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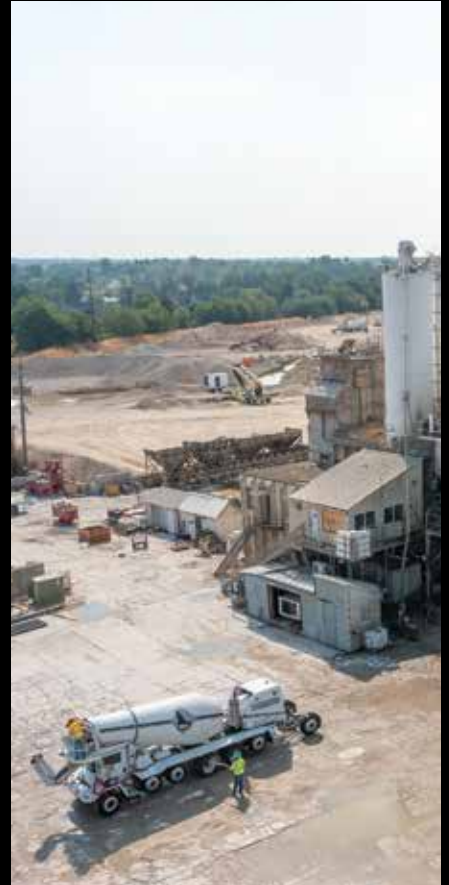


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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO OF THE IDAHO AGC WAYNE HAMMON



Greetings friends,

I hope you are enjoying a safe, productive and rewarding fall. This season is always a time of reflection and planning, and here at the Idaho AGC, we are reminded daily of how fortunate we are to work alongside the very best in Idaho's construction industry.

What an exciting moment to be part of this association. Idaho continues to grow at a remarkable pace, creating opportunities for contractors of every size and specialty. That growth is mirrored here at the Idaho AGC. Already the fourth-largest AGC chapter in the nation (of 87 chapters!), we are proud to once again be recognized with the Howard J. Mock Award for net membership growth. This recognition is more than just a plaque — it is a testament to the strength of our industry and, most importantly, to the commitment of our members.

A cornerstone of our new strategic plan is building stronger connections with our specialty contractor members — the electricians, excavators, plumbers, painters, HVAC specialists

and countless others who make every project possible. To support that effort, we are thrilled to welcome Will Smith to the Idaho AGC team. Will is working tirelessly to ensure specialty contractors are represented at regulatory meetings across state government and that important information reaches your desks quickly. You'll find a full introduction to Will on page 14, and I encourage you to sign up for his updates.

Beyond advocacy, our association is working every day to provide the resources you need to succeed. From workforce development initiatives like WeBuildIdaho.org and jobsite training programs, to our Northwest Online Plan Room, networking forums, and industry events, your AGC membership continues to open doors and create opportunities.

Don't forget to take advantage of our Idaho AGC Health Plan and the Northwest Retirement Plan, which are designed specifically for the construction industry and continue to grow stronger each year. If you haven't already, it's a great time to get an updated quote from the Idaho AGC Health Plan — contact Sue Fudge (HealthPlanTeam@idahoagc.org) for details.

As we wrap up the year and plan for 2026, membership renewal is underway. Invoices are out, and I hope you will continue to stand with us in building Idaho's future. If you have any questions about your dues renewal, Devin Casterline (dcasterline@idahoagc.org) is here to help.

At the end of the day, none of this is possible without you. Every success we celebrate, every challenge we overcome, and every step forward we take is fueled by the support and engagement of our members. Thank you for your partnership, your trust and your commitment to strengthening Idaho's construction industry.

Together, we are not just building projects — we are building Idaho's future. ●



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Please join us in welcoming these new members, who have joined the Idaho AGC since the last issue of *buildingIdaho*.

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COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION LOGIC PUZZLE

Difficulty: Moderate

How to play: Use the clues to determine which trade role is working on which project type, with what material, which equipment, and in which location. Each item is used exactly once per category.

Mark ✓ where a pairing is true and ✗ where it's impossible. Only one complete solution exists.

CATEGORIES

Trade Roles: Project Manager, Superintendent, Foreman, Estimator, Safety Officer

Project Types: Hospital, Office Building, School, Bridge, Warehouse

Materials: Structural Steel, Mass Timber, Cast-in-Place Concrete, Precast Panels, CMU

Equipment: Tower Crane, Mobile Crane, Excavator, Concrete Pump, Scissor Lift

Locations: Boise, Meridian, Nampa, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls

CLUES

1. The Superintendent is working on the School, which uses Mass Timber.
2. The Estimator's project is in Meridian.
3. The Hospital job requires a Tower Crane.
4. The Warehouse is in Twin Falls.
5. The Bridge project uses Cast-in-Place Concrete and an Excavator.
6. The Foreman's project isn't in Boise or Idaho Falls.
7. The Safety Officer is on the project with Precast Panels.
8. The Office Building requires a Scissor Lift.
9. The CMU project is in Nampa.
10. The Project Manager's site uses a Mobile Crane.

Master Grid (Mark ✓ or ✗)

TRADE ROLLS	PROJECT TYPE	MATERIAL	EQUIPMENT	LOCATION
Project Manager				
Superintendent				
Foreman				
Estimator				
Safety Officer				

ANSWER KEY ON PAGE 54.



Idaho AGC Adds Specialty Focused Government Relations Employee to Team



As reflected in our branding, the Idaho AGC is the construction association representing all of commercial construction in Idaho. While “GC” is also in our name, specialty contractors — the backbone of our industry — make up the largest percent of our organization.

Now more than ever, it is critical we ensure our members are being represented at every table. To that end, we are pleased to introduce Will Smith as the Idaho Associated General Contractors’ new deputy director of government relations. Smith is a lifelong Idahoan and proud graduate of Boise State University. He brings both deep roots in our state

and a strong commitment to serving the industry that builds Idaho’s future.

Before joining the Idaho AGC, Smith gained extensive experience as a lobbyist with two of Idaho’s leading government relations firms. Through this work, he developed a strong foundation in the legislative process and a proven ability to advocate effectively on behalf of the people and industries he represents. His expertise and dedication to advancing sound policy will now be directed toward supporting the contractors who are essential to the growth and strength of Idaho’s construction sector.

In his new role, Smith leads Idaho AGC’s government relations efforts on behalf of our specialty contractors

— including electricians, excavators, plumbers, and other subcontractors who are vital to every project’s success. He represents our members in regulatory board meetings, legislative hearings, and public forums across the state, ensuring that their voices are heard and their interests are protected.

“Specialty contractors are at the core of the industry, and I am committed to advocating for policies and regulatory changes that promote safety, foster opportunity, and strengthen Idaho’s construction community,” emphasizes Smith.

His work will primarily focus on monitoring and engaging with regulations emerging from the Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses, the Department of Environmental Quality, and other state agencies. He will also be the staff liaison to all our trades forums (communications pipelines allowing staff to directly communicate with contractors regarding their areas of interest). To connect with Smith or join a trades forum to receive updates relevant to you, contact him at WSmith@idahoagc.org.

We are proud to welcome Smith to our team and are confident that his leadership will further advance our mission to represent all of commercial construction. We look forward to the positive impact he will have on behalf of our members and the industry as a whole. ●



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Idaho AGC Education Foundation Awards 2025 Scholarships



Each spring, the Idaho AGC Education Foundation awards scholarships to full-time students in their sophomore, junior, or senior year of study at an Idaho college or university who have declared a construction-related major.

In addition to the six traditional Education Foundation scholarships awarded, this year saw the inaugural presentation of two new scholarships.

The first was the McAlvain Memorial Scholarship, which was established to honor a proud family legacy of leadership, mentorship and service within Idaho's construction industry and the Idaho AGC. Created to support the next generation of construction professionals who exemplify the dedication of

Doug and Torry McAlvain, this scholarship carries their legacy forward by inspiring and uplifting future industry leaders. If you would like to contribute, please send a check to the Idaho AGC Education Foundation and note "McAlvain Memorial Scholarship" in the memo line.

The second new scholarship to be presented this year was the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) Scholarship, awarded using funds raised by the Idaho AGC CLC at their spring CLC Cornhole Tournament (keep your eyes on our event calendar for next year's April 10th tournament, where you can compete while raising funds for scholarships like these).

Help us in congratulating the following scholarship recipients, the next generation of leaders in our industry.



Jaxon Cron

Jaxon Cron, recipient of the 2025/26 McAlvain Memorial Scholarship, has been immersed in the construction industry from a young age. A native of Boise, Cron is following in the footsteps of his grandfather and father, both of whom dedicated their careers to STRATA, a geotechnical engineering and materials testing firm. Cron currently interns at STRATA's Twin Falls office, where he performs field and laboratory testing of construction materials and is earning certifications in aggregate, asphalt and concrete testing. He previously gained hands-on experience building decks and installing garage doors, showcasing his drive to learn from all facets of the industry.

Cron recently earned his Associate of Arts degree from the College of Southern Idaho and will transfer to Boise State University in fall 2025 to pursue a degree in Construction Management. His early exposure to CTE courses in high school, including Residential Construction, and participation in the Idaho AGC Construction Combine further deepened his commitment to the trades and community service. He brings not only technical competence but also leadership, problem-solving, and a passion for quality. His supervisor at STRATA describes him as driven, curious, and compassionate, with a maturity and integrity well beyond his years. Looking ahead, Cron aspires to make a meaningful impact on the Treasure Valley through a lifelong career in construction.



Grant Gustafson

Grant Gustafson, a construction management student at Boise State University, has been awarded the 2025/26 Construction Leadership Council Scholarship in recognition of his exceptional leadership within the university and construction community. Originally from Las Vegas, Gustafson is a dedicated scholar and student leader and is on track to graduate in spring 2026. His resume includes two project engineering internships, at McCarthy Building Companies and The PENTA Building Group, where he contributed to multimillion-dollar projects including the Kurt Segler Water Reclamation Facility and the Wynn Spa Villas Remodel.

Gustafson's most notable contributions come from his leadership roles in Boise State's Construction Management Association (CMA) where he is currently serving his second term as president. Under his guidance, the student chapter has organized key events like the annual clay shoot, 30th anniversary golf tournament, the Bogus Basin renovation, and community service projects such as building an elementary school ball wall. Faculty describe Gustafson as a highly engaged, enthusiastic and dependable leader who consistently represents Boise State at high-profile events, including as a speaker at the groundbreaking ceremony for the university's new CM building and as a participant in statewide legislative outreach. His involvement extends internationally as well, having competed in the ASC International Competition in Dublin, Ireland.

