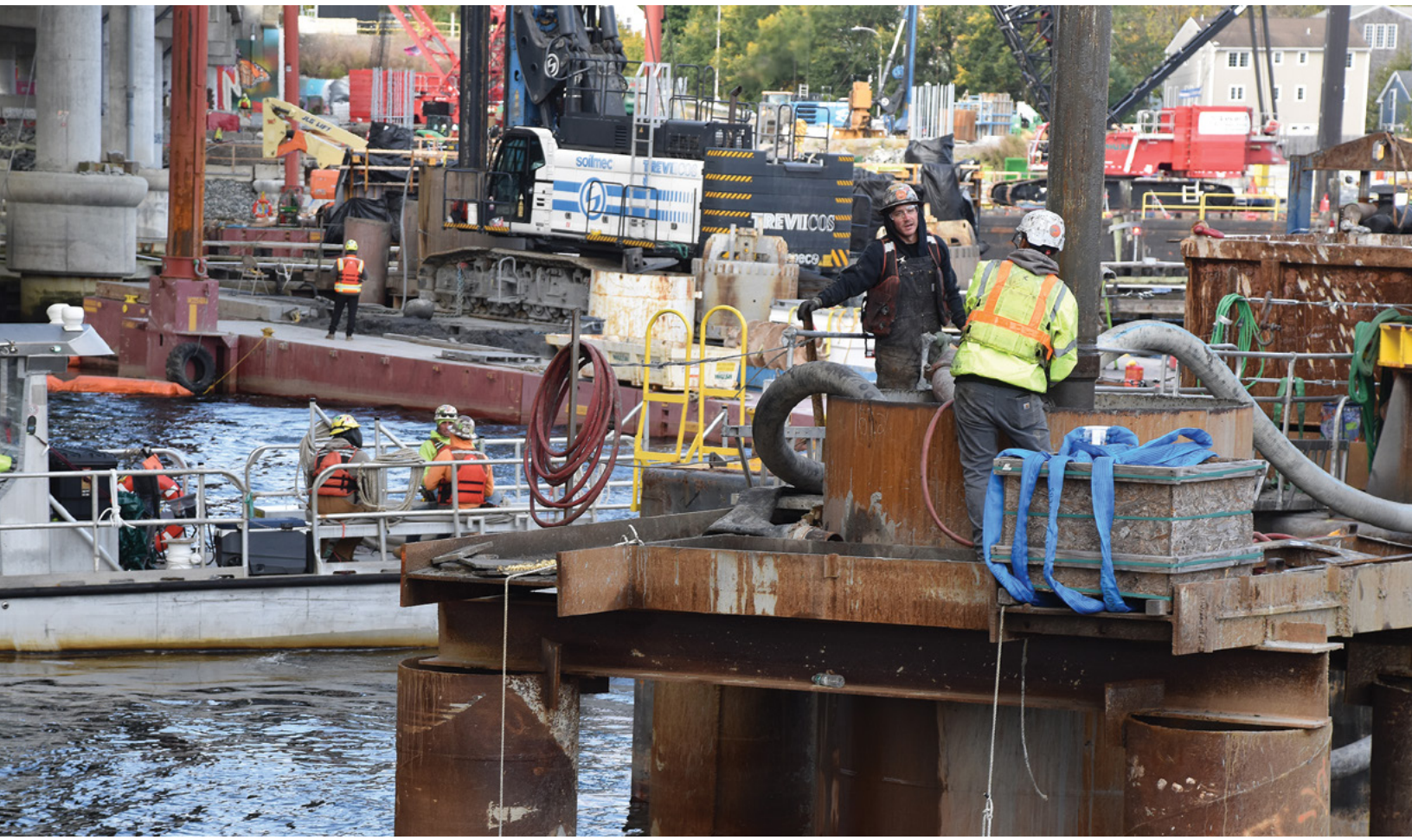
Rhodework Review

Fall 2026



CIRI

Construction Industries of Rhode Island

Washington Bridge Rebuild • Spring Meeting Recap • PAC Funding Appeal

President's Message

It's time to finish the job on infrastructure.



Michael D. D'Ambra
CIRI President

In 2021, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the resulting five-year program delivered $1.5 billion to Rhode Island for highways and bridges. The results are visible throughout our state.

