

CNR

CONSTRUCTION
NEWS AND REVIEW™

MAGAZINE

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OF PROGRESS

APRIL 2025 - YOUR RESPECTED INDUSTRY VOICE





APRIL 2025

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PERSPECTIVE
BY KERRY SMITH BUCK
PRESIDENT & CEO

The AGC of Missouri: 100 Years Representing the Power of Many Voices

President Calvin Coolidge was inaugurated as the country's 30th president.

Six years earlier, Congress passed Women's Suffrage, giving women the right to vote.

And in Missouri, the state suffered the effects of the Great Tri-State Tornado on March 18, 1925; it tore across Southeast Missouri, Southern Illinois and Southwest Indiana.

In and beyond St. Louis, the climate was hopeful as far as construction was concerned. World War I had ended six years earlier and a good number of native Missourians returned home to launch construction businesses. Thanks to the advent of the automobile, by 1925 St. Louis was home to some 200 car manufacturing companies - many of whom also offered trucks and tractors. Construction industry AGCMO- member companies back in those early days who are celebrating a century of association membership (or nearly so) include Koss Construction Company and Massman Construction Company.

A hearty group of 19 St. Louis construction industry execs attended the very first meeting of the organization that would eventually be known as AGCMO.

In the years that would follow, they'd be part of a number of industry firsts, overcoming workforce challenges, making tremendous progress and building projects that would transform Missouri.

What's the secret to a trade association's survival past the century mark? Through various mergers, the name of the association changed but its mission always remained the same: to educate, connect, inspire and advocate for its members.

Whether in construction or in life, the value of a collective voice is powerful. An association like the AGC of Missouri is what this entrepreneur likes to refer to as a "silo buster." Being part of a widely respected, productive association like this one brings us out of our independent company silos to gain valuable perspective on how we all fit together, the commonalities we share and the issues that are critically important to all of our businesses. Belonging to an association wherein we can unite our voices in a common message makes a difference, fosters trust and keeps a vibrant industry alive. The cross-company collaboration we see reflected in those who serve AGCMO (and AGC of America) in any capacity is a byproduct of individuals who generously serve beyond their silo because they see the

value in it - for them, their company and the industry overall. Time and time again, wise and forward-thinking construction industry professionals - many of whom you'll read about in the pages to follow - have served and do serve the AGC because they were (and are) passionate about the power of a collective voice via a profession they love(d).

Here's to the awesome power of a collective voice, particularly within the construction industry and uniquely through the AGC of Missouri.

Congratulations to AGCMO on its centennial, and to all those who have made that a reality.

Kerry

To truly appreciate the breadth of 100 years in the industry, let's travel a century back in time to set the stage for the country - and region - in which the founders of what would come to be known as the AGC of Missouri lived and worked.

The U.S. witnessed the first march of the Ku Klux Klan in August 1925 in Washington, D.C.

The Mount Rushmore Monument was proposed (construction would begin two years later).

Notre Dame won the 11th Rose Bowl, and the Pittsburgh Pirates won the 22nd World Series.

The New Yorker magazine was published for the first time.

With decades of experience and a thorough knowledge of a wide variety of project types, the Plocher team is poised and ready to Construct Your Vision.

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It's a Wonderful Life: AGC of Missouri Meets George Bailey

Every holiday season, millions of people tune in to watch "It's a Wonderful Life." George Bailey is saved from a suicide attempt and has an opportunity to see what Bedford Falls would look like if his work at Bailey Savings and Loan did not happen. We all learn that Bedford Falls turned out to be a better community due to the efforts of the team at Bailey Savings and Loan.

A couple of years ago, it occurred to me that in many ways the programs and services provided by AGC of Missouri to our community could be seen in the same light as Bailey Savings and Loan. I've often thought about the many seen and unseen impacts that the members and staff of AGC of Missouri (AGCMO) have had on the construction industry over the past 100 years.

I think of all of the young people who may not have known about the potential of a career in construction if not for the outreach efforts such as reading programs at elementary schools, career days for middle and high school students and Build My Future events. What career paths might they have chosen that may not have been as satisfying and rewarding as construction, if not for AGCMO?

I think of all the people who became educated and skilled about construction due to the multitude of training programs and educational materials created and supported by AGCMO. From the students who graduated from the Construction Careers Center charter high school to the thousands of people who received their apprenticeship training and became journey-level workers to the individuals who participated in foreman, supervisory and leadership training to the construction related college-bound young people who received scholarships, AGCMO has

touched hundreds of thousands of lives. How much "stumble time" was eliminated by helping people become more educated and knowledgeable about construction methods and techniques that helped them build solid, productive, well-paying careers because of the work of AGCMO?

I think of all the connections that have been made by bringing together the best contractors, specialty contractors, suppliers and service providers to build relationships that helped them grow their businesses. It's impossible to calculate the number of contacts that have been made through AGCMO social events, committee meetings and educational programs. How many businesses would never have had profitable and productive business opportunities or found that great partner if it were not for AGCMO?

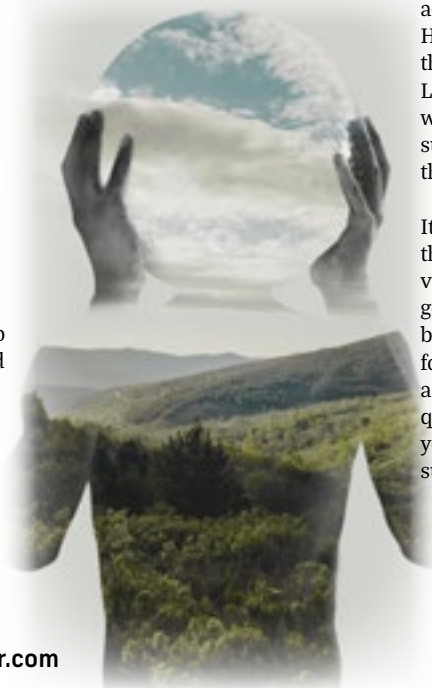
I think of all of the legislation and regulations that impact the construction community and the general public that have been either put in place or stopped due to the work of AGCMO. Certainly the AGCMO support for investments in roads, bridges and fresh water

and wastewater systems have made our community safer and healthier. Many laws and regulations that have had positive impacts on the buildings in our community have been supported by AGCMO, while we have been able to stop or modify some efforts that would have hurt the growth of our community. What would the quality of life and the business environment look like if not for the work of AGCMO?

I think of all the accidents and fatalities that have been avoided because of the thousands of safety training classes and seminars put on by AGCMO. It's impossible to measure the accidents that didn't happen, but I wonder about the number of craftworkers who may not have been able to make it home to their families at the end of a hard day's work if not for the safety education provided by AGCMO?

That said, over the past several years, one of AGCMO's initiatives has been the Pledge of Hope campaign, designed to fight the alarming number of suicides in the construction industry. I have personally heard several confidential stories of individuals who were considering taking their own life and then changed their mind after accessing some of the Pledge of Hope materials. How ironic that the basis for "It's a Wonderful Life" that tells a story of what the world looks like with just one suicide averted is now a part of the work of AGC of Missouri.

It is a wonderful life. I believe that the thousands of hours of volunteer time and staff work generated in the past 100 years by AGC of Missouri - in all of its forms and structures - have had a very positive impact on our quality of life. As always, thank you to all of our members and supporters.





MEMBERS & MILESTONES

WHO WE ARE TODAY



GUEST COLUMN

BY GOVERNOR MIKE KEHOE
58TH GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

Building a Stronger Missouri: 100 Years of AGCMO

Missouri's strength has always been its people - the hard-working men and women who embody the true meaning of the American dream.

But to keep Missouri thriving, we must ensure they have the training and opportunities to succeed. A strong workforce isn't just an economic necessity; it's the foundation of a prosperous future for all Missourians. That's why investing in workforce development and infrastructure is one of my administration's top priorities.

The Associated General Contractors of Missouri has been at the forefront of this effort for over a century, ensuring that Missouri's construction industry remains strong by training workers, advocating for smart policies and leading on workforce development. It was humbling to receive AGCMO's support and endorsement - the first of its kind in the organization's 100-year legacy - as it reaffirmed our shared commitment to strengthening Missouri's workforce. As we move forward, I am proud to work with organizations like AGCMO to ensure our state remains a place where businesses grow, communities thrive and workers succeed.

As I outlined in my first State of the State Address in January, Missouri must have a robust economy built on a workforce that meets the needs of today's employers. Right now, key industries like construction, manufacturing and infrastructure face serious workforce shortages. These industries power our economy, and we can do more to equip workers with the skills they need to fill these high-demand jobs. Missouri can't afford to ignore this growing gap. We must act now to connect

Missourians with available opportunities and ensure our state remains competitive.

To help tackle this, my proposed budget includes \$15 million in new funding to support capital and equipment needs for career centers across the state, along with an additional \$5 million to support the ongoing operations of these centers. We are also recommending \$1 million in funding to ensure high school students receive career counseling that exposes them to the full spectrum of opportunities available - including trade certifications and apprenticeships. Every Missouri student should graduate knowing that success doesn't come from a single path, but rather from choosing the path that fits their skills, goals and aspirations.

first choice. AGCMO has long understood this, which is why its training programs and industry partnerships are so critical to our state.

A strong workforce is only as successful as the businesses that employ them. That's why we are also focused on creating an environment where businesses can thrive by cutting taxes, eliminating unnecessary red tape and making Missouri an attractive destination for job creators. When our businesses succeed, our families and communities do as well.

The future of our state depends on the steps we take today. By prioritizing workforce development, investing in education and training and removing barriers to businesses and employment, we will empower

“When our businesses succeed, our families and communities do as well.”

For too long, the narrative around success has prioritized four-year degrees over career and technical education. But the reality is clear: skilled trade careers offer high wages, job security and endless opportunities for growth. Missouri must do more to ensure students see the value in these careers - not as a fallback, but as a potential

new generations of workers, strengthen Missouri's economy and reaffirm our commitment to helping Missourians achieve the American Dream. Together, our work will go far beyond building homes, bridges and roads. We will build careers, industries and a stronger Missouri for future generations to come.

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GUEST COLUMN

BY JEFF SHOAF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF
THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL
CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA



The AGC of Missouri and AGC of America – 100 Years of Delivering for the Industry

Congratulations to the AGC of Missouri and its many member companies as your chapter turns 100 years old.

Achieving this major milestone is impressive. But it isn't a surprise when you think about the amazing record your chapter has amassed in supporting its members and our industry. We at AGC of America have been grateful to work so closely with your chapter to accomplish so much during the past century.

Together we helped the state's construction industry return to normalcy in the years after World War I. We helped keep the construction industry afloat during the dark days of the Great Depression. We supported the industry as it helped America build its way to victory during the Second World War. And together we were the foundation for the nation's incredible post-war economic boom that saw the construction of national landmarks like St. Louis' Gateway Arch.

We helped secure the funding needed so our members could build the highways, airports and other infrastructure that defined post-war America. We made sure our members were able to build the defense facilities that helped win the Cold War and the factories and offices needed to make our country the world's strongest economy. We built the schools and universities that are the foundation of Ameri-

can innovation. All the while, we advocated for the kind of investments and common-sense policies needed to allow you to continue building and expanding Missouri's economy and quality of life.

More recently, the AGC of Missouri and AGC of America worked together to keep construction essential throughout Missouri and much of the rest of the country. We made sure member firms had the resources and support needed to keep their workers safe and healthy during the pandemic. We are both pushing to improve highway work zone safety and to help recruit a new generation of construction professionals. And we continue to help firms cope with inflation, supply chain problems and the need to keep the industry safe.

Few chapters have done as much to diversify the ranks of the construction industry - at all levels - than the AGC of Missouri. Your leadership in this area helps inspire much of the work we do at the national level to address workforce shortages by finding new and more effective ways to recruit and retain workers of all backgrounds. Likewise, the AGC of Missouri has been an invaluable partner in working with us to address the construction industry's mental health crisis.

At the same time, your chapter and AGC of America are working together to provide

world-class educational content on a host of construction skills and techniques to members. We continue to offer members thousands of dollars a year in savings, thanks to our many member-exclusive affinity programs. And we will keep providing members with the latest updates and analysis on a host of economic, political and regulatory developments and what those developments mean for the industry.

For 100 years, the AGC of Missouri and AGC of America have worked together to successfully support and promote the commercial construction industry. Together, we have become the voice of construction in Jefferson City, Mo. and Washington, D.C. And while we have accomplished a great deal together, our work is only starting. Working together, we are going to make sure this industry continues to move forward. The goal, of course, is to make sure the AGC of Missouri and AGC of America have even more accomplishments to celebrate 100 years from now.

On behalf of the entire AGC of America community, congratulations to the AGC of Missouri and its members for achieving this incredibly impressive milestone.





AGCMO Membership Services, Connections Keeping Members Active, Engaged

BY **KERRY SMITH BUCK**

Connections. Advocacy. Industry Savvy. Service.

The AGC of Missouri's members identify these advantages and others as reasons their companies have chosen to join, engage and remain members of the 100-year-old, widely respected construction industry trade association.

Each company has its own story, as does its workers. The answers as to the value AGCMO provides support the adage that you get out of an organization what you put into it.

"We've been a member of the AGC of St. Louis - now the AGC of Missouri - for well over 50 years," said Kozeny-Wagner President and CEO Patrick Kozeny. "The reasons are numerous. Throughout my career, I have considered the staff at the AGCMO a true extension of our very own staff here at Kozeny-Wagner. They are, and always have been, professional, intelligent, forward-thinking and responsive to our needs."

In addition, says Kozeny, the various industry committees established by AGCMO over the years - which he assures consist of the



best construction professionals in Missouri - tackle the tough issues the industry continually faces. "There are many well-established committees and many that are ad hoc," Kozeny said. "This allows us as members of a much larger organization, to stay on top of industry trends and collectively develop solutions to the important issues facing our industry today and into the future."

Tough legislative work being performed behind the scenes, says Kozeny, benefits AGCMO-member contractors and remains essential to the industry as a whole. "There's no doubt," Kozeny said. "The AGC of Missouri is the collective voice of Missouri's construction industry in Jefferson City."

Safety professionals, programs and resources offered to AGCMO members augment companies' internal staffs. "These resources enhance our well-established, in-house programs," added Kozeny. "The association makes us better, for sure. AGCMO also brings to our staff outstanding educational opportunities, timely training programs, industry networking opportunities and access to the outstanding AGC of America staff and their deep resources." Kozeny served as the 2004 AGC of St. Louis chairman of the board.

Alberici Corporation Chairman Emeritus John Alberici also believes in the value of being a long-time member of AGCMO.

The grandson of Alberici Corporation's founder (also named John Alberici - an Italian immigrant who began the J.S. Alberici Construction Co. in 1918), John Alberici remains active in the day-to-day operations of the construction firm that's headquartered in St. Louis. He has worked in the industry for more than half a century, many of those years as an active member of AGCMO. Alberici's father, Gabe, and Gabe's sister, Mary, ran the company together in the 1940s. The thread of family ownership remains woven through the company.

"Back in the 1940s, very few women worked in construction, let alone

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100 YEARS
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ran construction companies,” said Alberici. “Mary was the vice president. My father, Gabe, at one time served as president of the local AGC chapter and was also treasurer of the board for the AGC of America. He had been quite involved locally and nationally for a long time, and there were dozens and dozens of Alberici folks from our company who were engaged with the AGC both locally and nationally. We’re proud to share that kind of history with the AGC. Being part of such an outstanding industry trade organization has always been something we believed was very important. This organization represents our industry very, very well,” he added.

Giving back through involvement in the AGC is truly a core component of Alberici Corp.’s culture, says John Alberici. “The AGC - both locally and nationally - does so much as far as educating tradespeople,” he said. “To a union shop, that’s very important and really adds to the professionalism in the industry overall. Because our company (and others) is focused daily on our operations, we can become insular, concerned with what we’re doing internally...the AGC gives us an opportunity to get outside of ourselves and do things that serve our entire industry...and learn from that as a result. I’ve been involved with a lot of the safety aspects of the AGC and all the things that the organization brings back to our company that we wouldn’t have developed ourselves. It’s an invaluable opportunity and an investment that returns tenfold.”

John Alberici’s father, Gabe, worked steadily with former AGCMO President Joe Hamilton (who served the AGC of St. Louis for 33 years, 28 of those as executive vice president). Alberici says he also shares many positive outcomes from working with Hamilton.

“Joe set the standards of what the AGC should be for the community and the industry,” Alberici said. “He was someone who truly stood out to me as a role model for the industry.”

John Alberici says he was serving the AGC at the time when Hamilton was retiring and a newcomer was preparing to assume the office of association lead. That newcomer was Len Toenjes, who has now been at the helm for more than three decades. “When Len was installed as Joe’s successor, one of the complaints was that he (Len) didn’t have much construction industry experience,” remembered Alberici. “To that complaint, Joe responded that there was only one individual who entered the leadership role with less experience than Len...and that was Joe himself. Len came in with integrity, honesty and just a way of speaking with people that instilled confidence. It has been a great pleasure serving with both Joe and Len.”

No matter in what capacity construction industry professionals choose to serve and engage with the AGC, Alberici says it’s an obliga-

tion that needs to be prioritized. “Each one of us has an obligation to give back to this organization on the local level, and for some, also on the national level,” he said. “Our service impacts not only the AGC, but also our communities and the industry as a whole. There are outlets within the AGC of Missouri that really tap into the expertise as members we’re able to carry back to our companies to make us all better at what we do.”

Tarlton Corp. President Tracy Hart says her grandfather, Arthur (Art) Elsperman, served as the first president of the AGC of St. Louis in 1950. (On Dec. 29, 1949, the association came into being as a merger of the Master Builders Association and the Municipal Contractors Association.) Hart says her grandfather was among a small cadre of St. Louis-based construction company owners who worked to create a trade association to give the industry a stronger voice. Hart’s father, Robert (Bob) Elsperman, would serve as AGC of St. Louis president in 1981. And in 2008, Hart would serve as the first woman president of AGCMO.

The Elsperman family’s commitment to service is clear. Both Hart and her brother, Tarlton Corp. Chief Administrative Officer Dirk Elsperman, grew up in a family that prioritized service to the industry.