Through his roles in CMA, Gustafson has promoted collaboration, mentorship and professional growth among his peers, demonstrating the qualities that exemplify the Construction Leadership Council's values. His blend of industry experience, academic commitment and service-driven leadership makes him a standout future leader in construction.



Joseph Bugni

Joseph Bugni is a civil engineering student at the University of Idaho, where he is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree. Originally from Ellensburg, Washington, Bugni's passion for the built environment has translated into both academic excellence and meaningful industry experience.

He is currently interning at HLA Engineering and Land Surveying in Yakima, Washington, a position he earned through a strong academic record and an enthusiastic commitment to learning. At HLA, Bugni has contributed to cost estimating, construction surveying, ADA compliance evaluations and multimillion-dollar infrastructure revitalization efforts in downtown Yakima.

He has developed proficiency in AutoCAD, Civil 3D and engineering cost analysis, while also collaborating with field teams to ensure project quality and compliance.

Bugni's leadership experience includes serving as ASB president at Ellensburg High School, where he organized major student events and drove school spirit initiatives. At the University of Idaho, his coursework has included rigorous studies in engineering statics, surveying and fluid mechanics, supported by a solid foundation in mathematics and science. Bugni's future goals include obtaining his Professional Engineer (PE) license and working in the infrastructure sector to positively impact communities through thoughtful and efficient design.

Known for his reliability, energy and curiosity, Bugni has earned high praise from mentors and supervisors alike. His practical skills, academic dedication and commitment to community-focused engineering make him a deserving recipient of the Idaho AGC Education Foundation Scholarship for the 2025/26 academic year.



Wayne Cardwell

Wayne Cardwell, a civil engineering student at the University of Idaho, is a recipient of the Idaho AGC Education Foundation Scholarship for the 2025/26 academic year.

Originally from Rathdrum, Idaho, Cardwell earned an A.S. in Computer Science from North Idaho College before transferring to U of I and is on track to graduate in spring 2026 with a B.S. in Civil Engineering. Cardwell's passion for structural engineering is fueled by a fascination with architecture and a desire to design safe, functional and creative structures that serve communities. His commitment to understanding construction methods is evident in his hands-on experience, including a research internship with Alta Science and Engineering where he investigated mine waste contamination at a Superfund site, and an upcoming internship with the Idaho Transportation Department focusing on fieldwork at bridge and highway construction sites.

Cardwell's academic excellence, strong communication skills and practical field experience have earned him praise from faculty, including a top ranking in his structural engineering classes. He aspires to launch his own structural engineering firm after gaining industry experience and pursuing a master's degree.



Addy Eaglestone

Addy Eaglestone, a construction management major at Boise State University, is a recipient of the Idaho AGC Education Foundation Scholarship for the 2025/26 academic year.

Hailing from Scappoose, Oregon, Eaglestone developed a love for construction at a young age, drawn to the industry by its hands-on nature and the pride of building something meaningful. That early fascination grew into a career path when he began working with Cornice Construction, assisting with superintendent responsibilities and construction tasks across the Pacific Northwest. He returned to Cornice as an intern in the summer of 2025.

At Boise State, Eaglestone has earned the Dean's List with Honors recognition while completing coursework in construction materials, methods, sustainability and business management. He also serves as a teaching assistant in a construction lab course involving crane operations and hands-on technical learning. Eaglestone's long-term goal is to launch his own excavation company focused on wildlife habitat restoration, blending his passion for heavy civil construction with his commitment to environmental responsibility. He aspires to lead teams that use sustainable construction practices to create meaningful, eco-conscious projects.

Known for his work ethic, initiative, and clear communication, Eaglestone is respected by peers and superintendents alike as a driven and capable emerging leader.



Jacob Hessing

Jacob Hessing is a senior at Boise State University pursuing a degree in construction management and a 2025/26 recipient of an Idaho AGC Education Foundation Scholarship. Hessing is on track to graduate in fall 2025.

Originally from Athol, Idaho, he has combined academic success with meaningful extracurricular and professional experiences. He served as treasurer of the Construction Management Association (CMA) and is a member of Sigma Lambda Chi, the honor society for construction students.

Hessing has interned with both HC Company and Lydig Construction, where he gained experience in submittals, RFI processing, safety committee participation and project coordination. He also served as the team captain for the 2025 ASC Reno Competition, leading a high-performing group through project logistics and presentation challenges under pressure. Hessing is passionate about mentoring his peers and has helped newer students find their footing in competitive and academic environments. Long-term, he aims to start his own custom home construction company and become a leader who helps others achieve their career goals. His commitment to service, leadership and industry excellence makes him an outstanding ambassador for the construction management profession.



Aiden Russell

Aiden Russell, a construction management major at Boise State University, is a 2025/26 recipient of an Idaho AGC Education Foundation Scholarship. Russell is on track to graduate in May 2027.

From a young age, Russell was immersed in the world of building, learning from his father – who worked in construction manufacturing – and grandfather. That early exposure evolved into a passion for the field, which he nurtured through high school CTE programs and competitive construction events.

Russell has continued to thrive at Boise State, earning top honors at the BYU Construction Management Competition (first place) and a third-place finish at the ASC Reno Competition with his project management team. He serves as the newly elected treasurer for the Construction Management Association (CMA).

Described by his professors as intellectually curious, collaborative and driven, Russell has a long-term goal of owning his own construction company in Idaho, with the goal of giving back to the community that inspired his journey. His well-rounded academic, professional and leadership background makes him a standout among future construction professionals.



Benjamin Shannon

Benjamin Shannon, a junior in the Construction Management program at Boise State University, is a 2025/26 recipient of an Idaho AGC Education Foundation Scholarship. Shannon is on track to graduate in spring 2027.

His foundation in construction began at age 18 when he joined BriCon Inc. as a general laborer. Over the past several years, he has steadily advanced his responsibilities, from forming concrete and operating skid steers to managing teams and running heavy machinery. This extensive hands-on experience has shaped his understanding of job site operations, safety and leadership.

Shannon's dedication extends beyond the field. At Boise State, he's a member of the Construction Management Association (CMA), where he participated in projects such as the elementary school ball wall project, and earned a second-place finish at the 2025 ASC Reno Concrete Solutions Competition. He has earned Dean's List recognition with High Honors and is OSHA 10 certified.

Shannon brings a unique blend of field knowledge and academic rigor to his studies and aims to launch his own self-performing general contracting or subcontracting business after graduation. His career goals include leading high-performing teams, innovating construction processes, and contributing to Idaho's built environment through both quality and safety. ●



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Building Skills, Building Community

Idaho AGC's workforce development in action



The second-annual Big Dig: Construction vs. Childhood Cancer brought hundreds of families together at Ten Mile Crossing in Meridian.



Events like the Construction Combine and The Big Dig illustrate the heart of Idaho AGC's workforce development mission.

The Idaho AGC continues to lead the way in workforce development by pairing hands-on learning with

community impact. Through events like the Construction Combine and The Big Dig: Construction vs. Childhood Cancer, the association is not only preparing

the next generation of skilled workers but also showing how the construction industry builds stronger communities in every sense.



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THE CONSTRUCTION COMBINE: TRAINING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

This spring's Construction Combine drew more than 150 high school students (over 50 percent increase from the year prior), dozens of contractors and community supporters for two days of immersive learning and service.

Day one introduced students to a variety of trades through interactive booths hosted by local contractors. From framing and drywall to tool use and form-building, the experience gave students a real-world taste of what a career in construction could look like.



This spring's Construction Combine drew more than 150 high school students, dozens of contractors, and community supporters for two days of immersive learning and service.



The Big Dig gave kids a once-in-a-lifetime chance to climb into the driver's seat of real heavy equipment, all while raising critical funds for the American Cancer Society.

On day two, students teamed up with contractors to put those skills into practice, constructing 10 fully functional sheds from pre-built components. These sheds were then donated to Idaho veterans, showcasing the Combine's dual mission: to train future builders while giving back to those who have served.

Industry partners also stepped up, donating tools, PPE, and raffle prizes to ensure students left not only with valuable experience, but also with the equipment to continue exploring construction careers.

THE BIG DIG: BUILDING HOPE FOR KIDS

Later in the year, the second-annual Big Dig: Construction vs. Childhood Cancer brought hundreds of families together at

Ten Mile Crossing in Meridian. Presented by Hensel Phelps and Brighton, the event gave kids a once-in-a-lifetime chance to climb into the driver's seat of real heavy equipment, all while raising critical funds for the American Cancer Society.

The Big Dig sold 785 tickets (a 45 percent increase) and raised over \$27,000 to support childhood cancer research, patient programs, and services. Beyond the thrill of operating construction equipment, families enjoyed food trucks, construction-related vendor booths, games, music and activities that created lasting memories for a good cause.

BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

Events like the Construction Combine and The Big Dig illustrate the heart of

Idaho AGC's workforce development mission. By inspiring young people to pursue rewarding careers in the trades and demonstrating the construction industry's commitment to community service, these programs go beyond building structures; they build opportunities, resilience and hope.

As Idaho AGC looks ahead, these efforts remind us that the future of construction is about more than projects and profits, it's about people. And with every shed built, every child supported, and every student inspired, the association is laying the foundation for a stronger Idaho. If you or your company would like to be involved in our workforce activities, reach out to Molly Johnson, Idaho AGC's director of workforce development, at Mjohnson@idahoagc.org. ●

Senator Todd Lakey named Idaho's Construction Industry Champion



Left to right: Idaho AGC CEO Wayne Hammon and Senator Todd Lakey.

For more than a decade in the Idaho Senate, Senator Lakey has been a steady and thoughtful advocate for the state's contractors, advancing legislation that strengthens fairness, protects businesses and supports the infrastructure critical to Idaho's growth.

A CAREER OF SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

Now serving his seventh term in the Idaho Legislature, Senator Lakey represents District 23 with a career marked by public service and community leadership. After earning a B.S. in International Business from Brigham Young University and a Juris Doctorate from Lewis and Clark Northwestern School of Law, he began his career as a Canyon County Deputy Prosecutor before serving two terms as a Canyon County Commissioner.

During his time in local government, he also led the Idaho Association of Commissioners and Clerks and chaired the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS), helping to guide regional growth and infrastructure priorities.

In addition to his public service, Senator Lakey owns and practices law at the Borton-Lakey Law Office, focusing on serving Idaho families and businesses. He is also a retired officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. At home, he and his wife Jan have five children and five grandchildren, grounding his legislative work in a strong sense of family and community.

