

Issue No. 15 • Wednesday, April 16, 2025 • www.mbex.org

Ahhh, deep breaths, MBEXers; another tax day is in the rearview mirror. We've got a solid 250-ish days before we have to think about that again. In the meantime, let's turn our attention to something way more exciting: the 2025-2026 MBEX / TBG Construction Scholarship is officially open for applications! If you know a student pursuing a construction-related degree at a trade school, technical or community college, or university, send them our way. Details are just a scroll away  $\Box$  and as always, reach out with questions --- whether it's about the scholarship, MBEX, or which Taylor Swift album deserves the crown (I have thoughts).  $\Box$ 



**By Ashlee** *Membership & Communications Manager* 

## Five Quick Things To Know & Do This Week:

- 1.) Our next <u>Online Plan Room Demo</u> is this Thursday (April 17) at 9:00am. Open to both members and non-members, this 1-hour virtual session is a walk-through of our digital platform covering the basics, such as setting up a project search filter, accessing bidders lists, and more  $\Box$
- 2.) Construction materials <u>price escalations across the board</u> reflect early impacts from tariffs and mark the third straight month of price jumps. Both overall and nonresidential input prices are now 0.8% higher than a year ago and sit more than 40% higher compared to February 2020, largely due to a sharp rise in natural gas, steel, copper and lumber prices
- 3.) Congratulations goes out to member, Loeffler Construction. Two of their flagship projects from 2024, the Minneapolis American Indian Center and the Antlers Park Redevelopment, <u>have been named finalists</u> for the *Minnesota Real Estate Journal* Real Estate Awards  $\square$
- PS Want to see your company get a shout-out? Send your updates, achievements, promotions, awards, and other good news worth sharing to Ashlee at ah@mbex.org.
- 4.) If you missed *Construction Executive's* Q1 Construction Economic Update & Forecast webinar on April 2 with ABC's chief economist Anirban Basu, you can catch <u>a</u> roundup of the top takeaways here □
- 5.) When in doubt, call it 'biophilic design'  $\square$   $\square$

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- Scholarship: Now accepting applications for the 2025-2026 MBEX Scholarship
- To-Dos: Nine essential workplace law updates to track this month
- Tips & Tricks: Emailing multiple companies at once directly from the plan room
- MnDOT: 2025 state construction projects announced
- Upcoming: Minn. Construction Teachers Conference & Construction Safety Week
- Five Headlines: What to know about Flow-Down Clauses, agencies have been ordered to 'sunset' environmental protections, extending the life of your work boots, addressing the language gap in construction, & protecting construction costs against the impact of 2025 tariffs
- Project of the Week: Brooklyn Parks OKs Fire Station & Industrial Building Plans
- Industry Event: Construction Seminar May 20 Let's Talk About Cranes
- Member Benefit: Uniforms & Facility Services with UniFirst

# MEMBER NEWS + EVENTS



# Now Accepting 2025-2026 Scholarship Applications

The online portal is officially OPEN, and we are now accepting applications for the 2025-2026 MBEX / TBG Construction Scholarship

Sine 2003, the MBEX / TBG Scholarship Fund has awarded 167 scholarships for a total of \$326,500. We are proud of our ongoing tradition of supporting and empowering the future generation of construction industry leaders together with our partner, The **Builders Group Education Foundation** 

# How Do I Know If I, or Someone I Know, Qualify For This Scholarship?

To qualify for an MBEX / TBG Construction Scholarship, an applicant must:

- Be pursuing a construction-related field of study at an accredited post-secondary educational institution, be it at a trade school, a two-year technical or community college, or a four-year university.
- Be entering the Fall 2025 semester as a freshmen, sophomore, or junior. Students completing their degree beyond the traditional four years may also be eligible to apply.
- · Be studying at an accredited post-secondary educational institution located in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Wisconsin.
- Be maintaining a GPA of 2.5 or higher.
- Possess a strong passion for the construction and building industry.
- Agree to and attend a minimum of ONE MBEX-sponsored event during Fall 2025, Spring 2026, or Summer 2026. (For applicants living outside of Minnesota who may be awarded a scholarship, further discussion will be had with MBEX staff.)

