



CONSTRUCTOR

The Voice of the Kansas City Construction Industry

SPRING 2010

Gavin Barmby Takes Reins at Crucial Time

New HCA President Sees Light at the End of the Tunnel

The Heavy Constructors Association is pleased to welcome Gavin Barmby aboard as the newly elected president this year.

Barmby, president of Pyramid Contractors Inc. in Olathe, assumes the helm at a critical time for our association, our industry and our community, amid a perfect storm of growing needs and insufficient funding for those needs.

"The next couple of years ahead of us are going to be difficult," he acknowledged. "Everybody's feeling the same pain."

But Barmby, in true Heavies fashion, views the situation with a positive, can-do outlook.

"I believe there is light at the end of the tunnel. We all need to come together as one voice, collectively,



Gavin Barmby
HCA President

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For 60 Years, Heavies a Driving Force for Progress

Members Pave the Way by Working Together

Sixty years ago, Harry Truman was president and the Korean War was about to break out. The Paseo Bridge and interstate highway system did not exist. On April 29 of that year, a group of visionary heavy contractors met at Union Station. They wanted to work together to accomplish great things.

Out of that meeting the Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City was born. This 60th anniversary milestone provides the opportunity to reflect on achievements and resolve to meet new challenges.

Many Members, One Voice

Participants in that first meeting included the late Edwin Clarkson and his son, Bill Clarkson Sr., a former HCAGKC president and current president of Clarkson Construction Co. Clarkson said the association gave heavy contractors a

unified voice in dealings with labor unions and government agencies.

"You don't have much more independent people than contractors, particularly heavy contractors," Clarkson said. "But the fact that we have an organization like the Heavies, where we can coalesce and speak as one voice, is a remarkable situation. We have a strong voice and we're very well respected."

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Kansas Passes Landmark Transportation Plan

New Program Will Create Tens of Thousands of Jobs

In a move that promises to improve driver safety, grow our economy and foster tens of thousands of jobs, the Kansas Legislature on May 11 passed an \$8.2 billion transportation plan.

Known as the Transportation Works for Kansas (T-Works) Program, this 10-year program will enable Kansas to move forward with transportation improvements as the state fights its way out

of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City strongly advocated for this important program. Passage came two months after budgetary pressures forced Gov. Mark Parkinson to cut \$257 million from the

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MAKING IT BETTER

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Kansas Passes Landmark Transportation Plan

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State Highway Fund, and follows last year's expiration of Kansas' most recent 10-year transportation plan.

"The Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City commends the members of the Kansas Legislature who, based on the strength of their convictions, made the hard decisions to make this legislation happen," said HCAGKC Executive Director Ed DeSoignie. "This bill will enable our state to get on with the vital business of making our roads safe. These projects will create and support tens of thousands of jobs that will put Kansans back to work."

This legislation includes funding for road and highway preservation, modernization, expansion and economic opportunity projects.

The bill specifies that between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2020, at least \$8 million is to be spent on transportation projects in each Kansas county. The distribution of motor fuel taxes would stay at the current ratio of 66.37 percent into the State Highway Fund and 34.63 percent into the Special City and County Highway Fund.

The legislation also expands KDOT's bonding authority, lets municipalities use loans from the Transportation Revolving Fund, and lets the Secretary of Transportation recommend construction of new toll or turnpike projects. The Secretary also will be allowed to designate an existing highway or portion thereof as a toll or turnpike project, if warranted by a feasibility study.

The Heavies and other transportation advocates hope the legislation will pave the way for much-needed highway projects, such as rebuilding the I-35/I-435/K-10 interchange in Lenexa and Olathe, and widening U.S. 69 from I-435 to 119th Street in Overland Park.

"Now that the Legislature has passed this bill, we are confident that Gov. Mark Parkinson will sign it into law, enabling our highly skilled workers and local constructors to continue to make our critical infrastructure better and safer," DeSoignie said. ■

KC-Area Representation Restored

Miller to Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

For the first time since 2005, the Kansas City area has a voice on Missouri's Highways and Transportation Commission.

