

[www.icebac.org](http://www.icebac.org)[printable copy](#)[subscribe](#)**4th Quarter 2009 Report**

### **BAC/ICE BENEFITS CONFERENCE**

The annual Trowel Trades Trust Fund Educational Conference took place November 6-7 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

During the last year our funds have been forced to deal with the most serious economic conditions in recent history. Problems in the financial markets, growing concern about health care costs, and a changing regulatory landscape have all created new challenges for funds.

Read more [here](#).

### **ICE SUPPORTS MERKLEY AMENDMENT**

ICE and its Campaign for Quality Construction legislative partners have been working hard to show their support for the Merkley Amendment provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Coverage Act (H.R. 3590). This provision would require that employers in the construction industry with over \$250,000 in payroll and with five or more workers provide health care insurance for their employees or pay a penalty. The penalty represents only a small fraction of the uncompensated care bills run up around the country by the firms who do not provide health care benefits. The provisions would not go into effect until 2014.

Read more [here](#).

### **DEFINED BENEFIT PLAN SPONSORS URGE PRESIDENT TO SUPPORT FUNDING RELIEF**

December 22, 2009

The President

The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of plan sponsors that provide retirement benefits to millions of workers, the undersigned organizations seek your support in enacting legislation as soon as possible to provide much needed relief for both single employer and multiemployer pension funds. Without funding relief, many jobs will be lost and the economic recovery will be significantly slowed.

Read more [here](#).



## MEDIA SPOTLIGHT ON HELMETS TO HARDHATS

Below are just two of the many media events focusing on the good work of **Helmets to Hardhats**.

### Supporting Our Men and Women in Uniform

Last May, Democratic Senators met with Helmets to Hardhats to discuss efforts to support veterans and active duty members of the U.S. military. To read more and see a video of the Capitol press conference, click [here](#).

### Helping Vets go from 'Helmets to Hardhats'

MSNBC takes a look at how Helmets to Hardhats helps returning veterans fight unemployment and make the shift from life in the military to civilian life and work in the construction industry. To read more and watch the video, click [here](#).

## CAMPAIGN FOR QUALITY CONSTRUCTION ENDORSES PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON PENSIONS

ICE and the Campaign for Quality Construction (CQC), wrote US Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, on November 16 to support a recent recommendation by the ERISA Advisory Council to establish a





Presidential Commission to undertake an ambitious look at the structure of retirement benefit programs for American workers.

Read more [here](#).

## NEW PRODUCT SECTION

The ICE Voice will contain a new feature each quarter to help ICE members identify new work opportunities. ICE, IMI and the BAC are constantly surveying the marketplace for new products and materials that present opportunities for our contractor members to expand their businesses and claim new markets. The new product section will describe a different new opportunity each quarter and provide resources for contractors to get more information about how to perform and obtain the work.

### NEW PRODUCTS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The BAC/IMI New Products initiative helps signatory contractors bid on new work, and shows designers and managers how IMI training and technical assistance make them the right ones to install it.



Along with new products, promising new technologies include rain screen walls, thin cladding systems, and air barriers. Through education sessions, hands-on expos and more, IMI is encouraging contractors to install more of the building envelope overall.

*(Pictured at left and top: Cincy Freedom Center)*

IMI covers a modern building envelope project in its latest Case Study, "Johnson Controls: Controlling the Envelope." To read more, click [here](#).

To see what's happening in your region, go to [www.imiweb.org/calendar](http://www.imiweb.org/calendar).



**Is there news in your company or association?  
Send press releases or article proposals to [info@icebac.org](mailto:info@icebac.org).**

## **CONSTRUCTION LABOR RESEARCH COUNCIL REPORTS**

ICE Affiliates can view the following Construction Labor Research Council reports in the *Members Only* section of the [ICE](#) website:

### **5-Year Averages**

- 1/01/05 - 1/01/10 5-Year City Average Increases in Dollars - 1 & 2
- 1/01/05 - 1/01/10 5-Year City Average Increases in Percent - 1 & 2
- 1/01/05 - 1/01/10 5-Year Region Average Increases in Dollars - 1 & 2
- 1/01/05 - 1/01/10 5-Year Region Average Increases in Percent - 1 & 2

### **2009**

- Trends & Outlook
- Labor Supply Concepts Paper
- December - Wage and Benefit Settlements
- July - Union/Non-Union Paper