“Back when I began my career working at Pepper Construction, our whole family was preparing to go to Hawaii to the national AGC convention,” remembered Hart. “My dad (Bob Elsperman) asked if Pepper would let me attend if he paid the registration fee...that began my involvement with the Associated General Contractors. Then when I moved from Chicago to

St. Louis, I began becoming involved at the local level. Since I came from an English and communications background, the construction-specific education - the technical knowledge - that I received was invaluable,” she said. “I was able to take advantage of the AGC’s supervisory training program courses. And I also had the opportunity locally to become engaged with policy and learn about a number of factors that impact the industry.”

Like other long-time AGC members, Hart says serving is the best way to derive maximum value from the association. “You get what you give,” she said. “If you’re willing to put your two feet in and do things for the organization, you will learn and benefit from it. I’m incredibly grateful to all the old timers who have unfortunately since passed on...they were keenly instrumental in helping and teaching me.”

Eli Knight truly values her membership with AGCMO. As icon Mechanical’s client development and diversity coordinator, she has been a member for 10 years.

“This year I’ve taken on more active roles in AGCMO’s diversity and membership committees, and I’ve recently been asked to chair the organization’s specialty contractors council,” said Knight. “The AGC has played a pivotal role in my career at icon Mechanical, and AGCMO has been invaluable to our company - helping us stay current on legislative issues, safety practices and workforce development. What the association does benefits everyone in the industry and elevates the entire construction field. Plus, I’m always learning new things that I can apply to my own professional growth.”

Knight and icon colleague Scott Milles - among other coworkers - are active in AGCMO’s construction leadership council, a group comprised of young construction professionals.

Steve Loos, vice president of membership at AGCMO, says the

“You get what you give. If you’re willing to put your two feet in and do things for the organization, you will learn and benefit from it.”



trade association is proud to call more than 520 companies members. Building and cementing relationships, he believes, is perhaps the most valuable component of membership in AGCMO. Of AGCMO's entire membership, approximately 100 members are contractors and construction managers, 150 are specialty contractors and 250 member companies are suppliers and service providers.



"We survey members all the time and it's always about networking, information, who they have the opportunity to get to know and when they need something specific to the industry," Loos said. "It's perhaps closer than seven degrees of separation with us - you just never know who your next professional connection will be."

Discounts on local and national services is also a perk of membership that many find valuable. Examples are a multi-employer 401(k) plan, discounted payment card processing, member-based health and wellness offerings, safety resources and more.


"One of the comments we sometimes hear from members is, 'I didn't attend, so I didn't get any value from our membership,'" said Loos. "But that's not true because AGCMO offers so much more than valuable networking connections. Legislative briefings, advocacy, code issues updates, OSHA resources, time management tips, conferences and more... there's a generous menu of services to access to make you and your firm even better at what you do."

AGCMO's member companies extend well beyond St. Louis, Springfield and Jefferson City to the rural pockets of Missouri.


"AGCMO has dropped pins on a map to help us determine where members are and to enable us to better utilize our strength in membership by region as well," said Loos. "We believe this is evidence of AGCMO's statewide strength. Our membership extends beyond Missouri to other Midwest states, and to areas across the nation. We have members as far away as Medford, Mass., Labelle, Fla., San Antonio, Texas, Scottsdale, Ariz., Carlsbad, Calif., Denver, Colo. and Minneapolis, Minn."

A particular emphasis for growth is AGCMO's efforts to increase its memberships from companies with locations in southwest Missouri. In the southeast region of the Show Me State, AGCMO has a growing mix of member companies affiliated with building, highway and utility projects among its members. In the St. Louis metro region, building, highway contractors and utility division firms comprise much of the association's membership. Central and Southwest Missouri also have a nice mix of members and are other prime areas for AGCMO membership growth, according to Loos.


"There are approximately 1,000 member locations from which our AGCMO members hail," Loos said. "And we're attentive to each one."



BSI Constructors Congratulates AGCMO on 100 Years!
Thank You Len Toenjes and the AGC Team for Your Leadership & Dedication to the Industry!



Citygarden: AGC National BuildAmerica Winner & AGC St. Louis Keystone Winner



Central Library:
AGC National BuildAmerica Winner & AGC St. Louis Keystone Winner

Member Testimonials

Korte & Luitjohan Contractors, Inc.

Korte & Luitjohan values our longstanding membership with AGCMO. The organization provides invaluable education and networking opportunities, allowing us to stay connected with subcontractors who are also members. AGCMO keeps us informed on industry trends and developments, ensuring we remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market. Additionally, AGCMO's collaboration with SIBA and SIUE on the Construction Leadership Institute (CLI) has been instrumental in fostering the next generation of industry leaders. We appreciate AGCMO's commitment to the construction industry and proudly celebrate its 100th anniversary.

Scott Drury

CEO - Visionary, Bloomsdale Excavating Co., Inc.

Being a member of the AGC of Missouri means you are the most informed, included and served member of any association in our state. The AGC of Missouri is a recognized leader in the construction industry for having the answers to issues and the relationships to get things done. Our membership has provided us with a voice for legislation, labor and access to governmental agencies such as MoDOT, DNR and the Corps of Engineers, all playing a part in what makes our business successful.

AGCMO is a vital resource in our war chest for the battle in everyday business.

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DeLong's Inc.

We find great value in belonging to AGCMO and we're confident that it will continue serving our area very well. We see a big benefit in belonging to the AGC. Len (Toenjes) and his team are very proactive at making things happen. It's a consistently strong organization.

Matthew Stack

President, Russell

The AGC is a fantastic partner focused on advancing the construction industry. Its commitment to workforce development, safety and advocacy is second to none. Through its resources and networking opportunities, the association offers a great value to its members.

Lane Parker

Project Executive, Russell

Being a member and board member of AGC of Missouri has been an incredible experience. The connections, advocacy and industry support are invaluable. AGC fosters growth, innovation and collaboration. I'm proud to be part of this impactful organization.

S. M. Wilson & Co.

The Associated General Contractors of Missouri provides numerous benefits to its members, including networking opportunities, industry advocacy, professional development, market intelligence and enhanced reputation and credibility.

S. M. Wilson recognizes the value of these benefits and is committed to AGCMO through membership, active participation and leadership. This includes serving on the board of directors and various committees, as well as spearheading initiatives such as the Women of STEEL program - which promotes diversity and inclusion within the construction industry. Through our involvement, S. M. Wilson demonstrates our dedication to shaping the future of the construction industry in Missouri.

Goodwin Brothers

Goodwin Brothers is proud to celebrate the 100th anniversary of AGCMO, an organization that has been instrumental in shaping the construction industry in the region. For decades, we have valued our partnership with AGCMO, benefiting from its commitment to advocacy, education and innovation. The association's dedication to supporting general contractors like us has strengthened our industry and helped us deliver excellence in heavy industrial and civil construction. We congratulate AGCMO on this incredible milestone and look forward to continuing our collaboration for many decades to come.

Brinkmann Constructors

Since becoming a member in 2006, Brinkmann Constructors has found exceptional value in the AGCMO's comprehensive industry network of 520-plus construction firms and trade partners throughout Missouri.

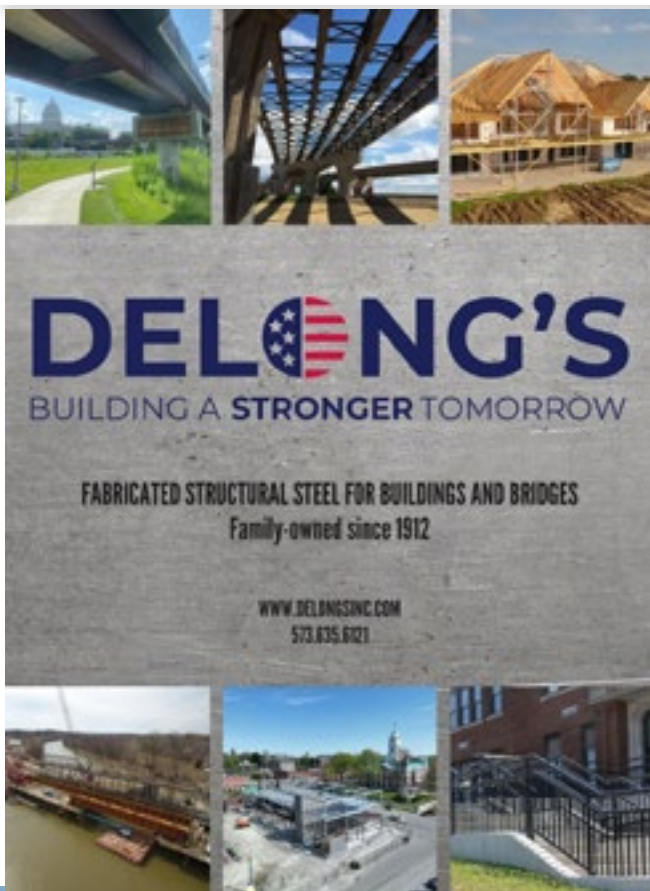
From professional development programs and educational tools to networking events and mental health resources, the association's wide range of specialized services has helped us stay at the forefront of the construction industry as we have expanded our reach both locally and nationally.

As an organization that shares the values of lifelong learning, unwavering integrity and entrepreneurialism, we are proud to be partnered with the AGCMO as it celebrates this major milestone.

Tyfoom

Tyfoom is proud to support the Associated General Contractors of Missouri. As members of the Safety Committee, we work closely with industry leaders to advance workplace safety, communication and workforce development. Together we provide members with world-class training, powerful communication tools and the essential resources they need to get their employees home safely and drive productivity.

Through our collective efforts to provide innovative solutions, we help companies engage and strengthen their teams, improve safety and increase retention. We celebrate AGC Missouri's 100-year legacy and look forward to supporting its members and the industry for years to come.



Ryan Poettker

President, Poettker Construction Company

For 4 decades, Poettker Construction has been a member of AGC of Missouri. The growing network of industry leaders and professional development opportunities are endless. This partnership has helped strengthen our safety culture and provided resources for skill training and workforce development.

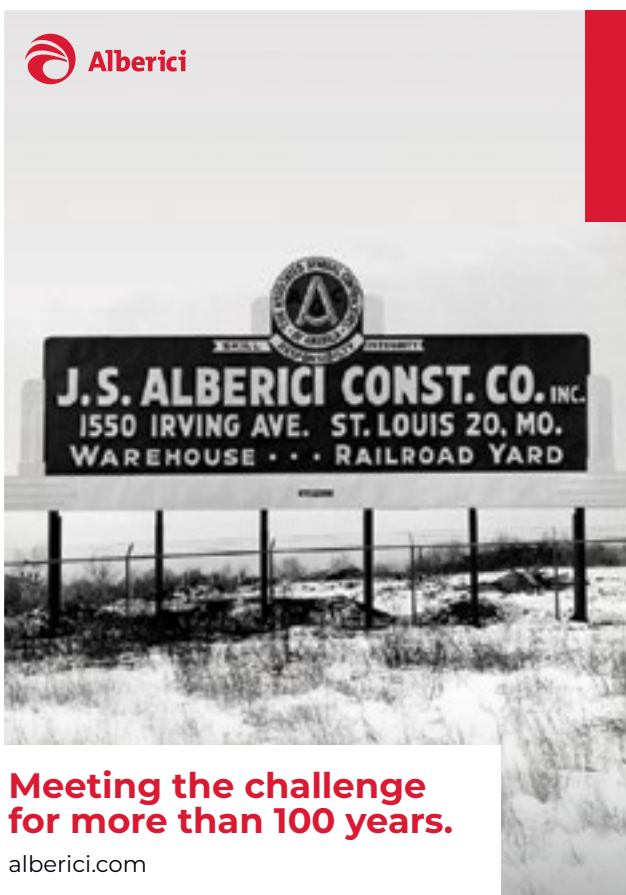
Member Testimonials

Brian A. Murphy BAM Contracting

My relationship with the Associated General Contractors began before I joined. As a member of the mayor's cabinet, I worked with the AGC to craft the city's initial program for minority and women-owned businesses. After leaving the city and starting my own construction business, the AGC was the first organization I joined - reconnecting with AGC members, staff and services, many of those relationships I carry with me today. AGCMO encouraged BAM Contracting to become active, join leadership and forge relationships in the industry, government and the private sector. Those relationships have been instrumental in the success of our company.

KAI Enterprises

We have never regretted writing the check for AGCMO membership dues. We receive 10 times more back in benefits every year by what we've learned from other members, the partnerships we have forged and the business we have gained through our membership. And because it is a state-wide organization, we have connected with firms and subcontractors throughout Missouri and now have the confidence to pursue work in Springfield, Mo. and Kansas City, Mo. If it weren't for AGCMO's regional guidance and support, we may not have had that opportunity for growth.



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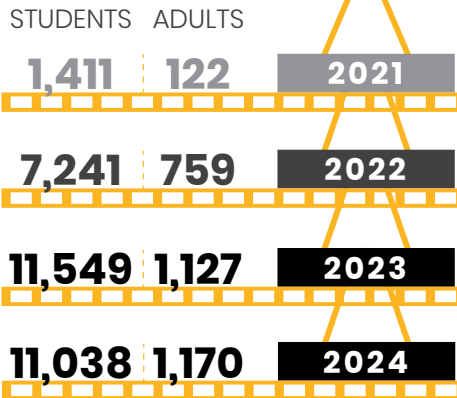
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Because of the efforts of countless organizations, contractors and vendors, the construction industry reached high schools all over Missouri with its Build My Future outreach.

EVENT GROWTH*



11,038

TOTAL # OF MISSOURI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED IN 2024*

1,170

TOTAL NUMBER OF MISSOURI ADULTS WHO ATTENDED IN 2024*

#'S THROUGHOUT THE STATE

106

MISSOURI COUNTIES

+ CITY OF ST. LOUIS

MACON

42 SCHOOLS
+ 1 HOMESCHOOL
STUDENTS: 1,536
ADULTS: 115

ST. LOUIS

35 SCHOOLS
STUDENTS: 725
ADULTS: 69

CAPE GIRARDEAU

68 SCHOOLS
STUDENTS: 2,196
ADULTS: 177

JEFFERSON CITY

51 SCHOOLS
+ 1 HOMESCHOOL
STUDENTS: 1,149
ADULTS: 123

NEW! BETHANY

44 SCHOOLS
STUDENTS: 709
ADULTS: 74

Numbers include programs in Sedalia, Springfield, St. Charles and Joplin where AGCMO did not serve as event organizer.



AGCMO
MISSOURI CHAPTER
THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

GUEST COLUMN

BY MIKE RALLO, JR.
PRESIDENT OF PARIC



Embracing Change: A Century of Adaptability in Missouri's Construction Industry

members. Whether it was negotiating the first labor agreements in 1940, establishing the Construction Training Advancement Foundation (CTAF) in the 1960s to address workforce development or merging with the AGC of St. Louis in 2014 to create a stronger, more unified voice, the AGC of Missouri has always been at the forefront of change.

This spirit of adaptability is something I see mirrored within PARIC. Over the years, PARIC has embraced new technologies, innovative construction methods and evolving market demands to remain competitive and deliver exceptional value to our clients. Like AGCMO, PARIC has thrived by staying ahead of industry trends and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. One of the ways we've done this is through a strong focus on leadership development, ensuring that our team is equipped to navigate the complexities of modern construction projects and lead with vision and integrity.

Navigating Modern Challenges

Today the construction industry faces a new set of challenges. The rapid pace of technological innovation, the increasing complexity of projects and the ongoing struggle to recruit and retain a skilled workforce are just a few of the issues that demand our attention. With 20-plus years in the industry, I've seen these challenges play out in real time. The adoption of Building Information Modeling (BIM), drones and other advanced technologies has transformed how we plan and execute projects, while the rise of modular construction and sustainable building practices has reshaped the very nature of our work.

The AGC of Missouri has been instrumental in helping its members navigate these changes. For more than 25 years, the organization has utilized a strategic planning system that ensures the board remains focused on both current and future member needs. This forward-thinking approach has allowed AGCMO to stay ahead of the curve, whether by advocating for favorable regulatory policies,

promoting safety standards or providing training programs that equip workers with the skills they need to succeed in a rapidly evolving industry.

At PARIC, we've taken a similar approach to leadership development, recognizing that the future of our industry depends on cultivating the next generation of leaders. Through mentorship programs, leadership training and opportunities for professional growth, we aim to empower our team members to take on new challenges and drive innovation within our organization. This focus on leadership development aligns closely with AGCMO's efforts to foster collaboration and prepare the industry for the future.

The Power of Collaboration

One of the key strengths of the AGC of Missouri has always been its ability to bring contractors of all sizes together to address common challenges. In an industry as diverse as ours, collaboration is essential. Whether it's through networking events or industry forums, AGCMO has fostered a sense of community among its members. This spirit of cooperation has been particularly important in recent years, as we've worked together to address workforce shortages and promote diversity and inclusion within the industry.

AGCMO is committed to creating a more inclusive industry, one that welcomes talent from all backgrounds and provides opportunities for everyone to succeed. At PARIC, we've also prioritized building a diverse and inclusive workforce, understanding that a variety of perspectives drives innovation and strengthens our ability to tackle complex projects.

Looking to the Future

As we look to the future, the need for adaptability has never been greater. The construction industry is on the cusp of a new era, one defined by digital transformation, sustainability and a renewed focus on workforce

development. The AGC of Missouri is well positioned to lead the way, thanks to its long history of innovation and its commitment to serving the needs of its members.

In my role as chairman, I am committed to building on this legacy of adaptability. By continuing to embrace new technologies, fostering collaboration among our members and investing in the next generation of construction professionals, we can ensure that the AGC of Missouri remains a driving force in our industry for years to come.

The challenges ahead are significant, but so, too, are the opportunities. Together we can build a future that is not only resilient but also inclusive, innovative and sustainable. AGCMO has been adapting for over a century, and I have no doubt that we will continue to do so for the next 100 years.

