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When the pandemic began, we had no idea just how significant its impact would be. Many of our member organizations experienced significant business loss and, sadly, many of our colleagues also dealt with the loss of loved ones. Unfortunately, we lost 19 member companies in 2020, many as a result of slow work, acquisition and merger, or even "closing their doors."

Fortunately, our industry is one of perseverance, innovation, and resilience. Many of you have recovered and/or made strategic decisions that allowed you to remain in business. We are so grateful for your support and allegiance to SCOAR! In 2021, we have gained 21 new member organizations, including large contractors, specialty contractors, valued suppliers, and educational institutions. We continue to solicit membership from owner organizations throughout our 12-state "footprint."

As the largest Local User Council of the Construction Users Roundtable (CURT), we were one of few able to have safe and effective in-person meetings, and had an average attendance of over 130 members per meeting. Last fall we hosted a Program Meeting, Sporting Clays event, and the annual TOPS Safety and Scholarship Awards Dinner in Savannah, Georgia. In January, we were able to have our winter meeting at the Resort at Longboat Key Club in Florida. At this ever-popular venue we had a great Super Bowl-themed reception and dinner, another great meeting, and the Annual Golf & Fishing Tournament.

Our most recent meeting was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, with a TopGolf Tournament. At every meeting, we had wonderful prizes for raffle and competition winners—thank you to owner-member DeWalt for their generous donations. This fall we will head to Charlotte, North Carolina, and we will have entertaining speakers, tours, and the 2021 TOPS Safety and Scholarship Awards Dinner. We are currently planning the 2022 winter, spring, and fall events, and know that in May 2022 we will be back in Longboat Key, Florida for the Spring Meeting and Golf & Fishing Tournament, for our 11th year. We hope to see you there!

From the Executive Director

SCOAR continues to utilize donations and net revenue from operations to fund Craft Training Grants, Technical Trades Scholarships, and College/University Construction Engineering and Management Scholarships. While donations are still coming in, so far over \$50,000 has been donated by member organizations Graycor Southern, NCCER, DeWalt, Fluor, Worley, Southeastern Construction & Maintenance, PTS Group, Ironworkers/IMPACT, Southern Sates Millwright Regional Council, Crane Industry Services, and MAC Construction.

If you have not already registered for the Member Portal on the new and improved SCOAR website, please do so. The portal provides secure access to individual employees of every member organization. The site also includes many member-only resources, including the detailed Member Directory, Committee information and documents, Discussion Forums/Blogs, and Special Promotions. There is also a library where you can access past meeting presentations, and all previous issues of *The VOICE Southeastern* are now available on our website too.

Diane and I are very pleased with the support of the SCOAR Board of Directors and our 95 member organizations. Member retention and recruitment of new organizations is one of our primary goals for 2022. Please continue to provide us with ideas for improvement and recommendations for potential new members. Your feedback via phone call, email, and feedback forms at our meetings are important to us! We look forward to serving each of you in 2022!

Steve Greene
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Strategies for Adapting to Disruption in the Construction Industry

By Brian Gallagher, Corporate Development, Graycor



Disruption is about more than just technology. The word disruption refers to processes or products that are game changers—they are fundamentally different from what is currently in use and render unforeseen, large-scale changes. Disruption impacts the construction industry significantly; however, companies can learn from other industries' mistakes, embrace disruption, and turn it into innovation.

When industries and companies fail to quickly adopt innovation, new technologies, approaches, or workflows, it is usually due to entrenched mindsets and failure to imagine sweeping change. Companies that are already experiencing success rely heavily on whatever formula gained them that success. But this approach can result in resistance to change. The desire to protect a successful business model leads to the rejection of new things, and by the time those new things are widespread in the marketplace, it can be too late to catch up.

A company can be well-managed, responsive to customer feedback, and focused on innovation, but still fail to adapt to disruptive changes. Sometimes these changes are products or services that were initially considered inferior, but then mushroomed and cut into existing markets. A 2015 Harvard Business Review article, "What Is Disruptive Innovation?" by Clayton M. Christensen, Michael E.

Raynor, and Rory McDonald, noted that it is entry into lower-end, neglected markets that allow new competitors to get a foothold, positioning them to move upmarket and challenge existing companies.

Another reason disruptive products or services can seem to come out of nowhere is that they are developed in other fields and/or start out by being viewed as mere novelties. Oren Harari's famous observation, "The electric light did not come from the continuous improvement of candles," is worth keeping in mind.¹

Identifying disruption

Consulting firm PwC Global defines five factors that can significantly alter an industry:

1. Changes in customer behavior;
2. New kinds of competition;
3. Shifting regulation;
4. New methods of distribution; and
5. Changes to a company's core business.

A fundamental first step for any company when facing such changes should be to broadly identify what it is providing to consumers. For every industry and every company, beyond the specific product or service being offered, there is always a basic problem being solved. For example, cars are a product, but transporting people from one location to another solves a basic problem. Thinking in terms of problems can change habitual thinking and foster "out of the box" solutions.

Since most change is driven by customer behavior, companies should also look at how and why people are using their products. For design and construction, the question becomes, "how are people using the facilities the industry builds?" A timely example is warehouses, where traditional pick/pack/ship routines are giving way to the new single item picking requirements of e-commerce as

well as to automated equipment, which requires different floor layouts, building heights, utility requirements, ceiling clearances, labor requirements, etc.

Embracing disruption

Firms in the construction industry can embrace and manage disruption by examining successful—and unsuccessful—responses from other industries. The lessons learned can be applied by construction companies to formulate adaptive responses. Historically, companies have resisted innovative products or processes because they don't meet the needs of their current customers—customers who are not only profitable, but who demand of all the company's resources just to continue the current trajectory. Additionally, these companies, like most of us, fail to imagine the kind of sweeping change that can radically alter "business as usual." However, the future belongs to companies that not only face change, but proactively assess which new workflows and technologies are likely to have staying power.