The Idaho Associated General Contractors (AGC) is proud to recognize Senator Todd Lakey as the 2025 Construction Industry Champion of the Year. This is the

second year the AGC, in partnership with Western States Equipment, has presented the Construction Industry Champion award recognizing the hard work being done to protect and grow the industry.



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For more than a decade in the Idaho Senate, Senator Lakey has been a steady and thoughtful advocate for the state's contractors, advancing legislation that strengthens fairness, protects businesses and supports the infrastructure critical to Idaho's growth.

A TRUSTED ADVOCATE FOR CONTRACTORS

Senator Lakey has been a consistent champion for Idaho contractors, carrying legislation that addresses complex issues with fairness and clarity. Recent efforts include:

- **Senate Bill 1005** – Eliminated unnecessary 30-day trials on construction lien-release bonds, streamlining dispute resolution and reducing costly delays.
- **Senate Bill 1006** – Ensured that Idaho construction projects are governed by Idaho law, protecting local contractors from out-of-state legal frameworks.

These reforms reflect his commitment to leveling the playing field and maintaining the integrity of Idaho's construction industry.

A STRONG VOICE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Beyond legal protections, Senator Lakey has been a consistent supporter of sustainable infrastructure investment. His votes to fund roads, bridges, schools, and utilities have helped Idaho keep pace with rapid population growth in our state while creating jobs and opportunity for contractors statewide.

BUILDING IDAHO'S FUTURE

The construction industry is foundational to Idaho's prosperity, and Senator Lakey has ensured that it remains strong. His leadership has advanced key legal reforms, prioritized essential infrastructure funding, and fostered a business climate where companies and communities can thrive.

"Senator Lakey has been one of the most reliable and effective champions for Idaho's construction industry," said Sean

Schupack, senior director of government relations for the Idaho AGC. "His work on lien law reform, protecting contractors from out-of-state overreach, and his consistent support for infrastructure funding have had a lasting impact. We

are proud to recognize him as this year's Construction Industry Champion."

The Idaho AGC congratulates Senator Todd Lakey for his well-deserved recognition as the 2025 Construction Industry Champion of the Year. ●



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24/7 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Idaho AGC's Milwaukee Member of the Month: June to September 2025



The Idaho AGC is an organization full of amazing companies and people. We have teamed up with Milwaukee Tool to highlight one amazing member company or person each month with the Milwaukee Member of the Month Award. These awards highlight and celebrate members and member employees who positively impact the industry and organization by going above and beyond.

June: Aaron Miller

Aaron Miller of Northwest Safety & Risk Services was selected for his ongoing and enthusiastic support of the Idaho AGC and his consistent sponsorship and presence at AGC events. From annual gatherings to on-the-ground workforce initiatives like the Construction Combine, Miller always shows up ready to help and elevate the industry.

As an occupational safety and health professional, Miller brings deep expertise in regulatory compliance and risk reduction across a wide range of industries—including construction, general industry and government. He has developed innovative safety approaches that not only enhance workplace well-being, but also deliver real business value.

Perhaps most notably, Miller and his team are the backbone of our safety training classes. Their dedication, professionalism, and real-world

perspective ensure that Idaho AGC members receive top-quality training that is practical, effective and affordable. His work helps create safer job sites throughout Idaho and beyond.

Miller leads a group of like-minded safety professionals who share his passion for worker safety and his drive to find creative solutions that support both employers and employees. Outside of work, he's a family man who enjoys traveling, being outdoors, building things and playing a few rounds of golf.

We are so grateful for his leadership, impact, and the many ways he supports the Idaho AGC community. We're proud to honor him as our June Milwaukee Member of the Month!

July: Western States Equipment

Western States Equipment Company (WSECO) has once again distinguished itself through outstanding dedication to the Idaho AGC and the broader construction community.

With over 30 years of continuous membership, the WSECO team has remained an active and engaged partner—whether through event sponsorships, hands-on participation, or thoughtful contributions like providing gift bags for our event attendees. Their commitment goes beyond presence; it's about consistent, meaningful support.

In 2024, WSECO took that



Top left: June member of the month – Aaron Miller, NW Safety.
Left: July member of the month – Western States Equipment Company.

commitment a step further by partnering with us on a new initiative to recognize champions of construction advocacy at the Idaho Statehouse. Thanks to their support, this initiative has grown into an impactful annual tradition, now continuing into 2025.

Always ready to collaborate and strengthen our industry, Western States Equipment Company exemplifies the values we honor at AGC. We're proud to recognize them as the July Milwaukee Member of the Month.

August: Brady Walling

If you've attended an Idaho AGC event, chances are you've already met Brady Walling—and it's easy to see why he stands out. Walling has long been an active and enthusiastic member, always stepping up to support our staff and fellow members in meaningful ways.

As director of marketing at Tates Rents, Walling brings the same dedication to the AGC that he does to his work. Whether he's serving on our Events & Marketing Advisory Council and Construction Leadership Council, sponsoring and attending events across the state, or simply asking how he can help, Walling shows up with positivity, energy and genuine commitment.

His contributions strengthen not only our organization, but the broader Idaho construction community. We're fortunate to have him—and the entire Tates Rents team—as such an integral part of the AGC family. We thank him for his leadership, generosity and the countless ways he makes a difference every day.

September: Joe Smith

Joe Smith, our September Milwaukee Member of the Month, has been the point person (chair) leading the AGC DEQ Task Force. The task force's lofty goal was to streamline the permit process for new concrete batch and hot mix asphalt

plant approval from its current timeline of over a year to less than a few months. This change would save contractors huge amounts of time and thousands of dollars per permit. In order to do this, the objective was to create a "fast lane" where plants that meet certain pre-determined criteria can be approved through a permit by rule process.

In order to have a permit by rule

process, industry (AGC) and DEQ had to agree on a wide range of criteria including setbacks, stack height, engine type and many more. The criteria had to work for industry while also following federal guidelines that Idaho DEQ must enforce.

While it might sound easy, this is an incredibly complex area with few people that truly understand the nuances. Smith used his expertise in this area to lead the



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August member of the month – Brady Walling.



September member of the month – Joe Smith.

AGC's efforts in negotiating with DEQ and developed a list of preset scenarios that work for both industry and the DEQ.

For the past several months they have been meeting for multiple hours every other week.

Now that we have agreed on what the scenarios will be, the DEQ can start the formal rulemaking process which will take us through the rest of this year and next for implementation in early 2027.

We applaud Smith and his dedication to finding real solutions to real problems and giving generously of his time and expertise to raise the industry.

Congratulations to Smith on being our September Milwaukee Member of the Month.

WHO'S NEXT?

Individuals selected to be the Milwaukee Member of the Month are visited by the Idaho AGC and Milwaukee Tool representatives, featured on our social media and website, included in our magazine, displayed on the Milwaukee Member of the Month plaque at the Idaho AGC office, and given some seriously sweet Milwaukee Tool swag.

Have someone you think should be considered? Tell us how awesome they are! Reach out to us at 208.344.2531 or email Cassidy Boughton at CBoughton@Idahoagc.org. ●

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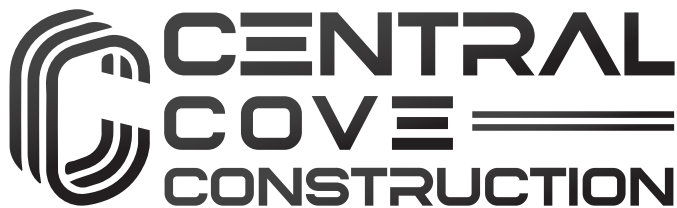
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Idaho AGC Members Receive National AGC Safety Awards (NASA) in Recognition of 2024 Zero-Incident Safety Rates

Since 1991, the National AGC Safety Awards (NASA) program has provided AGC members with a way to measure and celebrate their safety achievements. By comparing safety records among members nationwide — based on company size and type of construction work — the program highlights those who have made safety a true priority. It also gives members the chance to earn recognition at the national level for their outstanding safety performance.

To participate, a company must be an AGC member and submit summary data from their OSHA Form 300A for the prior year. There is no fee to take part, and once the information is provided, the chapter forwards the entries to the AGC NASA program.

Two types of commendations are presented each year:

- Zero-Incidence Rate Certificate of Commendation — awarded to companies that recorded no incidents for the year.
- Incidence Rate Below 25% of Division Rate Certificate of Commendation — awarded to companies with an incident rate at least 25 percent lower than the average for their occupational division.

Divisions include Building, Highway, Federal & Heavy, Utility Infrastructure, and Associate/Specialty.

Achieving a year without incidents requires more than luck — it reflects a company-wide commitment to safety, embraced at every level of the organization, from leadership to field crews. The Idaho AGC is proud to recognize the following member companies who earned the Zero-Incidence Rate Certificate of Commendation in 2024:

- Andersen Construction of Idaho
- Bateman-Hall, Inc.

- Bighorn Traffic Services
- C+H Construction Company
- CM Company
- Golden Valley Construction, Inc.
- GS Construction Co., Inc.
- Hansen-Rice, Inc.
- Quality Electric, Inc.
- Railco, LLC
- Rivers West Construction, Inc.
- STRATA
- Superior Blasting
- YMC, Inc.

Congratulations to all Idaho AGC members recognized through NASA this year. Your commitment to sending every worker home safe sets the standard for our industry.

Have questions or want to see your company recognized next year?

Contact Molly Johnson at mjohnson@idahoagc.org.



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Employee or Independent Contractor?

A common question in the construction industry

By Dave Larsen, J.D.



As anticipated, the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (DOL) under the Trump Administration is reversing a Biden-era rule and returning to the traditional economic-realities analysis for determining whether workers are employees or independent contractors under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). In 2024, the DOL implemented a final independent contractor rule (2024 Rule) that, in general, made it more challenging for workers to be classified as independent contractors; however, updated guidance (2025 Guidance) was provided earlier this summer by the DOL stating that it would no longer apply the 2024 Rule. In general, this change makes it easier for certain workers to be classified as independent contractors. This new guidance currently applies only

when the DOL launches an investigation into a business to enforce federal labor laws.

