daily, since ice can compromise anchor points and surfaces.



### 3.PPE for the Cold

Layering is essential. Crews should wear moisture-wicking thermal underlayers, insulated gloves, and waterproof boots with slip-resistant soles. Wind-resistant jackets and high-visibility outerwear ensure workers remain safe and visible. PPE should be sized to allow for layering without restricting movement.



# 4. Daily Safety Briefings

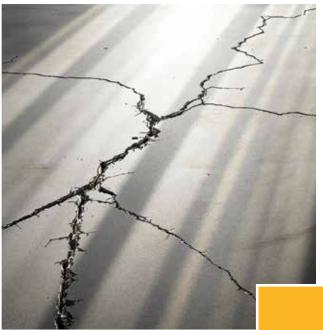
Morning safety meetings should include a weather update, hazard reminders, and adjustments to the day's tasks based on conditions. Encourage workers to speak up if they spot unsafe conditions — cold weather makes it harder to notice small hazards until they become big problems.

A safety-first approach not only protects workers, but also keeps projects moving. You can't make up time if you lose a worker to an avoidable injury.



# COLD-WEATHER CONCRETE AND ASPHALT — Best Practices for Quality Results

Working with concrete and asphalt in low temperatures presents challenges that, if ignored, can lead to costly repairs in the spring. Quality is protected when crews plan ahead, adapt their techniques, and use the right tools for the conditions.



#### Concrete in Winter

- **Temperature Management:** Concrete must be maintained at a minimum of 50°F during placement and curing. Using heated water in the mix, pre-heating forms, and covering with insulated curing blankets can help maintain temperatures.
- Avoid Rapid Cooling: Temperature swings can cause cracking. Heated enclosures or temporary shelters reduce exposure to wind and extreme cold.
- Use of Accelerators: Non-chloride accelerators can speed set time, but mix designs should be adjusted under the guidance of a supplier or engineer.

Quality is protected when crews plan ahead, adapt their techniques, and use the right tools for the conditions.

# Asphalt in Winter

- Mix Temperature: Asphalt cools quickly once it leaves the plant. Deliveries should be timed to minimize wait times on site, and compaction should begin immediately.
- Surface Preparation: Snow, ice, and moisture must be removed completely before paving. Even small amounts of moisture can lead to premature failure.
- **Limitations:** Above 40°F is best for paving, but specialty coldmix materials can be used for winter patching.

One member shared that they stage their winter pours by completing prep work on warmer days and pouring only during short windows of favorable weather. This approach minimizes exposure to risk while keeping projects moving.







# **EQUIPMENT WINTERIZATION** — **Preventing Downtime Before It Starts**

Preventive maintenance in fall reduces breakdowns in winter.

When temperatures drop, equipment performance can suffer. Preventive maintenance is the key to keeping your fleet running and avoiding costly downtime in the middle of a project.

#### 1. Fluids and Lubricants

Cold weather thickens oil and can reduce its ability to lubricate properly. Switching to winter-grade oils helps ensure proper flow. Coolant should be tested to confirm freeze protection, and diesel fuel should be treated with anti-gel additives to prevent clogs.

### 2. Batteries and Electrical Systems

A battery loses about 30% of its cranking power at freezing temperatures. Test batteries before winter begins, replace weak ones, and keep terminals clean. Using battery blankets or maintainers on critical equipment can prevent unexpected failures.

#### 3. Tires and Tracks

Cold air reduces tire pressure, so frequent checks are essential. For tracked equipment, slow initial movement helps prevent damage to stiffened rubber tracks.

#### 4. Storage and Protection

Whenever possible, store equipment indoors. If that's not an option, use covers and block heaters to protect engines and hydraulics from extreme cold.

#### 5. Daily Warm-Up Procedures

Allowing equipment to idle and circulate fluids before heavy operation extends its life and improves performance. Crews should be trained on proper start-up routines.

Equipment failures in winter are more than an inconvenience — they can stall entire projects. A well-prepared fleet means fewer surprises when the temperature drops.



