Melinda Wood Allen didn’t anticipate that she would find her voice in the construction industry. “Not at all,” Melinda, president and CEO of Allen & Company Environmental Services, says. “The way I got my start in this business is working for my husband, Bob. Initially, I worked for him before we were dating. I was a schoolteacher and had summers free. He asked if I would work in the office and even worked on larger jobs later, Melinda began helping more at the office and were fulfilled knowing that their work was making a difference.

When general contractor Adolfson & Peterson Construction was contracted to build the three-story, 5,150-sf Park Hill Medical Office Building and Ambulatory Surgical Center in Fort Worth, they knew the deadline would be tight. From the moment of the April 2014 groundbreaking, the race was on to meet the project’s December completion date. Weather, unfortunately, doesn’t always appreciate the urgency of deadlines. Fortunately, the entire team – including developer LandPlan Development Corp. of Frisco, Ascension Group Architects in Arlington and the project’s many quality subcontractors – did.

“All in good health

From a contractor’s perspective, we face big challenges when there’s inclement weather or weather delays – snow, rain or muddy days. However, A&P overcame these issues and challenges of the project and came in on time and within budget. It was built on an extremely fast-moving schedule, but across the Metroplex and especially in Fort Worth we would hear about how quickly Park Hill was going up, especially with the [weather] delays.” Ortiz gives special credit to the project’s subcontractors. “Our subcontractors are definitely one of the main reasons why we finished so strong,” he says. “We collaborated with the subcontractors daily. We brought them into our schedule sessions and got their input on the schedules – they actually buy in on the schedules and hold our members accountable to meet dates. Then...
Daryl Shelton, RDO Equipment Co.’s Vice President of Texas, says the wait for the company’s newest location in McKinney is finally over. “It’s been very anticipated,” Shelton explains. “Overall, for customers, it’s just been a matter of ‘When are you going to build it? We can’t wait for you to be operational in McKinney!”

The company’s seventh store in Texas, located at 2902 S. Central Expressway, was worth the wait. Built on 10 acres, the 38,000-sf facility will be the largest location service-wise, with 16 service bays. The store promises to offer full product support, providing everything: Repair, preventative maintenance, certified welding, line boring, as well as its full line of John Deere equipment.

“We also carry parts inventory commensurate with the Irving and Fort Worth locations and offer full support coverage with customer service advisors, sales professionals and a full management staff,” Shelton says.

McKinney proved to be the perfect spot for the latest addition, with its position in the northern growth corridor of RDO Equipment Co.’s territory. “We service basically from the Red River down I-35 to Laredo with the new North Texas location adding additional coverage and support capacity for a rapidly growing north Texas,” Shelton says. “We also want to be able to service both the areas north of Fort Worth and north of Dallas, but still be on a major thoroughfare on Highway 75. We know there continues to be substantial growth plans for all of north Texas and our investment in expanding locations allows us to partner with employees and build customers for life.”

Shelton says easy access to Highway 75 (and, in turn, back down to the Sam Rayburn Tollway) and from the Lewisville area is ideal for transporting heavy machinery for the rental business. Also, another full sales and rental servicing location in North Texas “bodes well for our customer base as well as RDO Equipment Co.”

RDO Equipment Co. is pleased to be a part of and economically impact the McKinney community, just as it has in the company’s other locations. While some of the store’s 50 employees will be transferred from other locations, most will be locally hired.

Jim Carell is the new store’s sales manager, Steve Staples is parts manager and Daniel Pompa serves as lead parts.

Now, the wait is for the store’s grand opening, which is being planned for the spring.

With 70 locations across nine states, and seven of those locations in Texas, RDO Equipment Co. sells and services heavy equipment brands for several markets, including construction. –mjm
Ever since Fortune Magazine created its “100 Best Companies to Work For” list in 1998, construction companies have jockeyed for a position among the various industries represented. This year, six construction companies with a Texas presence have been recognized with the distinctive honor.

Dallas-headquartered TDIndustries (TDI), which has secured “All-Star” status because it has made the list every year, was ranked #83. With offices in Austin, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Weslaco, the company, which offers facility services and mechanical construction, earned #82 last year.

For the ninth year, upscale homebuilder David Weekly Homes has been included in the Top 100, and was named #14 for the 2015 list. Last year, the company, which is headquartered in Houston and includes offices in Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth and San Antonio, held the #13 position.

Employee-owned engineering and architecture firm Burns & McDonnell has enjoyed five years (four of them consecutive) on the Top 100 list; this year, the firm, which has offices in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston, took the #15 spot after holding 14th place in 2014.

Design consulting firm Kimley-Horn and Associates skyrocketed to #25 from the 73rd slot this year. This is the eighth year on the list for the national firm, which has offices in Austin, Bryan/College Station, Collin County, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Las Colinas, Lubbock and San Antonio.

The nation’s sixth largest contractor, PCL Construction, was ranked #67 after holding the #59 spot in 2014. The group of independent construction insurance companies with Dallas and Houston offices has enjoyed 10 consecutive years on the list.

Fortune Magazine welcomed a new-comer to the 2015 “100 Best Companies to Work For” list: specialized construction toolmaker Hilti. Breaking in at #89, the company has Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth and San Antonio offices.

Since Construction News’ Dec. Spotlight feature on CG Environmental – Cleaning Guys’ Ebola cleanup, readers have asked for an update on the environmental spill cleanup company. Are they still in the news? Are they back to work? The answer is yes and yes. When they aren’t busy cleaning up construction’s most hazardous spillage, they’re still in the media, as they were on Mar. 19 when they reenacted the Ebola cleanup for CNBC. Don’t worry, though, they’ll never let fame go to their Hazmat masks.
Holly Green, president of Brettco Roofing, feels right at home among the men of the construction industry—that’s probably because, growing up, she had to hold her own among a family of boys. However, she also counts the women in her family among her greatest influences. Either way, she knows how to handle herself, whatever side of her the occasion calls for.

‘I’ve known you for about a year now, Holly, and I’m always struck by your strong, fun and independent spirit. Did your family and childhood have anything to do with that?’

‘I was born and raised in Carlsbad, N.M. My dad was a potash miner, my mom did hair, and I have a brother who’s a little bit older than I am—although he sometimes likes to say I’m older! My biggest influences were my mom, who later got her Master’s degree, and became a schoolteacher and was appointed by the governor to review the early childhood development program for the state of New Mexico; my aunt, who taught at Tarrant County College; and my grandmother, who was a single mom of three. I was the only girl in the family in my generation. With me being the only girl, I was taught how to always properly set a table and how to be a lady, but I liked hanging out with my brother and three male cousins so I had to hold my own! I did mostly what the boys did and was a tomboy. I played volleyball and golf, shot BB guns, rode horses and three-wheelers, learned how to drive on the ranch at a very young age and worked cattle. I always wanted to be on short socks and tennis shoes and go run the neighborhood, build forts, throw on some shorts and tennis shoes and go up and down the mountains.’

‘It sounds like a fun childhood!’

‘It was, but we were all taught discipline and work and that nothing was for free, that we had to work to earn what we wanted—all good things. My grandparents lived in Roswell, NM and I got to go up there quite a bit, and my granddad always made us work while we were there. I would have to mow the lawn for a quarter an hour, which was big money back then! He had these beautiful apple trees that I had to pick.’

‘Your granddad would also deliver the New Mexico Statesman, and I would weep rows in the garden for a quarter a row, which was big money back then. He would print coupons for me and in the afternoons we would have to go pick up the ones that didn’t sell and then in the afternoons we would have to pick up the ones for the next day to deliver them.

‘I spent a lot of time in a really cool El Camino with my granddad, zooming up and down the mountains.

‘Being from New Mexico, how did you come to settle in Fort Worth?’