By way of background, the 2024 Rule (Biden Administration) rescinded a 2021 rule under the Trump Administration that intended to make it easier for certain workers to be classified as independent contractors. The 2024 has been challenged, and several lawsuits are pending in federal courts. In those lawsuits, the DOL has taken the position that it is reconsidering the 2024 Rule, including whether to rescind it. The DOL is also developing a standard for determining employee status versus independent contractor status under the FLSA. Consequently, on May 1, 2025, the DOL issued Field Assistance Bulletin (FAB) 2025-1 explaining how to determine employee status or independent contractor status when

enforcing the FLSA. Pursuant to the FAB, while the DOL reviews the 2024 Rule, the DOL will no longer apply the 2024 Rule when determining employee status versus independent contractor status in FLSA investigations. Instead, the DOL will rely on principles outlined in Fact Sheet #13 (2008) and reinstated Opinion Letter FLSA2019-6 (2019).

Fact Sheet #13 provides a broader perspective regarding the meaning of an employment relationship. It specifically asserts that an employee under the FLSA is "one who, as a matter of economic reality, follows the usual path of an employee and is dependent on the business which he or she serves," and that an employer-employee relationship under the law is tested by "economic reality." It also lists seven factors the Supreme Court considers significant in determining employee classification under the FLSA. These factors are:

- The extent to which the services rendered are an integral part of the principal's business;
- The permanency of the relationship;
- The amount of the alleged contractor's investment in facilities and equipment;
- The nature and degree of control by the principal;
- The alleged contractor's opportunities for profit and loss;
- The amount of initiative, judgment, or foresight in open market competition



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with others required for the success of the claimed independent contractor; and

- The degree of independent business organization and operation.

While the 2025 Guidance is not a formal rule, its intent is to return the requirements and analysis to the pre-2021 rule precedent. The 2025 Guidance restored the multifactor, totality-of-the-circumstances analysis to assess whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor under the FLSA. In addition, all factors are analyzed equally without assigning a predetermined weight to a particular factor or set of factors.

Further, the 2025 Guidance does not change existing regulations, but it reflects how the DOL is allocating enforcement resources during a formal review of the 2024 Rule. The FAB supersedes any prior or conflicting guidance provided to DOL staff on enforcement related to independent contractor misclassification. Until further action is taken, the 2024 Rule remains in effect for purposes of private litigation, and the FAB does not change the rights of employees or the responsibilities of employers under the FLSA. Employers should continue to monitor the situation for updates.

Dave Larsen, J.D. founded Larsen Law, PLLC in 2010. Larsen's legal career has primarily focused on employee benefits, human resources and employment law. Prior to establishing Larsen Law, PLLC, Larsen worked for and represented numerous Fortune 500 companies. Larsen has broad experience with complex issues involving health and welfare plans, ERISA, PPACA, HIPAA, retirement plans, fiduciary duties, executive compensation, severance, corporate matters, human resources, employment and associated litigation. ●



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The One Big Beautiful Bill Act Tax Update: *A Contractor's Guide to the Latest Changes*

How the One Big Beautiful Bill Act Business and Individual Tax provisions affect the construction industry

By Matt Goodfellow, CPA, Sorren



The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) introduces significant tax updates that every contractor should know to keep their business strong and compliant. Whether you're on the job site or in the office, understanding these tax updates can help you build a stronger financial foundation and keep your business running smoothly.

BUSINESS TAX PROVISIONS

1. Full Expensing for Certain Business Property

Previously, 100 percent bonus depreciation was set to phase out after 2022 and drop to zero after 2026, with a 40 percent bonus rate for 2025. Under the new law, 100 percent expensing for qualified business property has been made permanent for assets acquired after January 19, 2025.

For contractors, this means continued ability to immediately expense significant investments in equipment and construction-related assets, improving cash flow and encouraging capital investment.

2. Increased Dollar Limitations for Expensing Capital Assets (Section 179)

The Section 179 expensing limit, which allows immediate deduction of qualifying property costs, was previously capped at \$1.25 million with a phaseout beginning at \$3.13 million in total asset purchase for 2025. The new law increases the limit to \$2.5 million with phaseout beginning at \$4 million, adjusted annually for inflation. This provides contractors greater room to expense costly equipment or property upfront rather than capitalizing it.

3. Extension and Enhancement of the Qualified Business Income (QBI) Deduction

The QBI deduction, which offers up to 20 percent deduction of qualified business income for pass-through entities, was set to expire after 2025. Now, it has been made permanent with increased phase-in thresholds for the wage/capital limitation and a minimum deduction of \$400 for taxpayers with at least \$1,000 of QBI.

Since most small- to mid-size construction businesses are organized as

passthrough entities, the continuation of this deduction prevents a large increase to their tax bill.

4. Exception to the Percentage of Completion Accounting Method for Long-Term Contracts

Previously, the exception allowing cash method accounting for long-term contracts applied only to home construction contracts. The new law expands this to cover all residential construction contracts with a three-year completion test. This change simplifies tax accounting for contractors engaged in residential projects, easing administrative burdens and smoothing cash flow.

5. Termination of the Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Deduction

The energy-efficient commercial buildings deduction was available for property construction beginning before 2033 but will no longer be available for property construction starting after June 30, 2026. Contractors involved in commercial building retrofits or construction should plan accordingly, as the incentive will phase out shortly.

6. Full Expensing of Domestic Research and Experimental Expenditures

Starting in 2025, domestic research and experimental expenditures can be fully expensed immediately rather than amortized over five years. Small business taxpayers (with average annual gross receipts under \$31 million) can even amend prior-year returns to claim this benefit retroactively. For construction firms investing in innovation or process improvements, this offers a valuable tax planning opportunity.

INDIVIDUAL TAX PROVISIONS

1. Permanent Lower Individual Tax Rates

The reduced individual tax rates established under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), previously set to expire after 2025, have now been made permanent. This provides greater certainty for contractors operating as pass-through entities or sole proprietors, helping with long-term tax planning.

2. Increased Estate and Gift Tax Exemptions

The estate and gift tax exemption, temporarily doubled to around \$13 million through 2025, is permanently increased to \$15 million (indexed for inflation) after 2025. Contractors with significant assets or family business succession plans should review their estate strategies to take advantage of the higher exemption.

3. Increased Limit on State and Local Tax (SALT) Deductions

The cap on SALT deductions, previously set at \$10,000, has been increased to \$40,000 for 2025 (indexed thereafter), with a phase-down for higher incomes. The deduction will revert to \$10,000 after 2029. This expanded

deduction limit can benefit contractors in states with high property and income taxes, improving tax outcomes in the near term.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CONTRACTORS

Successful contractors don't just build projects – they build smart strategies.

Taking advantage of these tax changes now can strengthen your bottom line and keep your business running smoothly. And if navigating the tax code ever feels overwhelming, we're here to help guide you every step of the way.

Matthew Goodfellow, CPA, is a tax partner at Sorren. ●



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Idaho's Construction Economy: Growth and Friction

By Macrina Wilkins, Senior Research Analyst, AGC of America

Idaho's project pipeline tells a story of guarded optimism. New housing projects and select commercial developments continue to move the needle from blueprint to jobsite, while high financing costs and tight labor markets keep growth measured. The likely outcome is steady but selective expansion, not an unchecked surge.

Construction remains a pillar of growth in Idaho, defying the national trend of cooling in the housing and non-residential market. Construction makes up a large portion of Idaho's economy, it contributed \$9 billion (6.6 percent) towards the state's \$131 billion economy in the first quarter of 2025. Compared to other states, Idaho's construction spending as a share of state domestic product was fourth largest.

The industry's strength reflects both population and building trends. Idaho tied for sixth in population growth from July 2023 to July 2024. Robust permitting, up 23 percent from 2023 to 2024 for single-family homes, pushed overall housing authorizations to more than twice the U.S. rate per 1,000 homes, even as

multifamily cooled late in the year.

That surge in homebuilding shows up in the job market. Construction employment in Idaho has risen 40 percent since February 2020, the largest increase of any state. In August 2025, Idaho posted the nation's fourth-fastest growth rate in construction employment. The state added 4,900 jobs for the month, a 6.8 percent increase from one year prior and putting the industry's total at 77,000. This makes construction employment's growth rate in Idaho significantly faster than the U.S. construction employment's growth rate of 0.7 percent.

Idaho now has four metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), revised down from seven, for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports employment data. Over the past 12 months, employment grew eight percent in Boise City and Idaho Falls, and six percent in Coeur d'Alene and Lewiston. That broad-based metro growth is keeping labor demand intense.

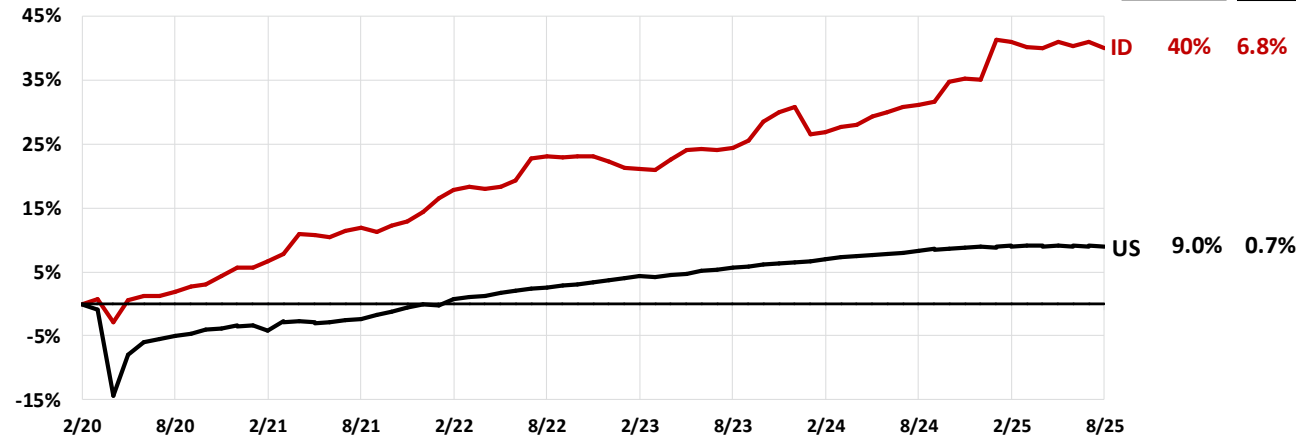
In the 2025 AGC NCCER Workforce Survey, Idaho builders report they are eager to hire, with 96 percent of firms reporting

US & ID Construction Employment

Cumulative change, Feb. 2020- Aug. 2025, seasonally adjusted



% change
Feb. 2020- Aug. 2024-
Aug. 2025: Aug. 2025:



1 | Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov/sae

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openings for hourly craft workers and 76 percent for salaried roles. However, that eagerness has not translated into filled positions, as nearly nine-in-ten firms say they cannot fill them. Firms most often cite a lack of qualified or properly credentialed candidates, and almost half report that new hires quit or fail to show up soon after starting. In a bid to remain competitive, 77 percent of Idaho contractors reported raising base pay as much as, or more than last year, and many boosted training budgets.