A well-prepared fleet means fewer surprises when the temperature drops.



# SCHEDULING AND PROJECT PLANNING FOR Q4 & Q1

Planning ahead keeps work moving, even when conditions change quickly.

In winter, good scheduling is as much about flexibility as it is about efficiency. Conditions can change quickly, and the ability to adapt is often the difference between meeting deadlines and falling behind.

#### 1. Build in Weather Delays

Snow removal, de-icing, and site clean-up can take hours before any work begins. Adding extra days to schedules from the start helps prevent unnecessary stress later.

## 2. Prioritize Work by Conditions

Indoor work should be scheduled for the coldest days, while tasks requiring precision or extensive outdoor exposure should be reserved for milder weather.

## 3. Coordinate Subcontractors Early

Everyone's schedule is impacted in winter. Frequent communication and early coordination prevent delays and ensure resources are available when needed.

## 4. Manage Client Expectations

Be upfront about potential delays. Explaining how weather affects timelines helps maintain trust and avoids frustration if schedules shift.

#### 5. Financial Planning

Winter slowdowns can affect revenue. Careful budgeting, strategic invoicing, and monitoring cash flow help maintain stability through the season.

Even in the toughest months, well-planned schedules and clear communication keep projects moving and clients satisfied.

# WINTER SAFETY BRIEFING

- 1. Review daily weather forecast
- 2. Identify specific hazards (ice, wind, cold stress)
- 3. Review PPE requirements
- 4. Discuss safe equipment use in cold weather
- 5. Encourage hazard reporting

# Quick Tips Low-Cost Ways to Keep Workers Warm

- · Heated break spaces
- · Hot drinks on site
- Windbreaks from tarps
- Hand and foot warmers
- Shorter outdoor shifts

# Industry Update Winter Work Regulations

Check Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania DOT and OSHA winter work guidance before starting seasonal projects.



As temperatures begin to drop, the days get shorter, and the evenings darker, it's a good time to review winter hazards and safety tips with construction crews.

# **Know Your Environment**

Assessing your environment will be key to safe operations in the winter months. Though the first few snowfalls might not be much of a threat, once the snow starts to accumulate, it can bring about a whole range of safety concerns for construction projects. Here are some best practices to follow:

**Monitor the Weather:** Check forecasts for the construction site and the surrounding area prior to heading out each day. Keeping an eye out for storms will also dictate if jobsite activities should cease for the day. Mobile weather apps display the current conditions for your area, and often include options for real-time weather tracking.

**Wind Speed:** Be aware of strong winter winds, especially when operating mobile work platforms, as this can lead to unbalancing and toppling.

Visibility: Ensure sufficient illumination for safe work.

**Prepare the Jobsite:** Clean up the worksite before a snowfall to ensure hazards don't get buried by the snow. If it starts snowing during the workday, find and mark any hazards that might be along any driving or walking path.

**Falling Debris:** Ice and snow accumulating on roofs and tall equipment can create icicles and falling debris. Inspect roofs and equipment regularly and remove ice buildup.

# **Warm Up Machinery and Workers**

## **Machinery**

Many pieces of heavy machinery do not function well in the cold and can malfunction as a result of the stress. Take time to warm up your equipment and tools prior to starting your work. Conduct daily inspections on mobile equipment, focusing on the following:

Warm Up: Allow the engine and hydraulic system to warm up to operating temperature to prevent brittle pipes and valves from bursting. Consider block heaters and coolant preheaters to help the equipment warm up faster.

**Fuel:** Use proper lubricants and fuel supplements, and prepare fuel supplies by using anti-gel agents for diesel fuel.

**Tires:** Check tire pressure and ensure adequate traction. As the temperature drops, reduce tire pressure and consider increasing traction on snow and ice by wrapping chains around the tires.

**Battery Life:** Cold weather shortens battery life, so ensure batteries are properly charged and designed for cold conditions.