‘I went to college at New Mexico State University and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in business administration with an emphasis in public relations and graphic design. I could have stayed a couple of more semesters to get a finance degree, but I opted out. I was at that point where I was burnt out and ready to head out to the real world.

‘Growing up, I would come and stay with my aunt here. She has a group of really close-knit friends who are all very successful and talented. It was nice to already have a network of extended family here, which made for an easy transition for me to come to the Metroplex area.

‘Did you start working in construction right away, or did you pursue another career?’

‘My first big corporate job was for the North Texas Division of the Southland Corporation, which owned 7-Eleven. I was hired in the corporate department under the buyers, and my ultimate goal was to be a buyer. I worked there for two or three years under a buyer and in the gasoline department. My primary job handled pricing, signage and promotions for every store. When TikTok first came out, I contributed the “Feeding Frenzy” idea. It was really fun; I got to use my creative side, yet had to use my analytical side too.

‘I finally went out into the field into the merchandising department. I was there for about 1990, and at that time, I decided it was time to change careers. When Ticketmaster first came out, I contributed an idea. It was really fun; I got to use my creative side, yet had to use my analytical side too.

‘I’ve also made a lot of relationships and all of that kind of stuff, you had to do what the guys had to do and work as a team.

‘In my crews, we work as a team. I have multiple composition crews, a metal crew, a flat roofing crew and a tile crew, and we all work together. And, they’re all guys I have worked with in the industry since the beginning. They’re family to me, that’s why I know the roofing system.

‘For instance, my lead guy, Roberto, has worked for me for 25 of the nearly 27 years we have been in business. His son is now 25 and is now a commercial roofing installer for me.

‘You mentioned your strong role models growing up. I’m curious, how did you also become a role model for the people you’ve met through the associations to which you belong? Can you share more about that?’

‘Four years ago, I joined the Fort Worth Chapter #1 of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) and the North Texas Roofing Contractors Association (NTRCA). At that time, there were some changes happening in my life; I had become single and thought I might need some guidance.

‘NTRCA was actually a good fit for me. I’m glad that I have joined it, glad that I’m a part of it, it’s made me a stronger individual and has put me around some incredible talent and knowledge and some unbelievable and fun people. I think the best thing I’ve gotten out of it is that they’re not going to set you up to fail, they’re going to set you up to succeed.

‘Now, as immediate past president, I see that NAWIC really helped me through some of the worst times of my life. It’s been strengthening and has encouraged me.

‘When I joined the North Texas Roofing Contractors Association, I wanted to be in an organization of our peers. The NTRCA is a strong organization in North Texas that educates the consumer and contractors. In NTRCA we are working to improve the roofing industry through education and training. I just joined the North Texas Roofing Contractors Association of Texas (RCAT), which is a statewide roofing organization. I’m excited about the new requirements to be a member. Brettco Roofing is proud to say that we have achieved these requirements. Before I got involved in these organizations, I never knew what a benefit it was to be a member. They’re not going to set you up to fail, they’re going to set you up to do good for me; I was on job sites and outside meeting different people and learning roofing systems.

‘And now you own your own roofing business! Being in business, how do you approach directing all-man crews?’

‘I’ve really strong female role models, but I had really strong males in my life, too—my dad, my granddad, my uncle, my brother, my cousins. The way I deal with men (in construction) is how I deal with any man. My father and granddad always said you look people straight in the eye, shake their hands firmly and stare in ground when you know you’re right and admit when you’re wrong. They taught me if you can’t back it up better than that. Basically, my father was very adamant that I may have been a girl, but there is not one thing out there that I couldn’t do.

‘It sounds like you learned a lot. How did you bring your experience and all of that kind of stuff, you had to do what the guys had to do and work as a team.

‘In my crews, we work as a team. I have multiple composition crews, a metal crew, a flat roofing crew and a tile crew, and we all work together. And, they’re all guys I have worked with in the industry since the beginning. They’re family to me, that’s why I know the roofing system.

‘For instance, my lead guy, Roberto, has worked for me for 25 of the nearly 27 years we have been in business. His son is now 25 and is now a commercial roofing installer for me.

‘When you’re working or attending association events, what do you do for fun?’

‘I go to church every week with my family at First Presbyterian downtown Fort Worth; I love to travel; I love to shoot motorsports; I’ve shot for NASCAR, and have been published in Sports Illustrated and NASCAR Scene. I did a photo shoot for The Star-Telegram of the saddles commissioned to beooled and built for Prince Charles and Camilla. I’ve shot a lot of Western stuff and a couple of weddings, but now I’m kind of taking it more to the artistic side and I had my first gallery showing at the Fort Worth Community Center in December! I am taking my photos to another level and put them on canvas and do them on a bigger media than normal. My goal this year is to take it bigger and my ultimate goal is to one day have a gallery showing in a museum.

‘What are your favorite subjects to shoot?’

‘My favorite things that I shoot now are the trips that I take to Italy and to France. I love architecture photos anywhere; I guess I’m a lot out of town. I am currently shooting different types of architecture.

‘What’s in your future for Holly Green?

‘The next few years, I’m working towards being a woman-owned certified WBE, and I’m working on getting my HUB. I’ve already gotten my company to the point where I can do that.

‘I’d also like my company to become more of a specialty type and possibly take in consulting. I did the rat race for a long time, and the one thing I want to do is pass the information along, teach people how to manage their time and how to actually live a life outside of their work.

‘Brettco Roofing in Fort Worth provides installation and maintenance of premium roofing systems and rain guttering, including commercial installation, maintenance and repair of low-slope roofing systems, including TPO, EPDM and modified rolled roofing. -mjm
It was a very bright way to start a rainy morning! On a misty Mar. 20, hundreds of construction industry members gathered in an Omni Dallas Hotel ballroom for the Regional Hispanic Contractors Association’s 8th annual Pillar Awards Breakfast. The event recognized construction companies that have been true pillars of building strength in the industry. Five awards were presented at the RHCA event: Public Entity of the Year, General Contractor of the Year, Subcontractor of the Year, the President’s Award and Project of the Year.

Attendees were also given commemorative coffee mugs to honor both the occasion and RHCA’s 20th anniversary this year. Topping off the event, three lucky guests found a sticker at the bottom of their mugs, which won them their pick of a brand new General Motors Chevrolet to use free for one week.

Public Entity of the Year: Parkland Health & Hospital System
General Contractor of the Year: Turner Construction Company
Subcontractor of the Year: KPOST Company
President’s Award: KPOST Company
Project of the Year: Parkland Acute Care Hospital

Guard-All Building Solutions president Dot Haymann credits her dad for the reason she “grew up different” from many girls. “My late father was an engineer, so growing up I was always very much involved when we would talk about a project he was working on,” the South African-born Haymann says. “Many girls don’t know what an engineer is or does. I remember being a teenager and my father was building a welding machine in the garage, and I saw it firsthand. I like technical stuff. At university, I started out doing biochemistry; I like the math and science part of it.”

Haymann moved to the United States 37 years ago, claimed Dallas as her home and, with her husband, created businesses ranging from jewelry to shade product manufacturing. She founded Sun Port International 20 years ago to cater to recreation markets and then merged with a California company to become USA SHADE & Fabric Structures. In 2011, she sold the company and founded Made in the shade Dallas-based Guard-All Building Solutions, which designs, engineers and manufactures freestanding, steel-framed tension buildings clad in waterproof fabric.

Haymann’s woman-owned, HUB-certified business perfectly combines her love of engineering with being a businesswoman. “I like the challenge every day of coming to work, meeting different people and being involved in projects where the clients are looking for aircraft hangars, large warehouses, sand and salt storage facilities, relocatable large buildings or covered tennis courts and swimming pools,” she says. “I think there are huge opportunities for women, but I think many young women and girls are intimidated the minute they hear the word ‘engineering’ or anything that they feel they have to have a math specialty in. I’ve had women intern with us. I think there are opportunities for girls and that they’ve got to take them.”