Thank you to the members of the AGC of Missouri for their unwavering commitment to our industry. It is through your hard work, dedication and willingness to embrace change that we have achieved so much. As we move forward, let us continue to work together, adapt to new challenges and build a brighter future for Missouri's construction industry.

As the newly named chairman of the board of directors for the Associated General Contractors of Missouri (AGC of Missouri) and the president of PARIC, I've had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the remarkable evolution of our industry. Over the past century, Missouri's construction sector has undergone profound changes, driven by advancements in technology, shifts in workforce dynamics and the ever-changing regulatory and economic landscape. Through it all, one constant has remained: the adaptability of our industry and the AGC of Missouri in addressing these challenges head-on.

A Legacy of Adaptation

The history of AGCMO is a testament to the power of collaboration and foresight. From its early days in 1925 - when it was formed with just 19 charter members - to its current status as a unified organization representing contractors across the state, AGCMO has consistently adapted to meet the needs of its

Vibrant Companies in Every Area of Missouri Represented Well by AGCMO

BY **KERRY SMITH BUCK**

No doubt AGCMO represents hundreds of construction industry firms in Missouri's major urban centers including St. Louis and Kansas City, but the 100-year-old trade association also well serves dozens of successful firms located in areas all across the state.

Structural steel fabricator DeLong's, Inc. is one of those members. The Jefferson City, Mo.-headquartered company is a decades-long member of AGCMO. Executive Vice President and General Manager Darrin Kelly says DeLong's started with very humble beginnings in 1912 as a small blacksmith shop. "DeLong's has experienced paced growth

over its 113-year history by investing in our people, capital improvements and training programs. We're always prioritizing our core commitments of safety, quality and on-time delivery," he said.

The fourth-generation, family-owned and operated company fabricates and delivers structural steel for railroad, highway and pedestrian bridges and structural steel for buildings. DeLong's also provides miscellaneous items for steel fabrication projects of all types, including handrail and bridge bearings.

"Gary Wisch, our previous long-term vice president of engineering, has served in many capacities for the AGC of Missouri," said Kelly. "We find great value in belonging to AGCMO and we're confident that it will continue serving our area very well. We see a big benefit in belonging to the AGC. Len (Toenjes) and his team are very proactive at making things happen. It's a consistently strong organization."

Kelly adds that AGCMO's decision to formally endorse a gubernatorial candidate - the first-ever candidate that the association has endorsed - was a wise move and well worth supporting.

DeLong's location in Jeff City has netted the company additional benefits as a loyal member of AGCMO. "We have the benefit of being able to offer shop tours when the association brings members to the legislative sessions," Kelly said. "From our perspective, we see the AGCMO as very active throughout the state of Missouri...the organization is really pushing and accomplishing solid objectives in all four quadrants of the state."

Kelsey DeLong, a fourth-generation leader, became president of the firm nearly two years ago. She, too, says she finds true value in AGCMO.

"Every year we send people from DeLong's to the AGCMO annual convention, particularly our younger leaders who are active in the Young Executive's Club," DeLong said. "And I've had the privilege of being involved in Women of STEEL from day one. We also participate in the Build My Future events that inspire young people to consider careers in construction. Our safety professionals have gained much by attending the association's safety and workforce development programs. The AGCMO's programming is second to none, and its execution of these valuable initiatives is flawless," she added.

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Branco Enterprises, Inc., located in Neosho and Springfield, Mo., is another shining example of a long-time AGCMO member company located in Missouri. Vice President Sean Thouvenot says Branco Enterprises has been an AGCMO member for more than 40 years. Thouvenot has served on the association's Governmental Affairs Policy Committee since 2010 and was board chair in 2022.

"The most valuable aspects of our membership in AGCMO are advocacy and networking, with professional development coming in a close third," said Thouvenot. "We have worked for years to get our advocacy group to where it is now, which sets the bar for engagement and relevance with our elected officials. One Missouri senator recently told me, 'AGC of Missouri is one of the best associations at translating advocacy into action.' It is a huge sense of pride and accomplishment that AGCMO and our members are the first ones our elected officials reach out to on issues that involve construction and workforce. That these folks actually want to hear from us as to what they may or may not do touches our companies and industry as a whole."

AGCMO networking - amongst colleagues and competitors, says Thouvenot, is priceless.

"You can create life-long friends and alliances if you get involved and attend the association's events," he said. "Even though some of us are competitors, we come together for the betterment of the industry for all. We share knowledge on situations that may be new to others and different perspectives on current industry trends. The old 'iron sharpening iron' adage fits here to a T," added Thouvenot.

Gerdan Slipforming, Inc. is another faithful, long-term member of AGCMO. The Cape Girardeau, Mo.-based company was founded in 1990 by Gerry Driskell. Gerdan Slipforming specializes in slipforming bridge parapets, barrier walls, footings, curbs and gutters, side-walks and ditch paving. Gerry's son, Blake Driskell - vice president of the firm - says his mom is still active in running the company. Their second-generation family business has been a member of AGCMO since 1996.

"Advocacy has always been a huge deal for us," said Blake Driskell. "We're members of several AGC chapters, but the AGC of Missouri is the most active and effective on an advocacy front."

At the time when Gerry Driskell founded her company, relations between the Missouri Dept. of Transportation and private-sector industry partners were strained to the breaking point. "There was a lot of contention back in the early 1990s," her son said. "The AGC of Missouri stepped in and began to restore those relationships. A lot of times, business people talk about 'partnerships,' but they're often one-sided and non-productive, or even contentious. In this scenario, the AGC worked hard as a true, sincere partner and was the biggest driving force in mending the rift with the state's DOT."





Through the years, networking has proved to be the second-most-valuable byproduct of membership in AGCMO, according to Blake Driskell. “Particularly after the pandemic, when so much in the construction industry became virtual, AGCMO offered – and offers today – genuine, substantive opportunities to shake hands, meet and do business. Putting names with faces is invaluable, especially today in our industry.”

Alan Reinkemeyer is vice president of AGCMO’s Highway and Transportation Division and worked for the Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources for 28 years.

Reinkemeyer’s story of how he became involved in construction in rural Missouri is a bittersweet one. In July 2009, his parents were

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involved in a terrible automobile accident. While Reinkemeyer’s mother recovered, his dad did not. “Back then I came to know Highway Commissioner Mike Kehoe (now Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe) well,” he said. “If there had been a guardrail at that bridge abutment, my dad would be alive today. Over the next few years, the bridge and Rural Route B saw some much-needed improvements (bridge deck replaced and two-foot shoulders with rumble strips added to the road). These changes have greatly reduced the number of accidents on Route B. I know then-Commissioner Kehoe played a big part in making that happen. That was really what ultimately drew me to represent the rural areas of the state on behalf of AGCMO,” said Reinkemeyer. “I have always been passionate about the conditions of our rural roads, but ever since the fatal accident, I began (and continue) to advocate hard for better roads. I don’t want anyone to have to endure what happened to our family, especially if it can be prevented.”

The AGCMO, he says, has been a great asset in this advocacy effort. “Over the years, we’ve accomplished much,” he said. “We have seen the General Assembly invest lots of general revenue dollars in rural roads, bridges and, of course, the investment to add the third lane to I-70. Additionally, we passed Senate Bill 262 (under former Gov. Mike Parson), Missouri’s first motor fuel tax increase in 25 years. And that section at the end of the Cole County Route B Bridge where my dad lost his life, today it’s a whole lot safer, thanks to advocacy from the AGCMO.”

AGC of Missouri Members Serving on National Level

BY KERRY SMITH BUCK

Associated General Contractors of Missouri member companies and their employees are known for their dedicated service - not only to the local chapter, but also on the national stage.

Tarlton Corp. Chief Administrative Officer Dirk Elsperman's industry service is an example. In April 2019, Elsperman - the brother of Tarlton Corp. President Tracy Hart, the son of the late Bob Elsperman and the grandson of the late Art Elsperman - has followed in the family footsteps with regard to industry service and volunteerism. In fact, a black and white photograph showing his grandfather and grandmother attending the AGC of America's 1939 convention at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City is evidence of this.

Dirk served as president of the AGCMO board of directors in 2013 and was sworn in as president of the AGC of America in 2019. "I began working at Tarlton at the end of 1991," he said. "Shortly after that, my dad and I sat down and studied the AGC committees that made sense for me to participate on. Starting the Young Constructors Forum in 1997 (now known as Construction Leadership Council) most likely was what spurred me to also become involved at the local level. My sister and I agree that working alongside Len Toenjes is terrific. I like to refer to Len as 'the godfather of the AGC chapter execs'...he's an awesome leader and really encouraged those of us who were just getting started in the construction industry to



Robert Elsperman
AGC of America Treasurer
AGC of St. Louis President

launch and grow YCF as part of the local association. In addition, when I was traveling around the country as AGC of America president, I had the chance to meet about 75 percent of our 85 chapter executives. At that time, approximately 30 percent had been working in their roles for fewer than three years. Len was definitely one of their go-to people.”

Dirk Elsperman’s service on the national AGC board was borne from his local service as chair of the AGCMO Building Division, the largest of the four chapter divisions. Serving as national AGC president in 2019-2020 turned out to be a pivotal time, not only for the construction industry but for the world with the arrival of COVID. “The national convention ended (in early March 2020), we turned out the lights in Las Vegas and wound up not returning to our offices for 10 weeks,” he remembered. “The era we’d embark upon was indeed one of the nation’s most challenging times...thankfully we had the AGC to serve as a source of how to navigate it all.”

Jeff Montgomery’s national service is also evidence of AGCMO member companies’ professionals who serve on a national stage. The safety director at IWR North America is serving his first term as a board member for the AGC of America and also serves on the (50-plus-member) Specialty Contractors Steering Committee with the national chapter. “We as an association really want to be the resource for our membership, both regionally and nationally,” said Montgomery, who also served nearly 25 years ago as a board trustee with the AGC of Kentucky. After relocating to Missouri in 2013, Montgomery steadily grew his involvement in AGCMO.

“The national networking opportunities are phenomenal. From a professional development standpoint, there’s no doubt that you get around people who make you better.”

“The national networking opportunities are phenomenal,” he said. “From a professional development standpoint, there’s no doubt that you get around people who make you better.”

Solidifying relationships between specialty subcontractors and general contractors is one of several focuses the steering committee prioritizes.

“Most of our member companies that are \$100 million or smaller (in annual revenues) benefit from the combined resources of the national AGC,” said Montgomery. “Empowering our members’ safe adoption of AI is just one example of the educational resources that the AGC of America provides to its chapters.”

Katey Twehous, director of marketing and technology at Jefferson City, Mo.-based Twehous Excavating Co., serves on the national Construction Leadership Council and in early 2025 was nominated to serve on the AGC of America’s Education and Research Foundation. She also served as a co-founder for Women of STEEL, AGCMO’s sub-organization to support women in the office and the field. In 2024, Twehous and S. M. Wilson Chief Marketing Officer Amanda Bohnert received the AGCMO’s “Chairs of the Year” Award for their contributions to women in the construction industry.

“The CLC is a really engaged group,” said Twehous. “Everyone is an active participant and we’ve formed friendships along the way. We’re all enthusiastic about serving an industry that has already provided much for us in return.”

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Twehous says she particularly enjoys the opportunity to review CLC scholarship applications and to co-host virtual town hall sessions as well as networking events at the AGC of America's annual convention.

AGCMO President Len Toenjes, who serves with Twehous on the Associated General Contractors of America's Education and Research Foundation, says she is a valued contributor.

"Our colleagues in the construction industry are generous with their time, service and overall leadership," said Toenjes. "It's really great that Katey is now joining this effort to help prepare the next generation of construction professionals," he added, noting that the ERF is a national scholarship foundation that began in 1968. For 50 years, this foundation has made good on its commitment to support the future of the industry through its robust scholarship program and innovative projects. Toenjes says the genesis for the long-running construction education foundation came from many of the past presidents of AGC chapters whose service was over but who wanted to continue making a difference.

"They formed a 501(c)(3) and awarded scholarships for young people who were pursuing four-year degrees in construction and construction management," Toenjes said. "About 10 years ago, one of the AGC of America board members was speaking with me about developing a strategic plan. I asked him if he'd ever thought about asking a current chapter executive to serve on the foundation board...about 30 minutes later he said to me, 'Congrats, Len. You're on the foundation board' and I've been serving ever since. This foundation has dispersed several million dollars over the years in educational scholarships. The foundation board has also added an essay contest, an outstanding educator of the year award, a craft worker scholarship program and a faculty internship so that professors teaching construction management can actually work for a contractor over the summer and gain real-world experience."

Through endowments made by AGC members and supporters and AGC chapters, the foundation is able to give 150 or more undergraduate and graduate scholarships each year to deserving students. Undergraduate students receive up to \$2,500 per academic year (renewable for three years) and graduate students receive \$3,750 per academic year (renewable up to two years). Since 1970, the foundation has awarded more than 4,000 scholarships totaling in excess of \$11 million. Scholarship candidates are evaluated for their academic success, their commitment to the industry through participation in campus professional organizations, summer or part-time work in the construction industry and their goals for the future. The 2026-2027 application portal will open July 1.

Over the past several years, adds Toenjes, the AGC of America foundation board has begun contracting with professors with case studies. "The foundation now has case studies available to universities who are teaching construction management and related careers such as ethics, estimating, construction technology or any number of topics. Educators can access all these online."

Speaking of scholarships, AGCMO now has an endowed scholarship with the AGC of America's Education and Research Foundation. The Bob Elspeman family has an endowed scholarship in memory of the long-time Tarlton Corp. executive.



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One of the most enjoyable facets of serving on the national foundation, says Toenjes, is having the opportunity to help review the scholarship applications. “The AGC receives 800 to 900 applications every year,” Toenjes said. “Each foundation trustee reviews 40 to 50 scholarship applications...all you have to do is sit down for a couple of days and read those applications and you quickly realize that it’s the right thing to do to help these young people.”

Another member of the AGCMO staff - Vice President of Safety Brandon Anderson - serves on the national level. In 2021 and 2022, along with colleague Mandi Kime (Director of Safety at AGC of Washington in Seattle), Anderson co-founded and launched the AGC of America Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Task Force. Anderson says the construction industry has one of the highest rates of suicide at 53.3 per 100,000 U.S. workers - a rate that is four times greater than the national average and five times greater than that of all other construction fatalities combined. Anderson was recognized in 2023 with a co-chair award for his work on the task force.

“We began by hosting quarterly (virtual) forums and we’re excited that these are now held monthly,” said Anderson. “More than 100 construction industry professionals attend. The committee grew during COVID to a national model that originated from AGCMO.”

A byproduct of the committee are suicide prevention coins; some one million are in circulation today. Anderson says the current message imprinted on the token - which is handed to workers on construction sites nationwide, is Your Story Isn’t Over. On the coin’s reverse side is the National Suicide Hotline phone number.

This year, Anderson and his national mental health colleagues are developing a supervisory training program for mental health awareness.

GUEST COLUMN

BY **JOE SNEED, LEED A.P. BD+C**
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OF
SPIEGELGLASS CONSTRUCTION
COMPANY

As I start my second term as Building Division chairman for the Associated General Contractors of Missouri (AGCMO), I am proud to share the incredible work we've done over the past year to strengthen the construction industry. We have addressed key challenges and fostered collaboration across the construction sector, from labor and safety issues to policy changes and workforce development. The focus of the Building Division has always been on ensuring that every member has the tools and insights he or she needs to succeed. The Building Division Board of Directors has remained committed to tackling the issues that matter most to our members and the construction industry at large, including:

- **Electronic Permitting in St. Louis County:** Streamlining the permitting process will increase efficiency and accessibility for construction projects.

Learning From Building Experts, Tackling the Tough Stuff

AGCMO staff members Maureen McDonnell, Anthony Lancia and I attended a permit collaborative meeting with St. Louis County on behalf of the Building Division to discuss improving the permit process, and we are committed to continue working together on this topic.

- **Pay if Paid and Prompt Pay Legislation:** This issue continues to be a priority as we work to ensure contractors and subcontractors are paid on time, improving financial stability across the industry.

- **Proposed Missouri 811 Changes:** We want to enhance safety and efficiency when it comes to locating underground utilities. I joined several AGCMO members in Jefferson City for our annual legislative day to discuss a proposed bill with state representatives, senators and Gov. Mike Kehoe.

- **Statewide Transportation Improvements:** We're advocating for critical infrastructure upgrades that benefit both contractors and the broader public. The improvements go hand in hand with quality land development.

- **Unified Commercial Codes in St. Louis County and Missouri:** We're aiming to standardize commercial codes to reduce confusion and improve project execution across the region. This consistency is desired by both owners and commercial contractors.

- **Disparity Studies in St. Louis County and City of St. Louis:** We're working toward fostering equitable opportunities for minority-owned and women-owned businesses within the construction industry.

- **Culture of Care Program:** We continue to support this AGC of America program which enhances safety and well-being on jobsites.

- **Labor Negotiations and Wage Rate Updates:** We're monitoring labor trends and tracking fair wage practices across the industry.

- **Davis-Bacon Rules and Requirements:** We're keeping our members informed about ongoing requirements for federal contracts and wage standards.

- **Workforce Development Initiatives:** We're involved in initiatives like the Build My Future program, which introduces high school students to the construction industry. In 2024, AGCMO hosted five and sponsored two additional BMF events throughout Missouri, reaching more than 11,038 high school students from schools in 106 Missouri counties.

- **Owner Dialogue Meetings:** We're facilitating communication between contractors and owners to improve project collaboration and outcomes.

- **OSHA Heat Standard Changes:** We're addressing worker safety, particularly in response to extreme heat conditions during the summer months.

- **Marijuana Impairment Training and Testing:** We're navigating the evolving landscape of marijuana use and its implications for workplace safety and productivity.

Learning from Industry Experts
One of the most valuable aspects of AGCMO membership is the

“One of the most valuable aspects of AGCMO membership is the opportunity to learn directly from subject matter experts.

opportunity to learn directly from subject matter experts. At our quarterly meetings, we bring in professionals to discuss emerging issues and offer insights into critical areas affecting the industry. This past year, we've heard from experts including:

- Jeff Stark with Construction Risk Partners/The Baldwin Group, who shared insurance information
- Alex Etchen with AGC of America (VP of Government Relations), who shared regulatory and legislative actions related to the climate
- Dan Meyer with Wies Offsite, who shared the advantages of prefabrication

- Shawn Davidson of Channel Partnerships at Smart PM Technologies, who shared info about his scheduling software.

