A Word From the President
This Infrastructure Is Important, Too

One of our Association’s most important missions is reminding people of the benefits of maintaining consistent, appropriate funding for public infrastructure. We need to repeat this message constantly because, regrettably, most of us take for granted the roads, bridges and sewer and water systems we all use every day.

We turn on the tap and water comes out. We pull out of the driveway and head down the smooth street. We get on the highway and cruise comfortably to our destination. It’s only when something goes wrong that people take notice – the water main breaks, potholes pound the suspension, or a bridge is closed. Then they start asking questions and demanding solutions. Unfortunately, by that time, the cost to fix the problem has far exceeded the expense of maintaining the infrastructure in the first place.

Last November we saw an example of another type of infrastructure that must be maintained. Metro area voters went to the polls to decide dozens of races and answer numerous ballot questions. Politics has many similarities to the situation I outlined above. (continued on page 4)

Opening Doors, One Apprentice at a Time
Women, Minorities Making Strides in Construction Workforce

“Thank you, Lord!” the man exclaimed as he walked out the door. He wasn’t leaving church, but he certainly had found a type of salvation. He wasn’t walking out of a store scratching off a winning lottery ticket, although he was on his way to making some good money. And he wasn’t walking out of a hospital cured of some disease, even though he was healed in a very real way.

He was thankful because he’d just been referred to an apprenticeship program, the first step toward a career in construction and away from the life he’d been leading on the streets. He was walking out of the Building Trades Training Center in North Kansas City after hearing the good news from Ken Washington.

Ken’s official title is recruitment coordinator for women and minorities. He likes to relate the story above for several reasons. It shows how people react to the good wages and benefits offered in the construction trades. It illustrates how these jobs can improve the lives of people who have been disadvantaged and felt left out. The story also shows how success breeds success.

“This guy came to me because his girlfriend had gone through the training program and was working in construction,” Washington says. “She had a better job than he did, and that served as motivation for him to improve his life.”

While 2006 saw a lot of headlines in Kansas City about the need to increase women and minority workers in the construction trades, the story is old news to Washington. He’s been at the task for almost nine years – the first and only person in the position, jointly created and funded by the Heavy Constructors Association and the Builders Association.

“We’re very proud that our two associations started this program voluntarily,” says Ed DeSoignie, executive director of the Heavy Constructors Association. “We recognized the need to expand access to the great jobs and benefits of the construction industry. It didn’t take a government mandate – just common sense combined with our long-standing commitment to the community.”

“I had to start from scratch to develop a program,” Washington says. He faced two immediate tasks. The first was to understand the industry’s needs and requirements. He did that by learning about the various construction trades and developing relationships with the training coordinators for each of those trades. (continued on page 7)
Keeping an Eye on the Capitols
By Ed DeSoignie, HCA Executive Director

As HCA members read this column, they have hopefully lined up plenty of work to keep them busy during the upcoming construction season. In the meantime, both state legislatures will start their respective 2007 legislative sessions, which will continue into late spring. Bringing out the crystal ball, here are some of the issues touching our industry that we believe will come up.

Missouri
The 2008 gubernatorial election will affect any and all issues in the next two sessions of the legislature. Gov. Blunt’s re-election campaign started the day after the Nov. 7 election.

Expect to see highway funding bills filed proposing various funding schemes to address highway needs in the post-Amendment 3 period. These may range from sales tax increases to public-private partnership proposals. While it doesn’t look likely any will reach the governor’s desk for signature, expect to see a higher level of dialogue on what to do next. Also under this subject, we expect to see more efforts to send highway dollars to the Highway Patrol and Department of Revenue, freeing up general revenue dollars for other legislative priorities. We will vigorously oppose these efforts.

Prevailing wages is an issue of prime importance to our general contractor members. Anticipate a renewed effort to weaken prevailing wages in rural counties. We don’t anticipate it will succeed. Expect the Taxpayer Bill of Rights subject to come up again in bill form, but there’s pretty strong opposition to it in the Senate.

Kansas
State House majority party legislators recently held elections for leadership posts of speaker, majority leader, etc. The election of a strong conservative to the speaker’s post, Melvin Neufeld (R-Ingalls), may signal a desire by the majority to continue battling Governor Sebelius on a number of issues.

While we don’t expect to see a new highway funding plan filed in bill form, we may see appointment of an interim transportation committee to study the subject, following adjournment of the session. Like Missouri, we expect the level of dialogue on a new program to increase over prior years.

We expect the Taxpayer Bill of Rights to come up again in bill form, even though its chances of passage appear nonexistent.

