



MINNESOTA BUILDERS EXCHANGE

# Weekly Bulletin

Issue No. 17 • Wednesday, April 24, 2024 • [www.mbox.org](http://www.mbox.org)

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

- 1.) We're now [accepting applications](#) for our 2024-2025 MBEX / TBG Construction Scholarship through May 31.
- 2.) Take a few minutes to complete both the [Project Build Minnesota - Youth Talent Strategy](#) survey and the [Minneapolis Federal Reserve - Construction Sector Conditions](#) survey.
- 3.) A [new city policy](#) has been adopted in St. Paul that will require new, expanded, or fully reconstructed parking lots to include infrastructure needed for electric vehicle charging, such as circuitry and paneling.
- 4.) Registration is now open for both the [MBEX Member Appreciation BBQ](#) (June 5) and the [Twin Cities Golf Tournament](#) (June 18). Sign up today!
- 5.) Swifties, this one's for you: [The Tortured Builders Department](#).

*Have you heard about the construction worker who lost his job when he kept telling crane jokes? Seems like he took his humor to new heights.*

## IN BRIEF:

- **Recap:** Revisiting last week's Spring Social
- **Higher:** Construction input prices increased in March
- **Hot Off the Press:** Our second issue of *MBEX Blueprint* is here!
- **Gains:** Minnesota gains jobs and workers in March
- **A Rebounding Backlog Indicator, Proper Preconstruction Training, and DOL's Updated Resource Book:** Five construction-related headlines to know now
- **Project of the Week:** A 130-unit multi-family development in Rochester
- **NPP Member Benefit:** Keep your employees looking great with UniFirst

## MEMBER NEWS + EVENTS



**EVENT RECAP: MBEX 2024 Spring Social**

Last week, members, trade partners, board members, and staff gathered at TPC Twin Cities in Blaine for the Exchange's annual Spring Social event.

Along with drinks and delicious food, members mingled, networked, and made new connections throughout the packed room before a short program. Guests had the opportunity to purchase a mystery box from our Wine & Spirits Pull, as well as wage their luck in the 50 / 50 Cash and Super Prize Raffles. All proceeds benefited the MBEX Scholarship Fund; thank you for your generous support!

We were joined by Timothy O'Neill from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and he shared his insights as a labor analyst for the metro region as well as overall trends in the labor market currently. You can [download his slide deck here](#) and he welcomes any questions members may have.

Winners were drawn for our two raffles (see winners below) and door prizes, including a couple sets of Twins tickets, were awarded to cap off the evening. Folks continued to network following the program's end, and we look forward to our next social in the fall (October 10 --- mark your calendars now!).

#### WINNERS OF THE NIGHT

- 50/50 Cash Raffle (\$290) - Tim Hughes, *Alliance Bank*
- Super Raffle (Air Pods) - Nick Valentini, *Grazzini Brothers*
- Super Raffle (Apple Watch) - Eric Heesen, *Dem-Con Companies*
- Twins Tickets (donated by Grazzini Brothers) - John Johnson, *Triple E Water & Sewer*
- Twins Tickets (donated by Dem-Con Companies) - Jay Feider, *Stanley & Wenzl*

#### DOOR PRIZES:

Natalie Belich (Triple E Water & Sewer), David Boily (Assa Abloy), Brian Gendreau (Capital One), Tony Gergen (Alliance Bank), Tom Gleason (Assa Abloy), Eric Heesen (Dem-Con Companies), Mike Hogberg (Tenet), Chad Jensen (Tenet), Chris Kok (Grazzini Brothers), Earl Madison (former MBEX President), Carl Maki (Tenet), Sue Monson (The Builders Group), Jon Polzin (Donlar Construction), Jeff Rich (Assa Abloy), Joe Ryan (Urban Companies), Jon Schindel (The Builders Group), and Pete Swartzbaugh (LaForce)

*We also want to give a big thank you to our Spring Social Sponsors:*

Premiere Sponsor:  
[The Builders Group \(TBG\)](#)



Platinum Sponsor:  
[ECCO Midwest](#)



Gold Sponsors:  
[Alliance Bank](#), [Mortenson Construction](#) & [Carl Bolander & Sons](#)



Silver Sponsors:  
[Dem-Con Companies](#), [Frattonone Companies](#) & [Donlar Construction](#)



Bronze Sponsor:  
[Woodstone Inc](#)



Wine & Spirits Pull Sponsor:  
[Alliance Bank](#)





Making new connections and connecting with others.



