



# CONSTRUCTOR

The Voice of the Kansas City Construction Industry

SPRING 2008

## A Word From the President

### Confluence of Calamities?

This issue of *Constructor* features a number of projects our Association members have built or are currently building in the metro area, from the gargantuan, multi-year “Untangling the Triangle” to numerous other projects smaller in scope but every bit as essential. They differ in cost, complexity and job length, but they all share two traits: Each is important to the traveling public (living up to our Association’s motto of “Making it Better”) and none of them could have been brought about without public funds.



Greg Kaaz  
HCA President

The Heavy Constructors Association has been actively involved in getting public funding programs approved over the past 57 years. From supporting specific local sales tax campaigns to working in legislative halls, we have spent countless hours getting funding measures passed for the highway, bridge and street projects our metro area needs.

We are now at one of the most critical junctures we’ve ever faced. The future of three of the largest public funding programs is in question: The federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, expires on Sept. 30, 2009; the Kansas

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## Consider It Untangled!

### 3-Trails Crossing Opens, Officially Ends ‘Triangle’ Era

For more than 30 years, a significant portion of the Greater Kansas City population endured the daily drudgery – and sometimes treachery – of navigating the “Grandview Triangle.” Though not in the city of Grandview nor in the shape of a triangle, the confluence of Interstates 470 and 435 and US 71 Highway in South Kansas City not only brought commuter traffic to a halt, but also disrupted growth in an important region of the metro area.

After decades of frustration and stagnation, the “Triangle” has finally been untangled. A Dec. 14 ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrated a job well done by the Missouri Department of Transportation District IV and two key members of the Heavy Constructors Association, who cut the ribbon a full year ahead of schedule.

Clarkson Construction and APAC-Kansas, the project’s contractors, were proud to overcome the enormous challenges they each faced during the various phases of the project.

“It was definitely one of the bigger jobs we’ve been involved in, and it was good to be part of something that will help the continued growth of the area,” said Jim Mangas, APAC executive vice president.

“The thing we liked about this project, it addressed the things we do,” said Bill Clarkson, Jr.,

vice president of Clarkson Construction. “We could self-perform a majority of the work and didn’t have to sub anything out. That’s what attracted us to the jobs.”

“These are contractors that are used to handling highly complex jobs and being very aware of schedules and the sequencing of construction activities,” said Beth Wright, MoDOT district engineer. “They looked to us to be flexible and vice versa, to make changes that would result in better quality and less time.”

### Massive Undertaking

Built at the historic crossroads of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California trails, the 3-Trails Crossing Memorial Highway provides three through lanes in all directions of I-435, I-470 and Route 71.

In addition to capacity improvements that match the volume of

traffic from highways feeding into it, the new interchange also provides wider shoulders, more gradual curves and longer ramps to move travelers through safely at freeway speeds.

The first phase of the Triangle project, which improved southbound to westbound I-435, was completed in late 2002, 10 months ahead of schedule. Intermediate phases reconstructed eastbound to northbound I-435,

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(l-r) Kansas City Missouri City Council members John Sharp and Cathy Jolly, and Bill Clarkson, Jr., Clarkson Construction Co., join others in the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the “Untangling of the Triangle.”



## CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE

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# Important Work Behind the Curtains

By Ed DeSoignie, HCA Executive Director

The discussions had been going for close to two hours. The subject: A plan for passing a new highway program. The legislative leader had wanted to discuss a plan of action over the course of the next year to get a new highway plan passed. As the meeting ended and handshakes were exchanged again, I found myself thinking of the work that lay ahead and the many other private meetings and discussions that would be taking place before any public meetings or discussions happen. And so it begins, as it has in the past.

For some time now we've been telling you that the current Kansas Comprehensive Transportation Program ends in fiscal year 2009, followed by the end of the Missouri Amendment 3 Program in fiscal year 2010. At some point in the very near future, either the Heavy Constructors Association or the media will report to you about a highway-funding bill being filed in the legislatures, or of an effort under

way to collect signatures for an initiative petition to fund highways. But what has happened in between, to get to the stage where we have a funding measure in play?

Like the *Wizard of Oz* character in the screenplay of the same name, behind the loud noise and flash is somebody (actor Frank Morgan in the movie) working the



controls behind the curtain. It has similar parallels to what we do to get the needed funds for public works programs.

Unseen by most are the countless discussions held with individuals and groups to formulate a strategic plan. Discussions with governors, legislative leaders, industry leaders and business community leaders take place years before any specific proposal surfaces for public discussion. Often these discussions have as much to do with the overall strategy and execution of getting a plan passed as with the actual financial details of the highway funding plan itself.

