

NORTH CAROLINA CONSTRUCTION NEWS

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Mixed news for NC construction employment - Triad/Triangle grows, while Charlotte declines

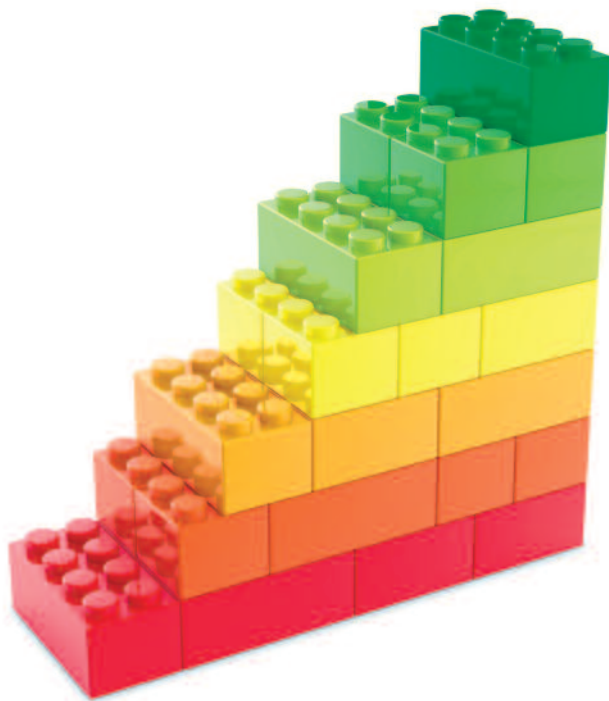
**2020 Construction Outlook:
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for director's decisions on
verified claims submitted to
the North Carolina Office
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Publisher's Viewpoint



Mark Buckshon, publisher

By Mark Buckshon

As I write this, my wife and I are about to embark on a two-month vacation to the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia. It is the longest journey of my life (both time-wise and in distance) since youthful adventures in Africa.

I suppose, if you are taking a long vacation, it is good that everything is mostly in order at home. Certainly, the construction economy, especially in the Triangle and Triad, is healthy – to the point that the major problem is a shortage of qualified skilled labor.

In my opinion, the biggest challenge for contractors and design professionals is complacency – the good times will not last forever, and while they continue, these are ideal opportunities to bolster your strengths and build your reserves.

There are ideas in these pages about the advantages of diversity and inclusion, understanding the rules regarding verified claims, and integrating processes and systems to enhance your business's efficiency and profitability.

We can't anticipate everything. When we started planning this vacation almost two years ago, I had no idea that we would need to consider the need for industrial-strength face masks when visiting Sydney or Melbourne, Australia. We can keep our eyes open and ears alert and appreciate and adapt to our environment (and maybe take some effective measures to protect it.)

I continue to believe one of the best ways to remain connected with the industry and to improve your knowledge (while building relationships and discovering business opportunities) is to join and participate in relevant industry associations. These could include (for marketing and business development professionals) the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS), with local chapters in the Triangle and Charlotte. Of course there are relevant specialty trade associations, broader groups such as the Carolinas Associated General Contractors (CAGC), and even groups that advocate for political/economic values, such as the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of the Carolinas, or (if you are on the other side of the fence) trade unions and relevant associations representing unionized contractors.

While I'll be travelling great distances in the next several weeks, I will remain in touch and your emails should reach me at buckshon@ncconstructionnews.com. Please write if you have comments about this issue and suggestions for the next one, which I will need to oversee from the other side of the world.

2020 Construction Outlook: CAGC's perspective

By Dave Simpson

President, Carolinas Associated General Contractors (CAGC)

While racking up thousands of miles driving throughout the Carolinas, it's amazing how much construction work is going on these days with building, highway-heavy and utility work. Construction workers and often clogged highways are everywhere, from Charleston to Greenville and Asheville to Wilmington, at a time when one of our biggest challenges is attracting more people into our excellent construction industry.

The U.S. economy appears to be slowing. The naysayers are out there, but output and employment should continue to grow in 2020. Construction is likely to remain on an upward path, in North and South Carolina as well as nationally.