**Additional Materials:** Consider installing winter windshield wipers and equip the vehicle with a snow emergency kit that includes items such as a shovel, snow brush, ice scraper, jumper cables, a tow chain, traction aids (sand or salt), flares, and a flashlight.

#### People

Temperatures can also be problematic for workers since the human body isn't capable of withstanding below-freezing temperatures for very long. Keeping construction crews warm is just as important as keeping the machinery warm.

Best practices include:

**Designating a Break Area:** Prolonged exposure to the cold can result in the development of potentially life-threatening conditions. Frostbite and extreme fatigue are two of these ailments. It is recommended that a designated break area be provided as shelter, and that warm beverages are supplied to help workers maintain adequate body temperature and hydration.

Layering Clothing: Encourage workers to wear multiple layers of loose-fitting, thermal clothing, warm hats, gloves, face guards, insulated work boots, and a waterproof outer layer. High-visibility safety gear should also be used since daylight hours are minimized in the winter months.

# **Slow Down Vehicle Operations**

## Mobile Equipment on a Jobsite

Operating heavy equipment always requires extreme caution, but when temperatures plummet and conditions become poor, responsible operation becomes even more important. Mobile equipment operator safe practices include:

- **Climbing onto Equipment:** Beware that grabbing frozen metal on exposed skin can cause cold burns. In addition, ice building up on steps can lead to slips and falls when mounting and dismounting equipment.
- Expecting Poor Traction: Icy patches, black ice, and uneven terrain will affect mobile equipment operations.
- **Slowing Down:** Drive slower than usual to account for reduced traction and longer stopping distances on icy or slippery surfaces.
- Ensuring Routes are Clear: Ice and snow can conceal hazards like ditches, piles of materials or even bodies of water. Set up and follow traffic lanes to minimize the risk.
- **Lighting Up the Jobsite:** Headlights alone may not be enough light to illuminate ground conditions or hazards. Consider additional work lights and generators.
- **Keeping Windows Clear:** Frost, ice, and condensation in cold weather can create blind spots and safety hazards. Sweep snow and ice from all parts of the vehicle including windows, mirrors, lights, wheel wells, and the hood. Wait until all windows are fully defrosted before driving.



# **Construction Vehicles Traveling on Public Roadways**

Over 70% of the nation's roads are in areas that receive at least five inches of snow annually. Each year, 24% of weather-related vehicle crashes occur on snowy, slushy, or icy pavements, and 15% happen during active snowfall or sleet. Safe driving tips on public roadways where snow, slush, and ice are present include:

- Slowing Down: Posted speed limits are for ideal conditions. Reduce speed when approaching bridges, overpasses, and shaded areas, as these freeze first.
- **Increasing Following Distance:** Add an extra 5–6 seconds.
- Performing Gentle Maneuvers: Avoid hard braking, sudden acceleration, and sharp turns.
- Maintaining Control: Do not use cruise control; keep constant, steady control.
- Watching for Hazards: Be alert for black ice, which can make roads appear normal, and slush or spray from
  other vehicles, which can cause a sudden loss of visibility. Hard-packed snow on any road can be as slippery
  as ice.
- Staying Visible: Turn on your headlights to activate your tail lights, improving visibility for others.
- Heed Snow Plows: Never pass a snow plow.

# **Special Considerations for Equipment Hauling**

Transporting heavy machinery, mobile equipment, or materials during winter weather requires extra precautions:

- 1. Weight and Momentum: A loaded truck and trailer take significantly longer to stop. Icy roads amplify this issue, often making sudden braking impossible.
- 2. Visibility: Heavy snow or sleet reduces visibility, making it harder to anticipate road conditions or see other drivers.
- 3. Obstructed Lanes: Snow accumulation narrows lanes, leaving less room for wide or oversized equipment to maneuver safely.
- 4. Road Conditions: Potholes, caused by freezing and thawing, can damage equipment and make hauling more treacherous.

Implementing winter preparation strategies can significantly reduce cost overruns in construction projects. The investment in protecting your workers, the site, materials, and equipment from cold, snow, and ice is far lower than the costs associated with weather-related delays, damage, and safety incidents. Stay safe this winter and take time to prepare.

