

Rhodework Review

Spring 2022



Construction Industries of Rhode Island

President's Message

The need for new workers in this new era of infrastructure.



Michael D. D'Ambra
CIRI President

In the not so distant past, the term “infrastructure” had turned into a political buzzword of sorts – without much substantive progress on the national level. That has changed both quickly and dramatically.

One of the few national issues today that can garner bipartisan support, this shared enthusiasm has resulted in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). When you add this renewed national effort to the fully funded 10-year RhodeWorks plan already in midstream in Rhode Island, the result is the most infrastructure activity in our state's history.

We need workers. And we need them now.

The challenge of filling the recruitment pipeline to meet today's massive demands for heavy and highway construction is certainly one of the better ones to have. But it does require a serious ramp-up of our efforts to bring more people into the industry – by communicating the exceptional pay rates, benefits and long-term career possibilities we offer as a whole.

It's time to bring some younger people into the mix.

One of our key initiatives is the careers outreach video recently produced by CIRI. It is targeted to attract young people, from new high school graduates to 20-somethings who are looking to transition to employment with a more viable career path. The 7-minute video uses engaging first-person testimonials to tell prospective employees about the current boon in heavy/highway activity – what it's like to work in this inspired industry – and how they can get started at the entry level.

In the coming months, CIRI will be getting our “workers needed” message out via social media and other outreach channels. We invite any ideas and perspectives our members may have to help us extend and maximize this crucial effort.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. D'Ambra".

Michael D. D'Ambra

Welcome to
our new member.

Adamsdale Concrete

551 Weeden Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860



Putting heavy and highway construction on the radar early.

CIRI Careers Video targets new graduates and young workers.

For a young person in today's working world, it can be relatively easy to find a job. It's much harder to find a satisfying profession that can actually lead to a long-term career. Beyond that, taking on the massive cost and time-intensive effort needed for college is often out of the question. Plus, a degree in many fields is no guarantee of landing a job that can effectively help to pay off student loans.

The approximately 7-minute video recently produced by CIRI addresses these issues, while offering heavy and highway construction as a viable career option. Viewers get to hear what the industry is like via engaging statements from industry pros — and from apprentices whose lives have already been transformed by the experience.

A solid way to build a future.

With the volume of infrastructure projects at an all-time high, both locally and nationally, heavy and highway construction holds great promise. This is especially true for young, ambitious men and women who are looking for a great-paying job with excellent benefits — a pathway to build a stable long-term career — and a wealth of opportunities to continue learning, growing and moving up the ladder.

Earn while you learn. With no-cost training.

In the Southern New England region alone, there are 17 different trade apprenticeship programs that offer free pathways to get started quickly with no-cost training facilities and paid internships to gain on-the-job training. Pre-apprenticeship programs are also available through Building Futures Rhode Island, a non-profit organization that has already placed 300+ of its graduates in registered apprenticeship programs in the construction industry.

Good money from the get-go. Skills you will own for life.

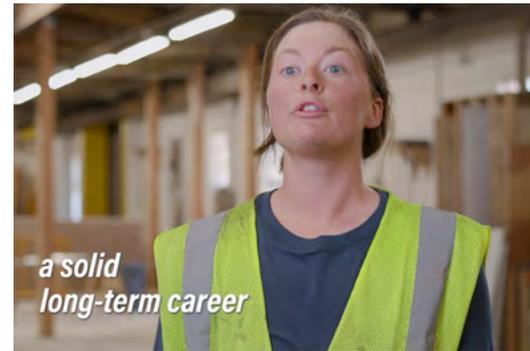
“This industry offers some of the best opportunities for young people to enter into a profession, and to begin making good money right from day one,” says Peter Alviti, Jr. PE, Director of RIDOT. “And there are plenty of opportunities beyond the entry level that will get you into management and other aspects of the construction industry that are available.”

To view the CIRI Careers Video:



Click on or scan the QR code.

Visit the Building Futures Rhode Island website at:
bfri.org



To inquire about apprenticeship opportunities:



CIRI spirit and resilience honored at Fall Dinner Meeting.

Governor Dan McKee and RIDOT Director Alviti were featured speakers at November 4 event.

In normal times, CIRI conducts biannual dinner meetings for its members to learn the latest about the state of the RI heavy and high-way construction industry — and to get a lookahead at what’s in store for the upcoming six months. Our 2021 Fall Dinner Meeting at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick marked the long-awaited return of this event, the first since the pandemic caused the cancellation of the prior three meetings beginning in the spring of 2020.