Networking: A Key Benefit

In addition to keeping members informed, one of the greatest benefits of AGCMO membership continues to be networking. Whether through formal events or informal gatherings, the connections we make with other industry professionals can help solve problems, open doors to new opportunities and build long-lasting relationships. I have had the distinct pleasure of being the chairman of the Membership Policy Committee since 2019. With input from our committee, we initiated lunch meetings on the second Tuesday of each month to provide a consistent time for networking with our members and guests. As the workforce evolves and seasoned professionals retire, it is critical to help new team members establish connections early in their careers. The rela-

tionships they build today will serve them for the rest of their professional lives, and they will be grateful for the networking skills and industry contacts they develop.

Looking Ahead

Serving as the Building Division chairman for 2024 has been an incredible honor. As we move forward in 2025, I encourage you to get involved and take full advantage of the many opportunities AGCMO provides. Working together, we can continue to build a stronger future for the construction industry.

BY **KATEY TWEHOUS**
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND
TECHNOLOGY AT TWEHOUS
EXCAVATING COMPANY



AGCMO Utility Division: Shaping an Increasingly Safe, Efficient, Successful Future

As chairperson of the AGCMO Utility Division in 2025, I have the privilege of working alongside professionals who play a vital role in building and maintaining Missouri's infrastructure. Our industry ensures that communities have access to reliable water, energy and communications, all of which are fundamental to economic growth. This year our division is focused on three key priorities: advocating for smarter policies, strengthening the workforce and ensuring long-term investment in Missouri's infrastructure.

A major part of our advocacy efforts in 2025 is Senate Bill 133, which aims to improve excavation safety, utility marking and accountability. Utility strikes pose a serious risk to workers and the public, causing project delays and unnecessary costs. SB 133 introduces important updates, such as requiring detectable markers on new underground facilities, enhancing excavation notification procedures and improving industry board representation in Missouri's notification center. These changes will reduce damage to underground utilities, make job sites safer for our workers and the public, and ensure contractors have a stronger voice in shaping industry regulations. By streamlining communication and improving how damages are reported, SB 133 will help contractors work more efficiently and protect critical infrastructure.

“The work we do in 2025 will have a lasting impact on Missouri's infrastructure.”

Advocacy, however, is only part of the equation. One of the biggest challenges we continue to face is the shortage of skilled workers. Without a strong workforce, projects take longer, costs rise and companies struggle to meet

demand. That's why the AGCMO Utility Division is committed to promoting careers in utility construction and creating opportunities for new workers to enter the industry. This year we are working to expand partnerships with high schools, trade schools and apprenticeship programs to expose students to careers in construction. Many young people don't realize that utility construction offers high-paying jobs, stability and opportunities for advancement. By improving outreach and providing more hands-on training, we can attract the next generation of skilled professionals.

Retaining skilled workers is just as important as recruiting them. Many experienced workers leave the industry because they don't see clear pathways for career growth. To address this, we are encouraging companies to invest in professional development programs that offer ongoing training, leadership opportunities and mentorship. By providing workers with the skills and support they need to grow in their careers, we can create a more stable and experienced workforce for the future.

At the same time, we must ensure Missouri's contractors have the opportunities they need to thrive as infrastructure investment reaches historic levels. Federal and state funding for utility projects is creating new opportunities, but excessive permitting delays, inconsistent regulations and inefficient project approvals can slow progress. This year we are working closely with state and local agencies to streamline processes and remove unnecessary obstacles that prevent projects from moving forward.

Partnerships between facility owners and contractors play a key role in keeping Missouri's infrastructure projects on track. When government agencies and private industry collaborate effectively, projects get completed faster and with fewer financial barriers. Our division is actively

advocating for stronger partnerships between utility companies, contractors and government entities to ensure funding is used efficiently and that Missouri remains a leader in infrastructure development.

As funding increases, it is also critical that Missouri-based contractors and workers benefit from these projects. We are pushing for fair contracting policies that prioritize local expertise and keep jobs in Missouri. When our state's contractors win projects, it strengthens not just our industry but the entire economy. By advocating for fair competition and clear policies, we can ensure that infrastructure investments create long-term economic benefits for our communities.

The work we do in 2025 will have a lasting impact on Missouri's infrastructure. Senate Bill 133 will make jobsites safer and improve the way underground utilities are managed. Workforce development initiatives will help attract and retain skilled professionals, ensuring that companies can meet growing demand. Infrastructure investment will create new opportunities for contractors and improve essential services for communities across the state.

I'm proud of the progress we are making and the commitment of AGCMO members to building a stronger industry. By working together, we are shaping a future where Missouri's utility contractors are safer, more efficient and better positioned for success. Here's to a productive and impactful year ahead.

GUEST COLUMN

BY JEREMY BEXTEN
ESTIMATING MANAGER WITH
EMERY SAPP & SONS, INC



My Journey: Young Project Manager to AGCMO Industry Leader

For the past eight years, I've had the privilege of serving as estimating manager at Emery Sapp & Sons, where I've been fortunate to work on some large, complex projects like the Kansas Dept. of Transportation's U.S. 69 Expansion Project, the Missouri Dept. of Transportation's Improve I-70 Phase 2 and the I-44 bridge rebuild. But my impact isn't just limited to the jobsites. It's been shaped by the relationships I've built throughout my career in the construction industry.

I've worked with AGCMO-member companies for almost 20 years now. From the start of my career, I recognized the value of connecting with contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and MoDOT representatives, which led me to get involved with AGCMO early on. I joined the Young Executive Committee (YEC) and didn't just attend meetings - I jumped in and actively sought out guidance from more experienced members, especially when it came to design-build projects. Those connections gave me direct access to experts whom I could call for advice, allowing me to bring better ideas to the table.

Over time, I went from seeking advice to offering it. I've had the honor of mentoring YEC members, speaking to AGCMO student chapters about the importance of relationship building and encouraging them to join the YEC right out of college to

start building their professional networks early. It's been rewarding to see how these efforts have had a real impact; several of the people I've connected with have become active members of the YEC, growing their networks and careers as well.

My involvement within AGCMO has only grown over the years. I served for three years as chair of the YEC, even receiving the Committee Chairman of the Year recognition. After two years as vice chair of the AGCMO Highway & Transportation Division, I was honored to take on the role of chair in January 2025. I also serve on the Governmental Affairs Policy and Political Action Committee and co-chair the MoDOT/AGC Bridge Committee.

Through my work with AGCMO, particularly in serving on the Highway and Transportation Board and the GAP Committee, I've gained valuable insights into the political side of infrastructure development. It's given me a deeper understanding of the challenges involved with government regulations and funding.

I'm passionate about encouraging others to get involved in AGCMO. Leadership is something that's always been a part of who I am. I don't join organizations or teams just to sit back. That said, leadership isn't the only way to benefit from AGCMO. I've seen plenty of people who don't take on a leadership role but still gain immense value by building relationships and getting engaged in the industry.

Looking ahead, I hope to continue serving in a leadership role with AGCMO, particularly as a key liaison between the organization and MoDOT. I've built strong relationships with many MoDOT leaders over the years, especially from my time as an inspector, and I'm confident those personal connections will continue to open doors for collaboration and partnership for years to come.

My journey with AGCMO - from a young project manager looking to make connections to now playing a role in shaping the future of the organization - has shown me just how powerful engagement, mentorship and a commitment to building a strong infrastructure community can be.

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AGCMO MEMBER COMPANIES INNOVATING, SHAPING THE FUTURE

BY KERRY SMITH BUCK



In addition to their loyal support and engagement as members of the Associated General Contractors of Missouri, a number of these firms are leading the way as innovators in their field.

TJ Wies Contracting, Inc. is an example. President Cameron Wies says innovation is indeed an integral driver in the construction industry.

“They say construction firms are not generally known as innovators... that they’re more of a laggard,” he said, “But I would say construction is more of an industry where you have to show value before adoption. Some say that’s wisdom rather than hesitation. I always look at any potential innovation and ask, ‘Does it really move the needle, or are we simply doing something differently?’ If it doesn’t solve the original problem, it’s not an innovation that carries value.”

One area where TJ Wies Contracting continues to innovate and lead is within its prefabrication arm of the company. While the firm has performed prefab for more than a decade, Wies says recently the company created a division specifically for its fully finished exterior cladding - with the goal of assisting clients, particularly those in health care and hospitality, in expediting their construction schedule and opening the doors earlier than ever before. “We’re providing cost certainty and schedule savings, perhaps the two most crucial factors for these two industry sub-sectors,” he said.

An example of this innovation is TJ Wies’ unique iteration of an air seal product that was actually created by the Dept. of Energy 20 years ago for a different purpose. In late 2024, TJ Wies Contracting became an official dealer for AeroSeal, a company that designs solutions for sealing leaks in air duct systems and building envelopes. TJ Wies developed a residential and multifamily solution utilizing the innovative duct and envelope air sealing technology to ensure that a new structure isn’t going to be a leaky one. “General contractors are required to pass an end blower test to meet code by demonstrating that the building is completely airtight,” said Wies. “Our approach to



this product includes air pressurization and an acrylic caulk spraying system that seals holes up to a half inch in diameter and everywhere you normally wouldn’t be able to see. Not only does this product seal the building from a thermal energy standpoint, but you also have a smoke, sand, sound and pest barrier and more.”

This latest innovation spurred TJ Wies Contracting to launch its TJ Wies Sealing Connections division.

At TJ Wies, not being content with the status quo is an effective catalyst for innovation. Wies says tempering the pursuit of perfection with a realist’s state of mind is often the key to overall success - for the company, but even more importantly for the client. “We enjoy the pursuit of perfection while understanding that we’ll never get there,” said Wies. “It’s the process of continual improvement that makes innovating interesting and fun. “I really don’t think anything is impossible anymore,” he said. “With time and money, you can pretty much solve anything. The challenge is in trying to complete what others think is impossible.”

Wies - who assumed leadership of the family business two years ago at age 36 - credits AGCMO for attracting the younger generation of general contractors, subs and suppliers. “Trust and relationships are what success is built upon,” he said, “and the AGCMO is fulfilling its mission in offering valuable relationship-building opportunities for current and future construction industry leaders.”

McCarthy Building Companies is another long-time AGCMO member that is known for innovating.

VDC (Virtual Design and Construction) Senior Director Alex Belkofer says that when the right technology is implemented on a project at the right time, greater certainty and better project outcomes follow.

“As an industry leader in the evaluation and implementation of technology across the entire project life cycle, we put tech to work to add real value - quality, schedule and cost certainty - that our clients can count on,” said Belkofer.

Emerging construction technologies McCarthy is known for driving include 3D modeling and scanning to BIM (Building Information Modeling), laser scanning, drone 360 imaging, virtual mockups and timelapse video production. The contractor is also immersed in 3D printing technology, from metals to continuous fibers, plastics and more. “3D printing technology is gaining traction as a faster, safer and cleaner way to build,” Belkofer said.

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There is definitely connectivity between virtual design and construction and 3D printing, according to Belkofer - and that's an intersection where McCarthy's innovative spirit shines.

"We're seeing the VDC trend shift to BIM as the processor and innovation," he said. "Without BIM, you can't have some of these cutting-edge AI (artificial intelligence) and machine learning innovations such as robotics and 3D printing."

Large organizations - McCarthy included - are innovating within the digital transformation space, he adds, and are gaining substantially more buy-in than even a few years ago. "We're a part of many of these organizations - the Design-Build Institute of America (Belkofer serves as chair of its VDC Leadership Committee), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Institute of Building Sciences, the American Institute of Architects, and of course the Associated General Contractors - that are strong proponents of construction digital tech. McCarthy was one of the first adopters years ago."

Lutalo Webb, vice president of data and technology strategy at long-time AGCMO member company Guarantee Electrical, says the 123-year-old specialty electrical contractor paces itself when considering adoption of new technologies to avoid creating separate silos for each new tech that don't operate cohesively.

"If a company doesn't already have a central repository for the data that the new technology is going to produce, it will likely create separate teams and inefficiencies every time they opt to adopt the latest and greatest construction industry software," said Webb. "Just as your company builds a cohesive team, onboarding and training individuals through a solid, consistent process, so it is with adopting new technologies. If your data isn't set up in a way that synthesizes relevant data and is integrated by professionals who understand the necessary team integration, you're not going to be effective at leveraging tech to produce meaningful solutions."

There's a solid parallel, says Webb, between the analog - wherein construction companies are integrating project teams - and the digital world, where companies are seeking to integrate meaningful

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data. “You want everyone collaborating because there’s value in working together,” said Webb. “It’s the same with data.”

Guarantee Electrical is seeking to build out technological goals and requirements before amassing the latest tech software, Webb says, to ensure that any new tech addition meets the specific needs of clients and fits into the overall data equation.

“People want to feel valued,” he said. “Without documentation of our current process and without gaining input from our employees who will be utilizing the new (tech) tool, the likeliness of using that new tool is diminished. Key questions we ask during this adoption process are, ‘Who’s going to lead the onboarding and training for it? Who’s responsible for renewing the contract?’ and the biggest question, ‘Does this (new tech) actually meet our needs?’ It’s vital that we think through the implementation process ahead of time and understand how the new product talks to our existing tech.”

Travis Byerley is director of facility and technology solutions at PARIC, another longstanding AGCMO member company that is known for industry innovation. Byerley says staying ahead of the company’s technology infrastructure is as important as is innovating. By integrating advanced cybersecurity measures and building robust, scalable IT systems, PARIC is ensuring its digital operations remain secure and reliable, he says. Secure communication platforms allows for seamless collaboration among teams, contractors and clients, all while maintaining the highest standards of data security, according to Byerley.

“We’re currently leveraging cutting-edge tools and protocols to protect our clients’ information...proprietary solutions,” said Byerley. “We rarely handle documents via email. Rather, our project partners upload and view e-documents via proprietary means. We’re taking innovative measures to make sure that when we’re sending out bid invitations, for example, that it’s clear they’re coming from PARIC. Maintaining the highest standards of data security by maintaining a secure network foundation - and taking a proactive approach to guard our network and streamline those operations - improves our efficiency and allows us to continue innovating without compromising the technology infrastructure.”



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**AGCMO
Member
Companies
Prioritize
Mental Health**

BY **KERRY SMITH BUCK**

There's no doubt that construction is a stress-producing industry.

Heightened competition to win jobs, accelerated project schedules, scarcities of materials and scarcity of workers. All of these factors can build stress that increases with the project's momentum. Even a few decades ago, the burly mentality of construction work unintentionally contributed to mental health crises - and sometimes tragedy - as workers were urged to leave their feelings and their problems at home.

The truth is startling. According to the National Academies, 83 percent of construction workers report stress-related issues. More than 5,000 people working in construction die by suicide every year, four times the national average.

But thanks to hard work and compassion - from one worker to another - these statistics are decreasing.

Awareness, resources, informational campaigns, alliances with health organizations and intense advocacy efforts by trade associations - such as the AGC and a number of its longstanding member companies - is gradually, effectively eroding the stigma that for too long plagued construction workers. And as these individuals and companies step up their message of self-care with compassion, education and resources, more individuals - in the field and in the office - are finding hope and learning that it's okay not to be okay.

Brandon Anderson, vice president of safety at AGCMO, is on a mission to equip as many member companies as he can to empower their workers to see, hear and say something if one of their colleagues seems to be struggling.

"If someone is off or an individual is acting differently...if his or her hygiene, behavior or mannerisms have changed...their coworkers - many of whom work alongside them for up to 12 or 14 hours a day - need to have the compassion and courage to ask them what's going on," said Anderson. "Many times, the individual just needs someone to listen. But if it's more than that, we need to practice self-care, take a moment, have a conversation and break the stigma. Those conversations will make a difference."

All of the AGCMO's materials include the National Suicide Hotline phone number plus additional resources such as the message to text HOPE (Hold On, Pain Ends) to 741741. AGCMO was in the driver's seat with initiating monthly "toolbox talks" topics (such as Mental Health Mondays) specific to mental health, substance abuse prevention and suicide prevention. The AGC, says Anderson, felt the need to get involved.

"Our goal at AGCMO is to have a minimum of one person at every jobsite who is trained in mental health first aid," he said. "For too long, the culture of the construction industry was built around this macho mentality with the thought process of not focusing on our feelings, our stress levels and our overall self-care. Hearing the message today that 'you're not always going to be fine, and that's okay - we can help you if you reach out' is so essential. We can see the evolution of this...whereas years ago a contractor or owner might have let a worker go who was struggling, today we're seeing employers and owners accessing resources for their workers who need help along the way. It takes bold thought and bold commitment to truly make a difference in the industry."

“If someone on our team asks for help, they're going to be taken care of.”

Contegra Construction Company, an AGCMO-member firm, is making solid steps toward sustainable mental health across its workforce. And although the contractor has grown its staff considerably through the years, Contegra Director of Safety John Flynn says its family-centric culture remains.

"It truly is a family atmosphere at Contegra," said Flynn. "All of our employees know each other, our spouses and even our kids' names. The fact that we know each other professionally and on a personal level is really valuable because we can tell if someone is struggling. And if it's a serious mental health situation, we're able to give that employee paid leave time to get help."

With construction schedules that are often demanding - such as a 4 a.m. concrete pour - Contegra staffs its jobs and shifts so that no employee is forced to work more than 40 hours per week, he says. "We strongly believe in monthly toolbox talks and are thankful that AGCMO and the national AGC have terrific resources and training when it comes to mental health and suicide prevention. These are tough men and women. You don't work in the construction industry without being tough. But we work hard to dispel the stigma that you've got to be tough no matter what you may be going through. If someone on our team asks for help, they're going to be taken care of," he added.

Holland Construction Services Safety Director Doug Devlin and Safety Manager Reggie LaRue agree that mental health is crucially important for anyone working in the construction industry. Like Contegra, Holland workers know each of their employees by name. "From the day this company began, our founder - Bruce Holland - set the tone," says LaRue. "Bruce recognized very early on that the mental health of his office and field coworkers could foster a healthy environment throughout the firm."