Steve Miller's appointment by Governor Jay Nixon, confirmed by the Missouri General Assembly earlier this year, comes at one of the most challenging times in recent history for Missouri's aging transportation system. After years of playing catch-up on repairs and improvements, revenues for the state's roads and other key infrastructure are getting even thinner.

Miller's appointment had broad-based support from construction and labor leaders, who hope that Miller's presence on the commission will bring more focus to overdue transportation needs in Western Missouri.

"This is an example of how successful we can be when we work together," said Ed DeSoignie, executive director of the Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City. "This would not have happened without the support of the Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO, the Minority Contractors Association and our women-owned business organizations."

A Kansas City attorney with more than 25 years of experience in construction law, Miller has been involved in a variety of work affecting the transportation industry. Examples include issues related to procurement, administration, dispute resolution and programs for minorities, women and small businesses. His work has made him familiar with different methods for funding transportation and transit infrastructure, including public/private partnerships.

"We are extremely pleased to have someone from the Kansas City area with Steve's qualifications and experience on the Commission," DeSoignie said.



Steve Miller

Reaching the Sky

kclCON Center Pylon Visible for Miles Around



Workers have finished pouring concrete for the 316-foot, delta-shaped center pylon of the new Christopher S. Bond Bridge over the Missouri River. The new bridge and reconstruction of adjacent roadways and interchanges will be completed in 2011.

Remove Roadblocks, Support Positive Initiatives

By Edward R. DeSoignie, Executive Director

As we celebrate our 60th anniversary as an Association, our metropolitan area and the two states we call home stand at a pivotal juncture in terms of transportation infrastructure.

Kansas City, Mo., has gone through a lot of ups and downs since our Association's founding in 1950. Together we've gone through floods and droughts, riots and renewal, construction booms and busts.

KC's Promises

But today we are deeply concerned with broken promises, shifting sands in the city budget, and the loss of a city manager who understood the need for ongoing capital maintenance. We recently launched a candid "Stop the Nonsense" campaign to remind the City Council and Mayor Mark Funkhouser of their promises to taxpayers to improve the conditions and safety of Kansas City's critical infrastructure.

"The city will use only \$35 million to fix roads, buildings, sidewalks and other basic public assets. That's \$12 million less than was budgeted at the start of the last fiscal year for capital maintenance. Worse, it's far less than the \$100 million or so a year required to keep up with fixing the deteriorating infrastructure."
— *Kansas City Star*, Feb. 14, 2010

We strongly supported the formation of a Capital Projects Management Department that will speed completion of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of major construction projects such as roads and public buildings.

Under the former setup, local contractors frequently act like they'd rather crawl through hot asphalt in gym shorts than bid on Kansas City, Mo., projects. Many prefer dealing with other cities in the metro area that offer more streamlined regulations.

The Association has long advocated for improvements to the city's contracting process to eliminate inefficiencies and foster better construction management practices. Such improvements would enhance our ability to deliver high-quality, cost-effective, timely projects to the citizens.

One positive idea that percolated from 12th and Locust came from Bernardo Garcia, who until recently was the city's Water Services Department director.

Garcia boldly pushed for repairing miles of leaking water lines and reducing the amount of sewage that flows into local waterways. That would necessitate the hiring of hundreds – or perhaps thousands – of people to perform the necessary infrastructure work. Unfortunately, speaking up in favor of smart, proactive infrastructure repairs these days can get a guy cross ways with other people's budget agendas at City Hall.

Kansas Commitment

The Heavies and allied groups pushed long and hard this spring for a comprehensive Kansas transportation plan to replace the 10-year, \$13 billion plan that expired last year. Throughout this year's legislative session, our staff and membership spent countless hours, on the phone and face-to-face in Topeka, burning legislators' ears.