In many industries, companies have successfully adapted to change by remaining open to vertical integration. In the construction industry, this means being open to end-to-end construction. Design and construction companies need to better visualize how their business models can innovate in terms of where and how buildings, facilities, and infrastructure are planned, designed, procured, constructed, operated, and maintained. This can be achieved via partnerships and alliances. Investing in research and development, exploring new project delivery methods, and remaining open to new materials and methods are all critical.

A common trap that companies fall into, construction companies especially, is using new technologies and methodologies to augment existing workflows

but not rethinking workflows from the ground up. For example, new technologies are used during construction and building operation for asset management, scheduling, and the assessment of building performance. But soon, a confluence of technologies such as IoT, Application Programming Interface (API), and big data will become a fabric uniting and transforming other technologies. The amount of information that can be known, and the speed with which it can be known—not to mention the development of physical tools such as 3D printers that extrude concrete—will cause a sea change in the way construction activities are performed and the way business decisions are made.

Strategies to adapt to disruption and innovation

The first hurdle is to change your company's fundamental approach and attitude, and then it needs to embrace innovation and disruption. Begin with evolutionary, strategic thinking. For example, hold off-site sessions dedicated to the effort where an entire team examines areas in which your business might be disrupted. Consider new business models, or address disruption in planning and leadership meetings. It also helps to seek outside partnerships and alliances. Technologies and their related changes tend to function in ecosystems; find the ecosystem that is going to impact your business and establish connections.

When deciding which changes might be worth investing in, pursue multiple options. Invest in talent that will bring different perspectives when hiring, then give employees the freedom to act and explore ideas. To keep such exploration within productive parameters, encourage a mindset shift towards accountability and establish conditions for piloting and scaling new technologies and services. Finally, recognize that the approach to address and embrace

disruption requires a shift in mindset and the allocation of significant resources. It cannot be accomplished as a sideline or afterthought.

Even when industries do see change coming, all too often they are unsure of how to meet it. The construction industry, and owners, may be similarly shortsighted as they fail to see robotic construction, machine learning, artificial intelligence, prefabrication, modularization, and other trends as game changers. But there is no disruption too big—or too small—to warrant attention from

construction leaders as they plan for their futures. The key is to implement a systematic, strategic approach, and do so sooner rather than later. Companies that are nimble, agile, proactive, and willing to embrace change will be future industry leaders. The question is, how many manufacturing companies will be among them? **I**

Brian Gallagher is Vice President, Corporate Development, for Graycor. He can be reached at brian_gallagher@graycor.com or 864-551-0362.

 	 
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Reference

1. San Diego State University News-Center. "In Memoriam: Oren Harari, Ph.D." https://newscenter.sdsu.edu/sdsu_newscenter/news_story.aspx?sid=72071.

The Great Migration to the South Continues

By Anirban Basu, Associated Builders and Contractors

No American region was spared the economic devastation wrought by the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the course of March and April 2020, the nation lost 22.4 million jobs. Unemployment surged from less than four percent to nearly 15 percent. Office buildings went vacant, retailers and restaurateurs entered bankruptcy in large numbers, arenas and stadia were silenced, and hotels felt utterly abandoned.

Even the southeastern U.S., heretofore an economic growth juggernaut, was waylaid by the crisis. Despite what were arguably the nation's least restrictive lockdown measures, the southeast, defined for these purposes as comprising Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee, lost 3.5 million jobs in March and April of last year. That translated into a loss of 13 percent of the pre-existing employment base. As a whole, the nation lost 14.7 percent of its jobs during that same time frame. Massive employment losses in travel, tourism, and retail represented a significant fraction of the damage. Despite that, the region's employment losses fell short of those sustained by the balance of the nation.

The southeast has also enjoyed more rapid recovery. Surging migration from the north, a V-shaped industrial production recovery, and the return of some semblance of normalcy served to reinvigorate a variety of regional industries ranging from tourism to chemicals. Over the 14-month period beginning in May 2020, the southeastern economies recovered approximately 75 percent of lost positions. The nation has recovered a bit less than 70 percent of what was lost. While national employment rates are down 4.4 percent since February 2020, the analogous southern percentage is down a somewhat less alarming 3.3 percent (see Exhibit 1, below).

The southeast's superior economic performance is reflected in numerous ways, including in terms of residential building permits. Permits represent one of the most important leading economic indicators since builders must acquire permits prior to the onset of construction. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, in June 2021, 30.6 percent of all permits issued in America were associated with the southeastern states. Importantly, 33.6 percent of single-family building permits were attached to the region, which means that a disproportionate share of the nation is investing

in homeownership in the southeast. As of 2020, the southeast represented 19.1 percent of America's population. Twenty years earlier, the corresponding population share was 17.5 percent.

Net migration to the South has accelerated during the pandemic as former residents of New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and other large cities raced toward less densely populated and less expensive communities. Earlier this year, United Van Lines, a relocation company, published results of its National Movers Survey. As indicated in Exhibit 2 (see below), five of the seven southeastern states ranked among the nation's top 10 in terms of inbound migration. At the head of the class is Idaho, home to booming Boise and many former Californians. The regional leader in terms of the difference between inbound and outbound households is South Carolina.

While the pace of migration between communities will decline as the pandemic subsides, the ongoing specter of Baby Boomer retirement will continue to generate rapid net migration to the southeast. Many Boomers not only prefer warmer temperatures, but also prefer the tax-friendly environments that tend to characterize the South. This helps explain why the South's share of American population has increased from 31 percent to 38 percent over the past century while the Northeast's share has declined from 28 percent to 17 percent (see Exhibit 3, on page 11).