This is where we find ourselves today. So when you hear or read about the next funding proposal, remember the work of that man behind the curtain!



Ed DeSoignie  
HCA Executive  
Director

## Confluence of Calamities?

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Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP) expires on July 1, 2009; and Amendment 3's financial boost for the Missouri Department of Transportation ends on July 1, 2010. One of

**“We need to educate the public about the real dangers of failing to invest in our roads and bridges. We must take that same message to legislators at all levels.”**

the most familiar terms to any business person is “cash flow.” When it comes to our industry, which is so strongly tied to public works, a large part of the flow is from government programs. Here we have three major streams potentially drying up.

We have to get to work to make sure that needed public works funding is provided in the years ahead. We need to educate the public about the real dangers of failing to invest in our roads and bridges. We must

take that same message to legislators at all levels. And, perhaps most importantly, we need to seek out and support candidates who understand it's vital to not only continue but increase funding for public works projects. Getting this done successfully will require the help and involvement of all of our members and allies.

I'm a NASCAR fan, so let me wrap up with a racing analogy. The “Heavies” are accustomed to setting the pace. Some choose to take advantage of that to “draft” behind us, benefiting from work on the projects for which we've secured funding, or from the economic development

that those projects generate. But we can't worry about those behind us. In the months ahead, we'll be putting the pedal to the metal in the race to secure future funding. We plan to win that race and, just like any race, the top finishers get a larger piece of the purse, making membership in this winning team more valuable now than ever.

My inaugural column as president of the Heavy Constructors Association would not be complete without comment on two other matters. First, I am honored to be serving in this role and I appreciate this opportunity. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to my predecessor, John O'Donnell, for all of his hard work over the past two years – work we plan to build upon as we move forward.

The next two years are critical for all of us. I hope you'll join me in helping the Association shape them into productive, prosperous years we can all be proud of.

*Greg Kaaz*  
HCA President

# No Audible This Time, But a Great Handoff

The last time the Heavy Constructors Association tried to bring in a pro-golfer-turned-TV-analyst for the annual banquet, we wound up with a legendary football coach – a great audible call if there ever was one. This year, we were able to stick with the original play-call as David Feherty spoke to more than 400 attendees gathered at the Kansas City Marriot Downtown for the 58th Annual HCA Banquet.

Like Gary McCord, last year’s originally scheduled speaker, Feherty is a former tour pro now working as an analyst for CBS. And like his colleague, Feherty is known for his edgy, sometimes controversial sense of humor. The great lines were flying off the tee all night, and his performance was on par with our best-ever speakers.

Other highlights of the evening included the showcase of member accomplishments

in the past year, headlined by the massive “Untangling the Triangle” project. And, of course, Past President John O’Donnell officially handed the reins off to President Greg Kaaz for the next two years.

Thanks go out to Feherty, our members and their families in attendance for making the event better than ever. ■



David Feherty kept the audience laughing as he shared stories about his life on and off the links when he was a professional golfer, how he became a commentator for CBS and whether or not Tiger Woods is human.



Immediate Past President John O’Donnell thanked the Association members for their commitment to “making it better” and for their contributions of time and money to various campaigns and causes during his term. O’Donnell is holding the plaque he received expressing the Association’s appreciation for his hard work over the past two years as president.



The Heavy Constructors Association’s 58th Annual Banquet took place Feb. 13 at the downtown Marriot with featured speaker David Feherty, former professional golfer and current golf analyst for CBS. More than 400 guests attended the event.



President Greg Kaaz told the audience that the Association has its work cut out for it over the next two years because three of the largest sources of highway and bridge funding are set to expire by 2010. (See the president’s column for more on this issue.) Calling it a potentially crippling “one-two-three combination,” he urged members to contact their elected officials about the importance of the funding programs.



Thanks, Bill! Bill Markey (left) was honored for his service as the Association’s representative on the Kansas City, Mo., Fairness in Construction Board for a dozen years. Association Executive Director Ed DeSoignie presented the plaque.

# Consider It Untangled!

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eastbound and westbound I-470 and added new ramps connecting Route 71 to I-435, I-470, Red Bridge Road, Longview Road, Hickman Mills Drive and Blue Ridge Boulevard. The final phase, completed in December, replaces mainline Route 71 from Bannister Road to Blue Ridge Boulevard. A new Longview Road and

really heavy on timing, preparation and coordination, and MoDOT was very open to any suggestions that helped get the job done better and quicker.”