# **Can Previous Scholarship Recipients Reapply?**

Yes, previous scholarship recipients are more than welcome to reapply as long as they continue to meet scholarship criteria and are not entering their final semester of study in the Fall of 2025.

#### What is the Deadline for Submission?

Applications must be submitted via the online portal, including all requested documentation, no later than 11:55pm on Friday, May 31, 2025. Failure to provide a complete application will result in the immediate disqualification of one's application.

#### Where Do I Submit My Application?

Head to the online portal found via Kaleidoscope here: apply.mykaleidoscope.com/program/MBEXScholarshipApplications2025

#### **How Much Do Awarded Recipients Receive?**

Scholarships can range from \$500 - \$5,000.

#### When Do Applicants Find Out If They Were Awarded a Scholarship or Not?

In early June, the MBEX Scholarship Committee reviews and scores all qualified applications, meets to discuss and selects awardees. They also determine dollar amounts to be awarded to each selected applicant. All applicants, whether chosen to receive a scholarship or not, will be notified in early July of their application status.

#### I Have More Questions. Who Should I Contact?

Questions can be directed to Ashlee at <a href="mailto:ah@mbex.org">ah@mbex.org</a> or <a href="mailto:(612) 381-2631">(612) 381-2631</a> during regular MBEX business hours.

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All of this information, and more, can also be found on our website at <a href="https://www.mbex.org/scholarships">www.mbex.org/scholarships</a>. An informational packet is also available for download (found below). Please share with family, friends, and colleagues who may be interested in applying for this financial opportunity!

**Apply Now** 

**Download Packet** 



## Nine Workplace Law Updates for April

MBEX is here to help our members stay on top of the latest changes and have an action plan for compliance when it comes to workplace laws, especially given the rapid pace at which the White House has acted in the first months of President Trump's second term.



For the latest changes and a compliance action plan, here's a quick review of some critical developments tracked in March and a checklist of the essential items you should consider addressing throughout the remaining days of April.

#### 1.) Track Changes Under the New Administration

President Trump's second term passed the 80-day mark in April --- and the new administration has moved at such a high speed that a recap was needed.

#### 2.) Keep Up with Evolving Guidance on DEI Practices

Employers received some clarity on March 19 about the types of workplace programs that may be risky under President Trump's recent executive orders relating to illegal diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. <a href="Here's what you need to know">Here's what you need to know</a> about the EEOC's latest guidance.

#### 3.) Review the Flurry of Immigration Updates

A new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rule --- which was announced March 7 and took effect on April 11 --- significantly expands foreign national registration enforcement by requiring certain noncitizens to register with the government, provide biometric data, and carry proof of registration. Learn more about what this means for employers.

## 4.) Adapt to Big Changes for Federal Contract Compliance

Federal contractors have been grappling with seismic shifts from the new administration --- and you'll want to pay close attention as new leadership takes shape at the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). President Trump appointed a new director on March 24 whose objectives include combating illegal DEI by reviewing affirmative action plans. Here's what federal contractors need to know about Catherine Eschbach's appointment and what you can expect next.

## 5.) Check Your Noncompetes for Compliance Even as FTC Shifts

In a somewhat surprising development, President Trump's new Federal Trade Commissioner announced in March that the agency intends to continue scrutinizing noncompete agreements and other arrangements the agency feels are unfair to workers. But while the FTC remains interested in noncompetes, its expected the new leadership will address them through investigations and enforcement actions, not through rulemaking. Here are answers to your top five questions on this topic.

#### 6.) Create Your Multi-State Privacy Compliance Plan

With eight states rolling out new privacy laws in 2025 (including Minnesota) and many more already on the books, businesses have never faced a more fragmented regulatory landscape. These laws will expand consumer rights, impose stricter data governance obligations, and create a complex compliance environment for businesses operating across state lines. Here's a breakdown of each law's unique requirements and practical guidance you can put into place right away.

#### 7.) Stay Tuned for Updates on the H-1B Cap Season

The H-1B registration window is now closed, and you will need to respond accordingly as you learn whether your candidates were selected. For selected candidates, employers must submit a detailed, individual nonimmigrant petition filing (USCIS will accept filings through the end of June). If your candidate was not selected, you'll want to stay tuned to see if a second lottery takes place. Read this employers' guide to navigating H-1B season.