When the BIL/IIJA expired on September 30, Congress passed a 10-week continuing resolution that runs only to December 11. CIRI and its members can tell you none of this work happens on a ten-week timeline. A contractor who bids on a bridge or road project is making a multi-year commitment. They hire crews, train apprentices, and make large investments in equipment.

Our members are in a position to make those steep financial commitments because a multi-year federal highway program gives them the signal to move forward. But when federal programs and funding streams become uncertain, companies stop hiring. Projects stall. And costs go up for taxpayers as inflation makes nearly every aspect of construction even more expensive.

Rhode Island's heavy and highway construction industry stands ready again to do its part. Our companies and our workers truly delivered on the promise of the 2021 law, on time and on the ground. Rhode Island is also fortunate to have widely respected congressional leaders who truly understand the job-creating and economy-boosting value of transportation and infrastructure construction. Their efforts benefit the rest of the country as well.

The last highway bill proved what Washington can do when both parties commit to building. Five years later, the proof is standing in concrete and steel across our state.

The next five years should be no different.

Respectfully,



Michael D. D'Ambra

2026 Henry J. Sherlock Scholarships awarded.

CIRI provides six students with $5K grants toward college studies.

Marking the 15th year of its scholarship program, CIRI has awarded $5,000 to each of six students to apply to their college studies. Since its inception in 2011, the program has awarded a total of 79 scholarships.

This year's awards were presented at the CIRI Annual Spring Dinner Meeting on May 27 at the Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick. The scholarships were renamed in 2014 in honor of Henry Sherlock, executive director of CIRI for 37 years and a lifelong advocate for the pursuit of higher education.

Any senior high school student graduating in 2026 who is the child or grandchild of a present employee of a CIRI member company — and will be enrolling in a two-year or four-year accredited college or university — was eligible to apply for consideration. The winning 2026 graduates who received this year's scholarship grants are:



Attending the CIRI Spring Dinner to receive their awards were (top) Isabelle Thies and Angelina Bostock; (bottom) Sebastian Prescott and Ryan Love.

Angelina Bostock • A graduate of North Attleboro High School who resides in North Attleboro, MA, Angelina is embarking on a four-year BS program at Fairfield University with a concentration on behavioral science. She hopes to become a physician assistant in the speciality field of sports medicine or dermatology. Angelina's father, Jeff Bostock, Is employed by Aetna Bridge Company.

Caroline Caouette • A graduate of Bishop Stang High School in North Dartmouth, MA who resides in Portsmouth, RI, Caroline is beginning a four-year program at High Point University in North Carolina, where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in interior design. Caroline's mother, Mary Caouette, is employed by GM2, Inc.

Ryan Love • A graduate of King Philip Regional High School in Wrentham, MA, Ryan resides in Norfolk, MA. He is beginning a four-year BA program on a pre-law track at Wesleyan University with a double major in government and economics. Ryan is pursuing a law career where he can advocate for families and their children with disabilities — to help provide them with the support and parenting they need to thrive. Ryan's father, Martin Love, is employed by Skanska USA Building Inc.

Sebastian Prescott • An East Granby High School graduate who resides in East Granby, CT, Sebastian is beginning a four-year program in aerospace engineering with a minor in business finance at Central Connecticut State University, while fulfilling an Air Force ROTC program. Sebastian also plans to pursue an MBA at Texas A&M. His ultimate goal is to become an aerospace engineer while serving as a United States Air Force pilot. Ryan's mother, Gabriela Prescott, is employed by All States Materials Group.

Andrew Shute • A Bishop Feehan High School graduate who resides in North Attleboro, MA, Andrew is pursuing a BA in business at the Northeastern University D'Amore-McKim School of Business. His career plan is to apply his business knowledge in a role where he can make a meaningful impact. His father, Matthew Shute PE, is employed by BETA Group.

Isabelle Thies • A graduate of Foxboro High School who resides in Foxboro, MA, Isabelle is beginning a four-year program in psychology at Stonehill College. She plans to pursue a career where she will be working with children. Isabelle's father, Timothy Thies, is employed by Pare Corporation.