The shortage is sharpest in specialized and leadership positions. Superintendents, project managers and estimators top the hard-to-fill list on the salaried side, while laborers, mechanics, concrete workers, carpenters and equipment operators are the toughest craft roles to staff. These gaps are already delaying projects: about a third of Idaho contractors have experienced schedule setbacks tied to labor shortfalls.

Policy headwinds remain moderate compared with other states. Only eight percent of Idaho firms reported immigration-enforcement disruptions in the past six months, and tariff impacts are limited. Still, contractors warn that long-term growth depends on stronger training pipelines and practical workforce policies to supply the skilled employees needed to meet demand.

Even with strong demand, Idaho contractors note that workforce constraints remain the more immediate challenge, but they also recognize that permitting and compliance requirements can affect project timing, particularly for large or federally funded

work. Federal rules such as the Build America, Buy America Act add cost and complexity by limiting material sourcing, and those impacts can deepen when tariffs push up prices. Projects near wetlands or waterways may require Clean Water Act reviews, and federally linked construction can trigger environmental or historic-resource consultations that extend schedules, as seen with the high-profile Lava Ridge wind project.

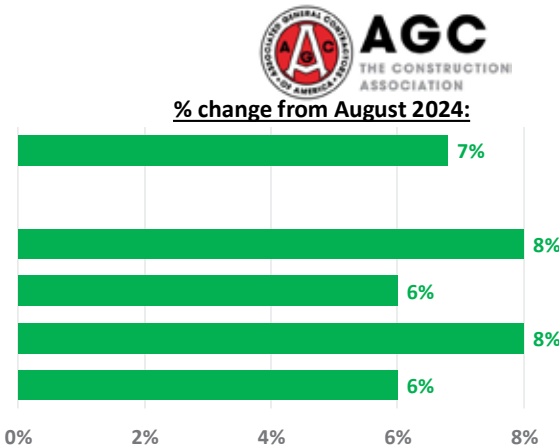
At the state and local level, most permitting processes are seen as manageable, though they still demand careful coordination. Under Idaho's Local Land Use Planning Act, rezonings and other discretionary approvals carry multiple hearing and appeal opportunities, and local governments can impose interim moratoria. Local rules, including design reviews, hillside or wildfire zone standards, and updated FEMA flood maps, can add time to planning and design, while traffic impact studies or stormwater permits often determine when ground can be broken.

While these layers of review are not unique to Idaho, they can still shape costs and timelines when combined with a tight labor market. For now, the state's construction boom shows little sign of fading. Idaho's challenge, as ever, is to manage both growth and friction by expanding its workforce and maintaining efficient and predictable approval processes so that today's momentum becomes sustainable, long-term progress. ●

Idaho Metro Construction Employment

August 2024 – August 2025, not seasonally adjusted

<u>State (seasonally adjusted)</u>	<u>August 2025:</u>
Idaho	77,000
<u>Metros:</u>	
Boise City*	40,700
Coeur d'Alene	8,300
Idaho Falls*	7,100
Lewiston, ID-WA	1,900



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov/sae. *BLS reports employment combined with mining and logging for DE, HI, DC and metro areas in which mining and logging have few employers. AGC attributes all of the change in employment to construction.

Culture is a Jobsite Issue: Why Investing in People Impacts Productivity



By Susan Kuehl, Co-Founder at Consilio

Walk onto any jobsite and you can feel it before you see it. The hum of work isn't just equipment running – it's the rhythm of people working together. And here's the truth nobody in construction wants to admit: your culture shows up before any work starts. If the team doesn't trust each other, productivity tanks, safety gets sloppy, and rework eats your margins alive.

Culture isn't a soft, feel-good HR slogan. It's a jobsite issue. It's productivity, profit and succession planning wrapped into one. Ignore it, and you'll bleed talent, bids and trust until your company becomes a cautionary tale.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

The construction industry is in a perfect storm: labor shortages, generational turnover, rising costs and razor-thin margins. Everyone's scrambling for talent, but here's the part most owners miss: paychecks get people to show up, but culture decides whether they stay and deliver.

You don't lose people because someone else pays them more an hour. You lose them because they don't trust their foreman, feel disrespected by their PM, or believe leadership only cares about deadlines and profit, not people. That's where companies are bleeding – not in their estimating spreadsheets, but in the daily micro-decisions of people giving their best effort or doing just enough not to get fired.

CULTURE = PRODUCTIVITY

The straight talk:

- High-trust crews work faster and safer. If you've ever watched a crew that trusts each other, it's like choreography: less downtime, fewer mistakes and zero drama.
- Disengaged teams cost you real money. The latest research shows that disengaged employees are 18 percent less productive. On a \$10 million project, that's a \$1.8 million hit. You can't outbid that.
- Leaders set the tone, whether they know it or not. Your superintendents and PMs are the culture carriers. If they bark,





blame or hide mistakes, the crew mirrors it. And then you wonder why you've got turnover.

Culture doesn't live in your company values poster. It lives in the jobsite trailer, at the morning huddle and in how your leaders handle the heat of deadlines and change orders.

Most owners talk about their backlogs, their bids and their margins. The smart ones talk about culture because they know that culture is the last competitive edge that can't be copied.

The only question left is whether you'll treat it like a jobsite issue – or let it keep eroding your productivity until someone else wins the bid you should've had.

HOW TO START FIXING CULTURE AT THE JOBSITE

1. Kill the silent jobsite

- Individual: Speak up when you see something wrong—or when you see something done right. Silence kills trust faster than mistakes. If you want to be part of a culture that values quality, your words need to back it up.
- Leadership: Make the morning huddle more than just “who's doing what.” Use it to set the tone: one recognition, one safety non-negotiable, one project priority. Ten minutes a day creates a drumbeat for culture.

2. Model “own it” behavior

- Individual: If you screw something up, own it immediately. No excuses, no finger-pointing. That's how you build trust with your crew. People remember the one who takes responsibility, not the one who hides.
- Leadership: When things go wrong, take the heat publicly and solve it privately. Crews notice when leaders protect them in front of the client or GC. That earns loyalty you can't buy with a paycheck.

3. Build micro-trust daily

- Individual: Show up on time, ready to work and with your head in the game. Reliability is the simplest form of respect—and it compounds.
- Leadership: Walk the site and talk to your people, not just “check the work.” Ask, “What's getting in your way?” Then fix one thing fast. Speed builds credibility.

These are habits you can start tomorrow that change the tone on a crew and ripple through the company. Culture isn't built in off-

sites; it's built in ten-minute huddles, in how mistakes get handled, and in whether leaders make promises and keep them.

Idaho built its reputation on strong backs and straight talk. Let's keep both. Make culture a jobsite variable you manage with the same discipline you bring to schedule and safety. When you do, bids get sharper, rework drops, and your best people stop leaving for “a dollar more” because they know they're building something that lasts.

WHAT'S COMING NEXT

This is part one of a four-part series for AGC members. If you're serious about protecting your margins, winning bids with execution, and building a company people actually want to work for, here's what's coming:

1. Five people trends reshaping construction firms right now

Why ignoring these shifts will leave you with empty crews and stalled projects.

2. How to build a high-trust team on the jobsite and in the office

The step-by-step playbook for creating crews that move like a machine.

3. People challenges no one talks about (but everyone faces)

The silent killers of productivity that lurk under every hard hat.

4. Your leadership reputation is already on the jobsite – own it or lose it

Why your foremen, supers and PMs already know your leadership style – and how to make sure it builds your impact, not buries it.

SUSAN KUEHL: THE OPERATIONAL EDGE YOUR CULTURE IS MISSING

Susan Kuehl is a co-founder of Consilio Consultants and a strategic advisor to leaders committed to humancentric performance. I am one of the lucky ones. I get to partner with companies that don't just say they love their people but actively prove it, every day.

Consilio's philosophy is simple, proven and non-negotiable: loving people IS the metric – and we know how to operationalize it. Fifteen years of working inside organizations have proven that when culture is built into the infrastructure, you create workplaces where people are proud to belong, and connection and employee experience can be observed and felt at every level.

Learn more at thinkconsilio.com. ●

Building Tomorrow: Why Tech-Enabled Tools are the Future of Communication and Collaboration in Preconstruction

By Steve Dell'Orto, Founder & CEO, ConCntric



The construction industry is at the cusp of a revolutionary transformation in its preconstruction phase – a pivotal, yet often neglected stage in project development. Despite holding one of the largest construction markets globally, the U.S. construction sector has faced staggering inefficiencies, misinterpretations, and costly rework, especially within the last ten years. Traditional communication methods through scattered spreadsheets have long hindered collaboration, causing detrimental delays. According to a 2021 IDC report, a shocking 75 percent of projects exceeded budgets, and 77 percent faced project delays averaging 70 days per year. These stark realities set the stage for an immediate call to arms for change.

In my over two decades as an executive officer in one of the largest privately-owned domestic general contractors in the United States, I've witnessed firsthand the intricate challenges within the construction industry. Despite remarkable technological strides, preconstruction processes remain predominantly manual and fragmented, with scattered spreadsheets hindering collaboration and obstructing a comprehensive project view. It's time to address these challenges head-on and embrace the transformative power of ongoing technological advancements, particularly in the critical preconstruction phase.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION IN PRECONSTRUCTION

Communication and collaboration in preconstruction are essential for project success. In the complex world of construction, preconstruction sets the stage, and effective communication ensures everyone is on the same page. Without it, misunderstandings arise, leading to costly delays and budget overruns. Think of it as making sure architects, engineers, contractors and clients are all speaking the same language, ensuring a smooth process from the get-go.

Currently, communication and collaboration often happen

the old-fashioned way – through scattered spreadsheets and traditional methods. This manual approach, while familiar, creates bottlenecks and slows down the process. The result? Delays, misinterpretations, and projects exceeding budgets. The urgent need for change is evident, and that change lies in embracing tech-enabled tools that streamline communication and foster collaboration in the preconstruction phase, setting the construction industry on a path toward a more efficient and cost-effective future.

TECH-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PRECONSTRUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of construction, embracing technology isn't just about staying up-to-date; it's a strategic move toward redefining how we approach and achieve excellence in preconstruction. Tech tools serve as catalysts, propelling the industry toward a more efficient, sustainable and collaborative future.