Exhibit 1. Southeastern States Job Recovery

	Jobs Lost March/April 2020	Jobs Recovered May 2020 - June 2021	% Recovered
Alabama	246.8	182.8	74.1%
Florida	1,269.2	895.3	70.5%
Georgia	609.5	464.0	76.1%
Mississippi	151.2	120.6	79.8%
North Carolina	575.2	451.0	78.4%
South Carolina	307.8	230.2	74.8%
Tennessee	379.8	315.1	83.0%
Southeast States (Total)	3,539.5	2,659.0	75.1%
U.S.	22,362.0	15,598.0	69.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Exhibit 2. 2020 United Van Lines National Movers Survey

	Total Inbound	Total Outbound
Idaho	70.1%	29.9%
South Carolina	64.0%	36.0%
Oregon	62.5%	37.5%
South Dakota	62.3%	37.7%
Arizona	61.6%	38.4%
North Carolina	60.2%	39.8%
Tennessee	60.0%	40.0%
Alabama	59.7%	40.3%
Florida	59.6%	40.4%
Arkansas	58.5%	41.5%

Source: United Van Lines

Population drives construction more than any other factor. This is true of both residential and commercial construction. It is not coincidental that areas associated with rapid population growth over time, like Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Orlando, and Austin, have also experienced large-scale office, hotel, and other forms of construction.

There are other factors at work, however. Among them is the burst of liquidity that is impacting virtually every economic segment, including real estate. With the Federal Reserve continuing to inject new money supply into the economy and keeping interest rates ultra-low in the process, investors are scrambling to identify ways to deploy available capital. The result has been surging asset values and robust investment into real estate. That has helped trigger a wave of improvements being rendered to existing structures, which helps explain recently observed employment growth among nonresidential specialty trade contractors.

Leading indicators like Architectural Billings Index (ABI) remain upbeat, with

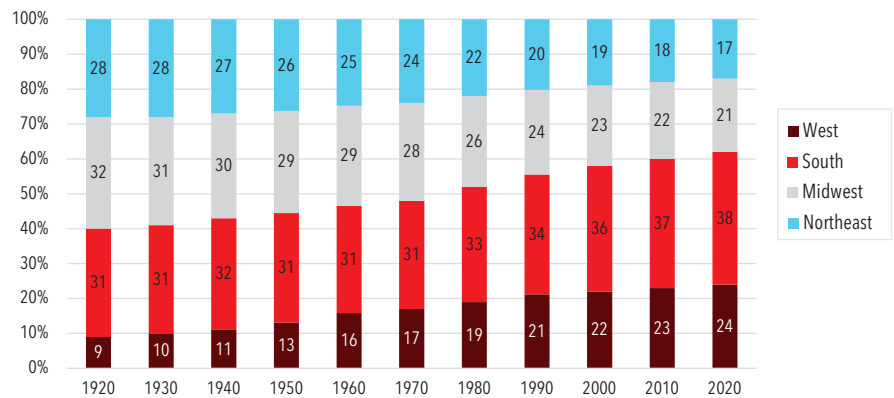
readings remaining above the threshold level of 50. The fact architects are getting busier from month-to-month, including in the South, is indication of more construction activity to come.

This, of course, comes with certain headaches. Contractors continue to wrestle with labor shortages, elevated input costs, and shortfalls of needed materials. Nonetheless, surveys conducted by Associated Builders and Contractors indicate upbeat

assessments by most construction industry leaders regarding sales, staffing, and even profit margins into 2022. Some firms are noticing fewer bidders competing for emerging projects, an indication that many contractors can no longer embrace additional work. ■

Anirban Basu is the Chief Economist for Associated Builders and Contractors as well as the Chairman and CEO of Sage Policy Group.

Exhibit 3. Share of Population across Four U.S. Regions, 1920 - 2020



Source: William H. Frey analysis of U.S. decennial censuses 1920 - 2020

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**BUILT ON
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Improving Capital Project Delivery for a Healthier Industry

By Peter Dumont, PrairieDog

The inaugural joint conference of the Construction Industry Institute (CII) and the Construction Users Roundtable (CURT) took place in August 2021 in Orlando, Florida, with approximately 450 COVID-compliant industry leaders. This event marked the first time these organizations held a joint conference. Both organizations have a history of trust and mutual respect after years of collaboration on research, benchmarking safety and productivity data, and pursuing innovations such as Operating System 2.0 (OS2).

This anticipated joint venture is consistent with the CII and CURT missions. It will deliver greater value for their members and will build upon the complementary strengths

and synergies of both organizations. This is only a start as more consortiums and associations may join this alliance going forward. CII and CURT see the joint venture as an opportunity to build premier capabilities for the A/E/C industry, especially regarding innovation and deployment. While this agreement is not yet finalized, the organizations plan to launch the joint venture on January 1, 2022.

OS2 is developing a new business model where capital projects are executed by a community of like-minded companies that work together to ensure no one gets hurt. This philosophy extends beyond personal safety to include financial and reputational safety. In these community "neighborhoods," the participants collaborate deeply, acting more as neighbors than as adversaries. The neighborhoods deliver more predictable business results, with lower risk and more

stable financial returns. These results are enabled by a blockchain-based commercial model that reduces transactional waste, manages risk with transparency and flexibility, and supports a healthier business climate for all companies.

Blockchain networks are de-centralized. They mitigate the risk posed by single points of failure common with regular databases and, thereby, dramatically increase reliability. Blockchain networks are designed with visibility and transparency at their core, engendering trust and confidence among all participants, mitigating the risk of fraud, and are immutable and self-auditing. Blockchain transactions are powered by Smart Contracts; lines of code that can automate the administration and governance of transactions according to the criteria and standards defined by their corresponding paper contract. PrairieDog is developing

Smart Contracts for capital projects and supporting groundbreaking blockchain research on risk and supply chain innovation at the University of Texas.