Smart Moves is the bi-state plan for funding metro-wide transit that was enacted last year by the Missouri General Assembly but which never got off the ground in Kansas. Look for renewed efforts to enact enabling legislation. Chances for passage are remote in light of voter approval of the Chastain light rail plan in Kansas City, Mo.

As always, we’ll keep you posted throughout the coming weeks on any further developments. Have a prosperous 2007.

Officers, At-Large Directors Named for 2007-2008

The Heavy Constructors Association of the Greater Kansas City Area is pleased to announce the election of the following individuals to serve as Officers for 2007:

- Vice President, Greg Kaaz, LEXECO, Leavenworth, Kan.
- Treasurer, Gavin Barmby, Pyramid Contractors, Olathe, Kan.

All three were re-elected to their positions by a vote of the Board of Directors on Dec. 7, 2006. The Board includes five individuals recently elected by the contractor members of the Association to serve as At-Large members for 2007-2008:

- John Bowen, Superior Bowen Asphalt Company, Kansas City, Mo.
- Bill Clarkson, Jr., Clarkson Construction Company, Kansas City, Mo.
- Don Godfrey, Wiedenmann and Godfrey Construction, Belton, Mo.
- Mike Pursell, Damon Pursell Construction Company, Liberty, Mo.

Five Division Directors are serving the second year of their two year terms:

- Buzz Bartley (Bridge-River Division), BSC Steel, Inc., Kansas City, Mo.
- Jamie 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.

Also present at the December meeting were the newly elected members of the 2007 Affiliate Committee, who were selected by a vote of the Association’s Major Supplier, Supplier and Affiliate members:

- Matt McNett (Chairman), Murphy Tractor & Equipment, Kansas City, Mo.
- Dave Gunter, Gun-Ko Traffic Services, Olathe, Kan.
- Chris Hughes, American Riggers Supply, Kansas City, Kan.
- Steve Shondell, Heathwood Oil Company, Kansas City, Kan.
Project Prepare, a cooperative effort of the City of Kansas City, Mo., the Heavy Constructors Association, AFL-CIO, Builders Association and the Full Employment Council, is working to increase the number of minorities and women that enter the construction industry.

The project, which began in December 2005, brought 71 applicants into the preparedness program’s first class, which kicked off in spring 2006. The fall 2006 session brought 113 applicants into the program. Most have completed training and are well on their way to successful careers in their chosen trades.

Project Prepare was created with a short-term goal of filling the local pipeline with enough skilled workers to meet demand and share in the benefits of Kansas City’s booming construction activity. Its long-term goal is to equip more individuals—particularly women and minorities—with the skills required for a successful career path in the industry.

To become eligible for Project Prepare, applicants must be at least 18 years old, possess a high school diploma or GED, pass a drug-screen test and have their own transportation. The program’s six steps are as follows:

**Orientation**

The Full Employment Council provides a one-stop orientation in the program, assesses eligibility and conducts the drug screen.

**Interview Panel**

Apprenticeship coordinators from each trade conduct interviews with potential participants.

**Selection Process**

Each coordinator selects participants for training.

**AFL-CIO Orientation**

Kansas City AFL-CIO provides orientation into the pre-apprenticeship training program. Participants sign a statement that acknowledges their rights and responsibilities with respect to the program.

**Pre-Apprenticeship Training**

Students begin a six-week curriculum consisting of two parts: 1) work maturity skills training, and 2) occupational skills training.

**Apprenticeship Program**

Qualified participants enter the apprenticeship program of their chosen trade.

Project Prepare is truly a team effort by all stakeholders. Unions provide training, contractors hire trained workers, and the City funds and monitors the program. The Full Employment Council recruits and pre-screens program applicants and also recruits former trained journeymen to provide training. This mutual accountability and team approach contribute to and ensure the long-term sustainability of this unique public/private effort.

“Our first year illustrated that there is a strong desire among this target population to work in the construction industry, and Project Prepare is working to make it happen,” said Clyde McQueen, president of the Full Employment Council. “We’re now expanding and retooling it to handle the increasing pool of applicants who want the challenge and benefits these careers provide.”
New Law Makes Missouri Highways a Safer Place to Work

A new highway work zone law went into effect Aug. 28, 2006, and comes with big penalties for reckless drivers. Injuring or killing a highway worker could cost $10,000, as well as a lost license for one year.

The law also creates two new crimes: endangerment of a highway worker and aggravated endangerment of a highway worker. It also expands the definition of a highway worker to cover suppliers and delivery personnel.

Two highway workers were killed in work zones in early August, as the Missouri Department of Transportation was in the midst of its busiest-ever construction season – more than 1,000 active work zones in 2006.