“An interesting thing about the jobs we took, they were all incentive/disincentive projects,” Clarkson said. “I have to give MoDOT credit here. They made it tough on contractors, with quite a bit of night and



An antique car was part of the celebration, reminding everyone of US-71's historic contribution to the metro area's transportation network.

bridge over Route 71 will be completed by summer, and roundabouts will be built at Longview and the collector ramps flanking Route 71 between Red Bridge and Blue Ridge.

The project was designed by HNTB Corp., and the total cost, including construction, right of way acquisition, utility relocation and design, was about \$300 million.

## Timing, Coordination Critical

Though Untangling the Triangle wasn't a design-build project, it certainly had the elements of one.

“We were designing while we built in phases,” said Steve Porter, MoDOT's senior community relations specialist. “That allowed us to move more quickly, but involved lots of logistical challenges and a lot of confidence in the designers and contractors. We were trying to build a whole new interchange and keep the old one functioning.”

For APAC, the challenge was removing the original bridges and constructing the new ones. “We couldn't just close the highway to put a bridge up. We had to drop it in overnight and get ready for traffic in the morning,” Mangas said. “The jobs were



Local high school students bury a triangle – a musical instrument – to symbolize the end of the Grandview Triangle and the beginning of 3-Trails Crossing Memorial Highway. The project was designed by HNTB Corp. Prime contractors included Clarkson Construction Co. and APAC-Kansas, Inc. Total cost for the project, including construction, right of way acquisition, utility relocation and design, was about \$300 million.

weekend work, but we got it done a year ahead of schedule.”

It was six long years rather than seven, but it didn't take Kansas Citians long to notice the safer, more efficient flow of traffic through what was once the dreaded “Triangle.”

“The public was very skeptical in the beginning, but now they really appreciate the work,” MoDOT's Wright said. “Six months after the project's completion, we continue to get calls and e-mails from people who are delighted with how quickly they can now move through the area in peak times. I think it's a project the entire community can be proud of.”

Now, that's what we call *Making It Better*. ■

## Mark Your Calendar

### Kansas Legislature

- Session scheduled to adjourn April 12
- Veto session approximately 2½ weeks after last day of regular session
- Sine Die: TBA

### Missouri General Assembly

- Session ends May 16 at 6 p.m.
- Adjournment per constitution May 30
- Veto session: Sept. 10

### HCA Events

- Monday, May 5: 9th Annual Don Clarkson Classic Golf Tournament and HCA Safety Awards Reception. Shadow Glen Golf Club, Olathe, Kan.
- Saturday, May 31: HCA Employee Night at the Royals (vs. Cleveland Indians), 6:05 p.m.
- Monday, Sept. 29: SAVE THE DATE – 17th Annual HCA Affiliate Golf Tournament at the National Golf Club, Parkville, Mo.

### KDOT Lettings

- Wednesday, April 16
  - Wednesday, May 21
  - Wednesday, June 18
- All at 1 p.m. in the 4th floor auditorium of the Eisenhower State Office Building, 700 Harrison St., Topeka. For latest information, visit: [www.ksdot.org/burconsmain/lettinginfo.asp](http://www.ksdot.org/burconsmain/lettinginfo.asp)

### MoDOT Lettings

- Friday, April 25
  - Friday, May 23
  - Friday, June 20
- All at 10 a.m. at the Missouri Department of Transportation General Headquarters, 105 West Capitol, Jefferson City. For latest information, visit: [www.modot.org/business/contractor\\_resources](http://www.modot.org/business/contractor_resources)

« Important notice: MoDOT no longer does a public reading of bids, but does make hard copies of the apparent bids available at its headquarters as soon as they are complete. See the following link for a helpful guide to viewing apparent bids: [www.modot.mo.gov/business/contractor\\_resources/bid\\_opening\\_info/bidGenInfo.shtml](http://www.modot.mo.gov/business/contractor_resources/bid_opening_info/bidGenInfo.shtml)

### AGC Events

- May 20-21: Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) Fly-In, Washington, D.C. More info is at [www.agc.org](http://www.agc.org). Go to *Programs and Events* and then *Meetings and Events*.

# Making It Better

## Bridging 23rd and American Royal Drive



Heavy Constructors Association Contractor Member L.G. Barcus and Sons, Inc., was the prime contractor on the rehabilitation of the 23rd Street Bridge at American Royal Drive for the City of Kansas City, Mo. Photos©P-Tn.com, used by permission.

