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BLUEPRINT for Progress

SUMMER 2012

CONSTRUCTION NEWS & INFORMATION FROM MINGHINI'S GENERAL CONTRACTORS, INC.

Economic Recovery in 2013?

According to a recent article on the Associated Builders and Contractor's website, during a national online news conference on June 19, the Associated Builders and Contractors' Chief Economist Anirban Basu stated the nation's construction industry may not recover even next year.

"I'm not buying in to the proposition that the nation's construction industry will recover in 2013," said Basu. "What we have right now is an utter lack of confidence in the economy, and confidence represents a centrally important requirement for construction spending growth."

According to Basu, while there is capital and profitability in the broader economy and money sitting in the banks, many decision-makers have adopted a wait-and-see attitude until the sea of uncertainty related to the future path of federal spending, tax rates, the financial chaos in Europe, and our own 2012 elections recedes.

"No sector of the economy during the recession has lost more jobs than the construction industry, with nearly five million jobs lost since December 2007," said Basu. "And what we now see is that job growth is decelerating. The trend is not positive for construction employment in the months ahead.

Locally in the Eastern Panhandle, we are not seeing a recovery as illustrated by the downturn in spending on private and public construction over the past several years, as well as the shrinkage in construction industry jobs.

West Virginia Occupational Labor Statistics projects only a .9% annual growth in construction and extraction employment in Investment Area 7, which includes the Eastern Panhandle as well as Hampshire, Grant, Hardy, and Pendleton Counties. During stable growth markets, normally this figure should be above 5% annually.

At least our WV State Government has ended its fiscal year with revenue reserves ($87.6 million!), which ranks the State among the top states in the country for fiscal viability. Of these funds 24 million are slated for the Rainy Day Fund for unforeseen financial emergencies and 10 million for a disaster relief fund. The State owes its largess to the fact that both personal income tax and consumer sales tax yields grew by 6% this last fiscal year. It appears that this will provide a better economic climate for the State in FY2012 than in previous years. If only the State would think about some incentives or public works projects to kick-start the Construction Industry … with fair bidding policies.

NLRB Ambushes Construction Businesses

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has pursued an agenda to limit employer and employee rights and protections, which in turn has stifled job creation and economic growth.

As noted in a recent ABC report, "The NLRB continues to implement politically motivated policies that threaten to harm the Construction Industry" (86 percent of which is merit shop). Further the report noted, "Amid today's economic challenges, ABC members and the construction workforce in general cannot afford the burden of the NLRB's anti-business pro-union policies."

The two-member Democratic majority of National Labor Relations Board issued a final rule implementing elements of a controversial union representation election proposal, which went into effect on April 30, 2012. Its ruling favored expedited, "ambush" elections that would significantly limit an employer's ability to educate its employees about the pros and cons of union representation. ABC 's Government Relations Representatives strongly opposed this regulation -- to no avail. The Government is not listening to what the Construction Industry has to say, nor is it creating the type of policies that favor a competitive free enterprise system. ■

Completed/New Projects

Completed: Charles Town Courthouse Columns Restoration and Hedgesville Public Library Phase 1



Hedgesville Library

New: Martinsburg Urgent Care Center for Valley Health, Valley Mall Expansion and City of Martinsburg City Garage addition

Editor's Message



Berniece Collis
Vice President

With our national election just around the corner, I feel a responsibility to small business owners like ourselves, as well as to the Construction Industry as a whole to expound on the concepts of Free Enterprise and the Merit Shop.

I wonder what our Nation's Fathers--those brilliant men who drafted and signed our Constitution and believed wholeheartedly in free enterprise and democratic principles--would think of our government today. Would they find it pervasive, expensive, burdensome, ineffective, and anti-business? Would they find its laws and practices contrary to Free Enterprise System, which built our Great Country?

Would they wonder why our Government favors Big Business over the engine that drives our economy, small business? Would they question why the US Government has bailed out many of the 18,000 Big Businesses when there are 27 million small businesses that bear this burden?

Surely policies like prevailing wage and the National Labor Relations Board's new ruling to limit employees and employers rights are not what Jefferson, Adams and Franklin had in mind. In this election, we need to pay attention to each party's voting record on issues that affect business, especially the Construction Industry, which has lost 5 million jobs nationwide during the past five years, if we are going to recover economically and remain the largest economy in the world.

We are supportive of programs that help families and children, but find that grass-roots community organizations are often more effective than Washington-dictated bureaucracies in helping those in need. We as citizens need to take more responsibility for our lives and vote against the proliferation of Big Government that is eroding small businesses' ability to compete freely in the delivery of quality products and services.

Small businesses are not only inundated with excessive reporting and paperwork, hit high and low by more taxes and fees, and required to comply with invasive regulations on every aspect of how we do business, but we are also trapped in unfair bidding processes on public construction projects.

Small business is responsible for America's economic vitality, its innovation and its employment, yet the federal government is only too keen to penalize small business while it bails out the giant automobile manufacturers, the mega insurance companies and crooked investment houses … in the name of economic stability. Locally, in the last couple of years we have seen way too many established construction businesses either go under or go away!