Dan McKee and Steve Cardi

The speaking program began with a welcome/introduction by Steve Cardi, outgoing CIRI president, who touched briefly on a few topics. These included the announcement of Mike D’Ambra as incoming president for a four-year term, a formal welcome to the newest member companies — along with

various initiatives and sponsorships including safety training and a holiday food drive for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

The event’s featured speakers were:

Dan McKee Governor of Rhode Island

While crediting the previous Raimondo administration for designating the construction trades as “essential workers” from the outset, Governor McKee began his address to the CIRI membership by honoring their continuous service to the state throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“You were all there during the pandemic and your workers did not retreat. For that long uncertain year, they were out there in the field,” said McKee, “which was a really important thing for the state of Rhode Island.”

The Governor also extended kudos to CIRI for the Question 4 bond referendum campaign, leading up to the March 2 special election, which helped to get passage of the \$71M Transportation Infrastructure State Match with over 80% voter approval. This authorized the state to borrow \$71 million to finance the Transportation Infrastructure State Match — which in turn

enabled Rhode Island to obtain an additional \$287 million in federal matching funds to make up for severe RI gas tax shortfalls caused by the pandemic.

“We did not miss a beat due to COVID,” said McKee, “moving into 2022 with a great record of success. The RI economy is ranked by Moody’s as the second fastest recovering economy in the entire country.”

The Governor also provided a glimpse at other non-construction initiatives underway, including efforts to increase airline activity coming into the state, and to improve RI’s ranking for friendliness to small business. He stressed the desire to respond to the multiple opportunities that directly affect our economy.

“Your work is a big part of that,” McKee concluded. “We want to make sure dialogue happens between our Governor’s Office and the business community. So please take advantage of that.”

Peter Alviti, Jr. P.E. RIDOT Director

Director Alviti of RiDOT also began by thanking CIRI and its members for their dedication and hard work despite the pandemic-related challenges since early 2020. This included the sheer amount of work that is getting done while executing the RhodeWorks 10-year plan,

(continued)



Peter Alviti, RIDOT Director

along with the aforementioned Question 4 advocacy effort. Alviti

then provided a synopsis of the RhodeWorks progress as it entered its sixth year.

“So far, we have overseen 254 projects together. 186 of them are already complete,” said Alviti. “We’ve pumped \$2.8 billion into Rhode Island’s economy. And we’ve created thousands of good paying jobs in the process. Not only in construction, but in design work, consulting, materials, manufacturing — and all the other support industries.”

Director Alviti then spoke to Governor McKee’s intent to continue the momentum and

trajectory of this effort to advance the state of our infrastructure and transportation assets.

“I’m really grateful to have a governor who understands the value of the work you all do in building our economy — and also what that means in terms of attracting businesses and allowing them to flourish here in Rhode Island.”

To view the most up-to-date infrastructure plans and news, visit the RhodeWorks section of the RIDOT website at:

www.dot.ri.gov/rhodeworks

Construction Career Days reinvention in the works.

New focus is on smaller, more hands-on events.

A program by CIRI and the Rhode Island Building & Construction Trades Council (RIBCTC) in collaboration with RIDOT, RI Construction Career Days enables the state’s high school students to learn about the construction industry firsthand. While participation rates have been high, these two-day events have not produced a substantial number of viable candidates for the heavy and highway construction industry.

“Up to now, many of the young people attending are students with little to no interest in entering the industry,” says Joe Caparco, New England Region apprentice coordinator for LIUNA. “Going forward, we’re looking to conduct

smaller events with a lot more hands-on involvement. We’ll also be working with the state’s school counselors to try to identify the students who will benefit most from an interactive experience.”

The current thinking is to set up a series of four events throughout the year, beginning as early as this Fall 2022. Some events could be geared toward particular affinity groups and/or possibly to coincide with wider national efforts.

“One idea is to hold a one-day event for women. Another is to schedule an event during National Apprenticeship Week,” Caparco concludes. “We’re looking at all options at this point. The idea is to plan out a RI Construction

Career Days series that becomes a consistent pipeline for attendees to connect with companies who are in need of new, young talent.”



Click image to download brochure

RIDOT April 30 quarterly report includes FFY22 lookahead.

Renewed emphasis on paving is a key factor going forward.

While providing status updates for the numerous projects that comprise the RhodeWorks program, the RIDOT April 30 quarterly report also outlines the agency's priorities for the construction season now underway.

In addition to the state's aggressive ongoing program for bridge rehabilitation and replacement, RIDOT is undertaking substantial pavement projects across RI — along with localized improvements to help mitigate traffic and enhance safety.