As Ken Simonson, Chief Economist for AGC of America notes, real GDP—inflation-adjusted gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic activity—slowed in North Carolina from a 3.3% annual growth rate in the first quarter of 2019 to 1.6% in the second quarter. Similarly, real GDP growth in South Carolina slowed from 3.5% to 1.8%. This tracks the slowdown nationally. Most economists expect U.S. economic growth to be as slow or slower in 2020.

However, one of the bright spots for the economy is likely to be housing, now that mortgage interest rates have dipped to a level that enables many more people to qualify for a first mortgage, refinance or move to another home without giving up a favorable rate. North Carolina is well-positioned to benefit from an upturn in housing. The state's population has been growing at a rate of more than 1% a year, while U.S. population growth has slowed. Land and building costs are both lower than the national average, making new homes more affordable in the Carolinas than in other states.

Commercial and industrial construction will also benefit from population and housing growth. In addition, the state is poised to serve as a hub for transportation and distribution-related construction. Highway and other infrastructure construction should also contribute to the industry's growth in 2020.

Much appreciation is in order to the N.C. General Assembly as lawmakers, before adjourning their long session recently, helped pump badly needed funding into our transportation and highway-heavy construction needs. South Carolina lawmakers also are to be commended for increasing infrastructure funding.

In the Carolinas, as in much of the U.S., contractors' top concern is finding enough workers – not work and



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projects to bid on. In an annual survey of construction firms conducted by AGC of America that was released on August 27, 91% of the nearly 2,000 respondents said they expect to hire hourly craft workers in the coming year, and 70% of the firms plan to hire salaried employees—mostly for expansion, not merely replacement. Among the 33 firms that listed North Carolina as their principal state of operations, even higher shares said they plan to hire for replacement or expansion—97% want craft personnel and 77% seek salaried workers.

At the same time, 91% of the North Carolina contractors said they are having a tough time filling craft positions and 73% said the same about salaried jobs. That may explain why construction employment in the state has slipped a bit in 2019, following eight years of rapid growth: there just aren't enough qualified workers to make up for retirements, let alone expansion.

In short, the outlook for construction in the Carolinas remains positive but with the ever-present challenge of finding, training and retaining enough qualified workers. Please visit our CAGC Build Your Career website to find how you can help become a BYC ambassador and recruit fine folks for a great industry.

Dave Simpson is president of the Carolinas Associated General Contractors (CAGC). This story was originally published in the CAGC Newsroom.



Mixed news for NC construction employment - Triad/Triangle grows, while Charlotte declines

North Carolina Construction News staff writer

Construction spending rose 4.1 percent from November 2018 to November 2019, while industry employment grew in 226, or 63 percent, of 358 metro areas, according to a new analysis of federal data recently released by the Associated General Contractors of America (AGCA).

Association officials noted that its recent survey found most contractors are optimistic about the dollar value of projects available and expect to keep adding workers in 2020, but they are finding it hard to fill positions and anticipate it will continue to be hard to hire employees.

North Carolina reported mixed results, with communities in the Triad area reporting significant growth, while the metropolitan Charlotte area reported a 3 percent decline, or 1,900 employees. (The Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport Beach area includes some suburbs within North Carolina, and this community saw a massive 12 percent employment increase, making it the eighth largest growth area in the country.)

“Both the actual spending totals for November and our members’ expectations for 2020 point to a continuing uptick in construction employment,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “It’s likely that even more metros would have added workers recently if unemployment weren’t at record lows in many areas.”

Construction spending totalled \$1.324 trillion at a seasonally adjusted annual rate in November, up 0.6 percent from October and up 4.1 percent from November 2018, according to estimates the U.S. Census Bureau released. There were year-over-year increases in all major segments—public, private residential and private nonresidential.

The Dallas-Plano-Irving, Texas metro area added the most construction jobs during the past year (15,400 jobs, 10 percent), followed by Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, Nev. (11,000 jobs, 17 percent). Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise had the largest percentage increase, followed by 15-percent gains in Omaha-Council Bluffs, Neb.-Iowa (4,500 jobs), Sioux Falls, S.D. (1,300 jobs) and Auburn-Opelika, Ala. (400 jobs). Construction employment set a new high for November in 71 metro areas and a new November low in six areas.