Thankfully, our hard work paid off at the tail end of the session, when the Legislature passed an \$8.2 billion program known as the

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Transportation Works for Kansas (T-Works) Program. The 10-year program includes funding for road and highway preservation, modernization, expansion and economic opportunity projects.

Movement in Missouri

On the other side of the state line, we were pleased to see that the Missouri Department of Transportation had committed all \$524.6 million of its federal stimulus money to projects, about a month ahead of the deadline. Satisfying, too, was a report from MoDOT that said 86 percent of the state's busiest roads are now in good



Edward DeSoignie
HCA Executive Director

condition. MoDOT said Missouri road conditions have been improving since the 2004 voter approval of Amendment 3, which boosted MoDOT funding. And I'm here to remind everyone of the critical

role the Heavies played in the passage of Amendment 3.

Changes at MoDOT

Of course, Missouri needs much more in the realm of infrastructure improvement. And it didn't help matters when a recent audit questioned whether MoDOT reliably reported its funding needs to the public, as this could hurt the department's credibility. MoDOT has already announced that it plans to cut 400 jobs in the next few years.

To make matters even more cloudy Pete Rahn, director of MoDOT since 2004, recently resigned to go to work for the Kansas City-based engineering firm, HNTB.

I am not a doom and gloom kind of guy, and our Association does not foster a doom and gloom mindset. But we must face up to the fact that we face big challenges and big obstacles in our region. As Heavies, we've got to speak out forcefully against wrongheaded thinking and support ideas that make things better.

You will see more of our thinking along these lines when we make our recommendations for the upcoming mayoral and city council races. Stay tuned. ■

Bridgette Williams Brings New Dimension to HCAGKC

The executive management team of the Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City has taken on new dimensions in labor, governmental and community relations with the hiring of longtime labor leader Bridgette Williams.

Williams, who served as president of Kansas City's AFL-CIO chapter for 15 years, came on board as HCAGKC's deputy director Jan. 1. She is the first female and the first African American to hold a management position in the Association.

During her tenure with the AFL-CIO, Williams helped boost participation by organized labor in major infrastructure and landmark construction projects in the area. As the first female and first African American to be elected president of a chapter of the AFL-CIO, she spearheaded policy changes aimed at providing more opportunities for minorities and women in construction.



Bridgette Williams

"As an organization committed to improving the safety and quality of life of everyone who lives and works in this community, we feel very fortunate to have Bridgette Williams join our team," said Executive Director Ed DeSoignie. "She brings a wealth of experience, talent, perspective and respect in the Greater Kansas City business and labor communities that will only make this organization stronger and more effective for our members."

DeSoignie said Williams will focus on management/labor initiatives and governmental and community relations. Efforts this year will include working with federal, state and local governments to find funding solutions for critical transportation infrastructure needs.

"Pulling out of a recession starts with economic development, and economic development starts with construction," Williams said. "Construction is the one productive, good-paying American industry, with good benefits, that hasn't been outsourced. We must – and will – do everything possible to keep families working."

As an example, DeSoignie said he and Williams will work with Kansas City to improve the city's construction project delivery system. The goal is to get already-funded and backlogged street, bridge, water and sewer improvement projects off the shelf so people can go to work.

As we celebrate six decades of service, we know we will benefit from Bridgette Williams' knowledge, experience and dedication as we keep working to make things better. ■

Transportation Funds Need to be Accounted For



The HCAGKC this spring launched an outdoor billboard awareness campaign to highlight the problem of road funding delays. Thousands of men and women in the construction industry are out of work because political trade-offs and budget manipulations are delaying or putting off long-promised safety improvements to our local streets and our state highways.

"We hope motorists who see these billboards will take the time to look closely at local and state transportation spending plans, and insist that critical improvement projects be delivered as promised and as earmarked," said HCAGKC Executive Director Ed DeSoignie. ■

Gavin Barmby Takes Reins at Crucial Time

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and speak a little louder as a group," he said. "People will take notice and listen to the fact that the best way to stimulate this economy is to put people to work in ways that will benefit families and this country."

