

Minnesota Resident Jessica Looman Secures White House Nomination

It's Not Just Where You Came From ...

"Last year, I came to the Wage and Hour Division after two years as the Executive Director of the Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council, which represents over 70,000 union construction workers."

But What You Stand For

"Because building trades workers work when their construction contractor employers have projects, it is critical that labor and management partner together to advocate for infrastructure investment, to ensure the safety of construction workers, and to expand diversity and inclusion in the industry."

Congratulations to our friend Jessica Looman in her pending nomination process for the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the US Department of Labor. And thank you for bringing Minnesota's vision and work ethic to the National level.



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 or toll-free at 1-844-777-0606.

Minnesota State Highway/ Heavy Wage Rates

New Highway/Heavy Prevailing Wage rates should be published sometime in the Oct/Nov 2022 time frame. Please check these rates as soon as they are published and contact MnDLI or FCF if you have questions.

To check the wage rates go to: <https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/prevailing-wage-information> and scroll down. You have 30 days from the date of publication to identify possible errors.

To receive e-mail notification when new rates are published or changed, go to:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDLI/subscriber/new?topic_id=MNDLI_168

You will be asked to enter your email address and then select the prevailing wage preference to be notified when rates change. Commercial rates should be published in December 2022.



Photos: FCF-Vince Muzik

Construction on new Hwy 14 just north of Courtland, MN.

Federal Prevailing Wage Rates (Davis-Bacon Wage Rates)

Anyone involved in federal projects should be familiar with the wage determinations published online. Those wage rates can be found at:

<https://sam.gov/content/home>

Look for "wage determinations" on the webpage to continue to lookup the rates.

Please check the wage determinations for Building, Highway, Heavy and residential federal-prevailing-wage rates. Keep in mind that the federal highway rates should match the Minnesota state highway prevailing wage rates while all others were determined by a federal survey.

Call FCF if you have any questions.



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A wind turbine under construction by M.A. Mortenson, one of 125 built this summer on the Northern Wind Project, near Woodstock, MN



Minnesota now gets the bulk of its electricity from renewable sources, including wind power. In 2021, renewable sources accounted for 29% of the state's electrical generation, compared to 26% for coal, 24% for nuclear, and 21% for natural gas. A recent report predicts the Minnesota renewable energy industry will grow by more than \$6 billion during the next 10 years.

Photos: FCF-Vince Muzik



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IRA Amplifies Renewable Energy Funding and Labor Standards

On Aug. 16, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Action (IRA), creating historic investments in renewable energy development while attaching strict labor standards that ensure these investments create high-quality union jobs. The bill authorizes \$370 billion in incentives to individual consumers, businesses, and energy utilities.

The IRA extends wind, solar, and biomass tax credits for 10 years, providing financial stability to the industry, which traditionally faces annual debates over renewing or extending such credits. And these investments will prioritize projects that require the payment of prevailing wages and hiring registered apprentices, leveling the playing field between contractors, ensuring adequate worker training, and avoiding the disastrous race-to-the-bottom business practices that can plague renewable projects.

These investments will supercharge Minnesota's renewable energy sector, which already provides the largest share of the state's power generation. A report by the Nature Conservancy estimates the IRA will spur more than \$6 billion in investment in Minnesota alone, creating 10,000 jobs every year for the next decade!

This is an historic opportunity for Minnesota's Building Trades unions and signatory contractors to play a leading role in building the energy infrastructure that will power the next century. Unfortunately, this bill did not receive unanimous support from our state's congressional delegation, casting a partisan pall over what should be a celebration for working families and the construction industry.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

On Nov. 15, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or IIJA, was signed into law. This law invests \$1.2 trillion into various aspects of our nation's infrastructure and represents one of the most significant investments in infrastructure in our history. The IIJA will provide opportunities for construction jobs for years to come through various funding streams.