Smart Contracts reduce friction and transaction costs inherent in the construction industry supply chain. They can be applied to traditional two-party or multiparty contracts. Capital projects generally suffer from around five percent 'contract leakage,' costly claims and disputes, and inefficient contract administration work processes. The invoicing process is still largely manual. While there have been improvements in automation, supply chain work processes are still governed by paper-based thinking.

Smart contracts help capture payable events digitally, process those transactions automatically, record them on a blockchain for all parties to see simultaneously, and process payments faster than today's conventional practices in the industry. They provide transactional certainty. By applying smart contracts, parties have far fewer items to dispute, if any at all.

With smart contracts, companies can pay as quickly as net one-day if they so choose.

We must recognize that late payments are a serious problem in our industry causing an average of three to five percent cost growth on projects. Why are engineers, suppliers, and contractors treated like lenders by subjecting them to 60-day, 90-day, or worse payment terms? The high cost of capital compounded in a tiered supply chain is one of the largest sources of transactional waste in capital projects.

Construction is a massive global industry, and it's also one of the most inefficient and slow to adopt new technologies or change old habits. I can't think of any faster or more trusted way than blockchain. This is going to create a new economy for capital projects based on trust and transparency. Blockchain is an equalizer, delivering a necessary 'single source of truth.' With blockchain, owners can now ascertain better than ever before the ability of their supply chain to deliver value using verified performance data while

at the same time becoming a 'client of choice,' attracting the best engineers, contractors, and trade partners.

PrairieDog's main goal is to reduce wasteful transaction costs inherent in the construction industry's outdated business processes, and it is beginning with blockchain-enabled Smart Contracts. PrairieDog and the OS2 researchers are creating a new economy for capital projects that will deliver greater capital efficiency for asset developers and better financial performance for the entire construction supply chain. |

Peter Dumont, P.E., is the CEO of PrairieDog and a member of OS2 research program at the University of Texas at Austin. He also is a consultant with Premier Resources Group helping owners and contractors improve performance on capital projects. He is the past President of CURT and has 30 years of engineering and construction experience developing and executing projects globally; and managing operations for EPC service organizations. He can be reached at pdumont@prairiedogvp.com.

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Purchasing Legal Services in a Post-Pandemic World:



Death of the Billable Hour?

By Fred Lyon, The Lyon Firm

Whatever controversy may exist about COVID-19—its genesis, the government's response, the necessity of lockdowns, masking, vaccinations—one reality is indisputable: since March of 2020, much has changed, individually, socially, politically, and economically. Many of us worked from home, replaced the office meeting with virtual meetings, and business travel became rare and deemed unnecessary. Bricks and mortar retail outlets closed as the trend towards online purchasing accelerated exponentially. Restaurants pivoted towards delivery as dining rooms shuttered. Rental cars became scarce and ridiculously expensive.

The list of changes is seemingly endless, which begs the question... what's next? Businesses everywhere are having to evaluate long-held assumptions and business models. For

example, those in the commercial real estate industry will confidently assert the return of workers to the office "soon," but truth be told, with the resistance from millennials and Generation Z to return to cubicles, no one can accurately predict where we will be working five years hence.

Lawyers and the legal profession have not escaped this pandemic-induced atmosphere of change. Traditionally risk-averse and loathe to innovate, especially when it comes to fee structures, business lawyers have faced a diminishing market since March 2020 with cash-strapped clients questioning the how and why of purchasing legal services. Clients have grown more discriminating and demanding, both good things, and many lawyers have had to re-consider how they get paid and the pricing of their legal services.

Dealing with business lawyers, clients traditionally have had little choice other than to pay their counsel by the billable hour. Attorneys bill their work in hourly increments, preferably by .1 but occasionally by .25 (which means

that one minute of work will result in a multiplier of 25).

Law firms are tiered structures with higher compensated partners and less experienced associates. Hourly rates will vary based upon experience. Before the pandemic, in larger cities, there had been an explosion in the compensation paid to recent law school graduates, especially among big firms. Starting salaries average \$85,000 with big city big firms paying \$190,000.

The billable hour makes this pay scale work. Many law firms expect associates to work 2,000 hours a year. With associate hourly rates at, say, an average of \$300 (low for big cities), an associate can generate \$600,000 for the partners. If the associate is being paid \$100,000, then that is a 600 percent return on investment.

Any such system is subject to potential abuse (emphasis on *potential*—most lawyers are aware of these realities and attempt to curtail them as best as possible). The more hours an associate bills, the more money they make for the firm.

The more hours an associate bills, the more likely that associate is made partner one day. Every incentive exists to bill a lot of hours to a file. And when you consider these are the less experienced attorneys, they need to bill the time to get the answers.

The other side of this equation is equally frustrating. Call an experienced partner with a question and they may be able to give you an answer off the top of their head, an answer that may save you thousands of dollars. What does the partner then bill you? One tenth of an hour (netting \$50) when the experience benefited your company \$10,000? If you sense a certain illogic in this model, your senses are accurate.

Before the pandemic, there were some attempts to correct the potential abuses. During the pandemic, budget sensitive clients accelerated these efforts. Clients properly insisted on budgets and approval over how many attorneys (and especially associates) worked on a file. Certain activities like "research" required client approval. Billing increments of .25 were rejected. Annual increases in hourly rates required client sign-off.

All of these trends are welcome, but hourly billing remains hourly billing. As a result, some firms and businesses are searching for alternatives. An especially popular choice has been a periodic retainer, usually done annually. For a fixed fee, a firm will agree to provide all legal services to a business for a defined scope. A retainer provides certainty to both the firm and to the client. No longer are bills generated monthly. No longer are partners penalized financially for their expertise. No longer are attorneys incentivized to run the meter. Now clients will be less reluctant to make a call to get an answer; they'll know the cost has already been baked into an annual budget.