## Winning Awards in Lenexa



A collaborative project to improve 87th Street Parkway and I-35/US 69 in Johnson County was honored as the 2007 National Achievement Award (State) winner by the National Partnership for Highway Quality. KDOT, the City of Lenexa, the City of Overland Park, Heavy Constructors Association Contractor Member Clarkson Construction Co. and the designer, Parsons America, were honored for their joint partnering effort on the \$66 million project. The project is shown under construction in 2007 (top) and with the completed signature overhead truss (bottom) constructed by Association Member Collins and Hermann, Inc., which also handled the decorative fencing and guardrails.

## Improving the 'View



City, state and county officials attended the Dec. 20 ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating improvements to College Boulevard from Ridgeway Road to Woodland Road in Olathe, Kan. Gavin Barmby, president of Pyramid Contractors and Association Vice President, is second from the left.



Heavy Constructors Association Contractor Member Pyramid Contractors, Inc., was the prime contractor on the nearly \$18 million project, which widened the road from two to four lanes and included construction of the two longest bridges in Olathe – each 622 feet long.

## Enhancing in Lansing

A ribbon-cutting ceremony in Lansing on Nov. 28 marked the completion of the Main and Mary Streets KDOT System Enhancement project. Heavy Constructors Association Contractor Member LEXECO was the prime contractor on the \$17 million project that included widening the roadway, a new bridge and new curb, gutters and sidewalks. LEXECO and Association President Greg Kaaz is pictured third from left in the front row, next to Kansas Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller. Photo courtesy KDOT.



## Diamond at Donahoo

Heavy Constructors Association Contractor Member APAC-Kansas, Kansas City Division, Reno Branch continues work on a new highway interchange at I-435 and Donahoo Road in Wyandotte County. They began work on the \$11 million KDOT project last spring and are scheduled to have it completed by November. The project includes a diamond interchange at I-435, as well as reconstructing and realigning Donahoo Road between Hutton Road and 99th Street.



# Winning Roster Announced for 2008

## *HCA's Elected Leadership Assumes New Roles*

**I**n December, the Heavy Constructors Association proudly announced the election of the following officers for 2008:

- **President:** Greg Kaaz, LEXECO, Leavenworth, Kan.
- **Vice President:** Gavin Barmby, Pyramid Contractors, Olathe, Kan.
- **Treasurer:** Jerry Wiedenmann, Wiedenmann & Godfrey Construction, Belton, Mo.

All three were elected to their positions by a unanimous vote of the board of directors on Dec. 13. The board includes five individuals recently elected by the Association's contractor members to serve as Division Directors for 2008-2009:

- Buzz Bartley (Bridge-River Division), BSC Steel, Inc., Kansas City, Mo.
- Jim Kidwell (Excavation Division), Jim Kidwell Construction, Greenwood, Mo.
- Jim Kissick (Utility Division), Kissick Construction, Kansas City, Mo.

- Robert Loch, Jr. (Concrete Division), Loch Sand and Construction, Maryville, Mo.
- Jeff Shoemaker (Asphalt Division), Holland Corporation, Lenexa, Kan.

The five Division Directors join the five At-Large Directors who are serving the second year of their two-year terms:

- John Bowen, Superior Bowen Asphalt Company, Kansas City, Mo.
- Bill Clarkson, Jr., Clarkson Construction Company, Kansas City, Mo.
- Don Godfrey, Wiedenmann & Godfrey Construction, Belton, Mo.
- George Hornung, Comanche Construction, Shawnee Mission, Kan.
- Mike Pursell, Damon Pursell Construction Company, Liberty, Mo.

Also present at the December meeting were the newly elected members of the 2008 Affiliate Committee, who were selected by a vote of the Association's Major Supplier, Supplier and Affiliate members:

- Steve Lange (Chairman), Schiffman, Remley and Associates, Mission, Kan.
- Matt McNett, Murphy Tractor & Equipment, Kansas City, Mo.
- Allan Emby, Ash Grove KC Concrete Group, Overland Park, Kan.
- Karl Schenke, Construction Anchors, Kansas City, Mo.
- Tom Quick, Cretcher-Lynch, Kansas City, Mo.



[www.constructingthefuture.org](http://www.constructingthefuture.org)



Want more information on Constructing the Future?

Check out our Web site, [www.constructingthefuture.org](http://www.constructingthefuture.org) for the latest information on the campaign.

This newsletter is brought to you by the Heavy Constructors Association. For additional information, contact Ed DeSoignie at (816) 753-6443 or [erdes@swbell.net](mailto:erdes@swbell.net).



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of Greater Kansas City  
3101 Broadway, Suite 780  
Kansas City, MO 64111

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