As an employer of nearly 50 workers who collaborate on projects for clients including Dallas Cowboys Stadium and the University of North Texas, Haymann is very glad she did.

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Taxable fringe benefits and self-employed health insurance

Lynda Land
Ridout, Barrett & Co. PC
San Antonio, TX

Every day, in the ordinary course of business, employers provide benefits to their employees. Some are taxable; others are not. For instance, do you know gift cards and prepaid credit cards are taxable benefits regardless of the amount on the card? That personal use of a company vehicle is taxable? What about group term life insurance in excess of $50,000? And let’s not forget health insurance. The IRS addresses these and other fringe benefits in Publication 15-8, Employer’s Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits.

Of the many benefits discussed in Pub 15-8, health insurance is the most often misreported and misunderstood. This is true, in part, because benefits are treated differently depending on whether the recipient is an employee or an owner/shareholder, and the entity is a corporation or partnership. This article focuses primarily on health insurance for shareholders of S Corporations who own greater than 2% of their corporation’s stock.

Health insurance premiums paid on behalf of a 2% shareholder through a company group health plan are taxable fringe benefits to the shareholder. The company cannot deduct premiums paid on behalf of the 2% shareholder, his spouse or dependents; nor can the 2% shareholder participate in a cafeteria plan, treating the premiums as pre-tax health insurance. Instead, the company must include the cost of health insurance in the shareholder’s wages, subject to income tax withholding; exempt from social security, Medicare and FUTA taxes. Including these benefits in the 2%-shareholder’s wages allows him to deduct the cost as an adjustment to gross income on Form 1040.

For S Corporations with one shareholder, the owner is also the sole employee, the policy can be in the name of the company or the shareholder. If the policy is in the name of the company and it pays the premiums, it must include them in Box 1 of the shareholder’s Form W-2. If the 2%-shareholder owns the policy and pays the premiums personally, he can only deduct the premiums as self-employed health insurance. If the company reimburses him and includes the premiums on his W-2, the company’s plan will not be a qualified health plan if the premiums are not paid or reimbursed by the company and included on the shareholder’s Form W-2.

Prior to the Affordable Care Act, small employers (less than 50 full-time equivalent employees) were allowed to reimburse their employees and shareholders for health insurance via the “employee payment plan,” or EPP, rather than go to the expense of setting up and paying for a group health plan. Under an EPP, the employee would purchase an individual policy, submit proof of payment and be reimbursed by the employer for the premiums. The reimbursement was treated as pre-tax health insurance, exempt from payroll taxes.

Today, this federal and state exchanges in place, EPPs are no longer permitted. In fact, continuing this practice will result in penalties of $100 per day per employee. That’s $36,500 per year, per employee. These penalties are punitive in nature and aimed at employers who directly pay or reimburse individual health insurance premiums. Because guidance on this penalty was not issued until late in 2014, the IRS recently issued Notice 2015-17. This notice provides retroactive relief for penalties for small employers who had or will have reimbursed employee paid premiums between Jan 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. Relief is also available for S Corporations that re-direct or directly pay individual health insurance premiums on behalf of the 2% shareholders. If the premiums are paid between Dec 31, 2015, unless the premiums are paid through a company-sponsored group health plan.

The health insurance debate will continue for many years. It is imperative that business owners and employees understand the rules to maximize their benefits and minimize potential penalties. If you have questions about self-employed health insurance or other fringe benefits, contact your CPA. We are here to help you.

Lynda Land is the Manager of the Small Business Services department of Ridout, Barrett & Co., PC, and a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Texas Society of CPAs.

Take steps to protect your family business

Jesse Abercrombie
Edward Jones
Dallas, TX

There’s nothing more important in the world to you than your family. However, your family-owned business probably helps support your family. So, when it comes to protecting both your family and your business, you need to carefully consider your moves.

As you know, you face plenty of challenges to keep your business running smoothly — but it can be even more difficult to pass the family business on to your children or other relatives. In fact, according to the Small Business Administration, only 33% of family owned businesses survive the transition from first generation ownership to the next generation.

Why is it so hard to keep a family business intact? Sometimes, it’s because no one in the family is interested in running the business — but family businesses frequently disintegrate because of the lack of a succession plan.

To create a succession plan, your first step — and possibly the most important one — is to collect the thoughts and preferences of family members on their future involvement with your business. It’s essential that you know who wants to really do the day-to-day work and who is capable. During these conversations, you’ll also want to discuss other key business succession issues, such as the retirement goals and cash flow needs of retiring family owners and the personal and financial goals of the next generation of management.

In developing a plan for the future of your business, you will need to determine who will control and manage the business, and who will eventually own it. These decisions will depend on a variety of factors, such as the time horizon, goals and financial needs of the family members involved.

Your succession plan could be based on a family limited partnership. Under this arrangement, you, as general partner, would maintain control over the day-to-day operation of your business, but, over time, you could gift or sell limited partnership shares to your family members. And eventually, you would relinquish control of the business to whoever is going to run it.

Another component of your succession plan might be a “buy-sell” agreement, which allows you to name the buyer for your business — such as one of your children — and establish methods to determine the sale price. Your child could then purchase a life insurance policy on your life and eventually use the proceeds to buy the business, according to the terms established in the buy-sell agreement.

We’ve just skimmed the surface of techniques that might be used alone or in combination to carry out your business succession. The transfer can be complex, so you will certainly need to consult with your legal and financial professionals. It’s important that you fully understand the business and tax implications of any succession plan, as well as the financial effects of a plan on all your family members.

In any case, once you’ve created your succession plan, you’ll need to work with your legal advisor to put it in writing and communicate it clearly to all family members. Surprises are welcome in many parts of life — but not when it comes to transferring a family business.

You want to leave your family a legacy. And if that legacy is the family business, do whatever it takes to pass it on in a manner that benefits everyone involved. This will take time and planning — but it can be well worth the effort.

Jesse Abercrombie, financial advisor with Edward Jones investments, works closely with business owners and executives in the construction industry. For any questions or comments, please contact him at: jesse.abercrombie@edwardjones.com or 972-239-0852.
The 2015 legislative session (the “84th Legislature”) has already produced a number of filed bills that directly affect the construction industry. Here are some highlights (bill status as of the date of writing):

**Consolidated Insurance Programs**
HB 1206, Representative Dan Huber (R-Humble), provides modest regulation of “CIPs.” Owner-Controlled and Contractor-Controlled Insurance Programs, requires disclosure of the existence, terms and required participation in Controlled Insurance Programs before bid, and allows regulation by the Texas Department of Insurance. Referred to House Insurance Committee. Referred to Senate Business and Commerce Committee.

**Notice of Lender Default**
HB 1208, Representative Cecil Bell (R-Magnolia), Representative Jeff Leach (R-Plano) and Representative Ron Simmons (R-Louisville), requires notice of Owner default on construction loans to contractors, allowing suspension of performance upon default. Referred to House Business & Industry Committee.

**Retainage Trust Fund**
HB 1966, Representative Jim Keffer (R-Eastland), amends Texas Construction Trust Fund law, requiring retainage be escrowed for the life of a project to protect retainage for contractors and subcontractors. Alternatively, a bond could be served as security. Referred to House Business & Industry Committee.

**Worker Misclassification**
This is a hot issue - when employers do not classify workers properly as employees or independent contractors, many contend that they gain an unfair competitive advantage in bidding for public work. Misclassification of employees is being properly limited to payment of back taxes owed, plus nominal interest and a tiny penalty - not enough to deter misclassification of employees from not classifying properly. HB 434, Representative Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston), provides greater penalties for misclassification as a deterrent. Referred to House Business and Industry Committee.