From November 2018 to November 2019, construction employment fell in 77 metros and was flat in 55. The largest declines occurred in New York City (-6,900 jobs, -4 percent) and Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif. (-4,300 jobs, -4 percent). The largest percentage decreases took place in Danville, Ill. (-17 percent, -100 jobs), Fairbanks, Alaska (-12 percent, -300 jobs) and Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, Conn. (-11 percent, -2,300 jobs).

Here is data for some North Carolina communities, including suburban areas overlapping other states.

(Numbers are employment totals in Nov. 2018, Nov. 2019, the percentage change, the number of employees added (lost) and the national ranking.)

	employment totals in Nov. 2018	employment totals in Nov. 2019	Percentage Change	# of Employees added	National Ranking
• Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	37,700	42,400	12%	4,700	8
• Asheville, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	10,000	10,600	6%	600	56
• Greenville, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,500	3,700	6%	200	56
• Winston-Salem, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	11,000	11,500	5%	500	89
• Raleigh, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	39,800	41,400	4%	1,600	119
• Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,300	4,400	2%	100	183
• Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC-NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	10,600	10,800	2%	200	183
• Durham-Chapel Hill, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,800	8,900	1%	100	210
• Wilmington, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,600	8,700	1%	100	210
• Burlington, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	2,900	2,900	0%	0	227
• Fayetteville, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	5,800	5,800	0%	0	227
• Greensboro-High Point, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	15,700	15,700	0%	0	227
• Rocky Mount, NC Mining, Logging, and Construction	2,600	2,600	0%	0	227
• Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Mining, Logging, and Construction	64,600	62,700	-3%	-1,900	313

The new spending and employment data comes as the association's 2020 Construction Outlook survey found that for each of 13 project types, more contractors expect an increase in 2020 than a decrease in the dollar value of projects they compete for. Three-fourths of the 956 respondents expect to add workers this year, while only 5 percent expect a decrease. However, 65 percent say it will be as hard or harder to hire workers than in 2019, when 81 percent said they had a hard time finding qualified workers to hire.

Association officials added that labor shortages are forcing contractors to boost pay, invest more in training and adopt new labor-saving technologies. But they cautioned that those changes are not enough to allow many contractors to keep pace with growing demand, noting many firms report they have raised bid prices or proposed longer construction schedules because of labor shortages.

"The single greatest threat to continued growth in the construction industry is the shortage of qualified candidates for firms to hire," said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association's chief executive officer. "That is why Congress and the Trump administration must act quickly to boost investments in career and technical education and allow more people with construction skills to legally enter the country."

[View the metro employment data, rankings, top 10 and map.](#) [View the 2020 Construction Outlook Survey.](#)



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Integration key to lean construction

By Amanda J. Lamela
North Carolina Construction News
special feature

During the Great Recession of the late 2000s and early 2010s, construction companies realized in order to survive, they would have to get lean. Not as well-known as lean manufacturing, lean construction also involves managing and improving processes with minimum cost and maximum value by focusing on customer needs and sustained profitability.

The digital revolution has helped the construction industry catch up with other industries in producing a lean workflow. But as with any new business concept, adoption can be slow while some people remain married to their longtime business processes.

"For many family-run construction companies, changing business processes doesn't happen overnight," said Tim Lambert, the director of specialized industries at Practical Software Solutions. "Multi-generational companies sometimes have a hard time of letting go of 'the way Grandma kept the books' because for the longest time, it worked."

While the concept of industry-focused software is not new, the idea of having an integrated, construction-specific software suite is new to the industry.

"When trying to get lean, integration is the key," Lambert said. "While software itself can help with calculations, measurements, and collecting data, automation truly comes when programs directly connect with each other."

While many software products will be advertised as "integrated with" construction software, Lambert said it often means the two products may work together, but there's no formal connection.

"'Works with' and 'integrated with' are not the same thing," he

said. "Integration almost always means the source code is shared between the parties so a true connection is bridged between two products. If you're uploading or rekeying in data from one program to another, that's not an integration."

According to Lambert, any time a person interacts with the software, it increases the chance that errors will join the equation.

"It's not just the points where there's data entry, which obviously opens the door for everything from spelling errors to transposed digits," he said. "Every point where a person needs to download data from one program and re-upload it into another adds another touchpoint for errors to creep in. This is why a true integration is so important."

Season West, the CFO at Harker in Charlotte, said switching to Sage 100 Contractor "tremendously" helped their company get lean. She first noticed the difference during the first check run she made after the implementation.

