



Flood Diversion Could Start Construction Soon

The Fargo-Moorhead Flood Diversion project could begin construction this fall now that a partnership agreement has been signed by local authorities and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project involves construction of a 36-mile channel and is expected to reduce the flood risk for 225,000 people. It will take about six to eight years to complete, involve construction in North Dakota and Minnesota, and to cost approximately \$2.1 billion. Work on the Minnesota side of the project is likely to begin in 2019.

5th Annual Construction Industry Open House - October 14

“The Future Is Here”

Meet with FCF staff during the Construction Industry Open House on Friday, Oct. 14 at the Construction Laborers Training Center located at 2350 Main Street in Lino Lakes, MN. The event, sponsored by Minnesota Laborers - Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (LECET), will be held from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. A series of short seminars covering hot topics in the construction industry will be available and lunch will be provided. The event is open to all public officials and construction industry stakeholders. Please RSVP by calling the Laborers Training Center at 651-653-6710.



Fair Contracting Foundation

353 W. 7th Street, Suite 204
St. Paul, MN 55102
www.fcfn.org

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Construction began in April on the Bell Museum + Planetarium. The \$79.2 million complex is located near the Minnesota State fairgrounds and is set to open the summer of 2018. Credit: University of Minnesota

Responsible Minnesota

At the end of June www.responsiblemn.org went live! This website is provided as a public service and is intended to provide an educational overview of Minnesota’s Responsible Contractor Law and specific information concerning contractors who do not meet the law’s minimum criteria. It contains useful information on the law and what it requires from contractors and project owners.



The greatest interest, however, is the list of contractors who do not meet the law’s minimum criteria. Contractors listed on the website are accompanied by the public records documenting their ineligibility. FCF urges all project owners, contractors, and trades to review and promote the use of this website. The Responsible Contractor Law is only effective when those involved in the industry are aware of the law and aware of contractors who are not eligible for public work under the law. The website also contains a form that the public can use to provide information concerning potential omissions or errors.



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Apprenticeships

Since 1939, more than 110,000 apprentices have been registered in Minnesota. Recently, the state has made an effort to grow the ranks of registered apprentices. A year ago, Minnesota was awarded a \$5 million grant through the U.S. Department of Labor as part of its American Apprenticeship Initiative. During the next five years, Minnesota will enlist more than 100 employers in 30 new occupations to recruit, train and retain more than 1,000 new apprentices.

But it's more than simply increasing the number of apprentices; the state has also focused on increasing apprentice diversity. In June of this year, there were 11,297 registered apprentices in Minnesota. Of those, 20 percent identified as an ethnic or racial minority, 7 percent identified as female and 5 percent identified as veterans. Between 2011 and 2015, the number of apprentices grew by 59 percent, with a 10 percent increase in the number of minority and female apprentices. This is a testament to the use of this proven workforce development tool and to supply apprenticeable occupations with the skilled workers they need. Congratulations to the trades and their contractors for this impressive progress.



"I don't care if they are cheaper...we're not using them!"

Scaffolding: Sticks or Safety? Protect our standards.



Kumbhalgarh, India. Credit: Mike Wilde

Laborers Training Center
in Lino Lakes, MN.
Credit: Rachel Nelson

Big-D Construction

At FCF we're well aware of contractors who try to cut corners with substandard labor, but some contractors cut corners with materials as well. Big-D Construction recently made headlines when a developer removed them as general contractor on a Golden Valley, MN, apartment project. Construction on multiple projects was halted when it was determined that some of the wood used in various projects may not meet fire code. Big-D Construction has stated that the use of substandard lumber was unintentional. The substandard lumber in four affected projects was apparently installed by subcontractor JL Schwieters and was purchased from Illinois based Chicago Fireproof.

2016 Minnesota State Prevailing Wage Certifications *Don't leave it to fate; check your rate.*

It's almost that time again. Look for the Highway/Heavy prevailing wage rates to be published in October 2016 and Commercial rates in late December. To receive an email reminder, subscribe to the MnDLI notices-and-reminders email list at www.dli.mn.gov/EmailLists.asp and click on subscribe/unsubscribe under prevailing wage. FCF will summarize and analyze the data shortly after rates are certified and will make that data available to you upon request. Contact Gary at FCF if you have questions related to your published rates. Checking the rates in a timely manner for accuracy is an important service that benefits both union members and contractors. Check www.dli.mn.gov/LS/PrevWage.asp for survey results.

Federal Building Survey Recap

The Federal Davis Bacon Survey for Building Construction was completed on March 31, 2016. Minnesota had outstanding results with 13,125 surveys submitted. This translates into approximately 40,000 workers. Needless to say, the staff at DOL was impressed with your efforts. To compare, Ohio had 9,000 surveys and they have **twice** the population. Look for the certified federal building rates to be published toward the end of 2017.

Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights Developer and General Contractor Training

On July 8 the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights held a Developer and General Contractor training event. The event focused on educating developers and contractors about requirements on projects owned or funded by the City of Minneapolis. FCF gave a presentation covering prevailing wage issues, independent contractor misclassification, and the Minnesota Responsible Contractor Law. FCF sends a thank you to the City of Minneapolis for the opportunity to present at this event and to also learn more about the various requirements that apply to Minneapolis projects, including the city's own recently adopted Responsible Contractor policy.

Town Hall Wrap-Up

The highlight of FCF's summer was hosting our annual session at the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council Convention. On July 27 we were fortunate to have about 50 representatives attend from 14 trade unions. More so than ever before, FCF was seeking open discussion in a town hall forum. Veteran and rookie agents from all six of the task forces shared ideas, questions and experiences in their daily effort to maintain construction standards.

We discussed the RCL, public school construction, investigation delays at government agencies, surveys, H2B visas and more. The energy in the room was strong and collective experiences created very good discussion. So it's probably true: *Experience is the teacher of all things.*

Feel free to contact us with your training ideas. We look forward to learning more together.

Our Mission

The Fair Contracting Foundation promotes prevailing wage law education, compliance and enforcement. It advocates for practices, policies and laws that ensure fair government contracts, a strong local industry and protection of the public interest. We're here to help. Give us a call at 651-797-2726.