**Mandatory Workers’ Compensation Insurance**
HB 689, Representative Armando Walle (D-Houston) and Representative Terry Canales (D-Edinburg), referred to the House Insurance Committee, Senate Bill 355 by Sen. Jose Rodriguez (D-El Paso), referred to Senate Business and Commerce Committee. These bills mandate workers’ compensation coverage be provided by all building and construction contractors.

**Mandatory e-Verify Participation**
Compromise bill requires contractors or subcontractors on state contracts to use an e-Verify program to verify employee information during the term of the contract with the agency, HB 889, Rep. Tony Dale (R-Cedar Park), referred to House State Affairs Committee. Companion Bill SB 401, Sen. Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown), referred to Senate Business and Commerce Committee.

**Reduced Construction-Defect Liability**
Rep. Paul Workman’s (R-Austin) HB1784 reduces contractor liability for construction defects ten percent for each project, and reduces costs for the issuance of a certificate of substantial completion. Companion bill to the House Insurance Committee. Referred to Senate Business Committee.

**Union Contracts**
Senate Bill 303, Senator Kelly Hancock (R-Tarrant County), outlaws requiring or precluding collective bargaining (union) contracts as conditions of contracting on publicly-funded, higher-education institutions. Referred to Senate Business & Commerce Committee.

**Made in the Good USA**
SB 1067, Rep. Yvonne Davis (D-Duncanville), provides that iron, steel and manufactured products to be used in state-funded construction projects must be manufactured in the United States, unless they are not reasonably available or increase the cost of the project by more than 15%. This bill has been referred to the House Economic & Small Business Development Committee.

**Sovereign Immunity Modification**
Representative Paul Workman’s HB1124 limits sovereign immunity in contract claims on state projects. This bill re-moves the $250,000 floor for state claims - it improves claims for increased costs and simplifies attorneys’ fee recovery. Referred to the House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee for Hearing.

**Contractor Licensing**
The last bill I will mention is a real doozy -- Rep. Eddie Rodriguez (D-Orlando County). It has filed HB1148, a modest little proposal requiring that all construction contractors be licensed, under the control of the Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation, and for TDLR to develop rules for the enforcement and penalties for their violation. This bill, just filed, should provide plenty of controversy in the regulatory-averse Texas political arena.

There is much to be watched in this year’s legislative session and, as always, most of the action will come in the last “run to the gavel.” Watch these pages!

**OSHA**
"Fall fatalities and injuries touch workers in all kinds of jobs across the country; it’s a broad problem that has a terrible impact on workers and their families,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. “Given the tremendous responsibility that stands behind every fall, we have a moral obligation to prevent such tragedies. OSHA has set a new goal this year to have over 3 million workers participate in the national Stand-Down from May 4 to 8, 2015. As the event expands, employers and workers are encouraged to find creative ways to grow and the full construction season begins, we hope the Stand-Down will re-focus employers and workers that fall prevention is an important part of every workplace safety plan."

"This is a great opportunity for the construction industry to demonstrate its commitment to health and safety by joining the national Stand-Down and supporting ‘Stopfalls’ efforts. That means raising awareness about fall hazards, and ensuring Americans have the information they need to take the steps necessary to prevent falls on the job site and at home."

"This national event has the potential to reach millions of workers and protect our nation’s construction workers and families. We encourage all employers and workers to find ways to participate in the national Stand-Down."

**Construction News ON LOCATION**

**Pride-full**

**CONSTRUCTION NEWS ON LOCATION**

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**Legal**

**Legislation—we are under way**

**Sewell C. “Spice” Cutler, Principal**
**Cutler-Smith PC**

**Dallas, TX**

**Pamela Lopez is proud to tell people about Inco-Sol Environmental, Inc. in Arlington. Not only does the company specialize in restoration and environmental janitorial services and federal contracting, but it’s also a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Certified.**

**OSHA**

**Stopping falls, saving lives 2014 National Safety Stand-Down to reach workers worldwide**

**Joann Natarajan**
**Compliance Assistance Specialist**

**OSHA, Austin, TX**

**Over the last 10 years, more than 3,500 workers have died from falls. In fact, falls remain the leading cause of death in construction, accounting for more than one third of deaths in the industry. If you’re involved in construction or any other work linked to ‘fall risk,’ now is the time to be familiar with these numbers. But what you might not know is that there’s a growing safety movement that focuses on saving the lives of workers through fall prevention education.**

Last year marked the first National Safety Stand-Down for fall prevention in construction, a combined effort from OSHA, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training. During the stand-down, employers and workers passed their workday to focus on preventing falls through talks, demonstrations and trainings. Due to the success of the 2014 program, this year’s Stand-Down has been extended to two weeks. OSHA’s goal is to have over 3 million workers participate in over 20,000 stand-downs from May 4 to 8, 2015. As the event expands, employers and workers are encouraged to find creative ways to grow and the full construction season begins, we hope the Stand-Down will re-focus employers and workers that fall prevention is an important part of every workplace safety plan."

**Reaching the Summit**

"Creating a new position within the company, Summit Electric Supply Company joined the company and stepped into the new role of president and COO. Before accepting the position with Summit, Jeffries was a group vice president and general manager for a publicly traded international distributor. Summit, a privately held independent electrical distributor is headquartered in Albuquerque, NM, but Jeffries' background is centered in sales, marketing, operations and technology. Last year, Summit had $421 million in sales.

For nine years, he was owner and president of his own electrical supply company. He earned his bachelor’s degree in engineering sciences from the United States Air Force Academy and his MBA from the Air Force Institute of Technology. Founded in 1977, Summit covers 27 markets across the United States and in Canada, including key growth locations in Texas, including Abilene, Austin, Beaumont, Bryan/Colllege Sta- tion, Clute, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Kenedy, La Porte, Midland, Pearshall, Pecos, San Antonio, Victoria, Waco, and of course, Houston. -- mh

Paul Jeffries, president and COO

**Construction News ON LOCATION**

**Pride-full**

"Falling falls and injuries touch workers in all kinds of jobs across the country; it’s a broad problem that has a terrible impact on workers and their families,“ said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "Given the tremendous responsibility that stands behind every fall, we have a moral obligation to prevent such tragedies. OSHA has set a new goal this year to have over 3 million workers participate in the national Stand-Down from May 4 to 8, 2015. As the event expands, employers and workers are encouraged to find creative ways to grow and the full construction season begins, we hope the Stand-Down will re-focus employers and workers that fall prevention is an important part of every workplace safety plan."

"This is a great opportunity for the construction industry to demonstrate its commitment to health and safety by joining the national Stand-Down and supporting ‘Stopfalls’ efforts. That means raising awareness about fall hazards, and ensuring Americans have the information they need to take the steps necessary to prevent falls on the job site and at home."

"This national event has the potential to reach millions of workers and protect our nation’s construction workers and families. We encourage all employers and workers to find ways to participate in the national Stand-Down."

"Paul’s perspective and skills will significantly contribute to Summit’s next phase of growth,” states Judy. “Adding Paul to the Summit team reflects our commitment to planning for Summit’s future success as part of a broadly imple- mented, companywide succession plan- ning process.”

"In Jeffries’ new position, he will over- see sales, operations, corporate credit, marketing and talent management. He will be involved with several divisions, in- cluding the international sales and mar- keting divisions, engineering, procurement, construction and the strategic accounts team.

“Summit is well-respected in every market it serves and across the industry,” comments Jeffries. “As a private compa- ny, it operates strategically and has a pro- grammatic, forward-thinking vision that gives it the ability to drive complete solu- tions. I know Summit and the values the company represents would be a natural fit for me. I’m eager to use my experience and business knowledge to deliver value-added solutions to our customers and further the company’s growth.”