# 8.) Monitor Legal Challenges to Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) Rules

The PWFA rules mandating that employers provide abortion-related accommodations are facing intensifying legal challenges now that a federal appeals court allowed a group of states to challenge the law. At the same time, the newly appointed Acting EEOC Chair, Andrea Lucas, has publicly opposed her agency's own abortion-related accommodation rules. Despite these developments, the PWFA and its rules remain in effect for now. Learn more about these developments and your compliance obligations.

#### 9.) Catch Up on Al News

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming all aspects of the work environment, making it essential to track new developments:

- Litigation heats up over Al screening tools
- You may want to review the findings in a recent report from <u>Colorado's Al Task</u>
   Force.
- Meanwhile, many of the country's most influential tech companies recently called for a
  unified federal approach to provide clarity and consistency for businesses, particularly
  those using AI in hiring, HR, and workplace automation. The companies were
  responding to the White House's request for feedback by March 15 on its AI plan.
  Here's a breakdown of the key proposals and their potential implications.

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The information provided in this article is intended for general informational purposes only. It should not be considered as legal advice. We strongly recommend consulting with your business's attorney or legal advisor before taking any actions based on its content.

### **Dive Deeper**





#### TIPS & TRICKS:

Email Multiple Companies Directly From the Online Plan Room

Need to email multiple companies bidding on a project?

Save time (and clicks) with this simple step-by-step guide on how to email them all --- or just a few --- bidders at once directly from the Online Plan Room.

We've laid it all out in a quick step-by-step guide. Here's how:

- (1.) **Find your project** by searching the Project ID, checking your tracked projects, or browsing the full list of projects out for bid.
- (2.) Click the Bidders tab to see who's interested.
- (3.) Select your contacts --- check the box next to a division (like Electrical or

General) to select them all, or hand-pick individual companies.

- (4.) Click the orange button with the envelope icon on the left-hand side.
- (5.) **Write your message and send.** An email automatically opens with all selected addresses pre-loaded in the BCC line.

It's really that easy.

Download the full PDF guide by clicking the image on the right and become a bulk-emailing wizard in less than 2 minutes.





#### MnDOT Announced 2025 State Construction Projects

The Minnesota Department of Transportation announced on April 2nd nearly 180 road construction projects this season that will help maintain and improve Minnesota's roads, bridges and transportation infrastructure; improve safety and mobility; and support jobs that will be worked on statewide.

The 2025 construction season includes nearly 180 planned road and bridge projects, plus 51 projects that will improve airports, water ports, railroad crossings and transit infrastructure.

Significant projects this year include:

#### In & Around the Twin Cities Metro Area:

- Repairing five bridges along I-94 in Minneapolis, including the Mississippi River bridge;
- Resurfacing Interstate 35W in Burnsville and repairing or replacing bridges at three locations;
- Replacing or repairing bridges on I-494 between Edina and Richfield and over Minnesota River;
- Reconstructing Highway 5 / East 7th Street and Highway 61 / Arcade Street in St. Paul and Maplewood;
- Repairing 34 bridges and ramps along I-394 and I-94 in Minneapolis;
- Repairing 11 bridges including the John Ireland Boulevard bridge along I-94 and I-35E; and
- Adding a third lane in each direction on Highway 10 in Coon Rapids.

- Completing the three-year I-35 Hinkley Bridge Replacement project. In 2025, crews will replace southbound I-35W bridges spanning the Grindstone River and a railroad.
- On Highway 12 from Litchfield to Cokato, crews will complete the two-year concrete repair, culvert and accessibility improvements project.
- In northern Minnesota, crews are reconstructing Highway 371 through Hackensack to three-lanes. The project will add a center-turn lane, additional sidewalks and parallel parking on both sides of the road and install a roundabout at the Highway 371 / Cass County Road 5 intersection.
- Expanding Highway 10 through Wadena to four lanes, plus resurfacing Highways 20 and 71 and other infrastructure improvements, begins in 2025.
- The 11th Street underpass in Moorhead as the project enters the second of three years of construction. The project also includes constructing two underpasses under BNSF rail lines, paving, sidewalk improvements, utility replacements and other improvements.
- Resurfacing eastbound I-94 from Rothsay to Fergus Falls.
- From Mankato to St. Peter, work on Highway 22 will begin to replace and repair bridges, install a new roundabout at the Le Sueur County Road 21 / Highway 22 intersection and improve lighting at intersections.
- Reconstructing Highway 19 in Marshall begins its first year of construction.