He added that the Heavies "will pull through this, collectively, together, and there will be a better day. We'll be able to move into good times together, if we pull together."

His own company, Pyramid, began operations in 1994 as a bridge contractor. Areas of operation broadened over time and today Pyramid enjoys a reputation for doing the highest quality work ahead of schedule, within budget and in an environment that promotes safety.

In addition to bridges, Pyramid's areas of expertise now include roads, highways, box culverts, excavation, noise/sound walls, retaining walls and storm sewers. The company's current projects include work on the kcICON/Paseo Corridor; I-470 and Blue Parkway; and Pryor Road in Lee's Summit. Most recently, Pyramid was the successful bidder to construct the long-awaited new bridge over Brush Creek at Troost Avenue in Kansas City.

Pyramid has earned awards for its work on projects such as the Lamar Roundabout; College Boulevard and Pflumm intersection; Lake Jacomo Bridge; 127th Street overpass; Mission Road Bridge over Rock Creek; and 135th Street widening/U.S. 69 northbound ramp.

"Gavin took the reins as our president at a challenging time, and has stepped up in a big way," said Executive Director Ed DeSoignie. "One of the very first things he did was head up successful labor negotiations that resulted in new four-year labor agreements."

And everyone can agree, that's a step in the right direction ... toward a light at the end of the tunnel. ■

Association Welcomes New Officers for 2010

The Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City is pleased to announce the election of the following individuals to serve as officers for the year 2010:

- **President:** Gavin Barmby, Pyramid Contractors, Olathe
- **Vice President:** Jerry Wiedenmann, Wiedenmann & Godfrey Construction, Belton
- **Treasurer:** Trey Bowen, Superior Bowen Asphalt Company, Kansas City

All three were elected to their positions by a unanimous vote of the board of directors at the annual board meeting. The board includes five individuals elected by the contractor members of the association to serve as division directors for 2010-11:

- **Buzz Bartley** (Bridge-River Division) BSC Steel, Inc., Kansas City
- **Mark Dombrowski** (Asphalt Division) O'Donnell & Sons Construction, Overland Park
- **Jim Kissick** (Utility Division) Kissick Construction, Kansas City
- **Robert Loch, Jr.** (Concrete Division) Loch Sand and Construction, Maryville
- **Steve Miles** (Excavation Division) Miles Excavating, Basehor

The division directors join the five at-large directors, elected in 2008 to serve two-year terms from 2009-10:

- **John Bowen**, Superior Bowen Asphalt Company, Kansas City
- **Bill Clarkson, Jr.**, Clarkson Construction Company, Kansas City
- **Kevin Fahey**, J.M. Fahey Construction Co., Grandview
- **Don Godfrey**, Wiedenmann & Godfrey Construction, Belton
- **George Hornung**, Comanche Construction, Shawnee Mission
- **Greg Kaaz**, LEXECO, Leavenworth (past president)

For 60 Years, Heavies a Driving Force for Progress

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Making It Better

Since its founding, the Association has been deeply involved in the life of Midwestern cities and states.

During the great flood of 1951, the Heavies rode to the rescue with men and equipment. They filled a similar role during the Country Club Plaza flood of 1977 and the Hyatt skywalk collapse in 1981.

Heavies members built the interstate highways in our region and led the way in construction of Kansas City International Airport and the Truman Sports Complex. They built College Boulevard, Bruce R. Watkins Drive and the Kansas Speedway. They brought Brush Creek flooding under control, updated the American Royal and untangled the Grandview Triangle.

Heavies successfully lobbied for trailblazing Kansas highway and transportation legislation in 1989, 1999 and 2010.

Negotiating the Rough Spots

Obstacles abounded during the first six decades. But by staying focused and pooling resources, together members got over those bumps and past many a hard time.

Bill Clarkson Jr., vice president of Clarkson Construction Co. and Superior Bowen Asphalt Co., recalled labor strikes that plagued members in the late 1970s.