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Back in 2017, LaRue says, he first met John Gaal and heard John's powerful message about suicide prevention. Gaal, the retired director of training and workforce development for the Carpenters, lost his son, John Jr., to suicide in 2017. John Jr. suffered a traumatic brain injury from being knocked out twice as a high school football and soccer player. "When I heard John Gaal's message," said LaRue, "I knew it was an issue that we all had to embrace. We invited John to speak to our company. After that, John came and did a QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) Institute training course for our people that was outstanding."

Devlin agrees.

"Our management's approach has made all the difference in our outreach on mental health," said LaRue and Devlin. "Management has committed to invest financial resources and time, and the trickledown effect has been powerful. We're essentially a conduit between what management has supported and what we're able to provide each and every worker."

LaRue met Anderson back in 2018 and agreed to join the association's executive

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safety committee. “Back then, the AGCMO had already been going for a year with its subcommittee on mental health in construction... this committee became the national AGC model. AGCMO is a huge resource for us with its toolbox talks, suicide prevention coins we distribute to workers that say, ‘Your story isn’t over,’ and more.”

Particularly during and after Covid, tensions in the field were at a high point, according to LaRue. Anderson came and spoke to Holland workers with strategies for de-escalation. It worked.

“Now our employees take part in the AGC of America’s quarterly suicide prevention forum,” LaRue said. “We’re also dialed into LEAN - Laborers Escaping Addiction Now, a program we learned about through Brandon. Our company has updated its EAP (Employee Assistance Program) based upon info and resources provided by AGCMO. We even ended up partnering with Corporate Chaplains of America, and now we have our own chaplain who is available 24/7 to all of our employees and trade partners. He’s a trained mental health counselor who shares relevant info, visits jobsites and talks with our employees. His email and phone number is accessible to all of our people, should they ever experience an issue or are just struggling.”

In 2024, Holland took another step in furthering its mental health awareness outreach by hosting a one-day symposium with its trade partners and competitors. “Brandon and the AGCMO helped us a lot,” said LaRue. “We also partnered with Chestnut Health Systems... CHS provided complimentary NARCAN® (opioid emergency nasal spray intervention). It was a really well-received event and we plan to continue supporting this important initiative.”



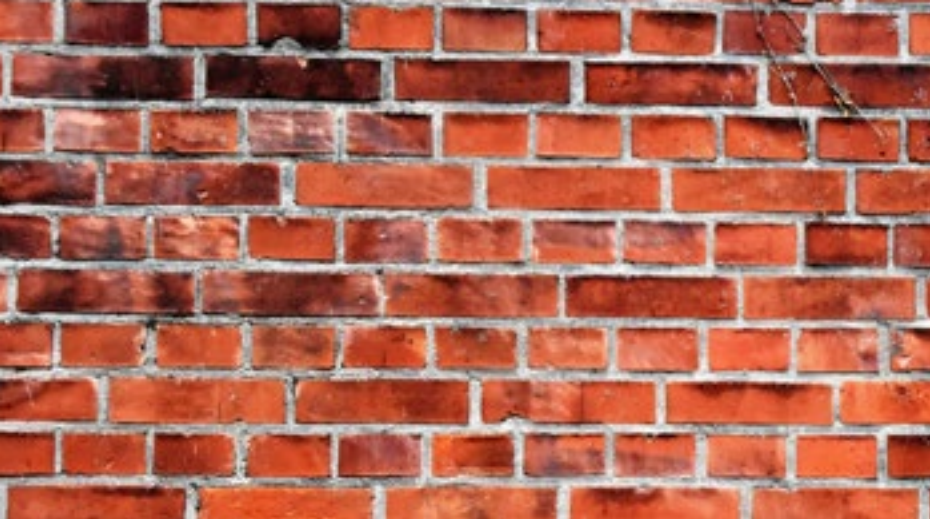
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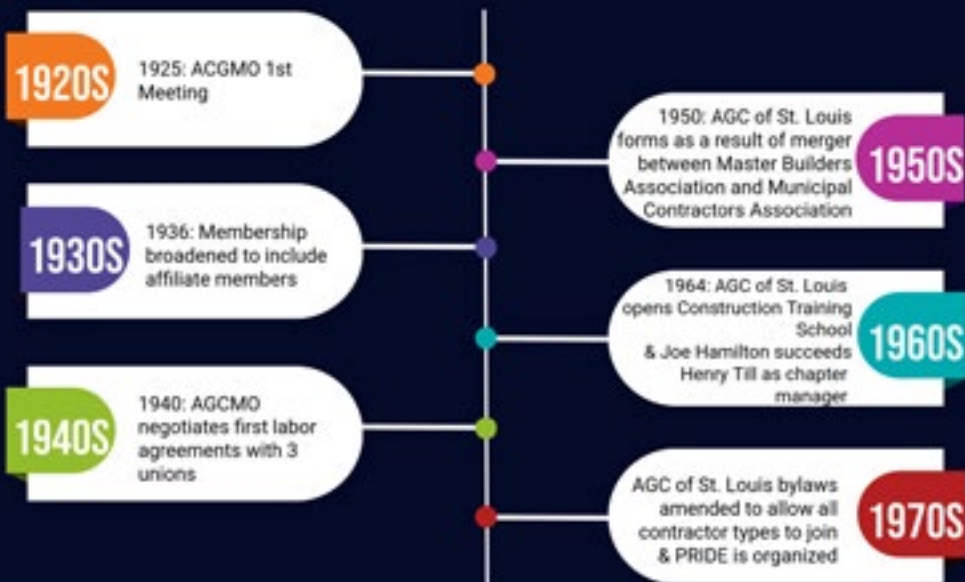


BRICK

BY

BRICK

HOW WE GOT HERE



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- C. W. Marshall
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- G. P. O'Rielly & Co.
- K.C. Bridge Co.
- Kersting Const. Co.
- Koss Const. Co.
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- List & Hallett
- List Const. Co.
- Lynch-McDonald Const. Co.
- Metropolitan Paving Co.
- Oscar Schmidt
- Pioneer Const. Co.
- Rouse Const. Co.
- Union Bridge Co.
- W.A. Ross Const. Co.
- W.D. Lonergan Const. Co.
- Western Bridge Co.
- W.M. Spencer Co.
- W.P. McGeorge & Co.





A Century of Building Missouri

BY BARBARA PIERCE

The 20s

When 19 charter members gathered at the Central Hotel in Jefferson City, Mo. for the first business meeting of the Associated General Contractors of Missouri, little did they know that they were planting the seeds for an association that would grow to become the largest construction association in the state representing building, highway, transportation and utility infrastructure contractors, industry partners and related firms. Today AGCMO is comprised of more than 500 members spread across 110 counties in the state. The industry it

“Buildings are storytellers. They teach us about our history.”

represents contributes \$22 billion - 4.9 percent - to the state's GDP of \$448 billion and employs approximately 150,800 Missourians.

On Dec. 10, 1925, D.C. Horton introduced various motions to the contractors, including bylaws drawn up for the occasion. Based on recommendations by member contractors from new AGC chapters in Illinois and Indiana, they decided to affiliate with the Associated General Contractors of America. They had heard good reports of a grievance committee, which, at the request of the secretary, could help solve a dispute between a member and some other party. At their inaugural meeting, they also approved 23 initial members and voted Jefferson City, Mo. as headquarters (over Kansas City, Mo.) in a 10 to 3 vote, with space rental and support from the Kansas-Missouri Contractors Association approved for a total of \$150. Dues were set at one-third of one percent of all work done in the state of Missouri after Jan. 1, 1926 with maximum yearly dues for any member capped at \$1,000. W.M. List from List Construction Company served as president for both 1926 and 1927.

“We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.”



The 30s

At first the organization was primarily limited to highway builders and Executive Committee meetings were held in conjunction with Missouri Dept. of Transportation lettings. In 1936, they broadened their membership to include affiliate members with annual dues of \$25.

The 40s

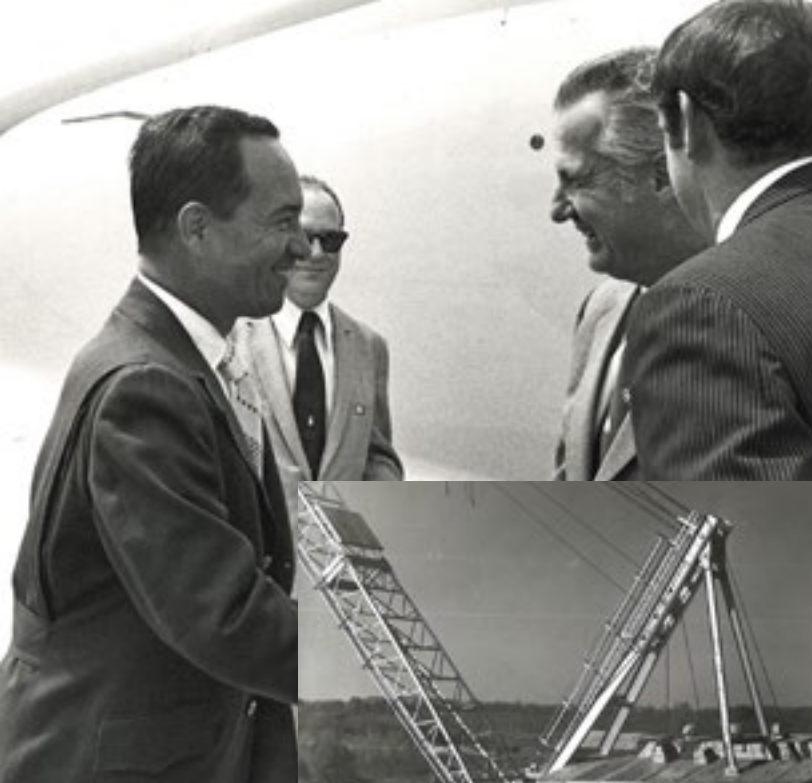
In 1940, AGC of Missouri negotiated its first labor agreements with three unions. AGCMO was acting for those of its members who wished to sign a union labor agreement, with agreements covering a limited number of counties.

The 50s

Meanwhile, in St. Louis, the Master Builders Association (founded in 1915 from a group started in 1903) and the Municipal Contractors Association (founded in 1917) had shared facilities and staff for a number of years. Both affiliated with AGC of America when they merged in 1950 to form the AGC of St. Louis. Art R. Elspeman of G.L. Tarlton

Contracting Co. served as the organization's first president, with 72 contractor members and provisions made for affiliate members. Henry Till was appointed as the first chapter manager with the first AGC office established in St. Louis at 511 Locust St.

The St. Louis chapter's jurisdiction included all work in St. Louis City and County and building construction only in Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, St. Charles and Warren Counties. In 1963 provisions were added to labor agreements to create the Construction Training Advancement Foundation (CTAF) at the rate of one cent per hour for Carpenters and Laborers, and two cents per hour for cement masons, iron workers and operating engineers. Teamsters were added a few years later.



The 60s

In 1964 the AGC of St. Louis broke new ground when it opened its Construction Training School, the first multi-craft apprenticeship and training facility in the country. Training carpenters, iron-workers, cement finishers and operating engineers in the CTS, this forward-thinking move preceded all the trade-specific training centers that exist today. Further leading in workforce development, AGC of St. Louis, working with Leon Strauss of Millstone Construction and others, helped to organize the Construction Manpower Corporation to recruit and train hardcore unemployed persons as construction workers.

In the 60s, Joe Hamilton succeeded Henry Till as chapter manager when Till passed away and the AGC offices moved first to the Coronado Hotel, and then to the Chase Park Plaza.

Al Hinton, who joined AGC of St. Louis in 1968 as director of public and industry relations and later became executive director, recalled an interesting story regarding Plan Bulldozer, whereby area contractors set up a short-wave radio system from the Chase Park Plaza to quickly mobilize heavy equipment in case of a disaster emergency such as an earthquake. "We had our radio equipment in the bathtub at the Chase and would have to remove it to take a shower," recalled Hinton. Current AGCMO President Len Toenjes recalls hearing that unsuccessful negotiations with Harold Kopljar, the Chase owner, over rental costs for rooftop antennas to accommodate Plan Bulldozer operations served as the

reason for AGC's subsequent relocation to a chapter-owned building at 2301 Hampton in the 70s. "It was the straw that broke the camel's back," said Toenjes. "The board didn't like the price the owner wanted for their radio tower, so they moved out."

Meanwhile, in 1969, AGC of Missouri in Jefferson City moved into the 111 Madison Street Building, across the street from the Missouri Governor's Mansion. Today the building contains Missouri Historical Society offices adjacent to the Gratz Brown House. Another milestone was reached at the end of the decade when, in 1970, AGC of Missouri established the Missouri Construction Industry Advancement Fund (MCI AF).

The 70s

Along with the rest of the nation, the 70s brought many changes to AGC. In 1970, the AGC of St. Louis bylaws were amended to make it possible for all types of construction contractors to become members.

A year later, an associate member category was created for employers doing more than one-half of their annual volume as a subcontractor and with the majority of their field personnel from one or more of the six basic trades. Associate members also were provided with an option to become a contractor member.

In 1972, a major piece of history occurred when PRIDE (Productivity and Responsibility Increase Development and Employment) of St. Louis, the first voluntary construction industry labor/management committee of its type in the country, was organized. Al Fleischer, 1971 president of AGC of St. Louis and chairman of the Council of Construction Employers, and Dick Mantia, executive secretary/treasurer of the St. Louis Building and Construction Trades Council, served as co-chairs.

In 1974, AGC of St. Louis left the Chase Park Plaza and moved into the top floor of 2301 Hampton Avenue.

The decade closed with AGC of St. Louis launching its first website and establishing an Emerging Contractors membership category.



“If these walls could talk.

The 80s

The next decade exploded with growth. With the concurrence of the Kansas City Building Chapter, AGC of America granted building jurisdiction for 19 counties in southeast Missouri to AGC of St. Louis.

In 1986, John Hinkson retired as director of apprenticeship and training at the CTS, and Len Toenjes was named director of apprenticeship and training.

In 1987 membership of AGC of St. Louis was expanded to include architects and engineers and a Young Executives Club was created in 1988 within AGC of Missouri. Political action committees were formed by both AGC of St. Louis and AGC of Missouri, and the first PAC auctions were held. Operation Safe Site was created and AGC of St. Louis' first safety vans made their debut.

In March 1988, Cheryl Gentges joined AGCMO as administrative assistant. Today, as assistant vice president of operations, she is in charge of planning many of the networking events across the state throughout the year - including the Centennial Convention and April 2025 celebration.



The 90s

At AGC of St. Louis, various bylaws were amended to refine membership categories including contractors, specialty contractors and supplier service providers. In 1996, Joe Hamilton retired and Len Toenjes was appointed executive vice president. In 1997, the Young Constructors Forum was founded and later renamed the Construction Leadership Council to encourage and nurture the next generation of construction leaders. In 1997, the first Partnership Agreement was signed between AGCMO and MoDOT. That same year, AGC of St. Louis launched its annual Construction Keystone Awards program. In 1998, AGC of St. Louis incorporated the AGC of St. Louis Education Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

The 2000s

In 2001, AGC of St. Louis opened the Construction Careers Center charter high school.

Also in 2001, AGC of St. Louis earned the inaugural AGC of America Diversity Award and the Workforce Development Award from the Construction Users Roundtable.

The completed merger of AGC of Missouri and AGC of St. Louis was announced in 2014.





GUEST COLUMN
BY PAUL SHAUGHNESSY
PRESIDENT OF
BSI CONSTRUCTORS

AGC of Missouri: As Good As It Gets

Like many in our great industry, I am a member of a multi-generational construction family.

Some of my earliest memories are of my dad dragging us kids around town on weekends for jobsite visits. Strangely, even as one who was only mildly interested in what my dad did for a living at the time, I was already aware of his trade association - the Associated General Contractors of St. Louis - at an early age. It was probably because of the trips. As a board member and board president, he and my mom frequently attended AGC national conventions in some very cool locations (Hawaii, etc.).

I suppose it made an impression on me that my dad (father of seven and co-owner of a construction company) felt that the AGC was worthy of his exceedingly scarce time. So, when I decided to give the construction industry a try in 1989, I already had a favorable impression of the AGC of St. Louis. I came to learn what an important partner the AGC had been when our company (then known as Bannes-Shaughnessy) was in its early years. And as had been the case since our founding, I also learned to turn to the AGC staff when encountering issues (certain labor disputes, as an example) that our company didn't have the in-house expertise to handle.

While our metro area hasn't always kept up as a whole (we're now ranked 23rd in the nation in population), our community has always been blessed with a disproportionate number of the nation's best and largest general contractors who make their home here. I say "blessed" somewhat facetiously, as it can be a grind to always have to compete with the best of the best for work here in town.

With apologies to Frank Sinatra, with regard to being a general contractor in St. Louis, "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere." But even though we regularly do battle in the marketplace, the AGC has always provided a haven where fierce competitors can put aside their differences to find common ground on the issues that should unite our industry - in areas like safety, training, government

regulation or collective bargaining.

Any organization that is going to thrive for a long period of time must evolve to meet the changing needs of its constituents. I was fortunate to be a part of that evolution as a board member in the early 2000s. One of those changing needs was to up our game related to government advocacy. Most of us just want to run our businesses and don't have the time nor the interest in politics. But as a famous politician once said, "No man's life, liberty or property is safe while the legislature is in session." We have no choice but to be politically active, and AGC was the ideal vehicle to advo-

“ I came to learn what an important partner the AGC had been when our company was in its early years.

cate for our industry and defend us from potentially damaging legislation and over regulation.

That's why in 2005, we created a new position of vice president of government affairs and hired Denise Hasty to fill the role, which she ably did for nearly 20 years. In 2007, I had the honor of following in the footsteps of my father when I became chairman of the board for the AGC of St. Louis. One of the highlights of my tenure was accepting the Chapter of the Year award (out of more than 80 chapters!) at the AGC of America's national convention in San Antonio that year. That national recognition just confirmed what we already knew: that the AGC of Missouri has been as good as it gets in serving its members and our industry.