"It saved as 4 1/2, 5 hours a week or more to be able to run our lien waivers through the system instead of check runs," she said. "It only takes us 30 minutes to an hour now."

West said payroll is "a piece of cake" now she doesn't have to double-enter data. With an Atrix e-file connection, she had the company's W-2s distributed on Jan. 2. "It's so easy because everything's in Sage and all I have to do is click a button."

Having a reliable software partner helped Harker become more self-sufficient, she said, which also lent to a leaner workflow.

"Tim Lambert taught me how to create my own reports to make the software run to our advantage," West said. "Now the CEO and Owner change orders run through Sage. This helped the construction

side get in to Sage and out of Excel."

Mobile workforce needs integration too

In the past few years, mobile technology for the construction industry has evolved from just being able to receive calls, texts and e-mails while on the job site. But just like any other program mobile technology must integrate with the software back in the office in order to provide a lean workflow.

Lambert said it wasn't long ago when construction-specific mobile applications were available to use in the field, but they required to be brought back to the office and uploaded into the system.

"If there's any extra steps involved, there's the chance of something happening," he said. "What if the mobile phone is lost, crushed, or dropped in water before returning back to the office?"

While some apps and mobile products still rely on a manual connection, products like Sage Construction Project Center are directly integrated with Sage 100 Contractor and Sage 300 Construction and Real Estate, Lambert said. These mobile solutions allow service technicians, field technicians, superintendents, project managers, office staff and even customers to have instantaneous access to data from the main construction software suite.

"To put it another way, you get a single source of truth," he said. "Apps and mobile solutions like these are leading the way when it comes to lean construction. Nightly data syncs or administrative postings are a thing of the past. They also highlight the two of the most important attributes of lean construction: improved customer service and sustainable profitability."

Poettker Construction achieves record-breaking revenue in 2019

Company makes impact in Midwest and Southeast regions heading into 40th anniversary year

North Carolina Construction News special feature

Poettker Construction Company has much to celebrate heading into the new decade. The second-generation family-owned construction company says it has surpassed 2019 projections and increased its revenue by a record-breaking 30 percent over the prior year.

“What a tremendous way to end the year for our company,” president Keith Poettker said in a statement. “We’re very proud of our culture, along with our talented professionals and the strong relationships we have with both our clients, business partners and trade contractors. The celebration of Poettker’s 40th year in business this year is truly arriving at the perfect time.”

Several company milestones and a diverse portfolio of projects from both recurring and new clients propelled Poettker to achieve this revenue milestone in 2019. The company enhanced its team, hiring more than 30 employees in the fields of construction management, site supervision and support roles. Poettker also saw a 40 percent increase in manhours this past year alone, earning the company a safety award for outstanding performance in the 300,000+ manhour category.



Left to Right: Tom Albers, Vice President Field Operations; Jon Carroll, Vice President Project Management; Keith Poettker, President; Charles (Chuck) Poettker, Chairman & CEO; Kimberly Luitjohan, Vice President Finance; Ryan Poettker, Executive Vice President & Chief Operations Officer; Kevin Poettker, Director of Business Development.

Last year, to better serve its clients nationally and help support the growth of its team, Poettker opened its new 40,000-sq. ft. headquarters in Breese, IL. and a Southeast regional office in Charlotte. Along with the expansion in the Midwest and Southeast came several strategic promotions for the multi-generation construction firm, including the appointments of Ryan Poettker to executive vice-president and chief operations officer, and Jon Carroll to vice-president project management.

Named a U.S. Top 25 Best Warehouse Construction Contractor and ENR Midwest/Southeast Regional

Top Contractor, Poettker is currently working on projects across the United States for returning clients including Ameren; Planet Fitness; the University of Illinois; Department of Defense agencies; and various national commercial retailers. The addition of new hospitality projects in St. Louis, Mo. and \$50 million in education projects in Illinois, as well as regional market growth in the commercial, distribution, federal, retail and mixed-use sectors in 2019, positioned Poettker for continued success as the company will celebrate its 40th year in business in 2020.



AFRC Consolidated Mission Complex project that wrapped up in Robins AFB, Georgia last year.