Whether you need training, advice, or a second set of eyes on a jobsite, **Joe Safety** is here to support you and your team. *Together, we can ensure safer jobsites and stronger safety programs across the Ohio Valley.* 



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# From Warehouse to Waterfront Hall: Building the Future on Wheeling's Riverfront

On a Friday night in downtown Wheeling, the sound of live music spills out of a brick landmark on Water Street. Inside, friends gather around wood-fired pizza and specialty burgers, couples sip cocktails at the bar, and upstairs a wedding reception is in full swing. The building feels alive, buzzing with new energy — but just a few years ago, this same space sat quiet, its historic walls waiting for a second act.

That transformation into *Waterfront Hall* didn't happen overnight. It took vision, grit, and a construction team willing to bring a 19th-century warehouse into the 21st century. At the heart of that effort was **Cattrell Companies**, the general contractor tasked with turning developer Dan Milleson's ambitious plan into reality.

For Project Manager, Brian Applegarth, stepping into the job was pure adrenaline. "Pure excitement. Absolutely couldn't wait to jump in and start," he says.



What began as an 1877 supply building is now a three-story hub of activity — a food hall and music venue on the first floor, a spa and luxury Airbnb suite on the second, and a 225-person banquet and event space on the third. Since opening in 2023, Waterfront Hall has hosted over 100 live shows, more than 100 private events, and has quickly become a cornerstone of Wheeling's riverfront revival.

# **Challenges & Solutions**

Renovating a 19th-century warehouse is rarely straightforward. Waterfront Hall was no exception. Beneath the sturdy exterior, the building held more than a few surprises for the construction team.

"Every move required additional thought and planning of how it would affect the next step or process," Applegarth explains. "Compared to a new build, the approach was layered — nothing was simple."

One of the most significant hurdles was rehabbing the original Water Street windows to meet strict historic tax credit codes. The task demanded precision and patience. "Those windows were a challenge, but they were also essential. They're part of what makes this building authentic," he says.

The team also uncovered hidden stories during the process. Applegarth recalls his favorite discovery: "We found a date hand-scribbled on the original brick wall — early 1900s — after demoing a wood stud and drywall wall in what's now the second-floor apartment. To see that piece of history was incredible."

Despite the obstacles, the crew embraced the chance to highlight the building's original character. "In whole, uncovering, restoring, and showcasing the original beauty of the building in every aspect — that's what I'm most proud of," Applegarth says.





# Collaboration & Craftsmanship

A project of this scale and complexity required a long chain of teamwork. "Our team was just a link in the chain," Applegarth reflects. "Each link depended on the other to keep things rolling."

That collaboration extended to architect Dennis Madama and developer Dan Milleson. "The collaboration between us three was so much fun," he says. "Cattrell had the satisfying part of bringing it to life, but the real work and brilliant vision was handed to us by Dan and Dennis to make a reality."

And then there were the local trades. Carpenters, masons, electricians, and countless others turned drawings into reality. "Local tradespeople made this project day in and day out," Applegarth says. "All local, second-to-none craftsmen and women, doing what they — and they only — can do best."







# Community & Legacy

For Cattrell Companies, transforming the building into a modern venue meant more than completing a contract. "Transforming this building to what it is now means the world to us at Cattrell," Applegarth says.

In his view, Waterfront Hall offers something unique to the city. "It brings an inviting space to all sectors of what Wheeling has — dining, entertainment, working, developing, relaxing, and playing. It gives people and organizations a variety of ways to use the Hall," he explains.

That variety is clear on the first floor, where two local favorites anchor the food hall: Avenue Eats, serving its signature burgers and sandwiches, and The Wood Fired Pizza Co., known for its blistered-crust pies fresh from the oven. Add in the cocktail bar and music venue, and the building hums with activity day and night.