Thanks to Len Toenjes (could there possibly be a stronger chapter executive?) and the stellar staff for making the AGC of Missouri such an amazing partner for all of these years.



AGCMO Benefits, Connections Extend Far and Wide

As a longstanding member of AGCMO, KAI and the Kennedy family would like to congratulate the organization on its milestone 100th anniversary.

Providing valuable networking opportunities, education, business support and advocacy, AGCMO has proven to be an indispensable tool in our company's growth and success.

I joined AGCMO in 2006 when I was the vice president of sales and operations at my father's firm, KAI Design & Build, based in St. Louis. I got connected to AGCMO's strong subcontractor base and had access to the owners of large firms and their leadership, which was really beneficial to KAI as a minority-owned business and especially one trying to grow its construction capabilities.

Unlike some industry organizations that only provide networking opportunities, AGCMO goes above and beyond by being on the forefront of industry issues and finding ways to resolve them for the betterment of its members. AGCMO provides everything a business, large or small, needs to succeed.

AGCMO boasts a tremendous number of outstanding programs that we have used to become more efficient - such as negotiating union contracts, hiring skilled labor and offering a 401(k) group plan that saves a significant amount of money for our employees and eliminates the cost of expensive company reviews. We receive vendor discounts as an AGCMO member and have access to a library filled with industry-related materials. We also receive safety support and advocacy services that let us know how federal and local legislative issues will affect our business in real time. AGCMO's education classes and staff training on leadership, safety, preconstruction and project management

have been extremely beneficial to our business as well.

I have never regretted writing that check for membership dues; I receive 10 times more back in benefits every year by what I've learned from other members, the partnerships I have forged and the business I have gained through my membership. Also, because it is a statewide organization, I have connected with firms and subcontractors throughout Missouri and now have the confidence to pursue work in Springfield, Mo. and Kansas City, Mo. If it wasn't for

President Len Toenjes to address the workforce shortage. My self-perform group, The UP Companies, produced a music video with St. Louis rapper Chingy to boost awareness of jobs in the construction industry and recruit diverse talent to the trades. Len and I partnered to conduct a variety of radio interviews encouraging young people to pursue careers in construction.

The COVID lockdowns occurred during my second stint on the board of directors. The AGCMO community was there to support

“ I have never regretted writing that check for member dues. I receive 10 times more back in benefits every year by what I've learned from other members.

AGCMO's regional guidance and support, I may not have had that opportunity for growth.

I have been given the honor of serving two terms on AGCMO's board of directors, where I learned a great deal and was given a voice to advocate for Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and diversity. In my first term, I chaired the diversity committee where we worked to adjust a St. Louis City ordinance that allows general contractors more time to coordinate minority participation on their projects.

While chairing the diversity committee, I leveraged AGCMO's influence to produce a video called "Building a Better St. Louis" that advanced the conversation surrounding MBE participation in the construction industry, focusing on issues and addressing potential solutions. Soon after, I became chair of AGCMO's Building Division board. At this time, I was given the opportunity to work with AGCMO

its members by working to find solutions to the supply chain issues and the many challenges that arose during that unprecedented and grim time. I worked to schedule online speakers to discuss the topics of the day and give professional advice to members on how to survive the pandemic and manage their projects, despite the situation.

Looking back, if I were a small contractor just starting out, I would have become a member of AGCMO a lot sooner. I would have gone a lot faster and further in my business by soaking up all the information I could and partnering with people in the industry rather than trying to figure it out on my own. AGCMO is truly an extension of my business, and I am so proud and thankful to be a member of this transformative organization.

Here's to the next 100 years.

LABOR AND MANAGEMENT: BUILDING BRIDGES

BY BARBARA PIERCE



It all starts with relationship building and finding common ground. In 1972, when a strike tore apart the St. Louis construction industry after months of disputes over jurisdictional issues, two leaders stepped up to solve the problem. Al Fleischer, 1971 president of the AGC of St. Louis, and Dick Mantia, executive secretary/treasurer of the St. Louis Building and Construction Trades Council, stood together amid the acrimony to form PRIDE (Productivity and Responsibility Increase Development and Employment), the first voluntary labor-management organization of its type in the nation's construction industry.

When the PRIDE co-chairmen saw idle job sites and an industry threatened by ill will, they gave their total commitment to bringing the industry together. Their perseverance and dedication changed the course of history by convincing labor and management to work together to bring jobs to the St. Louis area. Success was achieved and their legacy lives on. PRIDE, under the new name of the Saint Louis Construction Cooperative, is still at work today and based on a simple principle: building a bigger, better and brighter future for the St. Louis construction industry. The SLCC is the first-of-its-kind collaboration in the country, enabling regular, inter-trade communication, resolution and strategy to address the most pressing issues facing the construction industry. For 47 years, it has successfully pioneered a collaborative approach to sustaining harmony and building cooperation among St. Louis-area AFL-CIO construction craft workers, contractors, construction buyers, architects, engineers and suppliers.

Al Fleischer passed away in December 2003. At PRIDE's 25th anniversary celebration in 1997 he said, "I shudder to imagine how many corporations took one look at St. Louis and decided not to locate here or otherwise do business here - all because we in the construction

industry weren't getting along. The bickering kept jobs out of St. Louis. We were our own worst enemies until we got together and said, 'Enough is enough. Let's come up with a better way to do business.'"

At the time of Dick Mantia's passing in June 2014, Jeff Aboussie, then-executive secretary/treasurer of the Trades Council, called Mantia "a savior of the labor movement. His legacy is teaching both sides to sit down at the table, not just get mad and walk away." Jim LaMantia, executive director of SLCC, said Mantia "created harmony within our industry. Frankly, before him, conditions were chaotic."

Communication and collaboration is not just found across a contract negotiation table. The AGC of Missouri labor policy committee has taken significant steps towards strengthening relationships between contractor members and the five basic union trades.

Prevailing wage also is an important issue that draws support from contractor members across the state, with a goal of creating a competitive environment for construction consumers. AGCMO supports the concept of prevailing wage and opposes further erosion of wage protections or complete repeal of current statutes.

Several ongoing programs underline the important work of craft workers in building a successful industry. The well-being and mental health of workers is a top priority, with events and education efforts organized around work zone safety and suicide prevention. A large annual safety banquet, held at the



Machinists' Hall in Bridgeton in February, honors outstanding workers and safety records by AGCMO member contractors. In further efforts to elevate the importance of skilled workers, a Show Me Excellence in Craftsmanship Award was added to the annual Construction Awards gala in 2023 and an apprentice/craft/trade grant category supports apprentices through AGCMO's annual scholarship program.

AGC of Missouri represents construction companies of many types with many different types of labor needs. AGCMO works to maintain an environment where, regardless of its approaches to meeting their labor needs, contractors can work together to build tomorrow's workforce, keep today's workforce safe and generate the support needed to keep Missouri building for the future.



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MAKING CONNECTIONS: AGC OF MISSOURI HOSTS SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING EVENT

BY **CNR STAFF**

The AGC of Missouri's Labor Policy Committee recently took a significant step toward strengthening relationships between contractor members and the five basic union trades. Led by Chair Dirk Elsperman, the committee recognized the need for enhanced communication and rapport-building between labor and management, which can often be overlooked in the hustle of everyday operations.

To facilitate this connection, the committee proposed a social event, resulting in a well-attended happy hour held on Sept. 18, 2024 at the Hacienda Mexican Restaurant in St. Louis. The gathering, which took place from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in a private outdoor setting, was aimed at fostering personal connections rather than focusing on jobsite or industry business.

More than 40 representatives from 20 contractor companies joined more than 20 participants from the five basic union trades for an evening of relaxed conversation and camaraderie. The casual atmosphere provided a unique opportunity for labor and management to engage in informal discussions and share personal stories, helping to humanize roles that are often viewed through a purely professional lens.

Feedback from attendees highlighted the event's impact. One management representative remarked on the significance of sharing personal experiences, noting that despite sitting at the same table with a union representative for two years, it wasn't until this happy hour that they truly connected as individuals. Such personal interactions are invaluable in breaking down barriers and fostering a cooperative environment. Interestingly, the event also served as a platform for resolving ongoing issues among the unions. One union representative



shared that discussions at the happy hour led to resolutions that had previously been challenging to navigate. This unexpected outcome illustrates the power of relationship building in creating a positive atmosphere for collaboration.

The importance of these gatherings was echoed by several participants, who emphasized the need for continued opportunities for interaction between management and union representatives.

"This can only happen because the AGC of Missouri can pull the five basic union trades together with signatory contractors, and we need to keep doing it," stated one union representative. Management members echoed this sentiment, advocating for regular networking events to maintain and grow these vital connections.

A special thank-you goes to the chairs of the AGC of Missouri labor committees - Will Chipley (Carpenters Labor Committee), Dirk Elsperman (Cement Labor Committee), Lee Wyman (Ironworkers Labor Committee), Doug Wachsnicht (Laborers Labor Committee) and Tom Huster (Operating Engineers Labor Committee) for their efforts in personally inviting union representatives. And appreciation to the union leadership of the Cement Masons' Local 527, Ironworkers Local 396, Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council, Missouri Kansas Laborers District Council and respective locals 42, 110, 660, 840 and Operating Engineers Local 513 for saying yes, showing up and participating to help make this a successful event.

As the AGC of Missouri looks ahead, the emphasis on relationship building will undoubtedly pave the way for a more collaborative future.



MoDOT/AGCMO: *A Century of Partnership*

BY **BARBARA PIERCE**

The Good Roads Movement in Missouri moved into the public eye in 1920 when two convoys of U.S. Army trucks left St. Louis and Kansas City on Sept. 27, 1920. According to media reports from the day, their mission was to travel the state and encourage citizens to “lift Missouri out of the mud” by voting yes on a constitutional amendment allowing the state to issue a \$60 million bond, the largest in its history, to upgrade thousands of miles of muddy, often unnavigable roads.

After much contentious debate, with Missouri’s rural and urban areas directly pitted against each other, the Centennial Road Law of 1921 was finally passed. However, there continued to be a great debate between “hard roaders” who wanted to move Missouri into the Modern Era, and “dirt roaders” who worried the new system would ignore the needs of rural people in favor of roads that served urban areas and tourists. The acrimony went on for months as lawmakers wrangled over how much to pay highway engineering officials and how to spread around the \$60 million.

The disputes were finally resolved by the time B.H. Piepmeier, Missouri’s first chief highway engineer, attended the very first meeting of the Associated General Contractors of Missouri on Dec. 10, 1925. Piepmeier greeted the contractors in attendance and said, “I sincerely welcome an organization of this kind, if it is based on fundamental and sound principles of contracting...I have, at numerous times, wished for such an organization...I would like to see both engineering and contracting elevated higher in the mind of the public.”

According to the State Historical Society of Missouri, Chief Engineer Piepmeier and The Good Roads Movement made a lasting impact on Missouri’s and the nation’s transportation network. Its legacy includes, most famously, Route 66, which Good Roads supporters in Missouri played a key role in designing. As Route 66 was being planned in the mid-1920s, Piepmeier was central to designing the route that would eventually stretch from Chicago to Los Angeles by way of Missouri.

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Missouri Dept. of Transportation and AGC of Missouri contractors have worked closely together since those early days to create an enviable transportation system comprised of 4,800 miles of railroad tracks, 1,379 miles of interstates (5th-most nationally), 125 public-use airports and 15 public ports. Missouri has 33,811 miles of state highways (7th nationally in state highway miles) as well as 10,392 bridges and culverts. MoDOT states, "If you're trying to get goods from one side of the country to the other, it's likely they'll pass through Missouri."

In 1956, when the first ground was broken in St. Charles County on what would become the U.S. Interstate Highway System, AGCMO contractors stood side by side with Missouri Highway Dept. representatives. The importance of the Interstate Highway System and the reliable movement of goods it provides cannot be overstated. Missouri's 1,380-mile Interstate Highway System has been described as the workhorse of the state's surface transportation network, heavily traveled and providing the most important link in the supply chain, and the primary connection between and within urban communities.

According to Alan Reinkemeyer, vice president of AGCMO's Highway & Transportation Division, today more than 40 percent of AGCMO's members are involved in building and repairing transportation infrastructure. Much of the association's transportation related work is done through committees, including the AGCMO/MoDOT Joint Bridge Committee, the AGCMO/MoDOT Joint Grading/Specialty Contractor Committee, the AGCMO/ACEC/MoDOT Design-Build Committee; the Highway & Transportation Safety & Health Committee, quarterly MoDOT leadership meetings and the Railroad Committee.

"As members, AGCMO contractors have a direct input on MoDOT technical specifications, design issues and best practices," said Reinkemeyer. "Through our quarterly and MoDOT District Regional



Roundtable meetings, we are able to anticipate and resolve issues early on. Through our Governmental Affairs Policy Committee, our members are active in providing important industry input on proposed regulations and legislation."

Another noteworthy member benefit is AGCMO's affiliation with ARTBA (American Road and Transportation Builders Association) and AGC of America. "ARTBA is not as big as AGC of America, but it provides us with additional information and insights, especially in giving us a second set of eyes on all rules and regulations," said Reinkemeyer. "Both organizations are tremendous resources for insider information on federal transportation issues and upcoming infrastructure funding. Right now we're watching weighty lawsuits in 23 states that will impact contractors directly."

In 1997, AGCMO signed an important partnering agreement with MoDOT which endorsed open competitive bidding, a commitment to open communications and uniform/efficient procurement and contract administration, among other things. On Feb. 13, 2024, representatives from MoDOT, AGCMO, the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission and other industry partners signed a new and expanded partnering charter agreement to provide a world-class transportation system that is safe, innovative, reliable and dedicated to a prosperous Missouri. The landmark document, a substantial update from the 1997 agreement, represents a renewed effort to provide Missourians with one of the best transportation systems in the nation.

The agreement focuses on keeping employees and the public safe, developing a skilled and diverse workforce, open and honest communications, innovation, quality and collaborative teamwork principles with all partners and stakeholders. Providing efficient and effective solutions in operating maintaining and building a transportation system is paramount - along with stewardship of Missouri's natural and cultural resources - for a sustainable transportation system. The document also emphasizes ethics, including transparent, fair, inclusive and accountability in all aspects of contracts and agreements, and developing and engaging disadvantaged and underrepresented communities in the transportation design and construction industries.

Another important event came out of the original partnering agree-



ment. The annual AGCMO/MoDOT Co-op meeting, held in late Fall at Lake Ozark, began in 1998. Often attended by more than 500 persons, the purpose is to develop closer relations between MoDOT and the contractors and to have an open statewide meeting whereby changes in asphalt and concrete, new technologies, bridge and highway design and safety can be reviewed. The conference offers eight to 12 continuing education credits for engineers in attendance; it also offers an excellent opportunity for face-to-face meetings between contractors, subcontractors and highway engineers and officials.

The timing of the 2024 partnering agreement was significant, following on the Missouri General Assembly's 2023 passage of landmark transportation funding, allocating \$2.8 billion to rebuild and expand I-70, \$100 million for low volume and minor roads, \$25 million for environmental studies on I-44 and U.S. 63 and \$50 million to improve safety at railroad crossings. At the same time, MoDOT has demonstrated excellent stewardship of current resources through its five-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and its ongoing refurbishment/replacement of Missouri bridges.

Further demonstrating its commitment to infrastructure, the state legislature also recently appropriated \$15 million in the Missouri State budget (Fiscal Year 2025) for a heavy equipment operations program expansion at State Technical College in Linn, Mo. The funding has allowed State Tech to buy the equipment and hire staff to admit 200 more students in Fall 2025, providing 200 trained students as 2026 summer interns. In Fall 2026, the program will admit another 200 students, providing an additional 200 interns for Summer 2027, with a total of 400 full-time employees provided each year on an ongoing basis to augment the workforce starting in May 2027.

MoDOT came full circle from the early Piepmeier days of working together with AGCMO contractors when Ed Hassinger, longtime MoDOT chief engineer, was named MoDOT director in Nov. 2024. His promotion came after serving as chief engineer since 2013 with the added responsibility of deputy director since 2018. AGCMO President Len Toenjes noted, "Ed's experience - along with strong support from the governor's office and significant new transportation funding - is leading us, side-by-side, into a new era in Missouri transportation investment, improvement and partnering."

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AGC of Missouri Three-Time Winner of National 'Chapter of the Year'

BY CNR STAFF

Chapter of the Year award a third time.

Ed Twehous, vice president of Jefferson City-based Twehous Excavating Co., Inc., remembers attending the awards ceremony with AGCMO President Len Toenjes.

"We traveled to Washington, D.C. to accept the AGC of America's 'Chapter of the Year' award on behalf of our two merged chapters (AGC of St. Louis and AGC of Missouri)," said Twehous. "Another gratifying moment came when in 2019 the AGC of America honored us for creating the Training for Life Center for Special Olympics in Jefferson City, Mo. Our company (Twehous Excavating) predecessor companies and our families donated the land and 100 percent of the contractors that worked on the project were AGCMO members...all of them donated services towards the campus."

Toenjes says it's an honor to represent a vibrant association that has attracted the

attention of the national AGC chapter three times for excellence in programming and member involvement.

"The justice system is based on the premise that the best measure of seeking the truth is based on judgement by your peers. For AGC of Missouri to be recognized three times by our peers as the Chapter of the Year is truly a testament to the hard work and involvement of our member's leadership and our professional staff team," Toenjes said. "This is truly our proudest accomplishment."

The current AGC of Missouri was created on Dec. 18, 2014 by a merger of two AGC chapters, one being the original AGC of Missouri that was founded on Nov. 15, 1925. AGC of St. Louis was initially founded Dec. 29, 1949 as a merger of the Master Builders Association (founded on March 25, 1896) and the Municipal Contractors Association, founded on Jan. 25, 1917 and existed until the most recent merger with AGC of Missouri.

Just since 2001, the Associated General Contractors of Missouri has captured the coveted Associated General Contractors of America's Chapter of the Year award three times.

In 2001, when known as the AGC of St. Louis (prior to its merger with AGC of Missouri), the organization was first named Chapter of the Year, selected from more than 85 chapters across the United States.