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse delivers keynote at CIRI Spring Dinner Meeting.

Acting RIDOT Director Rocchio also featured at May 27 event.

The semi-annual CIRI dinner meetings are a valuable opportunity to review our industry's recent progress, along with current challenges on the horizon. As is customary for the President of CIRI, Mike D'Ambra provided both introductory and followup remarks for the major segments of the program. The latter half of the program featured the 15th annual presentation of the CIRI Henry J. Sherlock Scholarships to six college-bound students.



RI Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Keynote Speaker

After expressing his thanks to the CIRI leadership and its member companies, Senator Whitehouse provided a report on various congressional initiatives of particular significance to our members and the construction/ infrastructure industry at large. He began with a recap of the federal



Senator Whitehouse and CIRI President Mike D'Ambra participating in the awards presentations.

funding that has been obtained for major projects in Rhode Island over the past year as a result of discretionary grants.

Since Rhode Island was looking at projects that were going to need a lot more than the usual federal formula outlays, Senator Whitehouse developed the INFRA program. This program has already funded projects like the I-95 Viaduct construction, the Washington Bridge rebuild, the Missing Move project in North Kingstown and East Greenwich, the Route 146 rebuild, the I-95 15 Bridges project and the Newport Bridge Humidification project. The Mount Hope Bridge restoration was financed by a separate program as well.

"This has all gone forward through multiple administrations," Whitehouse pointed out, citing positive, fruitful relationships with both Elaine Chao, President Trump's first Secretary of Transportation and current Secretary Sean Duffy. "So as bad as things may look in Washington DC, there's kind of a zone of peace and getting along and getting it done around transportation."

A groundbreaking proposal for permitting reform.

In addition to his involvement in the all-important long term surface transportation reauthorization that is needed to replace the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) authorization, Senator

Whitehouse is also playing an active role in the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act of 2026. Introduced by Whitehouse and three other Senate committee leaders on September 30, it is a substantial bipartisan effort to modernize the federal permitting system for energy and infrastructure projects.

"I think you will see a really significant change in the way permitting is done in this country," Whitehouse concluded. "There is just too much unnecessary delay. The good news is that we want to keep Americans working, and we want to build American infrastructure."

Bob Rocchio
Acting Director of RIDOT

Prior to the keynote address, RIDOT Acting Director Robert "Bob" Rocchio provided a succinct recap of the achievements of the RhodeWorks legislation and its 10-year program — including some personal insights on what it has meant both to people in the industry and to the state at large.

"When we look back about 10 years ago, Rhode Island was in a very different place," Rocchio began. "We had some of the worst roads and bridges in the country. We were ranked 50th out of 50 states. On top of that, we were declining rapidly. And the cost to repair was only going up."

Rocchio then spoke to how RhodeWorks allowed the state to move away from borrowing against the future to go towards a more responsible pay-as-we-go approach — while greatly reducing RI's percentage of bridges rated as deficient.



"Ten years ago we were at 27%. Today we're at less than 10%," Rocchio said. "That's a huge improvement. And that's because of the people in this room."

Legislative Recap

During the 2026 General Assembly, the CIRI Legislative Committee identified these bills as warranting opposition for our members. Here are the results:

Passed with amendments

Budget Article 5: "Millionaires Tax." (HB 7127) Many companies are generational family businesses and passthrough entities where business income is allocated through the owner's personal tax return. CIRI maintained this would decrease available working capital to reinvest, hire additional employees and increase wages.

Did not pass

Payment of Wages (SB 2932 • HB 7961) This "up the chain" bill would have made general contractors civilly liable and/or jointly civilly liable for any claims of wage theft or nonpayment — whether an employee is working anywhere in the chain of the GC, its subcontractors or for subsidiary subcontractors.

Opportunity for Employee Ownership (SB 2744 • HB 7964) Would have required any company looking to sell to provide all current full-time and part-time employees with a 30-day window in which to initiate a process to potentially purchase the business as a workers' cooperative.

Transportation Investment and Debt Reduction Act of 2011 (SB 2095 • HB 8178) Effective July 1, 2026, this would have allocated 20% of available proceeds in the RI highway maintenance account to RIPTA for operating expenses. This would have decreased the monies needed for matching funds to obtain federal highway funds.