The lessons taken from the project go beyond construction. "Anything is possible with vision and teamwork," Applegarth says. "And for me personally, the most important story was building a lifelong friendship with Dan Milleson. To finish the project not only with success, but with that relationship — that's something I'll carry forever."

# A Building Reborn

Walking through the building today, it's easy to admire the polished wood floors, the exposed brick, and the state-of-the-art performance spaces. But for those who were there during construction, every detail carries a story.

For Applegarth, the reward is simple. "Just joy, pure joy," he says. "Happiness for the community and for the Milleson family. When you see concerts, weddings, and families filling this building, you realize all the long days and hard decisions were worth it. We didn't just restore a building — we gave the community a place to gather, celebrate, and create new memories."

Waterfront Hall stands as proof of what's possible when vision meets craftsmanship, and when local tradespeople put their hands to work preserving a piece of history. It's not only a landmark reborn, but also a reminder that construction is about more than bricks and beams — it's about building the future, one project at a time.





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On September 17th at the Wheeling Park Ice Rink, Project BEST hosted their annual Career Fair. This year an estimated 1,000 students from roughly 30 local school districts attended the event to learn about careers in the construction industry.

Featured at the event were booths from 12 different union construction trades, 7 hands on stations for the students to try, various 2-year and 4-year colleges that offer engineering programs or construction related degrees, tool companies and various vendors to the trades, and multiple local banks to help teach students financial literacy.

Project BEST Executive Director, Nathan Butts, said the event is an important one for the trades to attract new people into their field of work. "It's important for kids to learn about these opportunities, specifically with the trades, because college debt has become a big talking point," Butts added. "We just want them to know there's an opportunity for them right when they graduate to not go into debt and to be paid while in their apprenticeship working towards becoming a journeyperson."

Jennifer Long, a member of the Plasterers and Cement Mason Finishers Local 926, was busy showing students like Connor Darlington of Edison High School how to finish concrete during the showcase. She said the past two years the students' interest in the trades has grown.

"It's been a really nice group of kids the last two years. They really seem interested and they're all coming over here to try every trade we have out here," she said. "They're really showing interest in the trades. I think every trade is looking for help."

Butts said this event will continue in the years to come as he foresees more and more high school students becoming increasingly interested in construction trades in the near future. He concluded with "There are going to be a lot of vacancies in the construction industry in the next 5 to 10 years, so they are going to be needed in the workforce, and the opportunity is there for them if they want it. Great paying jobs, no debt, great benefits."

# 2025 Project BEST Career Fair



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Notable projects that OVCEC members will recognize include the Wheeling Waterfront, numerous Wheeling parks, and the Wheeling streetscape. Current and upcoming projects include the Adena, Ohio Streetscape, Adena Ohio Trails, Belmont County Courthouse Plaza, and the Morristown Multi-Modal project.

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# MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



**Grae-Con Construction** and **Quality Steel Erecting** are making incredible progress on the new Belmont County Records Building and Health Department — a two-story, 24,820 SF multi-county health agency building accompanied by 3.3 acres of phased site work.



**Kalkreuth Roofing & Sheet Metal, Inc.** is bringing new life to the Marshall County Courthouse with a restoration that includes a newly restored weathervane, 400 sq. ft. of 16-oz Freedom Gray copper, flat-lock seam metal panels, and a new underlayment for long-term protection.



A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held in July for the new 20,000-square-foot, two-story Neighborhood Hospital in St. Clairsville, Ohio. **Grae-Con Construction, Inc.** handled the concrete, steel, and general trades scopes of work on the new hospital, which includes 10 emergency room beds, six inpatient beds, and radiology and laboratory suites.



In July, Dan Milleson, Owner of Waterfront Hall, and Brian Applegarth, Project Manager with **Cattrell Companies, Inc.**, led OVCEC members on an engaging tour of the project's transformation, followed by a lively happy hour and networking.



Ohio County Schools and WVU Medicine have partnered with Madison Elementary to open a new clinic providing health and dental care for students twice a week. The clinic, built by JD&E Construction Services, is located at the school on Wheeling Island, and will operate two days a week for four hours each day.