Visit <u>mndot.gov/construction</u> for the statewide view of the 2025 construction season's projects. The site includes interactive maps linking to more detailed construction project websites, full project lists, and other information.

Individual project pages include information about construction schedules, detours and traffic impacts, maps, benefits, and project costs.

# **Read the Press Release**



A valuable benefit of an MBEX membership is invitations to our social and educational events; by being an employee of a member company, you too can take advantage and attend any and all MBEX-sponsored events.

#### **April 17 - Online Plan Room Demo**

From navigating the Deskpad, setting up filters, understanding project information, and adding your company to a project's bidders lists, this free one-hour session is a great introduction to our Online Plan Room. Register Here

#### May 1 & 2 - Minnesota Construction Teacher Conference

The MCTC engage secondary and post-secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) educators of the construction trades in cutting-edge professional development supported by the industry. <u>Learn More</u>

\*\* May 5-9 - Construction Safety Week

<sup>\*\*</sup> indicates a newly added or updated event



Construction Safety Week is an opportunity for people, companies, and even competitors, to work together and celebrate the incredibly hard work by people in the construction industry who make safety the foundation of everything they do. <a href="Learn More"><u>Learn More</u></a>

#### May 6 - Bluebeam 1: Baseline Basics

Attendees will learn interface navigation including menu dropdowns, toolbars, various tool panels, keyboard shortcuts and a few recommended settings. While learning various markup and measurement tools, several tips and tricks will be shared to increase accuracy and speed. Register Here

#### May 7 - Bluebeam 2: Material Takeoffs & Estimates (Basic)

Attendees will go through the standard measurement tools and settings, then move into various customization options and discuss the results in the Markups List. Register Now

#### May 7 - Young Professionals Network (YPN)

From college students, graduates and interns, to those just getting started within the construction industry, the MBEX Young Professionals Network creates a forum for emerging young professionals, providing resources to connect and begin networking. Register Now

#### May 8 - Bluebeam 3: Material Takeoffs & Estimates (Advanced)

After finishing the Bluebeam Takeoffs & Estimates (Basic) course, attendees will move into creating custom columns, embedding formulas, and information organization. Register Here

#### \*\* May 15 - Online Plan Room Demo

From navigating the Deskpad, setting up filters, understanding project information, and adding your company to a project's bidders lists, this free one-hour session is a great introduction to our Online Plan Room. *Registration Not Yet Open* 

#### May 26 - Memorial Day

MBEX will be closed in observance of the Memorial Day holiday.

#### June 4 - Member Appreciation BBQ

Join MBEX for a casual afternoon of Famous Dave's barbecue, cold beverages, a handful of door prizes, and great company and networking. Register Here

#### June 17 - Twin Cities Golf Tournament

Gather a foursome of golfers for a day out on the greens at Oak Glen's course in Stillwater for a par-tee with MBEX, fellow members, coworkers, and clients, complete with a grilled lunch, 18-holes, happy hour, awards and door prize giveaways, and dinner. Register Here

**View 2025 MBEX Events Calendar** 



#### YOUR SOURCE. YOUR RESOURCE.

Plymouth | Mendota Heights | St. Paul | Rochester Elk River | St. Cloud | Brainerd | Duluth

# **CONSTRUCTION HEADLINES**

Five construction-related headlines you need to read over the next coffee break.