Legislature creates deadlines for director's decisions on verified claims submitted to the North Carolina Office of State Construction

By Paul E. Davis

Special to North Carolina Construction News

Last summer, Gov. Roy Cooper signed into law the first significant changes to the State's "Verified Claims" process in over 30 years.

Senate Bill 255 (ratified as S.L. 2019-39) amended N.C. Gen. Stat. §143-135.3. The legislation was titled "An act providing the time period in which the Director of the Office of State Construction shall issue a final order allowing or denying a contractor's verified written claim."

As the title of the legislation states, the General Assembly added specific deadlines for the Director of the Office of State Construction to issue decisions on verified claims submitted to his office. This is a significant change to existing law as it effects virtually all claims bought by contractors on state construction projects. Claims on North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) projects are not, however, affected by this legislation. Claims on NCDOT projects are subject to a separate Verified Claims process under N.C. Gen. Stat. §136-26.

The significance of the amendment to §143-135.3 is greater than just the breadth of claims affected. There are now clearly stated deadlines for the director to issue final decisions on Verified Claims.

Prior to this amendment, the only deadline in §143-135.3 was that "the Director shall investigate a submitted claim within 90 days of receiving the claim, or within any longer time period upon which the Director and the contractor agree." That was the extent of any express deadline for the director to act.

The Office of State Construction has for many years taken the position that the 90-day deadline was a



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deadline to begin the investigation and nothing more; that there was nothing in this statute or in any other statute or regulation that set a deadline for issuance of the director's decision on the claim.

Senate Bill 255 deleted that sentence and added three specific deadlines for the director's decision depending on the amount of the claim.

For claims of less than \$100,000, the director "shall investigate and issue a final written decision" within 120 days of receipt of the contractor's Verified Claim;

For claims of at least \$100,000 but less than \$5,000,000, the direc-

tor shall investigate and issue a final written decision within 180 days of receipt of the contractor's Verified Claim; and

For claims of \$5 million or more, the director shall investigate and issue a final written decision within 270 days of receipt of the contractor's Verified Claim.

The General Assembly also added a "deemed denied" provision to the statute. If the Director does not issue a final written decision within the applicable time period (or at the expiration of any mutually agreed-upon extended time period) the Verified Claim will be deemed denied. The addition of the

“deemed denied” provision removes uncertainty as to the effect of the director’s failure to timely act.

Without the Director’s written final decision on a Verified Claim, a contractor is unable to seek further review of its claim either by commencing a contested case under the North Carolina Administrative Procedure Act or by commencing a civil action in North Carolina Superior Court. The addition of deadlines and the deemed denied provision are welcome changes to the Verified Claim process.

The amendment to the statute was effective on Jan. 1, 2020 and applies to Verified Claims submitted on or after that date.

<https://www.ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/sessionlaws/pdf/2019-2020/sl2019-39.pdf>.

Paul Davis is a construction lawyer



with Conner Gwyn Schenck PLLC, based in Raleigh. He has studied and briefed virtually every aspect of construction contract law and concentrates his practice in the areas of construction arbitration and litigation and contract drafting and negotiation for public and private clients, including general contractors, construction managers, and subcontractors. He can be reached by email at pdavis@cgspllc.com or by phone at (919) 789-9242 (Ext. 2343).

Raleigh-Durham top growing city in country – if you’re arriving with a U-Haul



North Carolina Construction News staff writer

Raleigh-Durham is the top-growing city in the country, according to new data from the do-it-yourself moving company U-Haul.

The metro area was number one for growth in 2019, the company said in a statement, adding that the rankings were based on the number of self-service trucks that went to various cities and left on one-way trips.

“We’re seeing Silicon Valley talent and companies flock to the area,” Kris Smith, the company’s Raleigh president, said in a January news release. “With a competitive cost of living, good wages and job growth, Raleigh-Durham is experi-

encing a boom in population.”

Statewide, North Carolina ranked No. 3 for growth in the United States, a jump from No. 24 the previous year, according to U-Haul.

“Arrivals of one-way U-Haul trucks in the Raleigh-Durham market were up more than 3 percent, while departures dropped more than 2 percent, compared to the market’s 2018 numbers,” the news release said.

Wilmington also cracked the top 25 list of places for growth – finishing at 24.

U-Haul says its numbers don’t have a direct correlation to population but can be “an effective gauge of how well cities and states are attracting and maintaining residents.”