Economic recovery in the Eastern Panhandle's Construction Industry is not happening, as our present administration would like people to believe. Are we going to vote for four more years of the same when we vote? It would be good to think about which party will do the least damage to small business, the backbone of the U.S. economy. We may not have great choices for our nation's leadership, but there are clear differences in how the Democrats and Republicans view business. ■

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

Client Profile

Bill Polk, Maintenance Director • Jefferson County Commission • bpolk@jeffersoncountywv.com



For the past 11 years, Bill Polk has served as Jefferson County's Maintenance Director. After leaving his work in Air Defense Missile Systems in the Army, Bill dedicated the next 25 years of his professional life to Maintenance Management. Prior to coming to Jefferson County, he managed the maintenance operation at a nursing home.

Bill has worked with Minghini's on a number of renovation projects, most recently the restoration of the historic Civil War-Era Columns (circa 1880) that grace the Jefferson County Courthouse. This courthouse was the site of two of the three treason trials in the United States!

According to Bill, the huge white columns are constructed of brick with a coating of plaster stucco. The internal brickwork was being compromised due to moisture, so Minghini's was retained to restore them.

In recent years, Minghini's has undertaken a major remodel of the Jefferson County Courthouse, and is currently replacing the metal roof on Hunter House, that was blown off during the recent storm with its sustained winds of between 60 and 70 mph. Additionally, Minghini's worked with Bill to construct the new Emergency Services Agency building that houses the paid emergency ambulances and chase cars.

Charles Town Courthouse
Civil War era columns restored by Minghini's.



Bill notes, "It's been a pleasure working with Minghini's. Their service is exemplary, far above the call of duty. For example, at 1 a.m. in the morning, the night of the recent windstorm, in which 1 million of West Virginians lost their power including 50 percent of Jefferson County residents, I ran into Minghini's construction crew. They had heard there were bricks on the ground and came out to check on the project and the scaffolding and to see if I needed help with anything. I was glad to have them help me with the roof situation, but just their being there shows the commitment of the firm to quality work and service. I was impressed. You don't see that kind of thing every day." ■



Associate Profile

Terry Stone, AIA (Architect) • Touchstone Design
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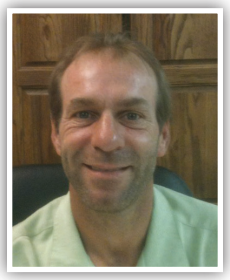
Architect Terry Stone graduated from Virginia Tech University in 1988 with both his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees of Architecture. For the past 25 years, he has planned, designed, and managed commercial construction projects in the Eastern Panhandle, the Shenandoah Valley, and the Southwestern United States.

While interning under registered architects as part of normal professional development, Terry began offering independent residential design services. He later joined the commercial architectural staff at Howard Shockey & Sons in Winchester, Virginia, and this position offered involvement in an extremely wide variety of projects and exposure to full management responsibilities.

In 1994, Howard Shockey dissolved their in-house architectural department and negotiated for Terry to take their design services 'out-of-house'. This development allowed Terry's practice to blossom into a full service commercial architectural firm in the open market. The diversity has continued and his reputation for quality design services has grown. In 2004, Terry relocated to Arizona and formed TouchStone Design, which has offered new opportunities to further diversify by providing services on both the East and West coasts.

Terry has teamed with Minghini's on a number of commercial projects over the years, including Blue Ridge Bank's Inwood Branch Facility, City National's Martinsburg branch renovation, as well as a Medical Office Building development. Currently, Terry is working with Minghini on the Valley Health Urgent Care Facility on Edwin Miller Boulevard in Martinsburg. This project, involving a comprehensive renovation of a former insurance office, will supply Valley Health with a new location to expand its Urgent Care services in the panhandle region of West Virginia.

States Terry of his experiences with Minghini's: "It is always an absolute pleasure to work with Minghini's. Their long history and legacy is built on integrity and reliability. I'm consistently impressed with the diligence and thoroughness that enables our projects to run so smoothly. I truly look forward to working on projects when Minghini's is the builder." ■



Subcontractor Profile

Lyle S. Firnhaber, President
Quality Production Construction, Inc
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Lyle Firnhaber who founded Quality Production Construction Inc. (QPCI) in 1988 is no stranger to commercial construction. In fact, like Craig Collis, Lyle learned from working in his father's construction company, which built projects throughout the United States for 57 years.

Recently, QPCI did the rough framing for the Hedgesville Library Project for Minghini's, their first project together.

In addition to turn-key rough framing and carpentry construction services, the company provides loose lumber, wall panels, floor joists, roof trusses, acoustical ceiling grid/tile, light-gauge metal framing, windows, and doors. QPCI has attained many certifications, such as being a certified trade partner, ei member of the Maryland USGBC, the NAHB Research Center and it is SB Certified (MD SB11-1414; VA 682044).