**LEGAL MATTERS** 

#### ☐ What GCs Should Know About Flow-Down Clauses

Flow-down clauses are a ubiquitous part of the agreement between prime contractors and subcontractors, to the point that parties often sign them without giving them a careful read. But they're not always as effective as they could be, especially when misunderstood or under-explained, according to attorneys. And while these clauses can be exhaustive, they are rarely encompassing enough to protect GCs from the actions of subs who fall off track. (Construction Dive)

#### ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

# ☐ Trump Orders Agencies to 'Sunset' Environmental Protections

On April 9, President Trump issued an executive order directing agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Energy Department, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, and Fish and Wildlife Service, to amend a wide array of environmental protections and regulations so they expire by October 2026. The order applies to all regulations issued under laws governing things like energy appliance standards, mining and offshore drilling --- as well as regulations issued under the Endangered Species Act. (*The Hill*)

#### WORKWEAR

#### ☐ Extend the Life of Your Work Boots in a Few Simple Steps

To prolong the life of a work boot, avoid placing unnecessary pressure or friction on the boot. For example, using the toe of the boot to kick pallets or push heavy equipment can damage the outer materials and compromise safety toe caps that are designed to keep feet protected. (For Construction Pros)

#### JOBSITE SAFETY

#### ☐ Addressing the Language Gap in Construction

Language barriers in the construction industry are a pervasive problem which are not being adequately addressed. These obstacles present severe consequences in terms of safety, work efficiency and workforce morale. Effective communication --- facilitated by language training and technology ---- is essential for creating a safer and more productive environment on construction sites. (Construction Business Owner)

#### **TARIFFS**

#### □ Protecting Against the Impact of 2025 Tariffs on Construction Costs

The tariffs on steel and other materials, along with the recently initiated Section 232 investigations on copper, lumber and derivative products, raise concerns in the construction industry regarding the increased cost of building materials to inflated project costs, potential delays and reduced profitability. It's anticipated that the newly implemented tariffs on Canada and Mexico will similarly cause significant impact on the U.S. construction industry. (Construction Executive)



PROJECT OF THE WEEK



# Brooklyn Park OKs Fire Station, Industrial Building Plans

#### Read more on Finance & Commerce

The Brooklyn Park Planning Commission recommended approval of a site plan for a new 64,488-square-foot fire station at the corner of Zane Avenue and Edinbrook Terrace. The sustainably designed new building would replace an existing, undersized station.

Separately, the commission signed off on a preliminary plat and site plan for a proposed 88,000-square-foot speculative office and industrial building within United Properties' 610 Junction business park. The 6.4-acre project site is adjacent to Highway 169 at the end of 95th Avenue North.

Designed by CNH Architects, the new fire station will house five to seven frontline emergency vehicles and is designed for future expansion, according to city staff. The project includes sustainable features such as solar readiness, efficient boilers, LED lighting and natural lighting.

The new building will also offer health and wellness features not contained in the existing structure.

The City Council will review the fire station's site plan on April 28.

Developed by United Properties, the proposed industrial building would be "Building 4" within the 610 Junction business park. Located on a 53-acre site, 610 Junction includes three existing buildings with a combined 556,000-square-feet of space. Separately, 610 Junction West offers a 126,000-square-foot "Building I" and a 1115,000-square-foot "Building II."

The proposed Building 4 would accommodate a "single tenant or multiple tenants," with 10% to 15% of the space used for offices, according to a city staff report.

Like the fire station, the industry building will be solar ready.

The original plan, dating to 2007, showed "office, multi-family, restaurant / retail, and hotel uses," but those plans were later changed to include institutional and manufacturing.

ABOVE PHOTO: CNH Architects' rendering of the proposed 64,888-square-foot Brooklyn Park fire station that recently received site plan approval from the city's planning commission.



Bismarck
Bismarck, ND 58504
701.255.5982

Fargo Fargo, ND 58102 701.235.4224 Baxter, MN 56425 218.765.3450 Sioux Falls Sioux Falls, SD 57104

605.367.3176

**Des Moines**Des Moines, IA 50317
515.265.8030

**St. Paul** St. Paul, MN 55126 651.483.6631

# **UPCOMING INDUSTRY EVENTS**



# Let's Talk About Cranes in Construction

Presented by Minn. Department of Labor and Industry

DATE: Tuesday, May 20

TIME: 7:00am - 9:00am

LOCATION: In-Person @ Department of Labor and Industry - 443 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, Minn., 55155 | Virtually via Microsoft Teams

**Register to Attend Virtually** 

**COST**: Free

Crane-lift plans and critical-lift plans are the blueprints for safe and efficient crane operations on construction sites. Operators and project managers use these plans to ensure cranes move smoothly and safely when lifting heavy loads.