The bill invests billions into several areas of infrastructure throughout the country, including:

- Roads, bridges, and major projects
- Passenger and freight rail
- Highway and pedestrian safety programs
- Public transit
- Broadband
- Ports and waterways
- Airports
- Water infrastructure
- Power and grid upgrades
- Cyber security, waste management, and disaster mitigation effort
- Low-emission and zero-carbon vehicles

Under the funding formulas in place, Minnesota is eligible to receive more than \$7 billion in funding for numerous types of infrastructure upgrades under the IIJA, assuming necessary matching funds are provided. There will also be opportunities for Minnesota to apply for additional grants for infrastructure investments. This commitment to infrastructure investment will not only improve the lives of all Minnesotans, but will continue to support good construction jobs in the state for years to come

FCF would like to thank the Minnesota Legislators who supported the passage of this law, Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, Representatives Angie Craig, Dean Phillips, and Betty McCollum.

Consider Construction Results When Voting

FCF is a non-profit agency. One of our General Purposes as spelled out in the Declaration of Trust Agreement is to "identify and expand work opportunities for workers and employers in the building construction and highway/heavy industry." So let's identify some of the important developments new in our construction industry.

- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act invests \$1.2 trillion in your work
- Federal Inflation Reduction Act bill passed bringing \$6 billion to Minnesota
- President Biden signed an Executive Order strongly favoring PLAs
- DOL advanced Davis-Bacon Rulemaking reversing harmful changes in the 1980's
- The American Rescue Plan passed which provides pension relief to some trades
- The former President of the Boston Building Trades Council, Marty Walsh, now leads the U.S. Department of Labor
- His acting administrator and soon-to-be Administrator is Jessica Looman
- Minnesota has expanded the Commerce Department's authority to investigate wage theft, which has gone unchecked in private construction
- Labor Lawyer Nicole Blissenbach temporarily leads MN Department of Labor & Industry

The list of positive developments could literally fill this entire newsletter. But we don't need to "identify" all work opportunities and advancements. Instead, we merely encourage you to answer this question when you go to the polls in October: Who supported the positive trends for working people ... and who opposed them?

Trades Summer Boot Camp Expands to Hinckley

Now in its third year, the South Central Construction Trades Boot Camp continues to give high school students a taste of working in the building trades. The hands-on experience the camp offered was enough for Truman High School junior Carter Gieske to get up at 6 a.m. and make a 40-minute one-way drive to Mankato West High School. "I am very glad I'm here because I think that I have gained a lot of experience that will be really helpful in the future that I think a lot of other people haven't had the chance to get," Gieske said.

The genesis of the camp came from the Construct Tomorrow Career Fair held for high school students in Mankato. "What we were hearing from the school counselors was that students loved the event. They got to see a couple different trades, but they were confused as to what the next steps might be," said Abby Flantz, Regional Career Coordinator at the South Central Workforce Council. "They wanted to have an event where students could dig a little deeper into the trades." The boot camp is modeled after the Minnesota Trades Academy program, a paid summer construction internship experience for selected Twin Cities area high school youth.

The camp spawned a similar camp, Operation Exploration, held at the Local 49 Operating Engineers' training facility in Hinckley. "I visited the boot camp in Mankato because they've been doing that for a couple years now, and we wanted to bring those opportunities to the youth that we serve in our rural area," explained Diana Ristamaki, Youth Program Manager for Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services. They marketed their camp to Native American high school students from the Mille Lacs Reservation.

Both programs rely on the building trades to put on the camps. They are involved in the planning process, scheduling what trades



Credit: FCF-Vince Muzik

will be there, project selection, and providing the materials to do it. More importantly, they bring the instruction, sharing their knowledge with the next generation. "All the trades did a fabulous job with the kids," added Ristamaki. "They were so engaging; it made it easier for the kids to learn."

While the camps can't fully replicate a job site environment, it did give Gieske a real world appraisal of the building construction trades: "The main thing I took from this is that this isn't a job where you can clock in, make 15 burgers and clock out. This is something that's going to be very demanding of you."



Scan the QR Code to watch a video highlighting the Summer Trades Boot Camps