Timothy O'Neill, DEED, speaks to the MBEX crowd.



Sizing up the Wine & Spirits Pull mystery boxes.

## CONSTRUCTION INPUT PRICES JUMP

### New Price Jumps 'Not Especially Good News'

Construction input prices increased 0.4% in March due to inflationary pressures and escalating supply chain issues, according to a new Associated Builders and Contractors' analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Producer Price Index released last Thursday.

Input prices have increased every month in 2024, offsetting the three months of moderation that ended 2023. Both overall and nonresidential construction costs remain 1.7% higher compared to last year, according to the report.

"This is not especially good news for those who purchase construction services," said Anirban Basu, ABC chief economist. "Were it not for declines in energy prices, the headline figure for construction input price dynamics would have been meaningfully higher."

*Prices increased for 10 of the 20 commodities tracked by ABC, according to the release. Materials like softwood lumber jumped, while copper wire and cable increased.*

[Read More on Construction Dive](#)

# MBEX BLUEPRINT

READ THE LATEST  
ISSUE ONLINE NOW



## OUT NOW: Issue 2 of *MBEX Blueprint*

Our second issue of our newest publication, the *MBEX Blueprint*, is back and hitting mailboxes as we speak. Inside the pages of this issue, you'll find:

- Unconventional Ways to Give Mental Health Support (Page 13)
- Understanding Minnesota's New Secure Choice Retirement Program (Page 15)
- MBEX / TBG Scholarship Awardees for 2023-2024 (Page 17)
- Trends to Watch in 2024 (Page 26)
- *And more!*

This publication has been shared with all current MBEX members as well as top general contractors, major architectural firms, city and county governments, and school districts across the state.

Thank you for your support of the Minnesota Builders Exchange. We look forward to building on the work we do together in upcoming issues. Now, click above and start enjoying this latest issue.

## READ IT NOW!



MBEX  
BLUEPRINT

ISSUE NO. 2

GET STARTED

## MINNESOTA GAINS JOBS & WORKERS

### Minnesota Gains 11,000 Jobs & 3,000 Workers in March

Minnesota posted strong job and labor force growth in March, according to information released by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

The state gained an estimated 11,000 jobs in the last month on a seasonally adjusted basis (up 0.4%) with the private sector up roughly 8,000 jobs (up 0.3%). Minnesota's labor force increased by an estimated 3,000 people over the month, bumping the labor force participation rate up one-tenth of a percent to 68.0%. The unemployment rate

remained steady at 2.7%.

Five supersectors in Minnesota gained jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis since the prior month, including, most notably, Leisure & Hospitality up 5,000 jobs; Government up 3,000 jobs; Education & Health Services up 2,800 jobs; and Construction up 2,700 jobs.

Six supersectors stayed steady or lost jobs but the losses were small in comparison to the large gains in other sectors.

Over the year, Minnesota gained 47,508 jobs (up 1.6%) with the private sector up 23,161 jobs (or 0.9%).

[Read the Full 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.

*\*\* indicates a newly added event*

**May 14 - MN Construction Crew's 10th Annual Construction Career Hiring Event**

Presented by Construct Tomorrow, this in-person event is an opportunity providing contractors a chance to meet / interview individuals that are looking for employment.

[Learn More](#)

**\*\* May 16 - MBEX Online Plan Room Demo**

From navigating the Deskpad, setting up filters, understanding project information, and bidders lists, this free, one-hour session is a great introduction to our Online Plan Room. There will be time at the end for questions and answers. [Register Here](#)

**May 21 - Crane Safety**

Join Minnesota OSHA Compliance's next free construction seminar in-person or online to learn what the general contractor's roles and responsibilities are when there's a crane on site and what is required for lift plans, inspection records, operator's qualifications, training, renting, and more. Plus, learn what ASME 30.5 covers and requires. [Sign Up Here](#)

**May 27 - Memorial Day**

MBEX will be closed on Monday, May 27 in observance of Memorial Day. Please plan any office visits and plan/spec/addenda orders accordingly.