To learn more, join Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance, in-person or online, for its final Construction Seminar of the 2024/2025 season.

Topics during this seminar include:

- Who needs to be a certified or qualified operator?
- Are operators of digger derricks required to be qualified or certified?
- What is required in the testing for certification?
- Does an operator need more than one certification?
- How is an operator certified or qualified?
- What other roles and responsibilities are required in crane operations?

Presenters at this Construction Seminar include:

#### Scott H. Richert, Sr.

The Travelers Companies

Risk Control Technical Specialist - Construction, Energy and Marine

 He has been a regional director and field manager, and is The Travelers national technical manager for fall protection and crane subject matter expert.

#### Lisa Hollingsworth MNOSHA Compliance

Principal Safety Investigator

• She will discuss OSHA's perspective on cranes.

# **MEMBER BENEFITS**



#### Benefit of the Week: UniFirst

MBEX Members who join <u>National Purchasing Partners (NPP)</u> can enjoy specially negotiated rates from UniFrist, a full-service employee uniform and facility service provider.

Nearly 2-million people go to work each day in a uniform hygienically cleaned, finished and delivered on a regular schedule by UniFirst.



When you join NPP (it's free!), your benefits with UniFirst include:

- 30%-60% off rental and leasing rates;
- Negotiated lost / damage costs;
- Discounted personalization and set-up charges;
- 20% off UniFirst Workwear Direct catalog purchases; and
- Free pressing of all work shirts.

Sign up today to schedule an on-site consultation and learn how to keep your employees, your facility and your bottom line looking great.

UniFirst provides uniform services for businesses of all sizes. With over 80 years of experience, UniFirst has built their reputation on quality products, dependable service and great value.

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National Purchasing Partners (NPP) is a trusted savings and solutions provider for businesses and their employees. By leveraging the purchasing power of more than 350,000 members, NPP can provide top discounts and special B2B pricing to businesses of all sizes. NPP members enjoy exclusive deals on a catalog of useful items for both work and play. Membership is free and there is never an obligation to purchase.

Plus, when you enroll via our special NPP sign-up page, MBEX receives a small royalty to further support our member services.

# PROJECT INFORMATION + UPDATES

- Total Projects Received at MBEX from 4/7/2025 4/11/2025: 91
- Total Project Leads Reported on at MBEX from 4/7/2025 4/11/2025: 24
- Total Active Projects Received / Reported on at MBEX as of 4/15/2025: 414
- Total New Projects in the Online Plan Room as of 4/15/2025: 1,907

# **DOWNLOAD HERE**

Click the button above to view the most recent project data from 4/9/2025 - 4/15/2025.

For information about the Bulletin's content, technical issues, or to place an ad (such as a Minority Notice, Job Posting, or Event Notice), contact Ashlee, Membership + Communications Manager.



The MBEX Weekly Bulletin brought to you in part by The Builders Group (TBG).

#### **UPCOMING MBEX EVENTS**

- April 17 Online Plan Room Demo
- May 1 & 2 Minnesota Construction **Teachers Conference**
- May 5 9 Construction Safety Week
- May 6 Bluebeam 1: Baseline Basics
- May 7 Bluebeam 2: Material Takeoffs & Estimates (Basic)
- May 7 Young Professionals Network (YPN) Networking Event
- May 8 Bluebeam 3: Material Takeoffs & Estimates (Advanced)
- May 15 Online Plan Room Demo
- May 26 Memorial Day MBEX Closed
- June 4 Member Appreciation BBQ
- June 17 Twin Cities Golf Tournament

Connect with the Builders Exchange:









#### Revisit Past Bulletins:

April 9 - No. 14 | April 2 - No. 13 | March 26 - No. 12 | March 19 - No. 11 | March 12 - No. 10

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