To view and/or download the full quarterly report document, visit the RhodeWorks homepage on the RIDOT website at:

www.dot.ri.gov/RhodeWorks



Some significant projects in motion:

I-95 Viaduct • Providence

Henderson Bridge • Providence & East Providence

Pell Bridge Ramps Project • Newport



Route 37 Corridor • Cranston

CIRI to offer free FMI training for project executives.

Survey coming soon to gauge interest among member companies.

CIRI has enlisted the services of the FMI Institute to conduct a series of jobsite management programs for companies serving the RI heavy and highway construction industry. Each CIRI member company will soon receive an email to determine its overall interest in the proposed



set of four topics/sessions, along with how many attendees it would look to send to each. All

sessions will be paid for by CIRI as a complimentary benefit for our members.

The FMI Institute program, a senior-level immersive experience, is designed to help executives operate efficiently and profitably over the long term — while also enhancing their acumen for strategic process improvement, financial controls, risk management and overall performance. The four sessions, each including FMI



Route 6/10 Reconstruction • Providence

experience-based Construction ProfitAbility™ simulations, are:

Process: Construction Project Process Improvement

Profitability: Driving Project and Company-Wide Profits

People: Purposeful Communication

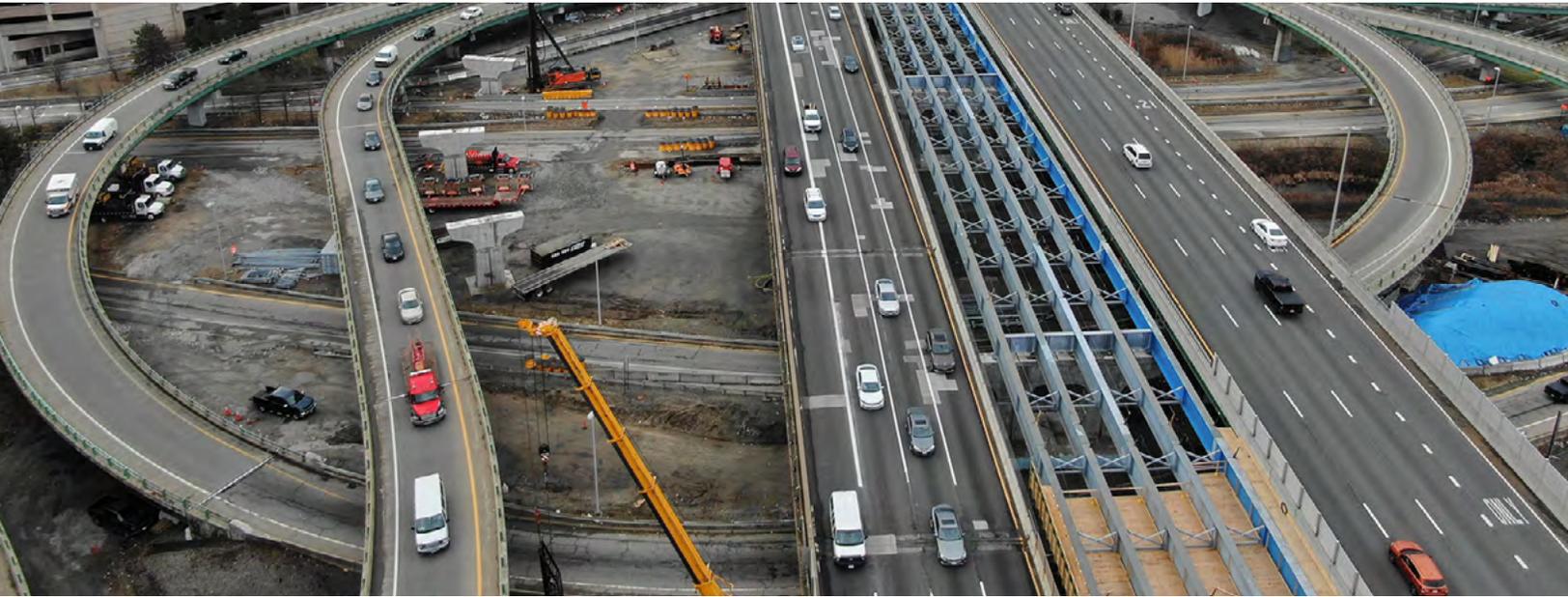
Productivity: Leadership and Performance

Keep an eye on your inbox for the survey email to come, in order to avail your company of this latest free CIRI member benefit.



Biden FY 2023 budget calls for full funding of IIJA programs.

RI forecasted to receive billions in funding across multiple modes.



Signed into law on November 15, 2021 by President Biden, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) — aka the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) — authorizes transportation and infrastructure spending of \$1.2 trillion, with \$550 billion of that earmarked for new investments and programs.