**\*\* May 31 - Deadline for 2024-2025 MBEX Construction Scholarship Applications**

Qualifying students pursuing a construction-related degree at an accredited post-secondary institution in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin are highly encouraged to apply for this financial opportunity. [See Eligibility Rules | Apply Here](#)

**\*\* June 4 - 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](#)

**\*\*June 5 - 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 Here](#)

**\*\*June 5 - MBEX Member Appreciation BBQ**

Let MBEX treat you to lunch as a thank you for your continued membership and support! Join us for a casual afternoon of Famous Dave's barbecue, cold beverages, a handful of door prizes, and great company and networking. Each member company receives 2 complimentary tickets. [Register Here](#)

**\*\*June 6 - Bluebeam 2: 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](#)

**\*\* June 18 - Twin Cities Golf Tournament**

Join MBEX out on the greens not just to golf, but to also meet and mingle with fellow members and industry professionals. [Register Here](#)

[View Full 2024 MBEX Event Calendar](#)



## CONSTRUCTION HEADLINES



### **ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**

□ [ABC's Construction Backlog Indicator Rebounds in March](#)

The Construction Backlog Indicator increased to 8.2 months in March from 8.1 months in February, according to the an ABC member survey conducted March 20 to April 3. The reading is down 0.5 months from March 2023. Backlog is down over the past year for every region except for Middle States, which now has the second largest backlog of any region. The South continues to have the largest backlog despite a large decline over the past year. *(Contractor Magazine)*

### **CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY**

□ [Preconstruction Support, Training Vital](#)

As technology rapidly transforms the project life cycle, the preconstruction phase is undergoing its own digital makeover. The integration of advanced analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), augmented and virtual reality (AR / VR), and other innovations promises to bring newfound efficiency, insight, and collaboration to this critical planning stage. Without proper support and training, firms risk fumbling the transition and forfeiting the strategic edge that transformative preconstruction can provide. *(For Construction Pros)*

## PREVAILING WAGE

### [DOL Releases Updated Prevailing Wage Resource Book](#)

The resource provides an overview of prevailing wage requirements under the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts and Service Contract Act. The updated guide incorporates changes to Davis-Bacon regulations that came into effect on October 23, 2023, under the August 23 final rule. The final rule made drastic revisions to the Davis-Bacon Act and Related Acts regulations that apply to federal and federally assisted construction projects funded by taxpayers. *(Associated Builders and Contractors)*

## MENTAL HEALTH

### [Encouraging Men to Talk About Mental Health](#)

Off the job site, men die by suicide four times more than women and research confirms what we all know: there's a stigma with men discussing mental health. Men are much less likely to seek resources for help because of this stigma. Add that on top of the fact that the construction industry is physically and mentally taxing, it sadly makes sense that construction has high rates of suicide. However, the good news is that is changing. *(ConExpo - CON / AGG)*

## BUILDING MATERIALS

### [Mass Timber Use An Emerging Risk for the Global Construction Sector](#)

Demand for mass timber, a sustainable construction alternative, has grown steadily over the past several years. However, a new trend is driving risks for the construction sector: mass timber being used for taller buildings, not just residential structures. According to one expert, this shift is observed in Europe, Asia, and North America. Michael Bruch, global head of Risk Advisory Services at Allianz Commercial, noted that the increasing adoption of mass timber for higher-rise construction indicates a broader acceptance of the material beyond traditional low-rise buildings. *(Insurance Business)*

## PROJECT OF THE WEEK

### [Rochester Vacates Right of Way to Make Room for Multi-Family Project](#)

The development is a 130-unit multi-family building, with studio, one- and two-bedroom units, spread over five stories, according to Desmond McGeough, the principal planner for Rochester. The city, upon request of one of the developers, vacated a 66-foot wide right of way between Fourth Street Southeast and Bear Creek. The city's community development staff recommended the vacation of the right of way, which is currently used for parking space, citing that it would help redevelop the property. The Council voted unanimously to vacate. *(Finance & Commerce)*



Image: City of Rochester

# INDUSTRY EVENTS

## Swing On By: Meet Our Network - A Sun Control Expo Presented by Sun Control of Minnesota

**DATES:** Thursday, April 25

**TIME:** 3:00pm-7:00pm

[Register Here](#)

**LOCATION:** [Sun Control of Minnesota](#)  
(Roseville, Minn.)

**COST:** Free!

Enjoy complimentary food from Big Guys BBQ and drinks while you swing away in Sun Control's top-notch golf simulator for a chance to win some hole-in-one prizes.