Retainers can create risk. Perhaps the client rarely uses the attorney or, on the flip side, maybe they use them so much that the attorney's effective hourly rate is reduced to absurd levels. This risk puts a premium on both the attorney and client to frankly discuss the anticipated legal needs for

the coming year so that the retainer amount approximates a reasonable rate of return for both parties. A banded approach is possible—with under-runs and overruns of a designated percentage triggering an adjustment in the retainer amount.

Although alternatives to the billable hour have been discussed for a long time, these discussions have accelerated since the pandemic began. It is likely that the billable hour will survive, even if transformed (like cockroaches, lawyers and their creative ways

are likely to survive nuclear war). Like other industries, the legal profession is facing fundamental challenges to its traditional ways of doing business. Candid discussions between client and lawyer about how to do business more economically and efficiently are welcome. Carefully crafted retainers are one exciting alternative. **I**

Fred Lyon is a construction attorney and mediator with over 35 years of experience in contract drafting and dispute resolution. Learn more at www.lyonfirm.com.

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Stanley Black & Decker is the largest, fastest growing, and most innovative tools and storage company in the world, selling roughly 50 tools per second and launching 40 plus “world’s first” products every year. They also take enormous pride in being the only tools and storage company based here in the United States of America and being publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: SWK) for 60 plus years.

Stanley Black & Decker has a unique position across all trades and all phases of construction, which they refer to as Total Trade Solutions. They are a

solutions provider for industrial, commercial, MRO, and residential contractors offering layout and design software, anchors and fasteners, abrasives, accessories, hand tools, power tools, outdoor power equipment, asset management software, storage solutions, and personal protective equipment.

Their founders’ names, including Fredrick Stanley, Duncan Black, and Alonzo Decker, as well as Raymond DeWalt, still adorn product today and formed some of the most iconic brands in the world. They were innovators and makers; they developed products for the craft worker that were industry firsts, safe, productive, and drove profitability. Now, 178 years later, that innovative spirit and solutions-oriented strategy remains.

Their global research and development focus is leveraged to continuously create breakthrough products for the trades, especially products like their cordless rotary hammer, cordless threaded rod cutter, cordless dust extractors, new anchors and fasteners, grinders focused on the safety of the contractor, cut saws, and pipe threaders, among others. Their specialty is developing

world class products for the contractor by working side-by-side to understand their challenges, needs, nuisances, and must-haves to get the job done safely, efficiently, and on-time. Their offerings provide a solution for the contractor, owner, and operator that allows everyone to work safer and more efficiently while focusing on cost-savings.

In times of crisis, the people and products of Stanley Black & Decker have gone beyond their intended applications to serve the country, and the globe. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Stanley Black & Decker collaborated with Ford and 3M to supply a DEWALT portable battery solution for their Powered Air-Purifying Respirators (PAPR) to help alleviate the shortage of critical respirator equipment. Using off-the-shelf DEWALT batteries, as well as a custom wiring harness created by Stanley Black & Decker engineers specifically for the PAPR design, healthcare professionals on the front line were protected from the airborne virus as they treated COVID-19 patients.

And they don’t stop there—Stanley Black & Decker is fiercely committed to their people and their planet. The company has a seat at the table in Washington and at the White House, as well as

Continued on page 18

Brace Integrated Services:

Taking Multi-Craft Services to the Next Level

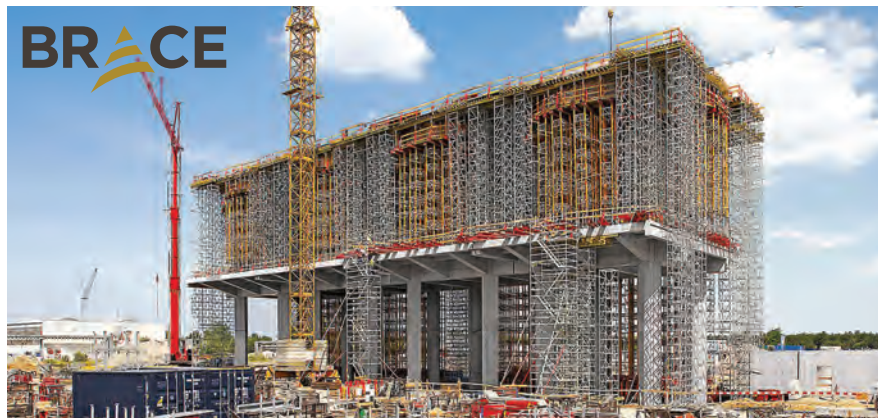
The two-story supporting structure at the Belachtow Power Plant accommodates the sorption installation for the flue gas desulfurization. Photo courtesy of Shirley E. Risen, Brace Integrated Services.

Recognized for its world-class safety performance, hands-on management, and highly qualified multi-craft talent, Brace Integrated Services is currently participating in several capital construction projects throughout the nation and particularly in the Southeast, including power generation, petrochemical, industrial, and oil and gas refining.

Brace Industrial Group company is a specialty contractor that designs, builds, and extends the life of large and small facilities alike, with a laser focus on the needs of its customers. Brace bundles cost-effective solutions to complete projects ranging from small-scale new construction to massive, multi-year EPC programs, maintenance, and scheduled or impromptu turnarounds and outages. Its scopes include insulation, fireproofing, heat trace design and installation, industrial siding and decking, lead/asbestos abatement, painting and coatings, and refractory.

Its experienced cross-trained craftspeople also perform proactive inspections, system diagnostics and onsite audits of processes, equipment, enclosures, transmitter lines, insulation, and electrical circuits to determine if repairs are needed and to predict repair costs. "Careful planning throughout the year with a regular maintenance program improves a plant's bottom line and the customer's peace of mind," notes Rob Canino, Vice President of National Sales and Director of Business Development at Brace Industrial Group.