RI Transportation Forum returns to URI for 39th year.

CIRI co-sponsored event unites leaders in industry, government and academia.

The University of Rhode Island has hosted the annual RI Transportation Forum for nearly four decades as a technology transfer platform for leading transportation construction professionals. At the 39th Rhode Island Transportation Forum, CIRI once again served as a sponsor with several member companies also providing additional program and financial support.





Recognition of Outstanding Contribution and Support awards were presented by URI professor and RI Transportation Forum founder Kang-Won Wayne Lee, Ph.D., P.E., F. ASCE to: (left) Henry Chango, contract administrator for D'Ambra Construction Company and (right) Professor Michael A. Rice, past president of the URI Faculty Senate.

A wide variety of participants and pertinent topics.

Co-hosted by RIDOT and the RI Transportation Research Center (RITRC), the one-day Rhode Island Transportation Forum was created by URI's Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering in 1992. It attracts international attendees from all facets of the field, including construction industries, consulting firms and academia — along with federal, state and municipal agencies. The 2026 keynote speaker was Jinwoo Lee, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in South Korea.

Topic areas presented/discussed included AI-assisted automated pavement distress detection approaches, sustainable pavement design, green infrastructure, cold in-place recycling, warm mix asphalt, full depth reclamation and lifecycle cost analyses for various pavement structures. The event included numerous podium presentations by New England faculty and researchers — along with poster presentations by URI researchers and students.

The international assemblage of speakers and presenters at the October 30 event.



The 39th Rhode Island
Transportation Forum

Relentless advocacy for heavy and highway construction.

The CIRI PAC appreciates your continued support.

Over the past three years, the CIRI Political Action Committee (PAC) has benefited from a substantial increase in contributions. We applaud this renewed participation from our membership which continues to empower the PAC to promote our industry and its needs on multiple fronts.



The CIRI Political Action Committee (PAC) has a decades-long track record of securing tangible support for our state's transportation and infrastructure initiatives. It is firmly rooted in the steadfast belief in the power of what our CIRI member companies contribute on a daily basis to the Rhode Island economy — to its business climate and commercial prosperity — and to the exceptional quality of life for our residents.

A broad-based, year-round effort to promote positive relationships.

Our crux of our mission is to keep funding levels at status quo at a minimum — while advocating for increases to offset the effects of inflation and unexpected challenges. This includes efforts to ensure the state's share for road and bridge construction is properly funded. All of this alleviates the need for public bond-issue campaigns which wind up costing our industry hundreds of thousands of dollars.

On the local level, our active advocacy keeps our message front and center with the RI General Assembly, our Governor, and statewide elected officials. These efforts support positive legislation that will help our industry and the RI economy — while opposing legislation that would be detrimental to our members.

Fortifying our position on the national level.

As an active member of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), the CIRI PAC also keeps a finger on the pulse of the latest developments in Washington. While keeping our advocacy efforts in alignment with the priorities of the Trump administration.

Donations are always welcome. We'll put them to good use.

In the current political and economic environments, on both the federal and state levels, competition for funding is fiercer than ever. Please consider a personal contribution today for $500 — or any amount you feel is appropriate — up to $2,000.*

Help us to keep CIRI's message front and center. While supporting people who can have a positive effect on our industry and your business.

Please mail contributions to:
CIRI Political Action Committee
615 Jefferson Boulevard,
Suite B207
Warwick, RI 02886-1357

**NOTE: Rhode Island State Law prohibits the acceptance of any corporate or business checks for campaign contributions. Only personal checks, made out to the CIRI PAC, are an acceptable form of contribution. Donations are not tax deductible and are limited to $2,000.*

Above water-level construction begins on Washington Bridge.

Among prominent achievements by RIDOT and CIRI members.

During the third and fourth quarters of FFY 2026, covering April through September of this year, RIDOT advanced numerous projects throughout the state. A few of the agency's accomplishments, highlighted in its Q4 report released on October 30, include:

Washington Bridge Rebuild. On June 10, in-water construction was begun on this crucial project of extreme statewide importance. While continuing to build a construction platform along the Providence shoreline, crews began installing the first of 32 drilled foundation shafts, each extending approximately 130 feet to bedrock to support the new bridge's piers and abutments.