Christi Beatty, AGC of America's vice president of chapter support and member engagement, says the national AGC organization recognizes chapters who have developed outstanding programming and have excelled at achieving tangible accomplishments - such as implementing highly successful membership campaigns, public relations campaigns or impactful diversity and inclusion programs during the calendar year. Each fall, the chapter that wins Chapter of the Year award is recognized at the National and Chapter Leadership Conference held in Washington, DC.

"The AGC of America is thrilled to recognize chapters that have proven to be truly outstanding at achieving their goals," said Beatty. "The AGC of Missouri is among a select few organizations that have been recognized with this award several times over."

In 2006, the AGC of St. Louis was again pronounced Chapter of the Year.

And again, in 2020, the construction industry association now known as the AGC of Missouri - following the Dec. 18, 2014 merger of the AGC of St. Louis and the AGC of Missouri - took home the AGC of America's

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Building a Century of Success: Congratulations to AGC of Missouri on 100 Years of Excellence

It is with great pride and appreciation that we extend our congratulations to the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Missouri on reaching its 100th anniversary. This incredible milestone is a testament to AGC's unwavering commitment to strengthening the construction industry, advocating for contractors and providing quality career opportunities for hard-working men and women across Missouri.

Its strength is in the more than 500 construction-related member firms doing business in every corner of the Show Me State. AGC puts boots on the ground - hosting seminars, educational programs, conventions and meetings that inform its members of the most current developments, allowing those companies to grow their business, and in turn allowing us to grow our union. Participating in the political process on both the national and local level, the AGC also gives us an invaluable partner advocating for the interests of everyone earning a living in the construction field.

For a century, AGC of Missouri has played a pivotal role in shaping the construction landscape, ensuring that the industry remains a pillar of economic growth and a pathway to the middle class. Through its steadfast support of union contractors and skilled tradespeople, AGC has helped set high standards for craftsmanship, safety and fair wages - values that our Carpenters Union holds dear.

A Valued Partner

AGC of Missouri has long recognized that a highly skilled and well-trained workforce is the foundation of a strong Missouri. By advocating for high labor standards, promoting responsible contracting and partnering with unions, AGC has helped members of the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council and our signatory contractors thrive. Through collective bargaining agreements and workforce development initiatives, AGC ensures that Missouri's construction industry remains competitive, productive and safe. The dedication to fair wages and benefits has not only provided stability for workers but has also attracted top-tier talent to our trades, reinforcing the value of union labor in delivering quality projects on time and on budget.

Investing in Training and Workforce Development

One of AGC's most important contributions has been its investment in workforce development. By supporting apprenticeship and training programs, AGC helps to equip skilled tradespeople with the knowledge and expertise needed to excel in their crafts. This partnership between AGC and labor strengthens our ability to train the next generation, and their efforts have ensured that Missouri construction remains at the forefront of innovation and efficiency while maintaining the highest standards of safety.

Strengthening the Middle Class

Beyond the jobsite, AGC's advocacy efforts have had a profound impact on working families and communities across Missouri. Pushing for policies that promote fair wages, benefits and workplace protections, AGC has been instrumental in supporting a strong middle class. A thriving construction industry means more opportunities for workers to earn a good living, buy homes, send their children to college and retire with dignity. The leadership of AGC of Missouri allows construction to remain a career of choice for those seeking stable, well-paying jobs with a bright future.

“AGC puts boots on the ground.”

Continued Success

As we celebrate this historic milestone, the Carpenters Union looks forward to continuing our strong partnership with AGC of Missouri. Together, we will keep advocating for fair labor practices, investing in workforce development and building a future where both contractors and workers succeed. On behalf of our union brothers and sisters, congratulations to AGC of Missouri on 100 years of excellence. Your leadership and commitment to this industry have made a lasting impact, and we are proud to stand with you in shaping decades of progress ahead.

Here's to another century of building a stronger Missouri - together.



GUEST COLUMN
BY BRANDON FLINN
BUSINESS MANAGER FOR THE
MISSOURI AND KANSAS
LABORERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Laborers and AGCMO: Building Missouri Communities, Infrastructure Together

My home local union, Laborers Local 42 in St. Louis, Mo., was chartered Jan. 7, 1933 and was the result of a merger of three existing locals; Local 22, chartered Aug. 1, 1906 (a brick hod carrier local); Local 284, chartered April 7, 1914 (a plasterer hod carrier local); and Local 162, chartered May 31, 1916 (a master builders local/concrete local).

Two local St. Louis-based construction associations were formed early in the 1900s. The Master Builders Association was formed in 1915 primarily for building contractors. The Municipal Contractors Association was formed in 1917 for infrastructure contractors. Meanwhile, in Jefferson City, AGC of Missouri was formed in 1925. The AGC of St. Louis was formed in 1949 with the merger of the Master Builders and the Municipal Contractors.

For the past 100 years, the Laborers' International Union of North America and AGC of Missouri have been working together to build Missouri's communities and critical infrastructure. During the past century, we have met the ever-evolving demands of the construction industry. Through this partnership, we've built a union construction industry sector

that is the leader in Missouri in providing construction owners and contractors with a safe, productive workforce that results in quality, finished construction projects.

The Laborers-AGC partnership is demonstrated every day behind the scenes without a lot of fanfare but results in significant benefits for both contractors and Construction Craft Laborers. We work closely together when it comes to training, apprenticeship, health and safety programs, labor-management partnerships, industry organizations and initiatives, not to mention administering our industry leading pension and welfare benefits.

Addressing the needs of the industry has been cornerstone of our partnership through the years. This was evident when it came to developing a program and center to provide training for Construction Craft Laborers. AGC was our original partner in the development of the Laborers-Contractors Training Center (originally named Laborers-AGC Training Center) in

High Hill, Mo., which serves the eastern half of the state.

The AGC continues to partner with the Laborers to provide world-class training and are working together to locate and

build an urban training center in St. Louis. Today, the training center provides 53,585 hours (in 2024) of training to more than 686 individual Laborers, to go along with an apprenticeship program of more than 550 apprentices. This is but one example. We can list many more ways that we're working together for the benefit of the Laborer, both on the jobsite and off, and for the signatory contractors who employ them.

Congratulations to AGC of Missouri on 100 years. This is an incredible milestone. Together we have built a solid foundation to build upon for the next 100 years.

“ The AGC continues to partner with the Laborers to provide world-class training.”



Here's to the next 100 years!

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Advocacy: A Game for Champions

BY **BARBARA PIERCE**

Since the association’s earliest days, member contractors and suppliers have been among the construction industry’s greatest champions. Whether in the governmental chambers of St. Louis City or County or within the walls of the capitol in Jefferson City, proposed new rules, regulations, building codes, licensing and pending legislation have always attracted the strong interest of and engagement by AGC members.

Duane Kraft served as the assistant manager of the AGC of Missouri in Jefferson City, Mo. from 1972 to 1974. He then served as executive vice president and corporate secretary of the AGCMO from 1974 to 2007 when he retired.

Kraft was the driving force behind AGCMO’s legislative relations program and also oversaw the expansion of its programs and services and the construction of its new headquarters building in 1999. Jack Atterberry, who joined AGC of Missouri in 1990 as

director of governmental relations, said that Kraft was frequently in the capitol representing the interests of AGCMO members when Atterberry came on board.

Meanwhile, AGC of St. Louis also had been actively engaged in legislative relations since forming in 1950, helping to develop building codes in post-WWII urban centers, guiding the growth of work rules and regulations impacting workers, contractors and suppliers and immersed in the state’s infrastructure planning and funding. Tom Barta, who served as executive vice president for Fred Weber Inc. from 1990 to 2012, was very active in statewide advocacy, serving as chair of the AGC of St. Louis Governmental Affairs Policy (GAP) Committee in 2010 and 2011.

“Contractors throughout Missouri made a successful push for the 1992 gas tax to provide additional MoDOT funding.”



“Metrolink was a huge issue for us in the 90s, with the St. Louis area continuously advocating for more funding for Metrolink and other urban projects,” said Barta. “Contractors throughout Missouri also made a successful push for the 1992 gas tax to provide additional MoDOT funding via a six-cent total phased in over a five-year period.”

Barta reports that it was the last increase until 2004, when they were able to get a referendum on the statewide ballot to clarify/rewrite the law covering the vehicle sales tax. “The state had previously been splitting the vehicle sales tax 50/50 between MoDOT and the General Revenue fund,” recalled Barta. “The 2004 Amendment 3 petition passed, requiring that 100 percent of the vehicle sales tax go solely to MoDOT.”

“Transportation funding was the focus all along,” said Atterberry. “We started on the utility side and worked to make the Missouri One Call System (now referred to as Missouri 811) mandatory for utility and contractor participation. Joe Berk of Ameren also was very involved. We met monthly and kept our members apprised of what was going on in the legislature. We also had a lot of affiliate members in the insurance industry, so workers’ compensation was always on our agenda,” added Atterberry. “There were also initiatives by subcontractors to limit indemnification clauses with contractors. They felt it was important for both contractors and subcontractors to be responsible for their own safety and to assume their own risk.”

“Jack did a terrific job,” said Ed Twehous, vice president of Twehous Excavating Co., Inc. “He was able to break down a bill so it was understandable, explain it in layman’s terms and help me to actually sit down with a legislator and speak intelligently about the issues.”

Twehous, 2005 AGCMO president, 2017 AGCMO board chairman and part of the second generation at his firm, was very active in forming AGCMO’s Political Action Committee (PAC) and establishing the first PAC Auction in 1986 - which has become the stalwart of AGCMO’s PAC fundraising.

“From the earliest days, we tried to be very strategic, supporting both sides of the aisle and connecting with key leadership and committee chairs. We also tried to keep a scorecard so we knew how legislators were voting,” recalled Atterberry. “Although most of membership skewed Republican at the time, we financially supported Mel Carnahan, a Democrat, for governor when he won the gubernatorial race in 1992. And we always were careful to try to cover key committee chairs in both chambers.”

For the first time in its then-99-year history, AGCMO publicly endorsed then Lt. Gov. Mike Kehoe, a Republican, in his bid to win Missouri’s gubernatorial race in 2024. At the time, Len Toenjes, AGCMO president, said, “Our GAP Committee has a long track record of supporting candidates from both political parties for local and statewide offices through its Political Action Distribution Committee. However, Mike’s leadership and advocacy for improving and main-

taining Missouri’s infrastructure, building a resilient construction and manufacturing workforce, and supporting a strong business climate convinced us that we needed to take this extra step for 2024 with an endorsement.”

AGCMO’s legislative efforts were in full force leading up to May 2021 when the Missouri Legislature increased the state’s gas tax by 2.5 cents per gallon per year for five years starting in Oct. 2021. This was the first increase in the state’s fuel tax in 25 years. The tax has now increased by 2.5 cents each year, soon to reach a total of 29.5 cents per gallon in July 2025.

Similarly, all hands were on deck preceding the 2023 passage of landmark transportation funding, the largest in the state’s history. AGCMO played a

pivotal role in supporting approval of the historic \$2.8 billion to rebuild and expand I- 70, \$64 million for low volume and minor roads and \$20 million for an I-44 Environmental Impact Study.

Funds for the AGCMO PAC were wholly supported by a large PAC auction, first scheduled in 1986 and subsequently held annually. Around the same time, AGC of St. Louis also established a PAC, supporting it through individual contributions, an annual golf tournament and Sporting Clays events. In 2005, AGC of St. Louis created an annual AGC of St. Louis Club membership to supplement PAC funding. Tied to the current year, annual club dues for 2005 were \$2,005, with 50 percent of the proceeds going to support the PAC. After the merger of AGCMO and AGC of St. Louis was completed in 2015, the two PACs were combined. Jack Atterberry also retired that same year.

Today the AGCMO PAC is funded by an annual PAC auction, golf tournament, individual contributions and other events throughout the year. AGCMO members currently give \$2,025 annually, with 50 percent going to support the PAC and 50 percent allocated as a charitable donation to support scholarships within the AGCMO Education Foundation.

“The Club was a mechanism to try and get consistent, sustainable funding for the PAC instead of continually asking individual members to fund our efforts,” said Barta. “The Club membership established a one-time, annual line item that contractors could plan for and put in their budget.”

Denise Hasty, retired vice president, advocacy and public relations, joined the AGC of St. Louis staff in Jan. 2005 from the St. Louis Regional Chamber & Growth Association, when the AGC of St. Louis board made the concerted decision to significantly change its approach to advocacy. Under her leadership, the AGC of St. Louis published its first legislative agenda, outlining its legislative priorities each session. She spearheaded the first legislative day in 2006, now an annual event when members visit Jefferson City to meet and talk with legislators about trending issues. Work-

“From the earliest days, we tried to be very strategic, supporting both sides of the aisle.”

ing with Chip Jones of Emery Sapp & Sons, Ed Twehous of Twehous Excavating Co., Inc. and Sean Thouvenot of Branco Enterprises, Inc., among others, served on the newly invigorated AGCMO GAP (Governmental Affairs Policy) Committee; the group initiated Contractors Speak Up Days where contractors walk the halls of the capitol building in safety vests to meet and build relationships with their home district legislators.

“After the merger, we felt we had a really strong statewide voice,” said Twehous. “With more than 500 members in 110 counties, we were able to speak with a single voice. Legislators wanted to hear what we had to say. “I loved working with Denise,” he added. “In the early days, we used to invite a dozen or so legislators in for dinner. When Denise added Legislative Day and Contractor Speak Up Days, we went to them in their offices to share our views and speak up when we had concerns. Denise had some very large shoes to fill and she did a fantastic job. She was able to gather together a bunch of contractors and always make us look good.”

One of the driving forces behind the merger of the AGC of St. Louis and the AGC of Missouri was advocacy. Prior to the merger, both chapters had strong advocacy programs. The strength of the post-merger AGCMO was far greater than the individual efforts of both chapters; the impact of representing contractors and industry suppliers from 110 counties across Missouri really resonated within the capitol. Since the merger, members have stepped up their game with a deeper sense of ownership and participation in the advocacy program. PAC fundraising is up substantially. According to AGCMO, PAC auction proceeds have exceeded \$70,000 annually for six of the past seven years.

According to Maureen McDonnell, AGCMO’s current vice president of advocacy, the 2025 legislative day on Jan. 29 was a great success, with 30 active participants. Six Contractors Speak Up Days are scheduled for the 2025 Winter/Spring legislative session and McDonnell anticipates more “home runs” for AGCMO’s industry advocates. Top 2025 issues include Missouri 811 reform legislation, post-secondary training and education and protecting transportation funding.

Thouvenot, a former AGCMO chairman of the board, echoes McDonnell’s enthusiasm for the grassroots effort. Thouvenot says his home district legislator, Missouri State Senator Curtis Trent (R-District 20), who serves as Assistant Majority Floor Leader, recently said, “We appreciate your involvement. If something is going to get done in your industry, you guys make it happen. You have one of the best, most effective, advocacy programs in the state.”

Thouvenot, who currently chairs the GAP Committee, says he’s hopeful that the Missouri 811 legislation will pass this session. Missouri’s 811 statutes were first enacted 50 years ago and have served and protected Missourians well since inception. AGCMO is committed to enacting reforms to the “Underground Facility Safety and Damage Prevention Act” that will increase public safety and reduce waste within the system.



“After the merger, we felt we had a really strong statewide voice. With more than 500 members in 110 counties, we were able to speak with a single voice.”





AGCMO: Board Leadership Continues into 2025 and Beyond

As I look back and reflect on 2024 as chairman of the Associated General Contractors of Missouri, I cannot help but to be thankful for the rest of the board of directors and the AGCMO staff. Its commitment to the AGC and our members is simply unparalleled.

We ended 2023 under the leadership of Tom Huster (president at KCI Construction Company), with the development of a new strategic plan. We began 2024 with a new plan with goals centered around workforce, connections, advocacy, providing information and leadership. As with any goal, goal champion assignments were taken up by staff. As the AGCMO board met throughout the year, strategies to implement the plan were presented, required action steps were developed and a progress report was given for each goal. I will always be impressed by the AGCMO staff's willingness to take on new challenges and a new strategic plan that is no little endeavor.

As with any strategic plan, we began with the previous three-year plan and addressed areas we believed needed continued - or in some cases, a new focused effort. I am particularly proud of the efforts AGCMO has made on our workforce issues with the Build My Future events around the state. I believe we have only begun to catch a glimpse of the impact these events will have on our industry. The amount of exposure gained from these events and the communication as to what our industry does, I

believe, is unprecedented. As these young people begin to think about their careers, they are finding that our industry has innumerable career paths to offer.

The AGCMO is one of the best places for companies and individuals in our industry to network and learn. We continue to strive to develop, enhance and promote programs, services and events that will draw and engage our members. Record attendance at many of our events is a testament to the desire of the many professionals in our industry to network and learn. Your time and resources are valuable commodities. The AGCMO recognizes this and puts much thought and effort into planning events that offer great return to those involved.

In a fast-paced, ever-changing political and regulatory landscape, it is necessary for the AGC to be the most powerful voice in the construction industry. Our strategy around advocacy centers around our Government Affairs Policy Committee. These member volunteers draw upon their collective knowledge to influence legislation and regulations. I am very thankful for the effort that they put into every year's legislative session. In addition, with assistance from the board of directors, the division boards and other committees, our association leads the effort in developing strategic relationships with state agencies and other associations that have similar interests as the AGC.

When discussing advocacy, I would be remiss if I didn't mention AGCMO's and the AGC of America's political action committees. Our membership's financial support of these PACs is crucial to our advocacy efforts. I want to personally thank those companies and individuals who make a financial contribution to these PACs year after year. The AGC could not have the voice that it does without this support. I strongly encourage anyone not contributing to learn more about what is being done on your behalf. You will find that the AGC PACs are a great investment of your resources.

I want to thank our membership for the opportunity to serve as your 2024 AGCMO board chairman. I will always be humbled by the collective trust that the membership puts into the various boards, committees and staff at the AGCMO. We have a staff like no other. It has been a pleasure to work with each of these individuals throughout my involvement with the association. They are committed professionals doing the hard work every day for our membership. I cannot express my appreciation enough.