With nearly 25 years of experience running various businesses ranging in size from $10 million to $800 million in annual sales, Jeffries’ back- ground is centered in sales, marketing, operations and technologies. Last year, Summit had $421 million in sales.

For nine years, he was owner and president of his own electrical supply company. He earned his bachelor’s degree in engineering sciences from the United States Air Force Academy and his MBA from the Air Force Institute of Technology. Founded in 1977, Summit covers 27 markets across the United States and in Canada, including key growth locations in Texas, including Abilene, Austin, Beaumont, Bryan/Colllege Sta- tion, Clute, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Kenedy, La Porte, Midland, Pearshall, Pecos, San Antonio, Victoria, Waco, and of course, Houston. -- mh

Paul Jeffries, president and COO

**Construction News ON LOCATION**

**Pride-full**
It took two years, countless hours of research, and a keen understanding of how the teen mind works. Now, Francine Hawkins-Alegeh’s first book, *Building Professionals: Road to Success*, has been published, released on Amazon for Kindle, and is ready for distribution to her target audience: young people who are interested in construction careers, but don’t know where to begin.

When Hawkins-Alegeh began her career in drafting and construction as a young woman, she struggled to find a mentor to guide her. Once she achieved success as founder of *Alegeh Autocad Design* and *F.D. Hawkins Painting and Remodeling*, and as senior AV Autocad designer for *ComNet Communications*, Hawkins-Alegeh vowed to help young people begin their construction careers. “I wrote this book because I mentor and work with high school students in architecture, construction and engineering fields,” she says. “They want to work in the industry, but when I ask them questions about it, they have no knowledge of it or what it takes to get there. Even in some of their classes, they don’t get enough information. I wanted to create a book that would guide them into what they needed to do.”

In the book, she addresses the different types of careers, the tools the construction industry uses daily, the degrees available, apprenticeship programs and organizations they can join that will support their careers.

Missing from the book are page numbers and complicated language. “When kids read books, they can get easily distracted; it can be too much information. I wanted it to be basic – read that, and then move on to the next part,” she says. “I didn’t put page numbers because I didn’t want kids to read the index or the table of contents and only go to [certain parts of the book]; I want them to read everything.”

Interest in her book is already growing. School administrators have purchased copies for students and the National Association for Women in Construction (of which she is a member) awarded the Amazon link to its chapters. Hawkins-Alegeh also plans to gift the book to the students she mentors. It’s her way of reassuring the next generation of construction workers that someone will be there to guide them. –mjm
Heart-stopping action on topwaters
by Capt. Steve Schultz

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Spring fishing is one of this writer’s most exciting times of the year to be on the water for several reasons. The first reason is we associate spring with warming conditions and the end of cold winter mornings. The second reason is water temperatures are reaching that magical point that most look forward to throw top water lures. Top water lures or surface plugs are by far my favorite types of lure to throw. They’re the only artificial lure that provides a visual sight when a fish attacks it. This type of fishing is by far the most exciting for me because of the heart stopping explosion that occurs when a fish attacks your plug. When a fish attacks your lure it can be at the end of your cast or five feet from your rod tip, either way it will surprise you even if you think you’re expecting it. For me every hit is as exciting as the first. With the arrival of warmer conditions to the Laguna Madre and surrounding bay it means the arrival of live shrimp at local marinas. I have already seen those white flags flying periodically at several of the marinas along the JFK Causeway. Live shrimp are by far the most popular of live baits along the Gulf coast. Using these little crustaceans under an Alameda Rattling cork can produce some constant action when drifting over grass beds with scattered pot holes. As shrimp migrate through the bay systems, so do the many species of fish that feed on them. If you’re opposed to using live bait, a soft plastic tied 18-inch behind a mauler can be just as effective. Gambler lures makes a 4-inch flap-n-shad that has become one of my favorite choices when choosing this method. Colors can vary depending on water clarity, but pumpkinsized/chartreuse and plum/chartreuse can always be relied on.

In our product section this month, we are going to put our equipment through some pretty rough conditions. Windy days are not uncommon during spring months and you can be sure there will be some days that you wished you would have stayed home. One piece of equipment that I will not have to worry about in the platform of my business is my boat. My 25-ft Majek Xtreme is by far the most reliable part of my operation and my office day after day. The folks at Majek boats have been around these waters for decades and know what it takes to build a boat to get you home safe. If you’re looking for a boat that will out perform the competition day in and day out, look no further than Majek Boats. The folks at Premier Yamaha have the full line of Majek’s to look at and test ride.

To schedule your next bay fishing trip give Capt. Steve Schultz a call at 361-813-3716 or 361-334-3105 or e-mail him at SteveSchultzOutdoors@gmail.com. Still have several days open in April although summer is filling up quick. Good luck and Good Fishing.

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Since 1981, Ken Milam has been guiding fishing trips for striped bass on Lake Buchanan in the Texas Hill Country. You can hear Ken on radio on Saturday and Sunday mornings, 6-8 AM on AM 1300, The Zone – Austin, or http://www.am1300thezone.com

Spring Break fishing results

For a lot of fishing guides, Spring Break is the fishing season opener. This is when we get to spend a lot of time on the water and get a good preview of the kind of fish we will be fishing in the coming months. After being on the water almost daily for the last couple of weeks, I can say that this is going to be a real good year!

The only bad thing about Spring Break is that it comes a little too early in the year for us to have nice settled weather in place. You never know when it will feel like a frosty winter morning or a balmy summer afternoon when you go fishing this time of year. All you can do is make do with whatever weather you get and hope the fish don't react too badly to the swings in the weather.

We did have a little rain splashing around Lake Buchanan to keep us guessing, and a tempestuous north wind that teased us and slowed down the catching. But when the weather behaved we did well.

One afternoon trip pulled two new Youth Water Body Records for Lake Buchanan! Logan Wiggins visiting from Midland with friends caught an 11.2-lb., 30.25-inch striped AND a 6.8-lb., 24.75-inch hybrid on the same trip.

Two days later, Barbara McPherson on a fishing trip with her husband Bryan, caught her first fish ever – a 46-lb. humpback blue cat just like a pro!

While the fishing might not have been consistent over Spring Break, I sure do like the trend I see here. We are marking lots of fish here on Lake Buchanan and larger fish too. The bait population is good and healthy and that's what all the fishing revolves around.

I think the increase in the general size of the fish we are seeing is largely due to the decrease of fishing pressure our lake has seen because of the bad press we get concerning the drought. If people are cautious of running their boats on a low lake, that's less people fishing and more fish having the time to grow to a larger size. That just makes fishing with a guide an even better proposition. We can put you on those fish and you don't have to risk your boat.

From what I hear from people who usually fish the white bass run on the Colorado River at Bend, the white bass once again have not been able to make their run due to low water. So I guess we will have to catch up with them around the islands this year. Crappie fishing is getting good, especially on the nice sunny days.

We are looking forward to good fishing and good times here on Lake Buchanan. We are going to be chasing the stripers and hybrids and going to focus a little more on those catfish too. I hope you can get the chance to come and join us this year! Tight lines!

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Spring Break
Wiggins' record striper. New youth record stripper
McPherson 46-pounder
Wiggins record striper. New youth record striper

L-R : Master Construction’s Don Weempe, George O’Reilly and RW Smith carted off the 1st place clay shoot prize on Mar. 19. The team won at the North Texas Chapter of the International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI)’s inaugural sporting clay event at the Dallas Gun Club. O’Reilly also won top shooter at the event, with a score of 85/100 – mjm

Submitted to Construction News
Claying to win
After competing in ABC’s 2015 National Craft Championships in Fort Lauderdale March 3-6, DynaTen’s Gary Buster decided he needed some fun in the sun. So Buster headed to the beach, and quickly realized why the South Florida town is often called “The Yachting Capital of the World.”