“Those recent tragedies remind us of the critical importance of work zone safety,” said MoDOT System Management Director Don Hillis. “This new law will make work zones safer for motorists and highway workers.”

At an Aug. 28 news conference at MoDOT’s District 4 Headquarters in Lee’s Summit, Heavy Constructors Association Vice President Greg Kaaz spoke about the need for the strengthened law. He reminded people that in 2000, 214 MoDOT employees have been injured and seven have been killed in work zones.

The HCA was part of a working group of stakeholders assembled by MoDOT to develop the legislation and help secure its passage. Other members of that group included the AGC of Missouri, AGC of St. Louis, the Highway Patrol and MoDOT. Representatives from MoDOT, Missouri Highway Patrol and HCA of Greater Kansas City were on hand at the news conference to make remarks and answer questions. MoDOT employees involved in past work-zone incidents unveiled new informational signs detailing the stiffer fines and penalties.

This Infrastructure Is Important, Too

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Many people don’t pay attention until there’s an issue or a problem that affects them directly. Our Association doesn’t have that luxury. We must have elected officials who understand the vital role transportation and utility networks play in preserving our quality of life, protecting our safety and improving our economy. We know that unless public works funding is given a priority, many other demands can deplete the public treasury and leave little to spend on maintaining or improving infrastructure. Few of those demands are as essential to the public well-being. We need to know that the people controlling the purse strings comprehend that. The ones that do are the candidates whom our Association supports during elections.

Our ability to support candidates and campaigns is possible only because of the ongoing efforts of our Association members. Much of this is done collectively, for example, through our Local and Federal PAC funds or by arranging fund-raisers for candidates. I never cease to be amazed at the response of our members when we send out an invitation to one of these fundraisers. I know it gets both tiring and expensive, but they understand the necessity. It’s also astonishing to me, and a bit disappointing, that only the same members respond again and again. Every political success we have helps secure the future of our industry – a future we should all be fighting to protect. Together, we send a louder and clearer message than any one of us can do alone. The more of us who support that message with money and time, the more successful we can be.

So how does the political infrastructure look? In Missouri, 94.8 percent of the candidates we supported in Congressional, General Assembly and local races won. In Kansas, the candidates we supported took 89.7 percent of their races, which included Congressional, statewide (Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer and Insurance Commissioner), state House of Representatives and local contests. This is a pretty good batting average. It doesn’t mean our Association’s positions will always prevail at the city, county, state and federal levels. It does mean we have people in office who are willing to listen to what we have to say and understand the importance of our issues. That’s about as smooth a ride as we could expect, but it’s one we’ll never take for granted.
The 15th annual HCA Affiliate Golf tournament took place Monday, Sept. 25, at Milburn Golf and Country Club in Overland Park. The fine weather provided a great day on the links for the 50-plus golfers who came out. The annual event raises money for the Heavy Constructors Local PAC, and this year it added $13,000 to the PAC coffers.

Of course, the teams playing in the two-man best ball tournament were just as interested in some other numbers that day – the scores! The low score was turned in by the team of Mike Goebel and Jim Schrader (below), who shot a 59. Close on their heels were John Bowen and Kevin Mulvaney with a score of 61, and filling out the top three was the team of Kevan Fouts and Gavin Barmby (photo below) with a score of 63.

In the skills competitions:

- Danne Webb had the Longest Putt.
- Jeff Keeling had the Longest Drive.
- John Bowen took home the prize for landing Closest to the Pin.

The HCA Affiliate Committee oversees the planning of this event and its members spend a lot of time and effort finding sponsors and encouraging teams to sign up. Special thanks to those individuals: Phil McCoy, Roadbuilders (Committee Chair); Dan Beattie, BKD, LLP; Kevan Fouts, Holliday Sand and Gravel; Bill Bundschuh, Pretech Corp.; and Mike Fagan, Marino & Associates. McCoy (pictured at left with all skills competition winners) deserves added commendation for taking on the role of master of ceremonies at the reception following the tournament on short (read: no) notice.