Shaft installation and platform construction — conducted during daytime hours with noise, vibration and erosion controls — continued throughout July and August. By September 25, six foundation shafts had been installed and filled with concrete. The number had increased to ten by late October, as crews had also begun pouring concrete for foundation components above the shafts.

Up-to-date information on the latest progress and developments is publicly available at www.washingtonbridgerebuild.com, the dedicated website for the project.

I-95 15 Bridges Project. A massive, multi-phase initiative in the metropolitan Providence area, this project is currently progressing across multiple active bridge sites in Bridge Group 04-R. RIDOT's largest project ever, it is removing 15 bridges from the state's backlog of poor-condition bridges along I-95 and Route 10 between Providence and Warwick.

The most consequential current work is the reconstruction of the Huntington Viaduct and the entire I-95/Route 10 interchange. A significant interchange demolition milestone was completed on the weekend of October 17 & 18, eliminating the immediate need for additional overnight I-95 closures. Other work underway includes:

- Bridge work at Broad Street, Jefferson Boulevard northbound and the Pawtuxet River
- Paving of I-95 South between the Pawtuxet River Bridge and Jefferson Boulevard
- Milling and paving Route 10 North within the project area

I-95 15 Bridges Project
video montage click/scan to view

Rehabilitation operations on the I-95 15 Bridges project.



Missing Move demolition work at the I-95/Route 4 merge in East Greenwich.



Missing Move Project. This $144 million project spanning North Kingstown, East Greenwich and Warwick remains on track for overall completion in Fall 2027. The Route 4 North to I-95 South flyover bridge is still under construction. I-95 North is being connected to Route 4 South via a ground-level ramp. I-95 South traffic remains shifted to accommodate drainage improvements and construction of the bridge's northern pier.

In late September, RIDOT also opened three new ramps providing better connectivity from Route 403 to the Quonset Business Park and the Route 1 (Post Road) business district. These new ramps, which were not built when Route 403 was originally constructed over 20 years ago, are links for:

- West Davisville Road to Route 403 East toward Route 1 and the main Quonset Point Business Park areas
- Route 403 West, coming from Route 1 toward Route 4, exiting onto West Davisville Road
- Route 1 (Post Road) to Route 403 West toward Route 4



Foundation shafts being drilled and installed on the Washington Bridge Rebuild project.

RIDOT also added a roundabout at the West Davisville Road/Compass Circle intersection, while making numerous safety improvements including new signage, striping and traffic signals. These new elements are designed to shorten travel times, make it easier for trucks and cars to get to/from destinations in the business park, and help reduce business park traffic on local roads.

Woonsocket Corridor Bridges. Scheduled for overall completion in the summer of 2028, this $22.7 million project is addressing five bridges and key road corridors across Woonsocket. Both the Diamond Hill Road Bridge over the Peters River and the Privilege Street Bridge reopened to traffic in September. Erosion protection was completed at the Mill Street Bridge, along with ongoing repairs to its arch. The Wood Avenue Bridge is closed for repairs and ongoing demolition.

For the most up-to-date information on RIDOT programs and projects, visit: www.dot.ri.gov/RhodeWorks



Night bridge work on Route 37 in Cranston.

Bob Rocchio to address CIRI Fall Dinner Meeting.

RIDOT acting director will be keynote speaker.



The annual CIRI Fall Dinner Meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, November 18 at the Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick. The keynote speaker for the event will be Robert "Bob" Rocchio, RIDOT acting director.

The program will also feature a brief presentation by the Roger Williams University Heavy/ Highway Competition Team — which is partially sponsored by CIRI — recapping their experience the previous week in the Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) Region 1 Student Competition.

An announcement and response form has been mailed to all CIRI member companies. For more information, feel free to call the CIRI office at 401-738-8530, email us at exec@ciri.net — or click here to download a response form.



RWU Heavy Civil team competing in ASC regional event.

CIRI supported team aiming for three-peat in the category.

The Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) Region 1 competition is a valuable test of skills and endurance for Construction Management students. CIRI provides support for the Roger Williams University Heavy Civil Competition Team, which is advised by Jonathan Gomes, M.S., assistant professor of construction management at RWU.