Boasting more than 300 miles of inland waterways and tens of thousand of registered yachts, Fort Lauderdale is homeport to the two largest cruise ships in the world, as well as the world’s largest boat show. The Intracoastal Waterway there also allows quick and scenic access to the inland waterways to the Atlantic.

Buster, who had never been to the east coast, enjoyed the parade of boats, and even had what he believes was a close encounter of the boat kind. “I was told that one yacht I saw belonged to [filmmaker/director] Steven Spielberg,” he says. –mjm

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Have an outdoor photo or story you’d like to share?
Send to:
DFWeditor@ConstructionNews.net
or call Melissa at 817.731.4823

Submitted to Construction News
Check out the trout!

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Russell Burgess, vice-president of operations for Burgess Construction Consultants Inc., caught this 16-inch rainbow trout from the Lower Mountain Fork River in Beavers Bend State Park in Broken Bow, OK. –mjm

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Happy mediums

Gary Buster
DynalEn Corp., Fort Worth
CEF Apprenticeship Program

Gary Buster says when HVAC workers meet him, their eyes light up. That’s not his ego talking, though. Sure, he’s qualified from his years of HVAC work in both San Marcos and D/FW, and he’s currently training at the Construction Education Foundation as an apprentice. But that’s not the only reason eyes are bright over the Dyna1en Corporation’s division of service employee. Buster is only 5’8” and 150 lbs. “soaking wet,” he says, which makes him the ideal candidate to shimmy into the tightest crawl spaces the crews are faced with. Fortunately, Bust- er doesn’t mind a bit.

“I remember being shoved into this little crawl space in San Marcos where there are snakes,” he says. “I’m in the attic and there’s a rattlesnake skin next to the duct I need to work on. I re -member looking around and thinking, ‘I can’t believe I love this! I actually like everything about this!’ It’s a perfect fit. It’s kind of my running joke at Dyna1en that it’s a ‘confined space’ if they ask me to get up in it!”

The 28-year-old Irving native first came to love working with his hands from his dad, who was employed in drywall and masonry. After trying his own hand at masonry after high school, Buster was then introduced to an HVAC contractor in San Marcos, where he moved in the pursuit of a romantic interest. Although the romance didn’t stick, his love for HVAC did, and upon moving back to the Me - tropolex, his father introduced him to an American Legion pal who worked for Dyna1en. Since his hiring at the mechanical and industrial contractor, he enrolled in CEF’s four-year HVAC apprenticeship program and also competed in the Na - tional Craft Competition Craft in Floridi - da last month, which he called “a great experience.” Buster says he appreciates his CEF training, and the fact that CEF “doesn’t turn away people who have been in the field but haven’t been (for- mally) educated.”

With a full workweek and CEF classes on his plate, Buster’s excited about completing his final semester this spring. He has post-graduation plans to stay busy by spending more time with his girlfriend Natasha and adding to his comic book and LEGO collection. He also anticipates plenty of crawl spaces in his future.

“I really see myself furthering the service department and honing in on the market that we’re aimed at right now—and that’s on the field level, not the office level,” he says, “I’m not there yet, but I’ll get there one day!”

Concrete reality

Salvador Rosales is living—and working—his dream.

Salvador Rosales has had his sights set on construction since childhood.

“Since I was a little kid, I knew I was going to get into construction,” Rosales, who is vice president of MSU Industries LLC, says. “I have family in construction in California that are into stucco, drywall, framing and concrete construction. I started in the construction industry when I was 17 years old and still in school. I started with a local subcontractor and worked with them for 10 years as an op -erator and foreman.”

When the owner closed the business in 2004, Rosales says he took that as his cue to start his own concrete services business.

“It was a natural step because as a foreman I had been responsible for over -seeing the jobs and turning in paper - work, so it made it a lot easier for me,” he explains. “And, actually, some of my em - ployees were my former co-workers.”

Even with all of the responsibilities he has faced running his own company for the past 11 years, Rosales continues to enjoy his work.

“One of the most important things I like about the job is when you get there, you just see an empty field and then, months later you see this very nice build -ing or parking lot in operation. For ex- ample, at Tarleton State University in Ste -phenville, we’ve been working for six years doing concrete improvements, parking, lots, sidewalks—you name it.”

Even though business is good and Rosales currently employs up to 50 work - ers, he has even bigger plans for his con- struction career that he hopes to realize.

“I want to be a general contractor eventually. I know it’s not easy, especially with all of the competition,” he says. “One of these days, we’ll get up there.”

Fort Worth-based concrete compa- ny MSU Industries LLC specializes in large commercial projects as well as drive- ways, sidewalks, retaining walls, parking lots, underground irrigation systems and more.

I t was high-fives all around Feb. 18 for HPD Architecture LLC. The Dallas ar -chitecture and interior design firm was celebrating in style at New Life Hard -woods in the Dallas Design District, fet -ing the fifth anniversary of “The Architec -ture Happy Hour,” an acclaimed monthly networking event created by HPD princi -pals Holly Hall, AIA, CAPS, Larry Pas -chall, AIA and Laura Davis, AIA. Bringing together architects, interior designers and construction industry members in -terested in making design community connections, each event is hosted at a different location to keep members com -ing back for more. The plan has succeed -ed: The event has ballooned from the 140 members at the first event to 1,960 in highest attendance, making it the 8th largest membership, making it the 8th largest active professional association in the world.

As a complement to “The Architecture Happy Hour” event, HPD authors and hosts a podcast of the same name, targeted to design professionals, clients and architecture students, “The Architecture Happy Hour” podcast is an informal discussion about architecture available on iTunes, and currently boasts 65,000 worldwide subscribers.

Davis says that when HPD launched The Architectural Happy Hour to broad -en its professional network, the princi -pals had no idea the far-reaching impact of the event would have on the design community. She says she considers it a privilege to “watch people connect with those they never would have met” be- cause of the event.

More than 175 celebrants attended the blowout and were encouraged to bring lots of business cards in the true spirit of the event.

HPD Architecture LLC was founded in 2008 as a woman-owned business special -izing in commercial and residential archi -tecture. –mjm

L-R: HPD Architecture principals Holly Hall, Larry Paschall and Laura Davis
Women in Construction (WIC) Week, which was scheduled for Mar. 1-7, almost became known as “Winter is Coming” Week! With snow and ice that threatened to white out the National Association of Women In Construction’s annual and anticipated females-in-construction festivities, it looked like the parties might be shoveled out with the powder. But never underestimate a woman’s ability to recoup and regroup. WIC Week is a time to highlight the contributions and achievements of women in the construction industry, and also to give back to the community, and the ladies had no intention of missing it. With some clever rescheduling, many of the activities were hosted at a later date and the Dallas and Fort Worth chapters were able to get their girl-power pow-wows on.

Fort Worth:

NAWIC’s Fort Worth chapter members rolled up their sleeves to start off their WIC Week on Mar. 4 by donating at the blood drive hosted at Barnsco in Fort Worth.

The winter weather cleared just enough for the ladies to enjoy a membership mixer at Fort Worth eatery Risky’s on Mar. 6. Then it was time to walk off all of that barbecue and beer on Mar. 7 with “Walk into WIC Week.” The ladies met up at Montgomery Plaza, shuttled to NAWIC’s Fort Worth headquarters and then promenaded 2.12 miles back to the Plaza. The walking workout ended with a Mexican meal and margaritas at Chuy’s.

The howls of laughter could be heard outside Fort Worth’s Diamond Oaks Country Club on Mar. 12. The chapter hosted its “Building Hope” fundraiser, complete with dinner and a fashion show of themed bras and boxers created by NAWIC members. Men and women in the construction industry sashayed and modeled such creations as “The Cowboy Baby” bra and the “Hole In One” boxer. One bra even featured .. ahem … headlights. It was a great way for the NAWIC members to show their “support” for each other and a worthy cause: all proceeds from the event went to Cancer Care Services and the NAWIC scholarship fund.