Our thanks to the following HCA member companies who stepped up to help make the tournament a success:

**Major Sponsors**
- Dean Machinery
- Holliday Sand & Gravel Co.
- M&I Bank
- Roadbuilders
- Universal Lubricants

**Beer Cart Sponsors**
- Carter-Waters Corporation
- Central Power Systems and Services
- P.B. Hoidale Co.
- Winger and Company

**Double Hole Sponsors**
- Lockton Companies
- Precision Tractor and Equipment/Kobelco
- Pretech Corporation

**Hole Sponsors**
- BKD, LLP
- Concrete Materials, Inc.
- First National Bank of Olathe
- Thomas McGee, L.C.
- The Victor L. Phillips Co.
- Surety Association of Kansas City
- United Rentals Trench Safety

**Raffle Prize Donors**
- Roadbuilders
- Dean Machinery
- First National Bank of Olathe
- Murphy Tractor and Equipment Co.
- BKD, LLP
Most of us are familiar with the old saw, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” Few people exemplify this mantra better than Gary McCord, who went through 23 years and 422 tournaments on the PGA Tour without nabbing a single victory. Thanks to his optimistic attitude, however, he managed to turn those years of mediocrity into outstanding success in other aspects of the world of golf. The man who couldn’t win a tournament is now a golf celebrity, working as a television commentator, instructor, author, speaker and even actor.

“Life is full of ups and downs, good and bad, but it wouldn’t be fun any other way,” McCord says. A man of good humor, he boasted a “NO WINS” license plate for years to poke fun at his own less-than-glamorous career as a professional golfer.

“Trapped in the headlights of bankruptcy,” as he liked to describe it, McCord pursued other avenues in golf and found himself launched into the world of broadcasting. He scored big when a CBS executive tossed him a headset and asked him to do commentary, with only 15 minutes to prepare. A friend of failure, McCord jumped in with no fear and impressed CBS with his performance.

Eighteen years later, McCord is still providing color commentary for CBS, in addition to competing on the PGA Champions Tour, where he finally notched not one but two tournament wins in 1999. Fans and critics alike praise him for his knowledgeable perspective, refreshing humor and sometimes-irreverent wit toward a game that is known for taking itself too seriously.

McCord will bring that sense of humor and his unique viewpoints to the 57th Annual HCA Banquet on Feb. 22, 2007. The event will take place at the Downtown Marriott in Kansas City, Mo. Watch for invitations in your mailbox in early 2007!

Making It Better

Top Left: The new 127th St. overpass over I-35 and the BNSF train tracks in Olathe officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, Dec. 21, 2006. HCA member company Pyramid Contractors was the prime contractor on the job, and Pyramid’s president, Gavin Barmby (third from left), was singled out for praise by Olathe Mayor Mike Copeland for getting the project done not only on budget but 11 months ahead of schedule. HCA members O’Donnell and Sons Construction; Hayes Drilling; Beemer Construction Co.; and Gun-Ko Traffic Control were all major subs, and a number other HCA members also worked on the project. In addition to Mayor Copeland, Congressman Dennis Moore and Johnson County Chair Annabeth Sumbaugh spoke at the event.

Bottom Left: After the ribbon cutting, the Mahaffie stage coach was the first ‘vehicle’ to cross the bridge – providing a visual example of how transportation has played a vital role in both Olathe’s past and present. The overpass is expected to help relieve traffic congestion on Santa Fe and 119th Street. The city of Olathe says studies indicate the new overpass will reduce east/west travel times by 10 minutes for all drivers in Olathe.

Above: Heavy Constructors Association member Clarkson Construction continues working on the $149 million Kansas City Convention Center Ballroom Expansion in downtown Kansas City, Mo. Clarkson is responsible for building the platform over Interstate 670, the Ballroom’s steel structure, and new bridges at Central Street and Wyandotte Street. (The old bridges were demolished in February 2006 for the project.) The I-670 roadway improvements underneath the Ballroom include new tunnel lighting, pavement realignment, concrete safety barriers and road widening. The Ballroom Expansion is expected to be complete by summer 2007.
Opening Doors, One Apprentice at a Time

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The second challenge was to figure out not only how to attract minority and women candidates, but how to make sure those candidates came into the program with their eyes wide open about both the rewards and challenges of a career in construction.

“Most of the people I talk to know that construction jobs pay well,” he says. “What many don’t think about is that it is a tough job. Sometimes it’s cold, sometimes it’s hot, sometimes you may not have work, you always have to show up on time, and you always have to show up drug free.” He thinks it’s important they see the entire picture before making a decision. “I lay it all out for them,” he adds. “Getting that good paycheck requires time and sacrifice.”

Washington knew the message he had to convey, but he also needed conduits for the message, a network of contacts that would connect him to people who might be interested in and benefit from construction careers. He began by linking up with, as he puts it, “any agencies where you find a lot of people,” such as schools, the “Y,” the Full Employment Council, neighborhood organizations, correctional facilities, etc. His network now numbers more than 40 agencies, both public and private. They refer people to him or provide him with a place to spread the message, whether it’s a classroom or a career fair.