Lyle, in reflecting on his experience as a subcontractor to Minghini's states, "I would give Minghini's a rating of '10' on a 10-point scale. They are easy to get along with and we had a good understanding because they are 'Old School' like my company, meaning an experienced commercial contractor with great problem-solving skills and impeccable values. They have been around a long time and know what it means to work in the trenches on all types of commercial projects."

According to Lyle, this is not always the case due to the economic crisis. He explains that the competition has become horrendous because a lot of unqualified start-ups and residential builders are switching over to commercial work without the required experience. They are undercutting prices and they often don't have the knowledge or experience to complete these projects efficiently, so it's a bad situation for the legitimate commercial bidders as well as the customers, who may choose the low bid and get a bad experience.

Lyle lives by the company credo, "Quality First" as embodied in the company slogan: "Quality Doesn't Cost, It Pays." He notes that his client base has been built upon QPCI's reputation as a contractor that consistently delivers a quality project and a dependable level of service.

QPCI has worked on some watermark projects including building and installing the longest wooden timber truss in the U.S. at the time, working on a custom home he named "the Stealth" for its innovative design, along with involvement in almost every type of commercial building construction – from offices and assisted living facilities to Lindal Cedar structures and office facilities.

Additionally, QPCI has constructed hundreds of military residential housing units (from Norfolk, VA to Mechanicsburg, PA) and commercial projects (i.e., Camp LeJeune Community Center) for the Military. QPCI is currently contracted to build 220 units at Camp LeJeune, starting September, 2012. QPCI also performed on the Wounded Warrior Care Facility in Fort Belvoir, Virginia for the USO. They have also donated time and material to Homes for Our Troops (specialty built homes for our wounded soldiers). ■

Associate Profile

Greg Gembe,
Graphics Universal, Inc.
Greencastle, PA

Graphics Universal is a family-owned business operated by the Gembe family dating back to 1970. We are the Quad State area's leading print solutions provider. Graphics Universal provides quality offset, flexographic and digital printing along with full bindery capabilities. Also providing mailing and fulfillment services to meet our clients' complete needs.

Graphics Universal has printed Minghini's newsletter and stationary for many years as well as providing the mailing service for the newsletter.

Garon Gembe, President, says, "We will achieve our vision by providing the full scope of services our clients need at the highest quality and most competitive pricing. Also by operating at peak performance to capitalize on our investment in superior people, work processes, and state-of-the-art technology, and by valuing our stakeholder relationships through corporate adherence to Christian principles and high standards of personal integrity." ■

Staff News

At the Panhandle Home Health "Puttin in the Panhandle" Miniature Golf Tournament fund-raiser, Minghini's team didn't win, but it played as well as most other teams and, what's more, had a fun time. Shown left to right are: Zora Collis, Berniece Collis, Larry Herrell, and Patty Nisewarner.



SAVE THE DATE – SEPT. 26TH

Please attend the luncheon honoring 3 outstanding Eastern Panhandle Women of Distinction sponsored by the Girl Scout Council-Nations Capital at the Holiday Inn. Tickets are available from Pam Allen at 304/596-3391 or by emailing wod@gscnc.org.

Community Service

Pearl of an Idea!

In preparation for the 2012 Women of Distinction Luncheon sponsored by the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital, **Christian Caine Jewelers** has graciously donated an 18-inch strand of 9-10 mm chocolate pearls. The clasp is fourteen-karat yellow gold. They are valued at **$1,500**! The pearls are being raffled to provide funds for Scholarships for the girls who earn their Gold Award, the highest Girl Scout award. Tickets are **$5.00 each or (6) for $25.00.** The winning ticket will be announced at the Women of Distinction Luncheon on September 26th. **You do not need to be present to win.** For tickets send a **check made out to GSCNC** and mail to Berniece Collis at **51 Trumpet Lane, Martinsburg, WV, 25404.** She will fill out your tickets and get the stubs to you. This is the Girl Scouts 100th Anniversary and by purchasing tickets you are helping to make sure a Gold Award Recipient has a scholarship opportunity to attend college ***And you may win a fabulous Christmas gift for someone special.***

Congrats Leslie, 2012 GSCNC Woman of Distinction



This year **Leslie Crabill,** a native of Berkeley County, has been selected as one of the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital's "Women of Distinction."Vice President and Trust Officer at BCT – Bank of Charles Town, Leslie serves as a Technical Advisor for the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation, helping the Foundation grow to more than $16 million in endowed assets. Among her list of accomplishments, she has been a board member and President of CASA of the Eastern Panhandle, served on the grant allocation board of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle, and is an active member of the Martinsburg Rotary.

Notes Berniece, "I have watched Leslie as she performs her "magic" in the community by raising much needed funds for CASA, the Girl Scouts, and many other organizations--too numerous to mention. But this isn't what makes Leslie the perfect choice as a Woman of Distinction. It is what she does when she doesn't even know anyone is looking. I have seen her reach out to a waitress who had lost her home in a fire; I have seen her provide the funds to make sure that little boys had an opportunity to pursue their dreams; and I have seen her crying in the bathroom when funding to her favorite organization was being cut. Leslie "does" so much for so many, because she "feels" so much for her community. "

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