At press time, RWU teams across multiple categories were finishing preparations for the mid-November 2026 competition in Albany, NY. The educational process for this demanding fast-track competition begins in the spring, includes summer learning and internships, and culminates in the fall.

Over the years, RWU competition teams have been frequent winners across multiple categories — Heavy Civil, Commercial, Design-Build and Concrete. The Heavy Civil team is coming off a first-place finish in both the 2024 and 2025 competitions.



Industry concerned by BUILD America 250 Act impasse.

December 11 expiration of IIJA extension looming large.



Night paving activity on the Warwick Corridor Project.

Back in mid-May, the BUILD America 250 Act (H.R. 8870) was introduced in the US House with bipartisan co-sponsorship. The legislation proposes a five-year reauthorization of federal highway, bridge, transit, rail, and transportation safety programs to replace the highly successful five-year Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) — also commonly called the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

As of press time, while an amended bill was passed and approved by a bipartisan vote, the H.R. 8870 legislation remains pending. It has not received a full House vote, passed the Senate, or been signed into law. In addition, no comparable Senate bill has been advanced.

The September 2 federal funding extension (Public Law 119-103) covering programs such as the IIJA is set to expire on December 11. Whether the current Congress will act on an additional extension by then, or hand over the task to the new Congress beginning on January 3, remains to be seen.

Key concerns about the proposed BUILD America 250 Act in its current form include:

A substantial decrease in guaranteed funding.

H.R. 8870 proposes $580 billion over five years, including $474 billion in guaranteed funding — down from IIJA's $539 billion. While the bill emphasizes highway and bridge funding, the question is whether enough money will be available, with sufficient certainty, for projects to proceed from planning and design into actual construction.

Significant restructuring of discretionary grants.

Part of H.R. 8870 is the proposed $12 billion Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG) program. While still providing up to 80% federal funding for eligible projects, STAG would consolidate a number of grant programs — including the INFRA and Mega grants that have been crucial to multiple large-scale projects in Rhode Island. On the positive side, this could favor a more consistent stream of smaller and mid-sized infrastructure projects. However, STAG programs would be dependent on continued annual authorizations — as opposed to the guaranteed federal funding associated with similar IIJA-related programs — leading to less predictable financing for exceptionally large projects.

The ongoing shortfall of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF).

The IIJA previously transferred $118 billion from the US Treasury general fund into the Highway Trust Fund, helping to finance the programs it authorized. The next five-year authorization may need to consider a similar measure to cover the projected shortfall for the next five years — while forging solutions to correct the recurring HTF imbalance for the long term.

The immediate challenge for Congress is to balance competing priorities, preserve support for major infrastructure projects, and ensure a steady pipeline of construction opportunities. Ultimately, the goal must be a sustainable, predictable funding framework that enables the industry to meet the nation's growing infrastructure needs, both now and for decades to come.

Free CIRI safety training is a key member benefit.

2027 program again includes crucial certifications.

Enabling member companies of all sizes to keep personnel up to date with certifications and safety awareness/knowledge, CIRI-sponsored initiatives include a series of toolbox talks by participating companies, either at their headquarters or on jobsites.

"We traditionally begin the process during the winter months,' says Peter Robbins, director of safety for D'Ambra Construction and chairman of the CIRI Safety/EEO/Training Committee. "This leads into an annual May effort at the beginning of the construction season, which coincides with National Safety Week. Members are also invited to reach out to us at any time with questions and requests."

For scheduling details, contact:

Peter Robbins
probbins@d-ambra.com

2027 Training/Certifications

dates and locations TBD

CIRI/MUST Dig Safe Event	**Highway Work Zone Safety** Supervisor & Technician Courses
OSHA 10-Hour Training	**HAZWOPER Refresher**
Excavation Competent Person	**First Aid CPR AED Training**

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Thanks for enabling us to keep in touch.

We appreciate your participation. Our membership email database — for sharing the latest CIRI news, developments and initiatives — has grown considerably over the past few years. Updates are always welcome to apprise us of people who should be added to or removed from our list. Simply reach out to the CIRI office at: exec@ciri.net

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