From creating detailed digital models of entire projects with Building Information Modeling (BIM) to exploring virtual constructions using augmented reality, technology is changing the game. Collaborative platforms act as conductors, bringing all these tools together, making communication smooth, and decisions faster. It's not just about staying up-to-date; it's about building a better future, one tech tool at a time.

BUILDING INFORMATION MODELING (BIM)

In recent history, one of the most important technological additions to preconstruction was Building Information Modeling (BIM). BIM enables the creation of a single or federated digital model of the entire project, offering stakeholders a dynamic and interactive platform to visualize designs, identify issues and actively contribute to the collaborative process. BIM's significance becomes even more pronounced with the recently passed \$1 trillion U.S. Infrastructure Bill, injecting \$20 billion every five years to propel advanced digital construction management systems.

From creating detailed digital models of entire projects with Building Information Modeling (BIM) to exploring virtual constructions using augmented reality, technology is changing the game.

BIM has become a linchpin in the drive towards design optimization, including sustainability. With the construction industry's increasing emphasis on eco-friendly practices, BIM enables stakeholders to assess the environmental impact of design choices, optimize energy efficiency and reduce waste. It becomes an integral part of constructing not just buildings but a sustainable and responsible future.

THE SYNERGY OF BIM AND VR

Building Information Modeling (BIM) and virtual reality (VR) are a dynamic duo reshaping how architects, engineers and builders approach construction projects. While BIM creates a virtual model of a building, VR technology provides an immersive, three-dimensional experience of the structure. When used together, these technologies enhance collaboration, design review and construction planning.

BIM's virtual model allows simultaneous access and editing by multiple team members, fostering real-time collaboration and communication. VR technology takes collaboration to a new level by offering team members an immersive experience of the building design. During design reviews, VR enables team members to walk through the building virtually, uncovering nuances that contribute to a more accurate and refined construction plan. Together, BIM and VR create a powerful synergy that not only improves collaboration but also elevates design precision in the preconstruction process.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The true triumph in preconstruction lies in the integration of the myriad workflows and various technologies as they develop through a comprehensive preconstruction management platform. A holistic preconstruction management platform consolidates data, work environments, communication threads, and schedules, ensuring a single source of truth for all involved. With platforms like ConCntric, no longer do we rely on fragmented communication channels or sift through scattered documents. Instead, we engage in a collaborative process that ensures everyone is on the same page, fostering a shared understanding of project objectives and requirements.

This integrated approach is particularly crucial in today's construction landscape, where projects are becoming increasingly complex and stakeholders are dispersed globally. A comprehensive preconstruction management platform acts

as a unifying force, breaking down geographical barriers and fostering an environment where every voice is heard, and every idea contributes to the grand composition of the project.

In conclusion, the optimization of every aspect in preconstruction requires not just the adoption of individual technologies but a strategic integration of various tools through a holistic preconstruction management platform. This approach ensures that the industry not only embraces the benefits of BIM, virtual and augmented reality, but also integrates these technologies in a way that propels us towards a built world that is truly more affordable, predictable and sustainable.

Steve Dell'Orto, a 26-year construction industry veteran and former executive officer of a leading U.S. general contractor with annual revenues of \$5-6 billion, brings unparalleled expertise to digital transformation. As the founder and CEO of ConCntric, he pioneers preconstruction management software, fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Explore www.concntric.com for a demo and witness the future of preconstruction. ●





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By working together with the construction and design community, Idaho Power is helping create buildings that are not only more efficient, but also more resilient and cost-effective.

From Blueprint to Breakthrough: Idaho Power's Role in Energy-Efficient Construction

At Idaho Power, we're leading the charge to promote a more energy-efficient future — but we can't do it alone! That's why we team up with contractors, developers, municipalities, and industry professionals across our service area to make energy-smart construction choices.

Here are a few ways Idaho Power

collaborates with our customers and industry partners to drive energy savings.

We believe energy efficiency should be an early part of the process when the design decisions are made. The architects and engineers ensure energy efficiency is integrated into a project from the ground up. That's why we offer our Professional Assistance Incentive, which pays the third-party architect or engineer to

support the participant with the technical aspects and documentation of the project necessary to complete the incentive process.

A vital partner in our educational effort is the Integrated Design Lab (IDL). IDL offers building performance analysis, technical services, design tools and education. IDL hosts lunch & learns and the Building Simulation Users Group

We help identify and correct inefficiencies in building systems and optimize controls which pays \$0.025 per kilowatt-hour saved and up to 100 percent of the cost. It's a win-win for your building and your budget.

(BSUG) which provides professionals with learning and networking opportunities.

Idaho Power also offers assessment services that provide tailored recommendations for energy efficiency improvements, complete with estimated financial impacts. We want building owners and developers to feel confident making decisions that benefit both their operations and their bottom line.

Training is another key component to our outreach. Our commercial and industrial trainings keep professionals current on the latest energy-efficient technologies, system optimization strategies and sustainable building practices. Whether you're new to the field or a seasoned pro, there's always something new to learn.

Another important offering is our Find n' Fix service, which is a game-changer for existing central HVAC systems. We help identify and correct inefficiencies in building systems and optimize controls which pays \$0.025 per kilowatt-hour saved and up to 100 percent of the cost. It's a win-win for your building and your budget.

Our Strategic Energy Management (SEM) program is all about collaboration. We bring together cohorts of commercial and industrial customers to identify



Idaho Power collaborates with our customers and industry partners to drive energy savings.

operational and behavioral changes that can reduce energy use both at their individual facilities and across their industries. With expert coaching, peer collaboration, and data-driven insights, participants see real, measurable energy savings over time.

We're active members and sponsors in industry associations like the Building Owners and Managers Association, American Institute of Architects, and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers. These associations help

us align our programs with national standards and foster collaboration across the building industry.

Through these multifaceted efforts, we're committed to supporting energy-efficient construction and fostering a culture of sustainability. By working together with the construction and design community, we're helping create buildings that are not only more efficient, but also more resilient and cost-effective.

For more information on how you can work with us on your next project, visit idahopower.com/business. ●

A New Gateway for Post Falls

By Shayna Wiwierski

The I-90 Offset SPUI project is modernizing mobility at the heart of North Idaho

The \$78 million offset Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) project is not just a construction endeavor, but a bold step toward easing congestion and preparing for the region's burgeoning traffic demands.

The new offset SPUI, a modern design that consolidates four directions of traffic under a single traffic light, aims to streamline flow and reduce congestion.

Along Interstate 90 in Kootenai County, a transformative infrastructure project is reshaping how residents and travelers navigate the growing city of Post Falls.

The \$78 million offset Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) project, spearheaded by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and executed by Scarsella Bros., Inc., is not just a construction endeavor, but a bold step toward easing congestion and preparing for the region's burgeoning traffic demands. With construction beginning in August 2022 and a projected completion in spring 2026, this project promises to redefine mobility in North Idaho.

The project centers on reconstructing a critical junction where I-90 meets State Highway 41, a vital artery connecting Post Falls and nearby Rathdrum. The existing interchange, long criticized for its inefficient design, was once cited by ITD officials as a national example of what not to do.

"The existing interchange was inadequate and couldn't handle the volume of traffic," says Jason Johnston, construction manager at Interstate Concrete & Asphalt, the subcontractor handling the

asphalt paving on the new project.

The outdated layout caused traffic to back up onto the interstate, creating bottlenecks and safety hazards. The new offset SPUI, a modern design that consolidates four directions of traffic under a single traffic light, aims to streamline flow and reduce congestion.

A SPUI is a compact, efficient design where all left-turn and through movements are controlled at one central point. The "offset" in Post Falls' version refers to the slight shift in alignment to accommodate local geography and traffic patterns. ITD's decision to implement an SPUI followed a comprehensive traffic study, which identified it as the optimal solution for improving mobility off I-90.

"The updated SPUI gives growing traffic volumes ease of direction and free right turns onto ramps in either direction," says David Lukes, project manager at Scarsella Bros., Inc. This design choice reflects a broader trend in Idaho, where ITD has already built one SPUI at US-95 and SH-53, and plans two more along I-90.

The project's scope is ambitious yet geographically compact,



These upgrades are designed to handle future traffic volumes in a region experiencing rapid growth since the population boom spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project's asphalt work, handled by Interstate Concrete & Asphalt, is designed to last 10 to 20 years, ensuring durability for the high-traffic corridor.



focusing on a stretch of I-90 just beyond mile marker 7. It includes the construction of six new bridges to support on- and off-ramps, as well as the decommissioning of the old SH-41 alignment. While the project's footprint is modest, its \$78 million cost, funded through the Transportation Expansion and Congestion Mitigation (TECM) program, underscores the complexity of its features, including ramps, bridges, and the SPUI itself. These upgrades are designed to handle future traffic volumes in a region experiencing rapid growth since the population boom spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Construction has not been without challenges. Staged construction, limited access to ramps and intersections, and the need to maintain traffic flow on a busy highway posed significant hurdles. To minimize disruption, Scarsella Bros., Inc. coordinated closely with ITD and stakeholders, opting for nighttime work involving one-lane closures, full closures and ramp closures.

"We overcame major construction challenges by coordinating with all stakeholders and the owner to effectively work at night," Lukes explains.

Johnston echoed the sentiment, noting the difficulty of managing traffic amid North Idaho's expansion.

"With the number of roadway construction projects, it can be a challenge working with the travelling public," he says, citing the region's growth as a complicating factor.

The project's asphalt work, handled by Interstate Concrete & Asphalt, is designed to last 10 to 20 years, ensuring durability for the high-traffic corridor. Other subcontractors, such as C.L.

Heilman Company for bridge construction and Frank Gurney, Inc. for guardrails and barriers, have played critical roles in bringing the project to life. Despite the absence of groundbreaking materials or techniques, the coordination required to execute such a complex project under tight constraints highlights the expertise of the teams involved.

For the Post Falls community, the SPUI represents more than just an infrastructure upgrade—it's a lifeline for a region grappling with growth. SH-41 serves as the primary route for local traffic heading south through Post Falls to access I-90. The new interchange will enhance connectivity between Post Falls and Rathdrum, completing a trifecta of major projects along this corridor.

"It's going to dramatically improve the flow of traffic," Johnston says, acknowledging the current inconvenience but emphasizing the long-term benefits.

