



The Masonry Update

what's happening in the masonry industry in New Jersey

NEWS FLASH: OCTOBER 14, 2021

Surfside Condo Collapse

The Surfside Condominiums in the Miami Beach area suddenly collapsed in late June killing 98 people. As the tragedy continues to be investigated, which can take several years, some preliminary reports indicate prolonged substantial concrete structural damage, delayed repairs, environmental issues and questionable design likely contributed to the collapse.

[Questionable design, construction practices likely contributed to Surfside condo collapse | Construction Dive](#)

[What we know about the Surfside condo collapse | ABC News](#)

NJDOL Cites PA Subcontractor for Wage Violations on NJ Public Works Project

A New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) investigation found that Bensalem-based subcontractor Men of Steel was in violation of New Jersey prevailing wage and worker misclassification laws while fabricating custom parts for a public works project.

“Our goal is to ensure that each worker is treated fairly at every level,” said Assistant Commissioner of Wage and Hour Compliance Joseph Petrecca. “I hope this case serves as a reminder to all public works contractors of their obligations under the law.” [NJDOL Press Release: September 15, 2021](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates and Union Masonry Contractors

On September 29, 2021 ICE hosted a webinar presented by John Adams, founder of the John Adams Law Firm in Hainesport, NJ. Mr. Adams provided an overview of the trends related to government, owner and contractor COVID-19 vaccination mandates and their implications for union masonry contractors. **Contractors only** can watch a recording of the webinar but registration is required: [COVID-19 Webinar Recording Registration](#)

CONSTRUCTION DATA

Dodge Data & Analytics

[Total Construction Starts Decline in August](#), falling 9% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$782.8 billion. Richard Branch, Chief Economist for Dodge Data & Analytics stated, “The Delta variant has raised concern that the fledgling economic recovery is stalling out, undermining the already low level of demand for most types of nonresidential buildings. However, the dollar value of projects entering planning continues to suggest that the recovery in construction starts should resume early in the new year.” *Note: September data has not been released to date*

[Dodge Momentum Index Recovers in September](#) gaining 11% to 164.9 from the revised August reading of 148.0, which was down from the July reading of 154.0. The commercial planning component increased by 13% this September, with a 32% increase from last year, and the Momentum Index showing 30% higher than last year. The strength in projects moved higher in most sectors this September with 17 projects valuing \$100 million or more entering planning. The Momentum Index gain is a sign that owners and developers are working past concerns of pricing, Delta, and politics to move forward with meeting project demands.

New Jersey's Unemployment Rate Declined

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that New Jersey unemployment rate declined in August to 7.2% with total nonfarm wage and salary employment increasing by 20,300 jobs making this the eighth consecutive month of gain.

The number of recovered jobs in New Jersey is now 468,000 or 65 percent of those lost since March and April of 2020. 6 out of 9 major private sectors saw employment increase, with construction showing a gain of 500 jobs.

Note: September data has not been released to date

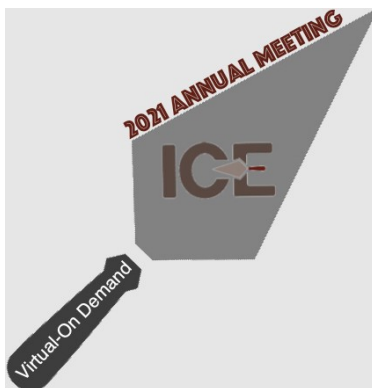
Architectural Billings Index (ABI)

The August ABI Billings score of 55.6 is up from 54.6 in July. Most firms have continued to report robust business conditions and continued inquiries into new projects. The value of new Design Contracts continues to grow with a score of 56.6, although down from 58 in July.

[*Business conditions remain strong at architecture firms, despite concerns about the Delta variant*](#) with most firms already reopening from their pandemic closures. The Northeast is reporting a more moderated pace of growth, which is in line with the broader economy 3rd Quarter growth, and both nonresidential and residential construction are still showing an overall slight increase. *Note: September data has not been released to date*

The *Architecture Billings Index* is an economic indicator for nonresidential construction activity, with a lead time of approximately 9–12 months. Investment groups like Wells Fargo, media outlets, firms of all sizes, and business leaders rely on this leading monthly economic indicator to assess business conditions and predict and track the market.

ICE ANNUAL MEETING



ICE's 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting

November 16-18 and 23, 2021

The Meeting will be a combination of live Zoom calls, recorded presentations, and on demand viewing.

An opening live Zoom call will kick things off on November 16, 2021, followed by two days (11/17-18) of recorded presentations with opportunities to submit questions for the final discussion and on demand viewing. The final discussion will be held via live Zoom call on November 23, 2021.

More details and registration information will follow in the coming weeks.

INDUSTRY NEWS

OSHA Updates

[*OSHA to develop heat standard | Construction Dive*](#)

[*US Department of Labor announces enhanced, expanded measures to protect workers from hazards of extreme heat, indoors and out | OSHA*](#)

[*\\$50,000 minimum: House committee proposes significant hikes to OSHA fines | Safety & Health*](#)

[*Biden's Vax Mandate To Be Enforced By Fining Companies \\$70,000 To \\$700,000? |FORBES*](#)

Technology – Robotics

Construction is a hot area for robotics development because it has not kept pace with innovation and hasn't had a technology make-over in decades. Scaffolding is a prime target for automation as reported by ZDNet. [*Scaffolding robot buttresses tipping construction industry | ZDNet*](#)

Steel and Aluminum Prices

Steel and iron prices are up 95.2% year over year, while aluminum prices are up almost as much: a 63% jump year over year. If you're building with these materials, you "might be wincing with every quote and invoice." Conditions are ripe for bubble pricing. Steel prices "have turned into a bubble. So, they go higher because they go higher," CRU Group Analyst Josh Spoore said. [Steel and Aluminum Prices Make Some Wonder If There's a Bubble | GlobeSt](#)

NYC Updates Building Codes

A major update to New York City's construction and building regulations includes more than 600 "major" changes and thousands of smaller ones as the city looks to improve safety and adapt to new technologies. The City Council passed the legislation October 7, 2021 with an effective date in January 2022, in some cases as soon as January 1.

City officials say its building codes are among the strongest in the world and often serve as a model for other cities. Buildings Commissioner Melanie E. La Rocca said in a statement that the updates "make our built environment safer for everyone living, working and visiting in our great city."

[NYC pushes through massive overhaul of construction codes | Real Estate Weekly](#)

[NYC City Council OKs Hundreds of 'Major' Building Code Updates | 2021-10-11 | Engineering News-Record](#)

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

5 Oldest Buildings from Around the World

The construction of the past has shaped and molded the world we live in today. These 5 of the oldest buildings from around the world demonstrate that with the proper mindset and materials; stone and bricks, buildings can be constructed to withstand anything. Check out these buildings that are still standing today, why they were created and how they were constructed here: [5 Oldest Buildings from Around the World | DOZR](#)

Dedicated to promoting Masonry Design and Union Construction
throughout the State of New Jersey

Visit our website www.mcofnj.org for more information.