Dallas:

NAWIC’s Dallas chapter tried a “two by two” approach to get the word out about its “Kick-Off Walk” on Mar. 1 at Bachman Lake. The goal was for members to include as many people as possible, with each member telling two friends, and encouraging them to tell two friends and so on.

Bingo! On Mar. 3, the group hosted a Bingo and ice cream social to bring smiles to the faces of elderly patients at Doctors Healthcare and Rehab Center in Dallas.

They’re so vein! To help meet the need for blood transfusions for the nearly 800 patients in North, Central and East Texas, an ongoing blood drive was hosted at Carter BloodCare Centers throughout the Metroplex.

Old man winter got in the way of the women’s plans by thwarting their Mar. 4 Schooling the Scholars event, during which NAWIC members had planned to assist Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) scholars, a fast-growing group of students who are dedicated to learning about these fields. The event was rescheduled for Mar. 25.

The ladies hosted a Bingo and Ice Cream social.
What is your background in the construction industry? I came out of the military, where I managed transportation. When I was recruited from the military, I went into manufacturing, then left corporate to start my own business. I founded my company in 1995, first as a construction cleaning company. In 1996, I actually merged to general contracting. My background is concrete; I do commercial and heavy highway.

Why did you choose a career in the construction industry? Years ago, I believed I would be the builder of my own home. As I continued with the construction cleaning company the first year, I was looking out the window at all the concrete formations happening and my curiosity became stronger.

What are the benefits of women pursuing a construction career? For one thing, it teaches non-traditional skills for women, so they can learn so much more. Women in construction right now are growing very strong in number. I think the other thing with women in construction is that – and I don’t think I’m being biased when I say this – women focus on the project, because [the opportunities to build or construct something] were originally something that was not a part of our so-called traditional world.

What challenges have you faced in your career? I think the key challenge is that organizations are not so apt to take on a small construction or a very small home. There. Again, we fall back into a traditional world. We really have to prove ourselves that we can take on the work with passion and ride that throughout the project. If there’s one small contractor that’s not the case, it’s as though that stigma follows us all.

What areas do you see the most increase in jobs for women? Heavy highway is growing. This is the opportunity that I see that we can make an impact, not only on the numbers, but on the type of work that we do.

What advice can you offer women who want to pursue a construction career? I would say study it. Know exactly what you’re getting yourself into. When I say study, that means study the structural work that you’re going after. When I first started in concrete, I didn’t know a lot about it. I didn’t know all of the technical aspects behind it. So I actually spent a lot of time out on projects that I wasn’t actually doing, I just wanted to see [the processes] I would actually go out and record their [concrete] pours; even at 2 o’clock in the morning, I was out there recording all. The other key is to not to have someone else running your business.

In your experience, are more opportunities opening up for women in construction? Yes, at this particular point, I should hope that we are running the front race for the women to come. The key thing is that we stay strong, network strongly and make sure that we take the jobs that we know we’re going to be successful at.

Women in the construction industry. Yes, more and more baby boomers are leaving the workforce, there is an awareness of career opportunities for women in construction. The construction industry is experiencing a labor shortage at all levels. Add to the fact that people are able to use. I like the beauty when you look at it and it’s a beautiful structure that people are able to use. I like the beginning and the finish.

What is your background in the construction industry? I came out of the military, where I managed transportation. When I was recruited from the military, I went into manufacturing, then left corporate to start my own business. I founded my company in 1995, first as a construction cleaning company. In 1996, I actually merged to general contracting. My background is concrete; I do commercial and heavy highway.

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Many more women in construction industry

Patricia Livas, Corporate Procurement 
Turner Industries Group LLC
Corpus Christi, TX

What is your background in the construction industry? I have been in the industry for 10 years. I started as a billing clerk with Bay Ltd. on a jobsite, so it was a whole different world for me since I was coming from an area manager position, but dealing solely with check cashing and loans. I worked my way up to accounts payable supervisor and learned the different aspects that accounting involved. At the same time I was working on my Master’s degree at the University of the Incarnate Word. It was a challenge, but well worth it.

After five years with Bay Ltd. I started working for Turner Industries Group LLC as a clerk for the Construction Division manager and it came easy to me since I had already been in the field a few years. During my six months as a construction clerk, not only did I learn more about the industry, I was then offered a position as a general contractor’s Houston office, so it was a whole different world. I worked my way up to accounts payable clerk, not only did I learn even more about the industry, I was then offered a position as a construction manager and it came easy to me since I had matured in age, I understood what it was to be a manager and to make the decisions she did. It was then that I decided I wanted to go back to school and major in Psychology of Organizational Development.

What are the benefits of women pursuing a construction career? Some of the benefits would be that we can decide how far we want to go in this industry. We can learn as many skills as we want and be able to advance. What we want to achieve as women - or any individual in general - is all up to us. So many women had the mentality that a construction career was only for men, but today we are starting to see more women pursue careers in construction, i.e. construction management, renewals and retention.

What do you enjoy most about your career? I enjoy my job and the relationships that I have built with so many people in this industry and within the company I currently work for.

What specific challenges have you faced in your career? I really haven’t faced any challenges. I would like to say they are more of an opportunity to learn something new. In this industry, every day can be a new learning experience, especially when working with so many different jobites. Currently, as corporate procurement, I deal with different jobites on a daily basis in different cities and every site is a different ball game. Each site, depending on the project, has different needs and my job is not only to procure what is needed, but to fulfill the needs of the client.

What advice can you offer women who want to pursue a construction career? Don’t give up or get discouraged. We all have second-guessed our career paths and if you think a construction career is for you then go for it.

Which is more important for a construction career - education, or experience? I would have to say from what I’ve learned and seen in these 10 years in the industry that education is of importance both internally and externally, and experience is more important externally.

From a woman’s perspective, has the construction industry changed over the years? Yes, there are several opportunities for you then go for it.

What are your goals for the future? Whatever the future holds for me, I am the Team Turner advocate for the Corpus Christi area and set up multiple events for Turner employees to participate in volunteering their time and getting involved with our community. I coach youth soccer (ages 3-6) for the Corpus Christi Parks & Recreation centers.

My time is always busy and people ask, “When do I have all the time to do everything?” I try to balance my time, the key to success, I say. –cw
Dallas’ Eddie Deen’s Ranch set the stage for the Southwest’s largest diverse construction expo focused on minority and majority contractors. Sponsored by the Dallas/Fort Worth Minority Supplier Development Council, the Hard Hat 2015 Construction Expo on Mar. 3 welcomed 600 attendees to participate in roundtables, visit nearly 65 exhibitor booths, bite into barbecue and network.

Margo J. Posey, president of the Dallas/Fort Worth Minority Supplier Development Council, says the event has changed in the past 15 years to adapt to the needs of attendees.

“We separated from our normal business expo,” Posey says. “Construction folks need to be in the field as long as possible, typically. So we moved it to this time of the year but in the evening. They come meet the right people for the right opportunities.” –mjm

It’s a Hard Hat’s night

Association Calendar

Content submitted by Associations to Construction News

ACCA North Texas
Air Conditioning Contractors of America
Apr. 15: Membership Thank You Ballgame, Globe Life Park, 1000 Ballpark Way, Arlington

AIA - Dallas
American Institute of Architects
Apr. 2: CELEBRATE ARCHITECTURE 2015: An Awards and Honors Reception, Klyde Warren Park Pavilion, Moody Plaza, 6pm

ASCE
American Society of Civil Engineers
Apr. 13: Branch meeting, 11am

ASA North Texas
American Subcontractors Association
Apr. 23: Luncheon at The Dallas Arboretum, 8524 Garland Road, Dallas. Register online at www.asa-northtexas.org or call (817) 640-8275.