While the Post Falls SPUI may not set a precedent, it aligns with ITD's shift toward innovative interchange designs over traditional signalized intersections. With plans for additional SPUIs in the region, this project could serve as a model for efficient, scalable solutions to Idaho's traffic challenges.

As construction progresses toward its 2026 completion, the people of Post Falls await a smoother, safer, and more efficient gateway to their city—one that reflects both the region's growth and its aspirations for the future.

"When it's done, it's going to be much, much better," says Johnston. ●

Reviving a Nuclear Legacy

Idaho's desert dome poised to power America's energy future



By Shayna Wiwierski

The MFC is shaping the future of nuclear energy through research, development, and demonstration.

In Idaho's Snake River Plain, spanning 890 square miles of federal land, an 80-foot-diameter, carbon-steel-and-concrete dome at the Idaho National Laboratory's Materials and Fuels Complex (MFC) is being transformed.

Originally built for the Experimental Breeder Reactor-II, a sodium-cooled fast reactor decommissioned in 1994, the dome is now the centerpiece of the Demonstration of Microreactor Experiments (DOME) project. Designed to test advanced microreactors to meet growing energy demands, construction began in September 2023 with a target completion date of March 2026.

The DOME project positions the Idaho National Laboratory (INL), the nation's leading nuclear research facility, at the forefront of a nuclear energy resurgence.

"At the Materials and Fuels Complex, our mission is experiments, engineering and demonstrations that drive the world's nuclear energy future," says Brady Orchard, project director at the MFC.

Funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of

Nuclear Energy, MFC collaborates with private industry to test advanced reactor concepts.

"We're at the hub of all the advancing nuclear energy activities happening right now in the country," Orchard says, noting increased partnerships with companies like Westinghouse Electric Company and Radiant Industries.

The dome, originally built for the Experimental Breeder Reactor-II (EBR-II), is being repurposed as a test bed under the National Reactor Innovation Center, established in October 2019.

"We are repurposing the original EBR-II containment dome to serve as a test bed for first testing of new reactor concepts," Orchard explains.

Initially slated for demolition, the dome was preserved in 2018, saving an estimated \$1 billion compared to building a new structure. The \$80 million repurposing effort involves restoring utility connections and containment capabilities. It's a unique structure, Orchard says, mentioning its one-inch-thick carbon steel exterior and foot-thick reinforced concrete interior, designed

to contain releases resulting from upset conditions during reactor testing. "If there were an accident, the dome itself would contain the release, protecting personnel and the environment," he says.

Construction, led by Idaho-based ESTECH LLC, began in September 2023. Challenges include complex welding for new utility penetrations and an enlarged access hatch, as well as a regional shortage of skilled trades.

"We've been very fortunate to have teamed with a construction company that has stepped up to the challenge to accelerate construction," Orchard notes, praising ESTECH's work on five MFC projects over the past five years.

A polar crane atop the dome, capable of 360-degree rotation, is being refurbished to support reactor installation and decommissioning. Originally set for completion in early 2027, the timeline has been accelerated by 10 months to March 2026, driven by renewed federal emphasis on nuclear energy.

The first tests, approved by the DOE in July 2025, will feature microreactors from Westinghouse and Radiant Industries.



Orchard says the Department of Energy has awarded two conditional approvals for the first tests to be conducted in the dome, designed to fast-track the deployment of American microreactor technology. Each test, lasting 12 to 15 months, will see reactors installed, evaluated, and removed for the next, supporting commercialization of compact, inherently safe designs to meet rising energy demands from AI and other sectors.

Economically, DOME is a catalyst for Idaho. INL, the state's fifth-largest employer, has seen MFC's workforce grow from 500 in 2005 to nearly 1,500 daily commuters today.

"We've had a \$600 million direct investment from the Department of Energy into our nuclear capabilities at MFC over the last 10 years," Orchard says, alongside a 250 percent increase in research activities. With at least eight more reactor demonstrations planned at INL, private investment in infrastructure like power lines will further boost southeast Idaho's economy.

"Each reactor demonstration will have

associated construction or installation efforts," he added, projecting sustained job growth.

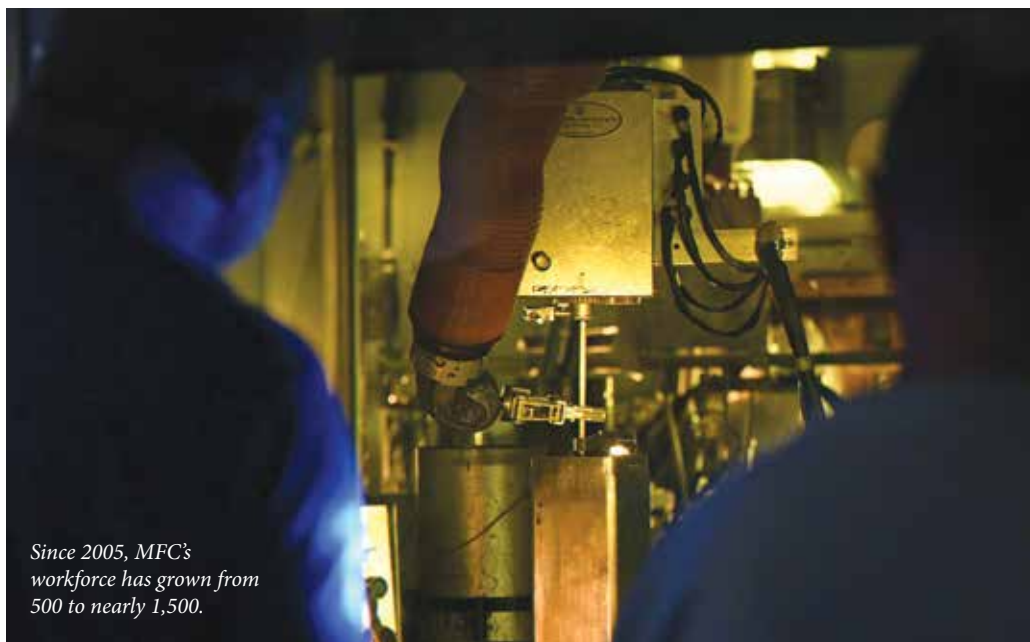
Orchard sees DOME's impact as both professional and personal.

"We're right in the middle of demonstrating advanced reactors critical to the nation's energy future," he says. "We're doing things at MFC that have the potential to impact my children and my

grandchildren's lives."

The dome's transformation underscores Idaho's enduring role in energy innovation, and by 2026 this desert structure could illuminate a path to a cleaner, more resilient energy future.

"In the early '50s and '60s, we were instrumental in nuclear. We're right there still today." ●



Since 2005, MFC's workforce has grown from 500 to nearly 1,500.



Redeveloping Boise's Riverfront

The College of Western Idaho (CWI), the state's youngest community college, is anchoring a \$200 million-plus mixed-use project that promises to transform 10 acres of underutilized land into a vibrant urban hub.

A new campus rises amid Idaho's boom

On a stretch of asphalt along the Boise River, where an abandoned car dealership once stood idle, an ambitious redevelopment is taking shape.

The College of Western Idaho (CWI), the state's youngest community college, is anchoring a \$200 million-plus mixed-use project that promises to transform 10 acres

of underutilized land into a vibrant urban hub. This public-private partnership, blending education, housing, retail, and recreation, reflects Boise's rapid evolution from a quiet city to one of America's fastest-growing metros — a city now grappling with how to build sustainably and inclusively amid explosive population growth.



At the heart of the project is CWI's four-story, 100,000-square-foot academic building, budgeted at \$38 million.



The building's ground floor will include classrooms and potential retail spaces like a cafe or coffee shop, while upper levels will feature offices and specialized teaching areas.



The project incorporates a five-story multi-family residential building with about 215 units, a five-story hotel (brand yet to be announced), and a 650-stall, four-story parking garage.

Founded in 2007 as the Treasure Valley's only public two-year college, CWI has ballooned from a fledgling institution to one serving over 31,000 students annually.

"We've had rapid growth in our short history," says Gordon Jones, president of CWI.

Supported by taxpayers in Ada and Canyon Counties, CWI has maintained a strong presence in Nampa but scattered its Boise operations across leased spaces. The new campus, on land acquired in 2015 at the intersection of Main Street and Whitewater Park Boulevard, aims to consolidate those facilities into a purpose-built node tailored for an urban setting.

At the heart of the project is CWI's four-story, 101,000-square-foot academic building, budgeted at \$38 million. Designed to house programs in cybersecurity, information technology, business and adult education, the structure will foster collaborations with nearby Boise State University.

"We're very close on the river to Boise State," says Jones. "We have academic programs that collaborate."

The building's ground floor will include classrooms and potential retail spaces like a cafe or coffee shop, while upper levels will feature offices and specialized teaching areas.

But the redevelopment extends far beyond academia. Led

by Ahlquist Development, the project incorporates a five-story multi-family residential building with about 215 units, a five-story hotel (brand yet to be announced), and a 650-stall, four-story parking garage. The garage's ground level will host 27,000 square feet of retail, including shops, restaurants, and outdoor patios overlooking the river. A quarter-acre park along the Boise River will serve as green space in the first phase, with potential for future expansion. Adjacent to the hotel, a wellness spa or high-end restaurant is under consideration, capitalizing on frontage to the Boise Greenbelt — a beloved pedestrian and bike path threading through the city.

"This is truly an urban campus environment that fits the Boise community," says Jones, emphasizing the site's accessibility. Thousands of vehicles pass daily on Main Street, heading to suburbs, while bus stops and multi-modal transport options abound. The parking structure, he added, will double as public access for weekend recreators drawn to the river and nearby Esther Simplot Park, one of Boise's signature green spaces.

Tommy Ahlquist, CEO of Ahlquist, described the location as a "destination" spot. A central courtyard with tables, benches, and grassy areas will invite CWI students and visitors to linger. In the garage's northwest corner, a rental shop may offer kayaks and



Tommy Ahlquist, CEO of Ahlquist, described the location as a “destination” spot.

recreational gear, tapping into the Boise River Park’s manmade wave feature — a popular draw for surfers and paddlers just upstream.

“This site will give the public even greater access to one of the city’s best amenities; the river and the greenbelt,” says Ahlquist.

Construction, handled by ESI Construction with architecture by Hummel Architects, and Paradigm as the owner’s representative, is set to begin imminently following recent approvals. The timeline targets completion by fall 2027, a roughly two-year build. Additional partners include the Raymond Management Company from Madison, Wis., developing the hotel, and Method Studio from Utah handling the residential design.