"Essential to keeping costs within budget is finding a trusted partner who can balance the elements of a project, with skilled people, the right resources, schedules and scope," Canino points out. "We're not just a scaffolding company—we're a quality scopes expert/



scaffolding designer, using 3D CAD engineering, 3D software technology and a customized approach for each project. We work hand in hand with our customers to overcome the pain points and avoid costly overruns. Safety is our top priority, our motto is *Target Zero... One Day at a Time.*"

Smarter scaffolding, better cost estimates

Using PERI Group's versatile PERI UP Rosett Flex modular scaffolding, Brace Integrated can save money by reducing the manpower and time required for installation and dismantling, making scaffolding a smaller line item on a customer's project budget. Its crews easily erect and dismantle structures with self-locking horizontals and non-slip, gapless steel decking, metal toeboards, and an internal ladder option. PERI UP can be adjusted to suit local site conditions and fulfill the strictest occupational safety requirements for working areas.

PERIPath scaffold management software drives Brace projects overall, which displays three-dimensional building models that support all phases of a project, including pre-planning, planning, and design. The web-based software walks users through the entire jobsite, streamlining estimates and manpower needs. The advanced program features an activity schedule, worksite configurations, demand forecast, project data library, and key performance indicator dashboard.

"Using PERIPath, Brace Integrated can reduce costs by up to 35 percent of the total scaffolding spend," Canino explains. PERIPath's material resource planner and advance work packages chart daily activity, due dates, manhours, materials required per piece, area by scaffold and more, helping Brace more accurately pinpoint costs in design, fabrication, and modification.

"Tracking all activity, we can more accurately estimate costs in advance, decreasing labor and downtime, making the unpredictable predictable," Canino says. "We can map out an entire major construction site project in real time, generate verifiable labor forecasts, set implementation schedules, and control thousands of pieces of scaffolding and labor distribution. It's a game changer."

One of Brace Integrated Services' recent combined cycle maintenance projects involved an independent power producer in the Southeast in need of a turnkey contractor to design, supply and install a full replacement of its heat trace, transmitter, and sampling lines. Combined cycle is the preferred technology of most gas-fired power plants. The project needed to be complete at a time when significant on-site congestion occurred during a turbine rewind. Management wanted a turnkey contractor to safely upgrade the system and ensure its reliability during extremely cold weather events, so it contacted Brace.

Continued on page 18

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within World Economic Forums addressing the skilled trades gap. They are laser focused on developing the next generation of workers, accelerating lifelong learning with skilling and reskilling at scale, mitigating productivity losses, and address widening inequalities—all issues that SCOAR members and their businesses also face.

In addition, Stanley Black & Decker's Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy focuses on the company's efforts in three key areas: empowering apprentices, innovating with purpose, and creating a more sustainable world. By 2030, they plan to enable 10 million apprentices to thrive in a changing world, innovate products to enhance the lives of 500 million people, and be carbon positive in its global operations, meaning its carbon capture is greater than its carbon emissions.

Their commitment to quality, safety, and sustainability guides them on their path to upholding the values of a human-centered global industrial company that keeps every stakeholder in mind, while helping to make the world better. These key pillars directly impact the contracting industry and how together, Stanley Black & Decker will shape its future. They are here to help SCOAR members meet every demand, across every trade, for your unique business. **I**

We'd love to start a conversation. To learn more, reach out to Will Munkres, National Trade Manager, at William.Munkres@sbdinc.com.

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Continued from page 17


Thanks to Brace's PERI UP Rosett FLEX modular scaffolding system and easy to operate Advanced Thermal Control and Optimization (ATCOM) heat trace control panels, the independent power producer was soon back on track. Brace was able to strategically erect the PERI UP scaffolding with the help of its sophisticated PERIPath scaffold management software. The web-based, three-dimensional system helped prevent fall hazards, promoting safer working conditions.

Brace also provided MultiProp post shores, removed and replaced the heat trace, transmitter, and sampling line systems, as well as enclosures and insulation for all root valves incorporating flexible, removable panels. Brace color coded all the individual systems and rerouted the sample lines to minimize the amount of material used. The results ensure that all heat trace sample lines from the heat recovery steam generator are equally accessible.

Continuously monitored, with no problems detected, the system is fully onstream. Plant personnel are pleased to report that the project was completed on time and under budget, with no safety incidents. **I**

BRACE Integrated Services combines state of the art scaffold management software, expert multi-disciplined craftspeople, superior materials and best-in-class safety practices for winning results in construction, heat tracing, insulation, fireproofing, coatings, refractory, and insulation in the oil, gas, refining, chemical, and commercial fields.

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What Have Our Committees Been Up To?



Marketing & Fundraising for Events & Scholarships Action Committee

The SCOAR Marketing and Fundraising for Events and Scholarships Action Committee was recently established to help promote SCOAR and raise funds for scholarships. The efforts of the Committee are centered around four key areas:

1. Promoting SCOAR and attracting new members;
2. Fundraising and developing innovative ways to have networking events to raise money;
3. Identifying and evaluating scholarship and grant opportunities; and
4. Developing strategies and tactics to promote scholarships.

During the recent meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Committee focused on messaging, member engagement and outreach, attracting new owner members, and scholarship promotion and fundraising. The Committee identified several key initiatives and will be working to develop and implement strategies and tactics.

The Committee welcomes participation from all SCOAR members. Please contact Steve Greene or Brian Gallagher for more details.

Workforce Development Committee

The SCOAR Workforce Development Committee has the largest member

participation of all committees, with more than 35 attendees at each meeting.

Since being established by SCOAR in 2021, the Scholarship and Training Grant Program has awarded over \$250,000 to students and educational institutions. Awards are funded by member contributions and organizational investment of net revenues. The three-pronged approach provides scholarships for college and university students pursuing Construction Management and/or Construction Engineering degrees; scholarships for students pursuing technical skills training through secondary, post-secondary and/or apprenticeship schools, to become Construction Craft Professionals; and training grants for secondary, post-secondary and/or apprenticeship programs to start a Career & Technical Education Construction Program, or to enhance an existing program.