On a final note, I'd like to wish the best to our incoming Chairman, Mike Rallo, Jr. Mike is serving the AGCMO well as its 2025 board chairman. I'm sure Mike will find the opportunity every bit as rewarding and humbling as I did. Once again, thank you for a great 2024.

“ In a fast-paced, ever-changing political and regulatory landscape, it is necessary for the AGC to be the most powerful voice in the construction industry.



How I Got into the Construction Industry as a Woman: Thriving in a Predominantly Male Field

The construction industry, traditionally dominated by men, is not a space where one might expect a woman to thrive. However, my journey into this field is a testament to how passion, persistence and the support of family can break down barriers and turn challenges into triumphs.

As a woman in the construction business, I've faced many hurdles, yet I have grown to not only embrace the challenges but thrive within them. My journey into construction began as a natural extension of my family business. And despite the industry's predominantly male presence, I've learned to navigate and love the work I do.

Growing up, I was always surrounded by the buzz of construction sites and the hard work that goes into creating infrastructure. My father and grandfather both worked in construction, and the family business was something I became accustomed to from a very young age. It was not just a career for them; it was a way of life. From the moment I could understand what they did, I was fascinated by the idea of turning nothing into something. However, as much as I admired what my father did, I never imagined that I, too, would become a part of the industry.

In my family, there was never an expectation that I would follow the traditional route or choose a different career path because of my gender. What began as summer and after-school office work turned into a full-time job. As I worked more closely with the business, I began to realize that I wasn't just observing; I was becoming a part of a legacy. Even though I didn't fit the typical mold of a contractor, I felt deeply connected to the work and to the men who had made it their life's passion.

As much as I felt at home in the industry, there were many challenges that came with being one of the few women in the business. For starters, there was the obvious issue of physical expectations. Construction projects require a great deal of physical labor, and it was obvious that I could not literally carry the same load as my male counterparts. In the early stages of my career, these doubts were hard to ignore because I was certainly aware of my limitations. Physically there was no comparison. I could not physically do the work of my male counterparts.

In addition to physical challenges, there was also the societal aspect. The construction industry, like many other fields, was traditionally a male-dominated space. Walking onto jobsites, I was frequently the only woman in a sea of men, and this often made me feel like an outsider. It's not easy to walk into a room or a construction site and be the only woman. I encountered men who doubted my ability or underestimated my skills. I also, however, encountered men who treated me with respect and valued my contribution. They are mentors and friends.

During 25 years of working in construction, I have leaned into my family's legacy, focusing on the knowledge and skills I had learned over the years. Instead of allowing doubt to creep in, I used it as fuel to prove that although quite different from my male counterparts, there were contributions I could offer in the industry.

The more I worked in construction, the more I learned – not just about the technical aspects, but also about leadership and negotiation. I gained a deeper understanding of how different pieces of the construction puzzle fit together and how vital it was

to communicate effectively with everyone involved, from laborers to clients to suppliers.

What I came to realize was that, being a woman in this industry, I could bring something unique to the table. My experiences navigating a male-dominated environment allowed me to become a better leader, someone who was empathetic but also tough when needed. I wasn't just learning how to be a better contractor; I was learning how to build relationships and foster a positive work environment.

Reflecting on my journey, I can honestly say that getting into the construction industry as a woman was one of the best decisions I ever made. It has not been without its challenges, but those challenges have shaped me into a stronger, more resilient individual. What started as a way to stay connected to my father's business has evolved into a career. Today, I am proud to be a part of an industry that is increasingly opening its doors to women and diversifying in ways that would have seemed impossible when I first started.

I am incredibly grateful for the lessons, experiences and growth that this field has provided me. What I once saw as a challenge is now my greatest achievement, and I couldn't imagine being anywhere else.

I am sincerely grateful for the opportunity my father, Dean Hartman has given to me. Without him, I would not have considered a career in construction.

Our company's membership in the AGC of Missouri continues to be a valuable component in my career and in the careers of those with whom I work. The resources, training and support that comes with being a member of this organization cannot be measured.

Building a Future Workforce

BY BARBARA PIERCE

Ask any contractor to name his or her biggest challenge and it's bound to be workforce. The construction industry, like so many U.S. industries, is faced with a retiring skilled workforce, changing demographics, rapidly evolving technologies and a supply chain altered by a worldwide epidemic.

In other words, it's no longer business as usual.

The difference between construction and some other industries is that the construction industry saw it coming. Contractors knew a well-trained, skilled workforce was needed to build for America. In every survey, at every convention and on every jobsite, contractors talked about the looming demographic issues. Task forces were formed, projections were made and best practices were

shared. From recruiting and training a nontraditional workforce to mentoring MBE/WBE firms, Missouri's AGC contractors anticipated the challenges ahead and managed to take on the challenge by developing innovative solutions and collaborating with other stakeholders to recruit, train and retain skilled workers. But their work is never done.

In 1964, AGC of St. Louis set the standard for workforce training when it built a Construction Training School (CTS), the first multi-craft apprenticeship and training facility in the country. Working with local labor organizations, AGC worked with joint labor/management apprenticeship programs to train carpenters, ironworkers, cement masons and operating engineers in its new CTS at 6301 Knox Avenue in St. Louis. As the program expanded, they added Laborers and Teamsters training and an annex.

In 2001, as the city was looking for more vocational training, AGC of St. Louis opened the Construction Careers Center charter high school at 1224 Grat-tan Street near Lafayette Square. The first charter high school in the nation dedicated 100 percent to construction, the CCC was chartered through St. Louis Public Schools and supported by the AGC of St. Louis Education Foundation. Terry Eivins, AGC of St. Louis' vice president for professional development, oversaw operations of the school where enrollment averaged about 200 students and even reached as high as 434 one year. The school also had a very successful basketball team which brought together students, parents and the local community.

"We operated under the guidance of the Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education," said Eivins. "Gwen Crimm did a wonderful job as placement coordinator, working with the families and helping students get jobs. Lori Sommer, tech prep coordinator, was a great help, as were our Teach for America teachers." Eivins was grateful for the hands-on support of Rick Grebel, Kloster Company, Inc., who served as AGC of St. Louis president in 1994, and Joe Kaiser, BSI Constructors, Inc., representing the Education Foundation.





The school ultimately closed in 2015 due to declining enrollment and available training elsewhere. The CCC was eventually sold to South City Prep which was looking for more space for a middle and high school.

Outreach to the minority community and supporting M/W/DBE companies has been a high priority in building the construction workforce for decades. In August 2003, the St. Louis region's public transit provider, Metro, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MOKAN to formalize an agreement to address collectively critical issues facing the minority contractor community. In March 2004, AGC of St. Louis was part of the Regional Economic Review Council as it was convened by Metro in partnership with the St. Louis Minority Business Council and the St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative. In total, stakeholders from 21 organizations in the St. Louis metropolitan and Metro East communities participated in this process to develop a common agenda that would make diversity a business imperative in the region's construction industries.

Out of this collaboration AGC of St. Louis became a founding member of ACCESS - the Association for Construction Careers, Education and Support Services. The vision for ACCESS was to make diversity a business imperative in the St. Louis and Metro East construction industries while ERC used data collection, policy analysis, education and advocacy to engage in agenda setting and oversight activities that monitor, measure and improve minority workforce and business development across the region.

Today, AGCMO and its vice president of diversity and inclusion, Terron White, continue to lead the industry in supporting and encouraging M/W/DBE participation in the construction industry. Through collaboration and amplified resources, AGCMO works to build minority participation on projects throughout the state. A robust Diversity & Inclusion Committee provides multiple opportunities throughout the year for contractor interaction. In March, the committee held its first DEI Conference at St. Louis University.

Ongoing, AGCMO works closely with MoDOT and other city, county and state departments to encourage and support fair bidding practices and inclusion for M/W/DBE contractors and suppliers.

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The BUD (Building Union Diversity) Program, started in late 2013 by the St. Louis Building and Construction Trades, has been renamed the Construction Apprentice Ready Program and is now part of the Missouri Works Initiative as another important piece of the workforce puzzle. A nonprofit supported by the Missouri AFL-CIO, the Missouri Works Initiative's mission is strategically positioned to address the state's changing workforce needs - whether those needs are creating healthy and recovery friendly workplaces, connecting laid off workers with job-search or upskilling resources for future employment or collaborating with community partners to offer innovative points of entry to traditional apprenticeship opportunities.

The Missouri Works Initiative's Apprentice Ready Construction programs introduce, train and connect people to a high-paying, rewarding career in the construction trades. This five- to six-week construction pre-apprenticeship initiative offers an industry-recognized entry point into the trades for traditionally underrepresented groups, creating a more skilled, equitable and diverse workforce. John Gaal, director of worker wellness for the Missouri Works Initiative, helped create the BUD program and currently teaches enrollees about mental health, opioid abuse and suicide prevention.

"Enrollees submit an online application and then go through a five- to six-week program that includes more than two weeks of classroom work based on the national MC3 (Multi-Craft Core Curriculum) where they learn about safety, tools, math and soft skills," said Gaal. "They then spend the last few weeks visiting various training facilities, such as the Operating Engineers' facility in Silex and the Laborers' training center in High Hill. There they meet workers and experience activities that demonstrate what it's like to actually work in the trades. AGCMO and its member contractors offer a welcoming environment and classroom space at the CTS, providing encouragement and assistance to program graduates as they interview and go on to enter apprenticeship programs."

There are basically one of two ways to enter the trades, says Gaal.

"Some trades have a system whereby, between the contractors and union, they project upcoming work and determine the number of apprentices they will accept," he said. "The second pathway, usually involving the Carpenters and Laborers, is for the soon-to-be BUD (now ARC) graduates to secure a Letter of Intent to hire from a contractor. That's where AGCMO comes in. AGCMO has been an integral part of the BUD (now ARC) program since its inception. Without contractors willing to hire these graduates, we'd just be another training program. The beauty of this initiative is that when we do the training, we do it so individuals can secure themselves in a living wage career. Our success is determined by how many of them enter registered apprenticeships. There is a symbiotic relationship between the trade unions and the contractors," he added.

Gaal says program cohorts can range anywhere from 10 to 20 participants, but 15 to 18 is the sweet spot for ideal class size. "We just completed our 36th cohort (or class) in St. Louis, and we've now expanded to Kansas City, Springfield and Columbia, Mo.," he said.

An additional way contractors reach young people (and yet another first) came in Oct. 2021 when AGCMO mounted its Build My Future one-day event for high school students at Three Rivers College in Sikeston, Mo., followed by another BMF the next week at the Jefferson City Fairgrounds. Based on the success of these two venues and word-of-mouth within the education community, in 2022 AGCMO expanded the program by adding BMFs in Macon and St. Louis, Mo. In 2024 AGCMO added a fifth BMF location in Bethany in northwest Missouri. BMF events are designed to introduce high school students to the construction industry and its varied and well-paying career opportunities, while also offering a fun day away from the classroom. The interactive showcase format

averages anywhere from 700 to 1,500 students at each location and attracted more than 2,100 at one program. After disembarking from their buses, the students start their day by grabbing a colorful t-shirt, safety glasses and backpack, listening to a safety talk, then enjoying hands-on activities and equipment exhibits.

Teachers and administrators from across the state are grateful for the opportunities BMF creates for their students. Kristin Eidson, a JAG (Jobs for America's Graduates) specialist with Horizons Camdenton, said, "I just wanted to let you know what an incredible experience my students had today at the Build my Future event. There were so many hands-on experiences and my students truly loved the day. Thank you for organizing this and making it worthwhile for the kids. We look forward to coming again next year."

Whether it is introducing more than 11,000 Missouri students to the trades each year through BMF events or providing space and support for hundreds of BUD Program graduates to enter apprenticeships, AGCMO strives to stand at the forefront of workforce development. Since 1998, AGCMO has provided a record-breaking \$411,000 in industry scholarships and supported six college/university student chapters at Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO), Missouri S&T (Rolla), State Tech (Linn), University of Missouri (Columbia), Missouri Western State University (St. Joseph) and Washington University in St. Louis. AGCMO also partners with the Wake Foundation on veteran job training at Three Rivers College in Poplar Bluff, Mo. At the other end of the age spectrum, in 2023, AGCMO started a reading program for pre-kindergarten through second grade students to introduce the industry to youngsters.

In 2022, AGCMO created another industry first when a small cadre of women formed Women of STEEL (Seeking To Engage, Elevate, Lead), an organization designed to help female workers in the construction industry find work/life balance, make connections and build "career scaffolding" to find successful career paths in the construction industry. The group recently concluded its third-annual conference in Lake Ozark, Mo., with more than 80 participants.

"I can't rave enough about this conference and the hard work that is put into it shows," said Melissa Collins, Branco Enterprises, Inc. "It was a great experience all around," added Kelly Kampeter, DeLong's, Inc.

Training today's workforce and attracting tomorrow's workers continues to drive the work of AGCMO. Through its participation in Joint Apprenticeship Committees, AGC helps train carpenters, cement masons, iron workers, laborers and operating engineers. It offers training and certifications for OSHA and superintendents. Hundreds of in-person and on-line classes are also available to help construction professionals gain and hone new skill sets. One such example is the AGCMO Architecture, Engineering, Construction Technology Conference (AECTech Con) scheduled on May 7 and 8, 2025 at the St. Charles Convention Center. The two-day, multi-track conference is designed to help A/E/C/O professionals innovate construction technology solutions to address current and emerging issues in the industry.

Asked about how workforce challenges have changed over the years, Eivins said, "It's always been about finding good people. What has changed is that today the trades are held in higher esteem and the cost of college has escalated. The general contractors have done a lot of work to get the word out and opinions have shifted about careers in the trades. Also, today there are many more career paths which may involve some college. Some colleges are now offering credits for apprenticeship programs. People are realizing that we have to develop a person's hands as well as his or her brain in order for that individual to be successful. And technology is changing the way everyone works."

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AGCMO Members Serve to Advance Career Opportunities for Young Professionals

BY **KERRY SMITH BUCK**



Any successful company, organization and industry contains a crucial ingredient: current and future young professional leaders.

So does the construction industry. A pillar of both the AGC of America and AGC of Missouri is creating opportunities for emerging professionals to lead as they grow their construction careers.

To that end, the Construction Leadership Council - previously known as the Young Constructors Forum - is a subcommittee of the national AGC that is committed to providing a forum in which members can network, exchange ideas and promote both personal and professional development. It exists on both the local and national level.

The CLC's purpose is to provide an open forum for exchanging ideas and to serve as an entry vehicle into AGCMO activities and promote new member involvement. Fostering a strong peer network is also among its objectives, as is discussing important issues and sharing feedback with AGCMO leaders. Perhaps the council's greatest goal is to create leadership opportunities through which to develop future AGCMO leaders.

AGCMO has an active CLC in place. In the mid-1990s, when the council was in its infancy regionally, Julie Cusumano Ledbetter and Rich Ledbetter were among a small but enthusiastic group of young professionals who led the way.

Julie Cusumano Ledbetter and Rich Ledbetter, among others, are well familiar with the roots of the YCF, now CLC. Cusumano was an early-twenties business owner, head of Castle Contracting (which 20 years later was acquired by McCarthy Holdings). Ledbetter had just joined Guarantee Electrical, his family's business, after a short career in teaching. "In 1999, the AGC of Missouri asked me to be its first Young Constructors Forum chair," Julie remembers. "I also had the privilege of being among a group that launched the national YCF (now CLC). As a young woman in the industry, my company benefitted greatly, as did I, from the people I met and their willingness to support me."

Just a year or so earlier, both Cusumano and Ledbetter benefited in another

“ I also had the privilege of being among a group that launched the national YCF (now CLC). As a young woman in the industry, my company benefitted greatly, as did I, from the people I met and their willingness to support me.

way, thanks to the AGC. Rich's dad introduced him to Julie one evening, just hours after a huge AGCMO meeting at St. Louis Lambert International Airport during which then airport director Col. Leonard Griggs unveiled plans for construction of the 9,000-foot, W1-W runway. Julie's company, Castle Contracting, was a project partner and did work for Guarantee Electrical at the time. Cusumano spoke on the panel at this event. Ledbetter set his sights on getting to know her better. The rest, as they say, is history.

That early corps of young construction industry leaders creatively decided to build a float for the Soulard Mardi Gras Parade. Ledbetter recalls other

“The purpose of the CLC is to act as a conduit for participants to network, exchange ideas about work and the industry, serve local communities and provide continuing education.

active young professionals who served the AGC, including Pat Murphy, Jr., Eric Kirberg, Tom Taylor and Eliza Southern. “We got all dressed up and bought a tractor trailer,” said Ledbetter. “We definitely generated awareness for the AGC.”

Rich and Julie credit others who were also young leaders in the St. Louis construction industry back then - such as Dirk Elsperman, Tracy Hart and Renee Bell - for their service which undoubtedly inspired others who were just embarking on their careers.

Fast forward to today.

Katey Twehous, director of marketing and technology at Jefferson City, Mo.-based Twehous Excavating Company, is currently serving year two of a three-year term on the AGC of America’s Construction Leadership Council Steering Committee. The CLC was established to fulfill the need to cultivate the next generation of leaders in the construction industry as well as the association, both at the local and national levels.

The purpose of the CLC, according to Twehous, is to act as a conduit

for participants to network, exchange ideas about work and the industry, serve local communities and continuing education which includes both professional development and leadership skills.

Twehous says that the national CLC has ties with AGCMO’s Young Executives Club, an opportunity available to men or women under the age of 40 who are company principals or have been identified as future company leaders.

“The individuals who founded the Young Executives Club also launched CLC on the national level,” said Twehous. “Both groups have their roots in education and workforce development. I’m honored to represent AGCMO as a member of the CLC...it’s a really engaged group. Everyone is an active participant.” As part of her duties as a national CLC rep, Twehous reviews CLC scholarship applications, hosts or co-hosts virtual town hall meetings and contribute to the CLC’s major presence at the AGC of America annual convention. “We develop sessions for students on construction industry best practices, social events such as a scavenger hunt and other initiatives to include, educate and motivate future construction leaders.”

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