What sets this project apart is its role in Boise’s growth narrative. Idaho’s capital, long isolated — about 350 miles from the nearest comparable city — has surged in population, nearing one million in the metro area and projected to double in 25 years. Factors like remote work, post-COVID migration, and expansions at companies such as Micron Technology have fueled the boom.

“You’re watching the transformation in a metro area get rapidly built,” says Jones. “That kind of growth rate you need to get ahead of and lean into.”

The redevelopment exemplifies proactive urban planning: repurposing a blighted parking lot into a mixed-use enclave that integrates education with community amenities.

“Smart cities know how to do that early,” says Jones. “If we weren’t doing it now, we might be over in a warehouse district in 20 years from now, in a much less desirable location.”

For Ahlquist, the uniqueness lies in its recreational synergy, creating a riverside node that enhances livability.

While not pursuing LEED certification, sustainable features include energy-efficient systems. The academic and retail buildings will employ variable refrigerant flow (VRF) mechanical systems, a high-end option for reducing energy use. Stormwater management incorporates engineered seepage beds and landscape swales to handle runoff, addressing the site’s environmental sensitivities.

Challenges have arisen from the riverfront location.

“The biggest challenge right now is with the water table and the floodplain,” says Ahlquist, adding that all occupiable spaces



Construction, handled by ESI Construction with architecture by Hummel Architects, and Paradigm as the owner's representative, is set to begin imminently following recent approvals.

must sit two feet above the 100-year flood mark, complicating foundations. The shallow water table necessitates aggregate piers for stability in the garage and hotel areas, while traditional stormwater solutions like seepage beds require creative adaptations. As a public-private partnership (P3), the project has navigated public bidding and input processes, which Jones described as methodical but not unusually burdensome.

Funding for CWI's portion draws from a campus development fund, while private investment drives the rest, totaling hundreds

of millions. The partnership model underscores Boise's strategy for scaling infrastructure without overburdening taxpayers.

In a region prized for its "livability at scale," as Jones put it, the CWI Boise Campus redevelopment not only educates but elevates, turning a forgotten lot into a gateway for Idaho's future.

"Great cities have meaningful universities and colleges," says Jones. "This is a critical project to keep the things we all love about a city — employers, schools and recreation activities all in one." ●



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From left to right: Hamish Bell, co-founder of Forge Building Company; Hayden Farrell, co-founder of Forge Building Company; Roger Allen, founder of Stor-It; Kenzi Hurless, granddaughter of Roger Allen; CW Hurless, Stor-It chief development officer.

Building Idaho's Future: The Partnership Behind 25+ Years of Self-Storage Success

In Idaho's growing self-storage market, two names stand out: Forge Building Company and Stor-It Self Storage. Their relationship is one built on aligned values, shared vision, and more than 25 years of collaboration—a partnership that has shaped the state's storage landscape and raised the bar for quality and innovation.

The relationship between these companies is rooted as much in history as it is in trust. Before Forge Building Company was formally established, co-founders Hamish Bell and Hayden Farrell were already “boots on the ground” at Stor-It's Parkcenter facility (1999–2001), installing steel that laid the foundation for their future careers. What began as a single project between two young builders and a forward-thinking storage company has since grown into a collaboration spanning four generations of families and over two decades of work.

FORGE BUILDING COMPANY: BUILT ON TRUST, DELIVERED IN STEEL

Founded in 2007 and headquartered in Boise, Forge Building Company was born from decades of experience in the steel-structure industry. Guided by three pillars: building, designing and erecting, Forge has created a diverse portfolio nationwide,

delivering projects across self-storage, RV and boat storage, large warehouses, flex space and pre-engineered metal buildings for commercial and industrial use. Forge Building Company is Idaho's steel building expert.

Today, Forge stands as:

- Builder of 500+ projects
- Creator of 50+ million square feet
- Home to 200+ employees
- A privately owned Idaho success story

STOR-IT'S SELF-STORAGE: FOUR GENERATIONS OF GROWTH

Stor-It Self Storage's roots stretch back to 1972, when a Boise State University professor combined classroom teaching in real estate and finance with hands-on experience. Encouraged by students eager to invest in property, the professor joined his students in purchasing land on Mitchell Street in Boise, Idaho, an unconventional move at the time that proved visionary.

What started as a small experiment grew into one of the largest family-owned storage companies in the nation. Over the years, the professor bought out the original student partners and, with his family, expanded Stor-It into the 44th largest self-storage

BUILDING IDAHO'S FUTURE, ONE PROJECT AT A TIME



Your Vision. Our Expertise.

With over 200+ projects across Idaho, Forge is the steel building expert. Our success is rooted in understanding the Idaho market and our ability to work closely with all stakeholders — developers, city planners, and community leaders — to deliver the best outcome for every project.

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Above left: Founded in 2007 and headquartered in Boise, Forge Building Company was born from decades of experience in the steel-structure industry. Above: Of Stor-It's facility builds since 2001, Forge has been there every step of the way—designing, building, re-roofing and expanding.

facility owner in the U.S., with over three-million square feet and 20 facilities. Managed by four generations of the same family, Stor-It remains firmly rooted in its entrepreneurial beginnings and continues to carry the business forward.

BUILDING IDAHO'S FUTURE AND RAISING THE STANDARD

Forge and Stor-It's partnership has shaped the state's self-storage landscape. From storing dorm-room contents for Boise State students to offering climate-controlled units, RV and boat storage, and flex space for small businesses, Stor-It offers solutions for every need, while Forge has been the trusted builder behind each development.

Of Stor-It's facility builds since 2001, Forge has been there every step of the way — designing, building, re-roofing and expanding. As C.W. Hurless, chief development officer of Stor-It, puts it simply, "We will never build or buy a self-storage facility unless Forge is involved. Their standards are my standards. They're professional, honest, dedicated and incredibly productive."

Their most recent achievement: Stor-It's 240,000-square-foot Yamhill facility, opened May 5, 2025, sets a new benchmark for self-storage in Idaho. It includes:

- 10 buildings

- 671 units
- Drive-Up Storage
- Climate-controlled storage
- Interior units
- Flex space with storefront
- Large angled covered parking
- RV wash bay with dump station & water fill-up

This landmark project sets a new standard for storage solutions in Idaho.

IDAHO STRONGER, TOGETHER

Beyond bricks and steel, both companies share a deep commitment to Idaho's communities. Their impact includes sponsorship of youth athletic programs, support for more than two-dozen local charities and scholarship programs at Boise State University.

And the story isn't over. With projects already planned through 2034, Forge and Stor-It are poised to keep building together—creating not just facilities, but lasting value for Idaho's people and communities.

Their partnership proves that when trust, expertise, and vision align, the results are stronger than any one company could achieve alone. ●

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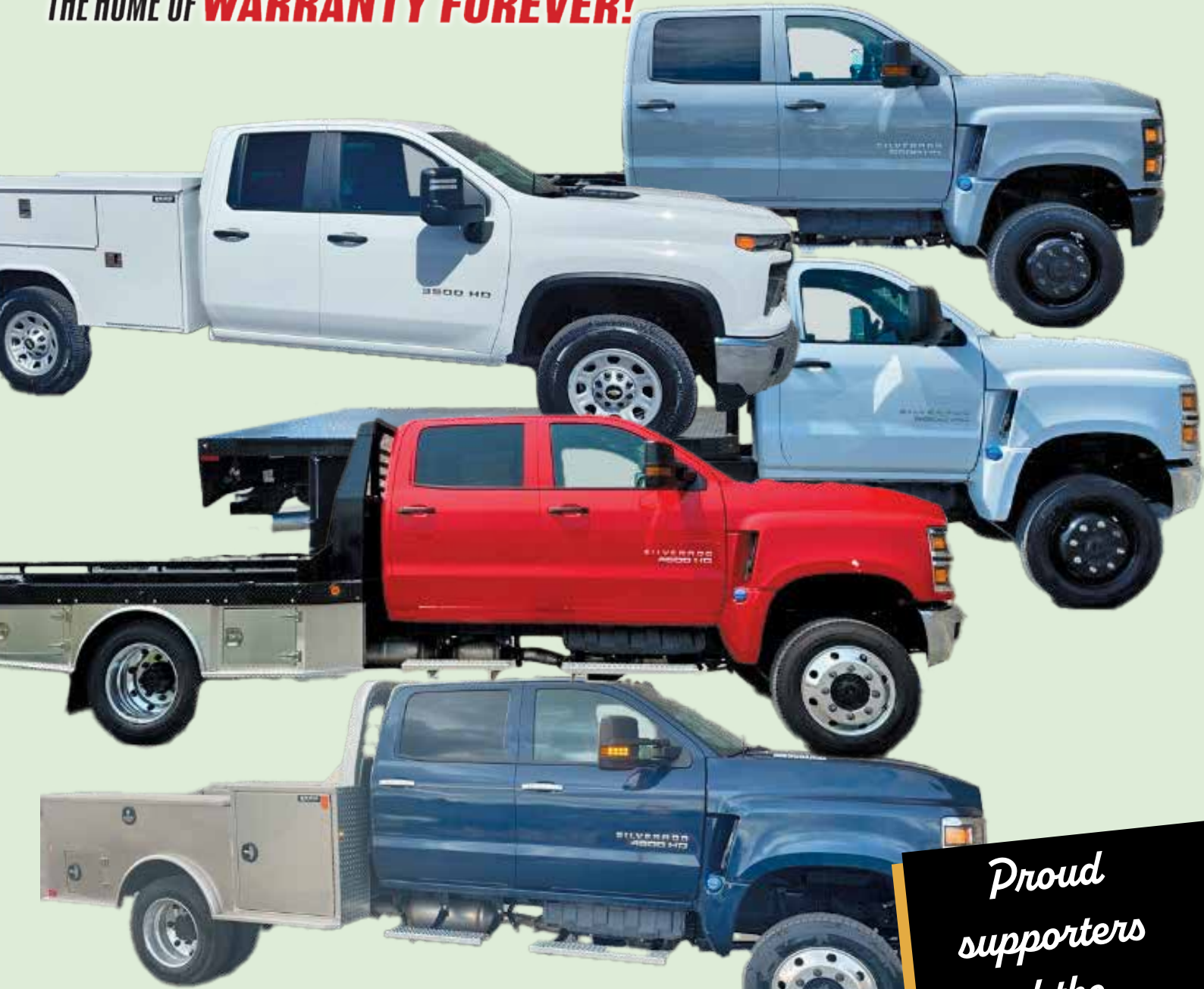
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