CFMA
Construction Financial Mgmt Assn.
Apr. 16: Membership meeting and education session, Las Colinas Country Club, 11.30am.

CFMA
Construction Financial Mgmt Assn.

LTC
National Utilities Contractors Assn.
Apr. 25: 5th Annual Dirty Scary Adventure Run, LaGrave Field, 301 Northeast 6th Street, Fort Worth, 9am.
Apr. 30: NUCA of Texas 2nd Annual Clay Shoot, Dallas Gun Club, 3601 S. Stemmons Fwy, Lewisville, 10am. Contact Deana Butorac at (817) 657-1993.

ICRI - NT
Int’l Concrete Repair Institute
Apr. 25: NT ICRI Scholarship application deadline

IETF - Dallas
Independent Electrical Contractors
Apr. 29: IEC Night at the Ballpark

ICF - Fort Worth
Independent Electrical Contractors
Apr. 29: IEC Night at the Ballpark

NARI
Nat’l Assn. of Women in Construction
Apr. 14: Membership meeting, Sub-Zero/Wolf 3707 Lennom Ave., Dallas, 6pm.

NAWIC - Dallas
Nat’l Assn. of Women in Construction
Apr. 20: Membership dinner meeting, Dallas Theological Seminary, 3909 Swiss Ave., Dallas, 5pm.

NAWIC - Fort Worth
Nat’l Assn. of Women in Construction
Apr. 16: Business meeting, Colonial Country Club, 6pm.
Apr. 29: 21st Annual NAWIC Golf Tournament, Sky Creek Ranch Golf Club, 600 Promontory Dr., Keller

NTRCA
National Roofing Contractors Assn.

PHCC
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors
Apr. 16: PHCC North Texas/Rheem 16th Annual Golf Tournament, Duck Creek Golf Club, 2800 Diamond Oaks Dr., Garland

RHCA
Regional Hispanic Contractors Assn.
Apr. 28: RHCA Worker Memorial Day Breakfast, Goodwill Industries of Dallas, 3002 N. Westmoreland Road, 8-10am.

SCWCPA
S. Cen. Wall Ceiling & Plaster Assn.
Apr. 9: SCWCPA Annual Luncheon, Coyote Ridge Golf Club, Carrollton, 11:30am. Contact the association office at (817) 461-0676 for more information.
Apr. 9: SCWCPA Spring Golf Tournament, Coyote Ridge Golf Club, Carrollton, Tee-off at 1pm. Registration forms at www.scwcpa.org under “Events” or call the association office at (817) 461-0676 for more information.

TEXO
The Construction Association
Apr. 10: Texas Spring Golf Tournament, The Links at Lands End

USSBC - NTx
U.S. Steel Building Council
April 13-14: SPEER Summit, Addison Marriott Quorum by the Galleria, 14901 Dallas Parkway, Dallas.
It’s a decision that they are grateful they made, and one in which they each find success and a personal reward. Trotter enjoys connecting with others and providing them with a valuable service. Augustus, who grew up in a family that worked in “many different trades – framers, roofers, concrete guys, carpet, bricklayers,” takes pleasure in listening to customers’ needs and giving them a finished project that exceeds their expectations. Gibbs, who has more than two decades of experience in Fortune 500 facilities management, finds satisfaction in making sure each project adheres to a schedule and that the employees feel good about the work they do on each project.

For Brooks (who, like Gibbs has nearly 30 years of Fortune 500 facilities management experience) it’s the abundance of opportunity to build...
When HOLT CAT needs to capture the image of the company, that’s when multimedia communications manager, Steve Hudepohl, grabs his equipment. At 61, Hudepohl has been with the company for more than 16 years, joining the equipment dealer as Power Systems marketing manager in December 1998. Named multimedia communications manager in January 2006, he is HOLT’s official photographer and filmmaker.

After graduating from the University of Texas at Austin with his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in 1977, Hudepohl and a good friend embarked upon a month-long backpacking adventure through nine countries in Europe. Before leaving, Hudepohl bought his first camera for the trip, and he developed his passion on that journey. He cultivated his interest on the side while working at jobs for Gulf Oil Company in Houston, designing compressor packages at HOLT Machinery, and evaluating oil reserves for Alamo National Bank.

When the oil industry tanked and Alamo National Bank shut down his department in 1987, Hudepohl had been doing photography and videography for weddings and other events on the side for four years. So, he became self-employed and took his hobby on as a full-time endeavor.

Two years later at church, he met Gary Stone, a marketing manager at HOLT at the time, and Hudepohl started doing photography and video jobs for the company and transitioned to working for HOLT in 1998. Today, Hudepohl creates primarily brand-building films for the company, as well as photographing people and events at various locations across 118 counties in Texas. One of his latest projects showed the teardown and rebuild of a CAT 777D mining truck at the Fort Worth facility over a period of two months – in a three-minute video, which can be seen on Vimeo.

“I’m so blessed to get paid to do what I love to do,” says Hudepohl. “And I’m very grateful for HOLT.”

Hudepohl is not the only member of his family to make a career behind the eye of a lens. His paternal grandfather worked at Studer’s Photos in San Antonio for 45 years.

Not one to sit still, when he’s not at work, Hudepohl sings and plays guitar at his church, plays in a sand volleyball league, goes snow skiing and rides dirt bikes. He also used to race motocross. His 32-year-old son, Erik, was a professional motocross racer before he started his own remodeling company in 2012. He also has a daughter, Stephanie, 22, who lives in Denver.
What's your favorite local hidden gem?

The Trinity Groves (at the base of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge in West Dallas), and all of the options that are in there. There's a cake bar that is really, really good. Every place that you will try in there is the greatest.

Diana Diaz, Azteca Enterprises

I like Taquenta La Venata, a little taco shop on the backside of El Fenix close to the West End. It's all outdoor seating, and I like going there and sitting. “La Venata” is Spanish for “window” which is exactly where you are sitting.

Philip Partington, Austin Commercial

Mercardo Juarez on Spangler and North-west Highway. I like to have the lunch special combinations, several different ones, depending on the day of the week. I highly recommend it.

Cesar Colunga, Carrco Painting

Sneaky Pete’s on Lake Grapevine. The food is nice, the music is nice, the view is good, but not a lot of people know about it.

Ahad Ghafoor, Innovative Design Build

Sundance Square. Fort Worth used to be such an old, old town with no modifications, a diamond in the rough. Once the Bass brothers and other investors took over, a place has been created that visitors, even visitors from out of the country, want to come to. I love it! It’s relaxing. I love to walk and see what else is new there.

Sharon Douglas, Bradley Douglas Construction Services

My favorite restaurant is Benito’s Mexican Cuisine on Magnolia (in Fort Worth). Oh my gosh … we used to live in North Richland Hills and we drove to Benito’s; now we live two blocks from it! Their ceviche is unmatched, their enchilada con mole verde and all of their breakfast stuff is really good. It’s not Tex-Mex, it’s very authentic Mexican food.

Melinda Wood Allen, Allen & Company Environmental Services

There’s the Plato Arbor Hills Preserve. It’s a nature preserve, with walking trails, bobcats and birds. We also like to go to Outpost Barbecue in Tioga, north of Plano, home of musician Bob Wills. We like to drive up there; it’s a pretty drive, and it’s about an hour from me.

Ann Hicks, Hicks Resource Consulting

Ozona Grill and Bar. It’s close to where I work, so we run over there to happy hour sometimes. The service is just amazing. It’s very roomy; they have an outdoor covered section that is really nice in the springtime and even in the summer. In the winter they have a fire going, so it’s cozy year-round.

Sandy Liebau, Manhattan Construction Company