The development of a formal Mentoring Program that will assist SCOAR members in the design, development, and implementation of effective Workforce Development activities. Utilizing a subcommittee to design the "Roadmap" for the development of the Mentoring Program, a draft will be released at the Fall SCOAR Workforce Development Committee meeting.

SCOAR Safety Committee

Over the past 18-months, the construction industry embraced challenges associated with COVID-19 and our obligations to maintain operations to the benefit of our workforce and markets we serve. Throughout this period the definition of safety was expanded with increased diligence related to personal hygiene, transmission controls, and ever-changing regulatory requirements.

Company leaders relied heavily on their safety professionals and field leadership in the navigation of the pandemic climate. Our healthcare professionals are certainly heroes, but those in the construction and safety profession, without fanfare, also deserve our praise.

The SCOAR Safety Committee focused on enhancing our support of each other and the SCOAR membership. This included: improving availability of resources on our website; strong support of SafetyWeek; the identification of key areas of concern which will be tackled to assure, collectively, we remain up to any challenges that arise; and overseeing the TOPS Safety Awards application process.

To the Construction Industry and Safety Professionals, we extend my thanks for your heroics in the support of our workforce and families they provide for. **I**



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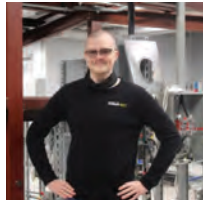
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SCOAR News

SCOAR SCHOLARSHIPS & TRAINING GRANTS



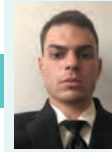
SCOAR Skilled Trades Scholarships

SCOAR presented two Skilled Trades Scholarships valued at \$500 to Andrew Hicks and Kara McFadyen from Owensboro Community and Technical College.

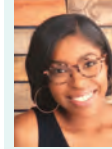
SCOAR also presented two Skilled Trades Scholarships valued at \$1,000 to Vincent Manzo from Manatee Technical College, and Tyler Otwell from Bremen High School.

Additionally, SCOAR presented a \$1,000 tool package to Michelle Thornton after her completion of the Women in Construction Program.

SCOAR Construction Management Scholarship Recipients



Congrats to Joshua Prager of University of Florida!



Congrats to Amber Scarborough of Western Carolina University!



Congrats to both Skylah Mahan of Kennesaw State University and to Kyle Britsch of Kennesaw State University!

Thanks to all our Sponsors and SCOAR Members who were able to make this happen!

TOPS WINNERS FOR 2020!

Less than 60,000 Work-Hrs Annually

Contractor: Graycor Southern, Inc.

Owner: Kentucky Utilities Company



Left to right: Steve Immel (Vice President Generation Transition Strategy, Duke Energy and SCOAR President), Joan Lipp (Project Director, LG&E KU Energy), Scott Straight (Vice President – Project Engineering, Facilities Construction and Real Estate & Right of Way, LG&E KU Energy), Shawn Buchanan (Vice President – Construction, Graycor Southern), Brian Gallagher (Vice President – Corporate Development, Graycor), and Darryl Thornton (Business Development Manager, Graycor).

More than 60,000 but less than 250,000 Work-hrs

Contractor: Classic Industrial Services, Inc.

Owner: Cleco Power/Cabot Corporation



Left to right: Steve Immel (Vice President Generation Transition Strategy, Duke Energy and SCOAR President), Jesse Daughtry (Branch Manager, Southeast, Classic Industrial Services), David Ford (Director of Operations and Safety, Classic Industrial Services), and Sam Benton (Vice President, Classic Industrial Services).

More than 750,000 Work-Hrs

Contractor: Wood

Owner: Louisville Gas and Electric Company/Kentucky Utilities Company



Left to right: Scott Straight (Vice President – Project Engineering, Facilities Construction and Real Estate & Right of Way, LG&E KU Energy), Joan Lipp (Project Director, LG&E KU Energy), Jay McGill (Senior Project Manager, Wood), Steven Watters (Senior HSSEA Manager, Power & Industrial, Wood), and Steve Immel (Vice President Generation Transition Strategy, Duke Energy and SCOAR President).

In 2020 and 2021, over \$75,000 in contributions were made possible through donations from Graycor Southern, NCCER, DeWalt, Fluor, Worley, Southeastern Construction & Maintenance, PTS Group, Ironworkers/Impact, Southern Sates Millwright Regional Council, Crane Industry Services, and SCOAR.



Moore Community House – Women in Construction Program (Biloxi, MS) was awarded \$4,500 to enhance their construction program, \$1,000 in tools, and over \$10,000 in classroom tools (contributed by DeWalt).



Manatee Technical Institute (Bradenton, FL) was awarded \$4,500 to enhance their Instrumentation and Electrical Controls program, and was awarded \$2,000 in student scholarships, and \$500 to the state office of SkillsUSA Florida.



Owensboro Community and technical College (Owensboro, KY) was awarded \$4,500 to purchase an incredibly important piece of technology, and \$1,000 in student scholarships.

Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Virginia are in the process of identifying post-secondary schools to be the Training Grant Recipients for 2021.



Bremen High School (Bremen, GA), Northwestern Community College (Kingsport, TN), Daniel Morgan Technology Center (Spartanburg, SC), and A.L. Brown Technical High School (Kannapolis, NC) were each awarded \$4,500 to enhance their Construction program, and \$1,000 in student scholarships.



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Why Join SCOAR?

SCOAR fosters innovation and breakthrough thinking on issues related to industrial construction to improve your business performance.

SCOAR's dedication to learning is unique among associations serving the construction industry, giving you and your company the greatest return on the investment of your time and money.