RSVP by contacting Karissa at [karissa@suncontrolmn.com](mailto:karissa@suncontrolmn.com), text [\(651\) 335-0172](tel:6513350172), or click the 'Register Here' button above.

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## 2024 USDOT Bonding Education Program Presented by USDOT Great Lakes SBTRC

**DATES / TIMES:**

- Thurs, April 25 (9:30am-4:00pm CST)
- Fri, April 26 (9:30am-4:30pm CST)

[Register Here](#)

**LOCATION:** [MnDOT Training and Conference Centers](#) (Shoreview, Minn.)

**COST:** Free!

Many small businesses face difficulty in accessing enough bonding and financing to grow their business. The USDOT's BEP is designed to provide small and disadvantaged businesses tools and resources required to compete for transportation projects, and this includes all categories for horizontal, vertical construction, engineering, trucking and supply.

This will be a two-day, in-person program, covering 10 hours of instruction, presented by the Great Lakes Region Small Business Transportation Resource Center (SBTRC) and MnDOT. Graduates of the two-day program will receive a certificate at the end of the second day for their completion of the program.

To be considered for this program, applicants must be primary owner for a business that meets the following criteria:

- In business for at least two consecutive years;
- Annual revenue of at least \$200,000;
- Good credit standing (business and personal);
- Prior transportation infrastructure construction or heavy construction work experience (preferred)
- Have at least one of the following certifications: DBE, Woman-Owned Small Business,



Small Disadvantaged Business, Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business, Veteran Owned Small Business, Hub Zone, SBA (8a), MMSDC

Registration for this program will assist in your success with understanding agency processes for procurement opportunities with bonding and lending on federal and municipal contracts, and provide the chance to network with surety, lending representatives and other small business resources to advance your business.

Questions regarding the program or eligibility criteria, please contact: [mia@sbtrcgreatlakes.us](mailto:mia@sbtrcgreatlakes.us) or [hilda@sbtrcgreatlakes.us](mailto:hilda@sbtrcgreatlakes.us).



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## MEMBER BENEFITS



### NPP Benefit of the Week: UniFirst

It pays to look good and UniFirst definitely has your back.

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



Thanks to our partnership with NPP, MBEX Members can save:

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

Log in to your [NPP account](#) and schedule an on-site consultation and learn how you can keep your employees, your facility, and your bottom line looking great.

Not an NPP member? No problem! It's free to join and you can do so [here](#).

[UniFirst](#) is widely recognized as one of the top uniform and facility services providers in the U.S.

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National Purchasing Partners (NPP) is a trusted savings and solutions provider for businesses and their employees. NPP delivers negotiated contract pricing for leading-edge products. Membership is free and there is no obligation to purchase.

If your MBEX member company is not already an NPP member, [enroll today](#) and enjoy the buying power



## PROJECT INFORMATION + UPDATES

- Total Projects Received at MBEX from 4/15/2024 - 4/19/2024: **109**
- Total Projects Leads Reported on at MBEX from 4/15/2024 - 4/19/2024: **15**
- Total Active Projects Received/Reported on at MBEX as of 4/23/2024: **481**
- Total Projects in the Online Plan Room as of 4/23/2024: **1,662**

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

Click the button above to view the most recent project data from 4/17/2024-4/23/2024.

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 30](#) - Win More Contracts with Strategic Sales Planning [Webinar]
- [May 14](#) - MN Construction Crew's 10th Annual Construction Career Hiring Event
- [May 16](#) - Online Plan Room Demo
- [May 21](#) - Crane Safety [MNOSHA Construction Seminar]
- [May 27](#) - MBEX Closed (Memorial Day)
- [May 31](#) - Deadline for 2024-2025 MBEX Scholarship Applications
- [June 4](#) - Bluebeam 1: Baseline Basics
- [June 5](#) - Bluebeam 2: Material Takeoffs & Estimates (Basic)
- [June 5](#) - Member Appreciation BBQ
- [June 6](#) - Bluebeam 3: Material Takeoffs & Estimates (Advanced)
- [June 12](#) - Deep Dive into Construction Work in Progress [Webinar]
- [June 18](#) - Twin Cities Golf Tournament

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Revisit Past Bulletins:

[April 17 - No. 16](#) | [April 10 - No. 15](#) | [April 3 - No. 14](#) | [March 27 - No. 13](#)

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