During his March 1 State of the Union address to Congress, President Biden said: “We’re done talking about infrastructure weeks. We’re now talking about an infrastructure decade. This was a bipartisan effort, and I want to thank the members of both parties who worked to make it happen.”

The single biggest investment in history to rebuild America, the Biden administration blueprint released on March 28 calls for spending levels that would

increase core highway and transit spending by 2% — the continuation of supplemental spending for highway, transit and airport capital construction — and continuation of the full set of investments at FY 2026 levels through FY 2032.

Included in the IIJA is the Buy America, Build America Act (BABA), which aims to prioritize and incentivize the usage of goods, products, materials and services that are made or provided for in the United States.

What’s in the IIJA/BIL for Rhode Island.

According to the IIJA state fact sheets released in November 2021 and updated this April 11, based on formula funding alone, Rhode Island is expected to receive approximate funding over the next five years in the amounts of:

- \$1.8 billion in federal highway and bridge funds — about 15.5% more than current highway formula funding on an average annual basis
- \$15 million in FAST Act formula funding to improve highway safety — about a 29% increase over current levels
- \$292 million to improve public transportation options across the state — representing about a 38% first-year increase over 2021 FAST Act transit funding levels
- \$23 million to support the expansion of an EV charging network. RI will also have the opportunity to apply for grants from the \$2.5 billion available for EV charging.
- \$45 million for airport infrastructure development

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An organization-wide call for support.

In anticipation of the new fiscal year beginning on October 1, the annual federal appropriations process is now underway. Final investment decisions will be negotiated by Congress and the administration in coming months, after hearings to lay out individual budget requests for each department, at which time legislators will begin crafting spending bills for FY 2023.

CIRI urges all our members to communicate their support for the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act to legislative leaders, among industry peers and associates, and within their respective companies.

For more information on the IJJA (aka BIL), visit the ARTBA website at: www.artba.org/economics/iija-impact

Do we have your current email address?



Our email addresses database is a valuable tool for keeping CIRI members apprised of the latest developments in our organization and across the industry at large. If you're new to CIRI, or your email address has changed recently, reach out to us with an update when you get a minute at: exec@ciri.net

Relentless advocates for heavy and highway construction:

Donate today to the CIRI PAC.



At the outset of 2021, the heavy and highway construction industry was facing a funding shortfall for key RhodeWorks projects across the state. This year, projects are coming to life everywhere you look. The new challenge is recruiting the workers needed to meet the intensive demand.

It's always something. That's why the year-round advocacy efforts of the CIRI Political Action Committee (PAC) are more crucial than ever. Prime examples of these multifaceted efforts include:

- The successful Question 4 awareness campaign in early 2021 to gain needed voter-approved funding

- The current aggressive outreach initiative to put our industry on the radar for young career-seekers
- The ongoing effort to keep our message front and center at the RI State House

Contributions to our PAC are crucial. And welcome year-round.

Please consider a personal contribution today for any amount you feel is appropriate.*

Simply mail it to:

CIRI Political Action Committee
615 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite 207
Warwick, RI 02886-1357

* **NOTE:** Rhode Island State Law prohibits the acceptance of any corporate or business checks for campaign contributions. Only personal checks are an acceptable form of contribution. Donations are not tax deductible and are limited to \$1,000.

CIRI safety program regrouping for fall/winter planning.

Key challenges include ongoing pandemic-related issues.

The unpredictability of COVID variants and surges, which now occur sporadically across all seasons, has been a perplexing problem for many educational and training programs. As the prime scheduling time for construction safety training sessions is during the less-busy winter season, the past two years have presented a particular challenge for the CIRI Safety Committee.



Peter Robbins, chairman of the CIRI Safety/EEO/Training Committee.

“We had five winter courses ready to go this year, and plenty of people signing up,” says Peter Robbins, director of safety for D’Ambra Construction and chairman of the CIRI Safety/EEO/Training Committee. “But when it came time for the courses to start, many understandably opted out. So we relied more than usual on the CIRI companies to help fill the void with toolbox talks and other activities, at their respective headquarters and/or jobsites.”

Expanding the options to get programs back on track.

The CIRI Safety Committee is already looking ahead to a busy planning season in the fall. A key initiative is to find ways to integrate more virtual learning options into the mix where possible — even though a great deal of the needed training is more geared to hands-on type learning in person.

“It’s about being as prepared as we can to roll with the challenges that will likely come our way,” Robbins concludes. “It’s crucial for employees at member companies to earn and maintain a variety of certifications. It’s even more important to ensure they’re able to stay safe and avoid injury on the job — so they can go home as healthy as when they arrived that day.”



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