Once he finds interested people, he gives them what he calls a “personal application.” As Washington explains, “It’s a test of sorts that shows how well they pay attention to detail, their ability to communicate, and so on.” He says it also helps him determine what kind of assistance they may need before moving on to the next steps, whether it’s improving math or communication skills, arranging child care or reliable transportation, or getting help with a substance abuse problem. His goal is to deliver candidates to the apprenticeship programs that have been “pre-screened” and who will be most likely to succeed. Washington’s success rate has been good. The number of women and minority workers has increased from 19 in 1998 to 55 in 2005. (Those numbers represent 13 crafts – Carpenters, Painters, Iron Workers, Glaziers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Floorcoverers, Roofers, Laborers, Sheet Metal Workers, Plumbers/Pipefitters, Electricians and Operating Engineers.)

Washington says increasing the numbers further means confronting some enormous challenges, some of which apply to recruiting, retention or both:

**Getting the word out.** Recent media campaigns and Washington’s networking have helped bring in people, but he says many are still unaware of the free training programs.

**Finding people who have, or are willing to adopt, a solid work ethic.** Washington is quick to point out this problem isn’t confined to disadvantaged populations. He says many young people these days have trouble understanding that a job is a commitment – you have to go to work every day and be there on time. It’s especially important in construction, with contractors needing crews on the job to maintain project schedules.

**Transportation.** This is a major obstacle facing many who come to see him. Construction work is not the kind of job you can ride a bus to or rely on family and friends to pick you up and drop you off. Having a reliable car is vital to get to the job site, but many of the candidates can’t afford one.

**Child care issues.** This confronts mostly women but some of the men, too. Washington says it’s hard to find child care providers that open early enough and/or stay open late enough.

**Lack of mentors or role models.** Washington points out that economically disadvantaged people who have been that way for a long time are not used to dealing with the pressures and problems of any workplace. Someone who has never had to negotiate his or her way among co-workers, deal with supervision or adhere to schedules and standards can be overwhelmed. The conditions, traditions and attitudes prevalent on construction sites can compound this problem. Having someone to talk to whom you can trust and who’s been there and gone through it can make a huge difference. Right now, too few in the workplace meet those criteria.

**Drug use.** It’s a scourge that crosses all social and economic boundaries, but in disadvantaged communities it can be an even greater problem. Washington says he’s seen many cases where candidates will pass the initial drug screening to get into the program but are unable to stay clean once they’re working.

“When they’re faced with the choice of momentary pleasure or a long-lasting, secure job, all too often they’ll make the wrong choice,” he says. Better education and counseling that includes confidence building, tactics for handling stress and decision-making strategies all would help.

Despite the challenges, Washington remains optimistic about the future for women and minorities in the construction trades, an optimism bolstered by the success of the people who’ve made it. People like the young man who came to him wanting to get into an apprenticeship program but who had never graduated high school. (Candidates must have graduated high school or have a General Equivalency Diploma [GED] to enter the training program. They also must be at least 18.) Washington told him that if he did what it took to get his GED, Washington would do what it took to get him the tools he needed to start his first job. It took the man two years to complete his GED, but he did it, and Washington got him his tools. The man is now working as a bricklayer.

And, of course, there’s the man whose story began this article. He’s one of 14 people from the program who are working today as operating engineers. Washington referred 15 to that training program, and all but one completed it successfully. It’s tough to beat a record like that, but you can be sure Ken Washington will keep trying.
Mark Your Calendar

KDOT Bid Lettings
Wednesdays, Jan. 17, Feb. 21 and March 21. All at 1 p.m. in the 4th floor auditorium of the Eisenhower SOB, 700 Harrison St., Topeka. For the latest bidding information, visit www.ksdot.org/burconsmain/lettinginfo.asp.

MoDOT Bid Lettings
Fridays, Jan. 26, Feb. 23 and March 30. All at 10 a.m. at the Missouri Department of Transportation General Headquarters, 105 West Capitol, Jefferson City. For the latest bidding information, visit www.modot.org/business/contractor_resources.

Missouri Highway and Transportation Committee
• Wednesday, Jan. 11
• Tuesday, Feb. 7
• Wednesday, March 8

HCA Events

AGC Events
• March 21-24, Annual Convention, San Antonio, Texas
For details on these and all AGC meetings, visit www.agc.org

Legislative
• Jan. 3, Missouri General Assembly convenes
• Jan. 8, Kansas Legislature convenes

Elections
Kansas City, Mo. – Mayor and City Council
• Filing deadline: Jan. 30
• Primary election: Feb. 27
• General election: March 27

Want more information on Constructing the Future?
Check out our Web site, 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.

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www.constructingthefuture.org

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