NORTH CAROLINA CONSTRUCTION NEWS

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For information contact:
Chase, Phone: 1-888-627-8717 ext 212
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North Carolina Construction News staff writer

Here are some projects and opportunities recently reported in North Carolina Construction News. You can keep up to date on new projects at the nconstruction-news.com website or by subscribing to the weekly eletter.

LLFlex to invest \$7.6 million in new High Point building

Kentucky-based LLFlex will invest \$7.6 million in a new building in High Point and add 46 jobs, officials announced on Jan. 7.



HeLLFlex has custom packaging and lamination solutions for the construction, tobacco and wire and cable industries for more than 90 years, the governor's office said Tuesday in a news release announcing the investment.

The business will open in a new building in the Gallimore Industrial Center, 738 Gallimore Dairy Rd., the High Point Economic Development Corp. says.

New five-story office building to start construction in Morrisville

Construction will start soon on a five-story, 198,535 sq. ft. office building in Morrisville.

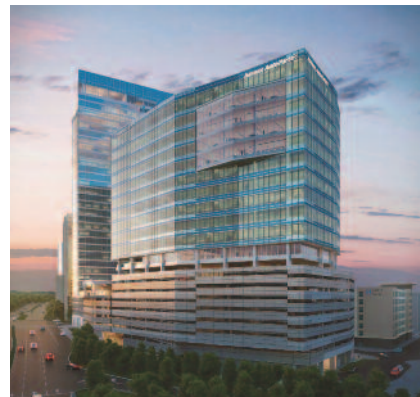
Indianapolis-based Strategic Capital Partners and FCP of Chevy Chase, MD, said that the Class A building will be situated on 16.2 acres at 712 Slater Rd. overlooking the Interstate 40/540 interchange. The building has been given the name Forty540 phase II, *Triangle Business Journal* reports.

The project is expected to be completed by mid-2021.

Griffin Electric providing installation work on in-progress Advance Auto Parts tower in Raleigh

Electrical subcontractor Wayne J. Griffin Electric, Inc. says it is currently providing installation work on Advance Auto Parts Tower, a 328,600-sq. ft. mixed-use commercial building in Raleigh.

The tower is expected to open in the fall of 2020 and will stand 20-stories high. In addition to 11 floors of office space, the building will also feature an eight-level parking garage, retail space, as well as access to a conference center and terrace-level amenities. Situated in the heart of North Hills in midtown Raleigh, the building is adjacent to a 35-story residential tower and is within walking distance of a variety of restaurants, hotels, retail shops, and entertainment options.



The Raleigh-Durham Griffin team is responsible for the electrical and lighting systems on-site. Griffin Electric's work will also include installing power distribution, lightning protection, fire alarm systems, and a 750 kW unit generator.

The project team, which anticipates LEED Certification due to the building's high resource efficiency, also includes construction manager Holder Construction Company. Duda Paine Architects, LLP of Durham is serving as the architect, while Crenshaw Consulting Engineers of Raleigh is the project's electrical engineer.

Middleburg Communities

to build 250-unit multifamily project in Wilmington

Middleburg Communities is entering the Wilmington market with a 250-unit multifamily project to be constructed on a newly acquired 9.3-acre site in the Newland master-planned Riverlights community, *Multi-Housing News* reports. Construction of Mosby at Riverlights, a Class A apartment community at 4027 Watercraft Ferry Ave., is scheduled to start imminently with leasing beginning in late 2020.

Middleburg Construction is serving as general contractor and McKim & Creed is providing civil engineering services. Cline Design Associates is the architect of record, interior designer and landscape architect.

Duke Realty begins construction on industrial building near Raleigh

Duke Realty Corp. has announced that it is building a new, speculative, 165,921-sq.-ft. bulk warehouse south of Raleigh.

Located in Garner, the project dubbed Greenfield North 1201 will be the eighth industrial building owned and operated by Duke Realty in the Greenfield North Business Park. All of the company's other buildings in the park are currently 100 percent leased.

Construction on Greenfield North 1201 is underway and is set to complete in July 2020.

Greenfield North 1201 will feature 32' clear height, 50' x 50' column spacing, 30 – 9' x 10' dock doors, two 12' x 14' drive-in doors, an ESFR fire protection system and 2,400-amp electrical service. Outside the building will be a 120' truck court and parking for 96 trailers and 129 automobiles.