The **Kalkreuth Amateur Golf Championship** raised a record \$70,000 for Easterseals Rehabilitation Center, putting the 10-year total over \$440,000.

"Seventy thousand dollars is a record donation for this event," said Eric Filberto, president of Easterseals. In fact, \$70,000 will cover about 700 medical or therapy sessions for local kids. That's almost one-third of the children we see in a year and offer uncompensated care for, and Kalkreuth has paid for their care."



Fabio's Wheeling is open for business after **Cattrell Companies, Inc.** completed Phase 1 of the project. Work will continue in additional phases through 2027.



**Project BEST** hosted a luncheon that featured Justin Williams, Director of Affiliated Construction Trades of WV, as the keynote speaker. Justin spoke to an audience of public officials, union representatives, and contractors about the difference between "most qualified low bid" and low bid, and how public employers can help ensure they hire quality contractors to bid on their projects.



Bridgeport Equipment & Tool has been honored with the Encova Safety Award, recognizing their exemplary commitment to workplace safety and employee well-being. Glessner, Wharton, Andrews Insurance is proud to collaborate with BET on their Workers' Compensation Program, supporting initiatives that foster a safe, secure, and productive environment for all.





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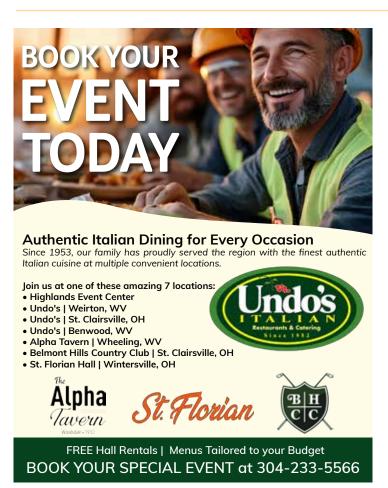
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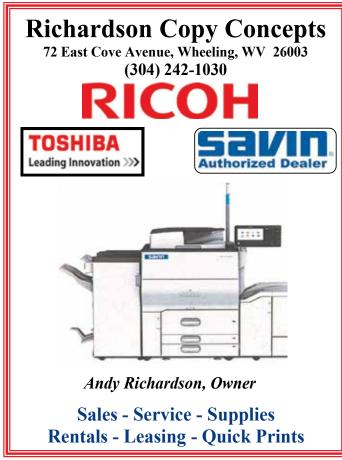
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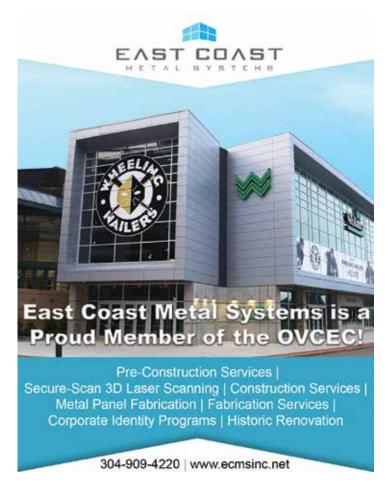
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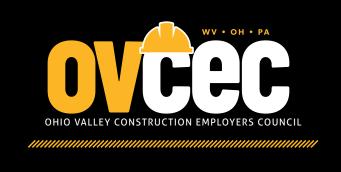
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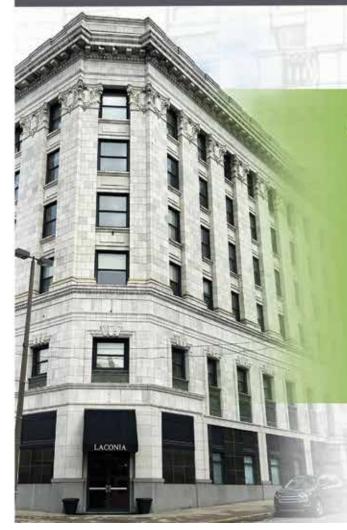
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