Our membership is comprised of industrial facility owners, EPC companies, engineers, general and specialty contractors, labor and material suppliers, as well as service suppliers, educators and consultants.

HOW SCOAR IS DIFFERENT!

SCOAR is an interactive learning alliance of construction professionals.

- Spend your time learning and addressing interesting and challenging topics, not stuck working on the typical association-type committee.
- Benefit from an interactive learning environment focused around team-based exercises, subject matter experts and collaborative discussions.
- Be a part of creating new methods and processes to tackle the typical construction issues and challenges.

Case Example: "A new solution to an old problem."

The project started going wrong in the engineering phase. As it moved into construction, the project was behind schedule and over budget. The SCOAR member recalls, "The owner (us) was not happy, and my engineering and construction teams were pretty dispirited. Typically, we might go in and make some wholesale personnel changes, but I knew I had good people on the teams."

SCOAR had recently brought in an expert from outside the construction industry to discuss the Judgment Index, a scientifically-based assessment tool that measures, among other things, the level of engagement on a project. "I was intrigued by the concept and thought it was worth a try," says the owner.

The owner brought in the expert, who took the engineering and construction teams, as well as key contractors, through a daylong exercise.

"It worked. The process creates a lot of self-reflection. It makes you ask, 'Why is my responsibility here.' It got everybody past the typical finger pointing

and working together again. In the end, we were able to turn the project around and bring it in much closer to the original schedule and budget."

Harness the creativity and experience the diversity. SCOAR brings together facility owners from different industries and all parts of the supply chain to address the issues that will improve business performance.

- Combine experience bases and methodologies from different industries to discover new solutions.
- Understand and incorporate perspectives from various parts of the supply chain to create comprehensive responses to construction challenges with great changes for success.
- Learn from construction professionals who have already "been there and done that."

Case Example: "A whole new way to do business."

A long-time owner-member of SCOAR recently retired from his position managing construction for a utility company. He was approached by a supplier-member of SCOAR seeking help in bidding on the construction of a new energy plant. A third member of SCOAR, a large general contractor, was added to the team. Combining each team members' expertise and leveraging the working relationships developed through their time at SCOAR, this group proposed a new and innovative approach and won the bid.

"The client could see immediately how our approach is going to save them tens of millions of dollars, versus the standard way this stodgy industry goes about building this type of plant."

Focus close to home, on southeastern construction market, for a practical and actionable experience.

- Concentrate on regional labor and supply trends where impactful solutions can be generated and implemented.
- Learn about and share information on capital projects in the southeast increasing insight into your market and identifying potential partnerships.
- Experience more powerful networking by meeting colleagues in your own area who are facing the same issues and environment.

Case Example: "SCOAR learnings are more actionable."

A long-time owner-member commented that the interactions at SCOAR events resulted in learnings that "are more specific to the southeast," taking into account the southeastern environment—companies, cultures, behaviors and climate—and resulting in solutions that "we can actually implement."

Enjoy a collegial and "small group" atmosphere.

- Every member has a voice in the direction and focus of SCOAR. You help choose the focus.
- The informal and supportive atmosphere, where everyone is focused on learning, leads to a better and more fun way to accomplish objectives.
- Profit from a better approach to learning about and evaluating potential suppliers unencumbered by the pressures of the contracting process.

WE OFTEN GET DONE WHAT OTHERS OFTEN CAN'T.

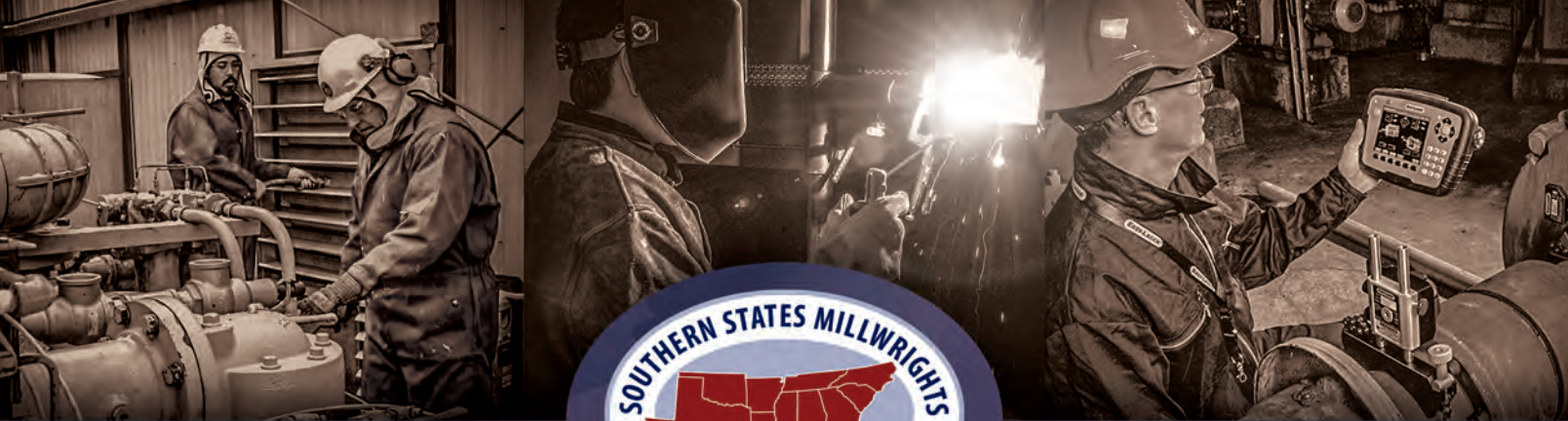
We're dedicated to being the best multi-craft services firm around because we've seen the results when our competitors don't follow through. When you call BRACE, we respond with skilled crews and the right resources promptly. Every job gets attention from senior management and project managers, who create a thorough plan before crews arrive. Expect excellent results that stay on schedule, delivered by one company you trust.

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