Diversity and inclusion

How can designers and contractors go beyond the percentage requirement?

North Carolina Construction News staff writer

How can architects, engineers and contractors go beyond “the percentage requirement” in achieving diversity and inclusion in teaming and project execution?

Panelists at a Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) Research Triangle Chapter event discussed this challenging issue on Jan. 14.

Speakers included moderator Candis Parker with Balfour Beatty, with Renee Jones (All for 1), Chris Hilt (CLH Design, PA) and Pamela Gales (HUB program manager for Wake County Public Schools System).

“Each of these panelists drew on their passions for creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace,” Donna Francis from Clark Nexsen reported on the chapter’s website. “Their experiences and insights into the topic left us all with some provocative thoughts on how to promote an office culture that embraces the value of diversity and inclusion.”

As the panelists reflected on what Diversity and Inclusion really means, Hilt shared this quote from Vernā Myers: “Diversity is getting invited to the party, but inclusion is being asked to dance.”

In the past, the thought that we have people from different backgrounds and cultures within our company is enough to claim diversity in the workplace, but as Renee Jones stated, true inclusion is difficult.

“As our community becomes more diverse, the workforce must be shaped to create a safe, accommodating atmosphere for all employees to grow and achieve their



potential. Inclusion is not just the responsibility of leadership or HR,” Francis wrote. “Young professionals need advocates within the workplace who can recognize their potential and offer pathways to leadership for development.”

All panelists shared that true inclusion happens when leadership begins to think outside the box while building our work environments. “From thinking differently about potential job candidates, inviting potential partners into our work environment, to selecting leaders with opposing viewpoints can help to build the inclusive workforce that we are all seeking,” she wrote.

Relating to women in the design professions, panelists observed that currently 54 percent of graduates are women, but only 24 percent of those graduates seek licensure. Creating family-friendly workplaces and providing professional and leadership training can increase the number of licensed, professional women in leadership positions.

We should ask ourselves, “does

the culture of our workplace embrace diversity and inclusion?,” Gales said. Change can happen from a grassroots level.

Gales also discussed the importance of supplier diversity, in that as businesses we need to look beyond the normal way of doing business and support small businesses to keep local economic growth stable. There are many programs in place to support WMBE firms which offer training and professional interaction to grow and learn how to succeed in the current work environment. Diversity and inclusion can positively impact the bottom line of any company.

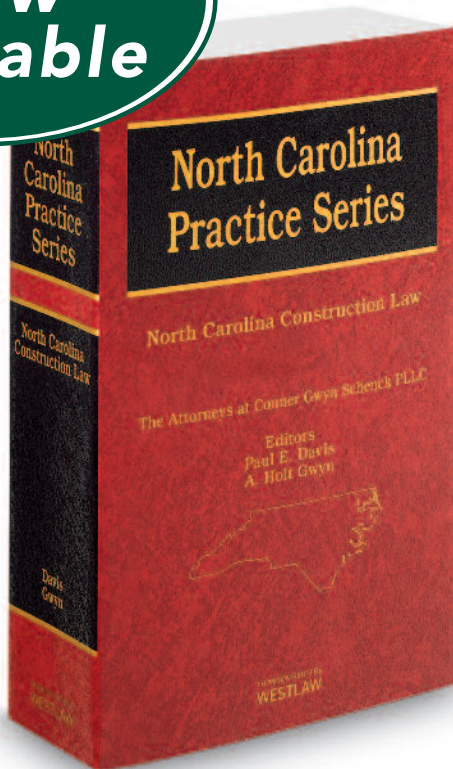
“As attendees, we were all inspired by the leadership initiatives of this panel toward creating better workplaces for all employees, and better communities through these efforts,” Francis wrote. “I know that I left thinking more about how we can make our firm a place where ‘everybody is invited to dance.’”

North Carolina Construction Law Treatise

By Conner Gwyn Schenck PLLC

2019-2020 edition

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North Carolina Construction Law offers in-depth analysis of construction law and contractual relationships in North Carolina with citations to relevant cases, statutes, rules, and regulations. In addition to contractual issues, the text discusses sureties and bonds, warranties, bankruptcy, building codes, licensure, mediation, and arbitration.

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