"We stuck together as a group and got more equitable contracts," Clarkson said. "Our relations with the unions are much more harmonious now, thanks to our professional association. We have open, constant communication."

In 1996, Heavies were the first group to point out fatal flaws in Missouri's inadequately funded 15-year transportation plan. These challenges have intensified over the last 10 years.

"It's gotten a lot more difficult to accomplish things," said Ed DeSoignie, HCAGKC executive director. "Everybody wants improvements, but providing financing for those improvements is a tall hill to climb."

Getting It Done

Heavies have intensified lobbying efforts to meet the challenges head on. For example, the Association played a major role in the 2004 passage of Missouri's Amendment 3 that boosted MoDOT funding.

The group also rose to the challenge when federal stimulus funding bypassed Kansas City.

"There was a huge coalition effort by the Heavies, labor and community and government leaders that forced MoDOT to rethink its projects," said Bridgette Williams, HCAGKC deputy director and former president of Kansas City's AFL-CIO chapter. "We ended up getting some much-needed road and bridge projects." The new Troost Avenue Bridge over Brush Creek is only one example.

Lobbying by the Heavies helped pave the way for the \$82.3 million contract to widen U.S. 69 in Overland Park, with the work going to a local member contractor.

The Association pushed hard for a new Kansas transportation plan, with DeSoignie serving on the Transportation-Leveraging Investments in Kansas (T-LINK) Task Force.

Heavies not only push for projects and funding, but also fairness, taking pride in the role played alongside the labor community in the passage of a 2007 Kansas City ordinance that sets goals for the number of minorities and women working in the construction industry. "It's cutting edge, and it has become a national model," DeSoignie said.

Gavin Barmby, president of Olathe-based Pyramid Contractors and current HCAGKC president, said members can take pride in the achievements of the Association.

"The individual members make those achievements possible," Barmby said. "Yet we cannot rest on our laurels. The challenges facing us are greater than ever. But we know that by working together – as Association members and with our allies in labor, the community and government – we will keep making things better." ■

Note: A limited number of 60th Anniversary video copies are available to HCAGKC members. To secure your copy, call the Association office at (816) 561-7555.



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Constructing the Future?

Check out our Web site,
www.KcHeavyConstruction.org,
for the latest information on
the campaign.

This newsletter is brought to you by
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For additional information, contact
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Putting KC's Promises Under the Microscope

Not one to look the other way when public funds for infrastructure are diverted or cut, the Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City is shining a light on critical budget machinations happening behind the scenes at Kansas City's City Hall.

With long-promised capital improvements again threatened by political thimble-rigging and budget shifts, the local construction industry has enacted a campaign to "Stop the Nonsense at City Hall."

HCAGKC Executive Director Ed DeSoignie noted that, for many years the association has supported Kansas City sales tax efforts dedicated to funding capital improvements. "But we're sick and tired of city leaders and administrators ignoring and even sabotaging the most critical infrastructure needs of our community," he said.

"Unless our elected officials at City Hall reverse these self-destructive moves," DeSoignie added, "the people of Kansas City will be left with more broken promises. Streets, bridges and



sidewalks will continue to crumble, and men and women in construction will continue to be without work."

An independent study known as the CIC (Community Infrastructure Committee) report made clear that Kansas City should spend at least \$150 million on deferred maintenance. The city has never reached that level of commitment, but in the past has made concerted efforts to attain it.

This year's budget provides only \$42 million for deferred maintenance, an amount that falls far short of meeting the stated needs and past capital improvement

campaign promises. Kansas City's acting city manager has recommended that funding for deferred maintenance be cut to \$35 million in next year's budget.

"These actions not only damage the credibility of our industry, they undermine the public trust," said DeSoignie. "We are asking all Kansas City, Mo., residents to contact the mayor and city council and tell them to stop raiding the capital improvements sales tax fund and live up to the commitment they made to voters to increase the deferred maintenance budget – not cut it. Only then can we start making things better again in Kansas City." ■