### **2008**

- Settlements
- Construction Labor Rate Trends
- March - Cost of Terms and Conditions

### **2007**

- Bricklayers Settlements

## **CALENDAR**

### **MASONRY FOR SUSTAINABILITY - Glenn Ellyn, IL**

January 21, 2010

### **MASONRY FOR SUSTAINABILITY - Chicago, IL**

January 28, 2010

### **SUSTAINABLE MASONRY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM - Bordentown, NJ**

January 29, 2010

## **CAMPAIGN FOR QUALITY CONSTRUCTION ISSUES CONFERENCE - Washington, DC**

May 3 - 5, 2010 - Washington, DC

### **ICE VOICE CONTINUED**

#### **BAC/ICE Benefits Conference**

The annual Trowel Trades Trust Fund Educational Conference took place November 6-7 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

During the last year our funds have been forced to deal with the most serious economic conditions in recent history. Problems in the financial markets, growing concern about health care costs, and a changing regulatory landscape have all created new challenges for funds.

At the 2009 Conference, guest speakers addressed each of those challenges, and offered insights into what's ahead and how our funds may be impacted. Highlights included Dr. Teresa Ghilarducci, Director of the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis, The New School for Social Research, who presented her compelling and informative talk "When I'm 64: The Plot Against Pensions and the Plan to Save Them," a Health Care Reform Status Report from Gerald M. Shea, Assistant to the President for External Affairs, AFL-CIO, and a review of regulatory developments in multi-employer pension funding legislation by Actuary, Peter Hardcastle, of CHEIRON, Inc. Investment market experts projected the near-term outlook for each investment type and Jack Marco, Chairman of the Marco Consulting Group, reviewed the overall investment environment in 2009 and provided insight into prospects for 2010.

The conference also provided updates on the status of existing programs as well as new programs available to help signatory trust funds weather these uncertain times. Investment managers and consultants, actuaries, health care providers and technology vendors were available in the exhibit hall to give conference participants access to information towards the conference goal, to provide funds with information to enable them to continue to provide ICE member's employees with health and welfare coverage and a secure source of income in retirement.

Finally, the conference updated the status of Reciprocal Agreements and how they are working to benefit funds, participating employers and participants.

The conference is not held in years when the IUBAC holds its convention, so the next conference is scheduled for the Fall of 2011.

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#### **ICE Supports Merkley Amendment**

ICE and its Campaign for Quality Construction legislative partners have been working hard

to show their support for the Merkley Amendment provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Coverage Act (H.R. 3590). This provision would require that employers in the construction industry with over \$250,000 in payroll and with five or more workers provide health care insurance for their employees or pay a penalty. The penalty represents only a small fraction of the uncompensated care bills run up around the country by the firms who do not provide health care benefits. The provisions would not go into effect until 2014.

**Construction is a high risk industry with low percentage of firms providing healthcare:** In our view, all construction employers should be providing health insurance for their workers. It is a very high risk industry and the work takes a physical toll on the body. Construction has the highest rate of injuries and illnesses entering the nation's hospital emergency rooms and concomitantly the lowest rate of health care coverage compared with other industries. CQC employers are willing to give up some of their profits and their employees are willing to give up some of their take-home wages to help provide this valuable benefit. Health care reform will establish a Health Care "Exchange" which would make insurance affordable for companies who say they cannot afford to provide coverage now.

**The Merkley Amendment would still exempt 65% of construction industry employers and a larger exemption in construction would virtually exempt the entire construction industry from any employer requirements:** A construction employer with 50 employees would be a very big employer. The small business exemption for construction should be for the truly small construction employer.

- 90% of all construction employers have 20 or fewer employees
- 80% of construction employers have 10 employees or fewer
- 68% have fewer than five employees

**Health care reform should support employers who do not shift all the burden of health care coverage onto the worker and the federal government:** The CQC is comprised of small employers who do provide health care. Utilizing the proposed Health Care Exchange, other construction employers can easily do the same. The responsible employer willing to provide health care should not be disadvantaged. Health care reform should not put good jobs with good benefits at risk.

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## **Defined Benefit Plan Sponsors Urge President to Support Funding Relief**

December 22, 2009

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of plan sponsors that provide retirement benefits to millions of workers, the undersigned organizations seek your support in enacting legislation as soon as possible to provide much needed relief for both single employer and multiemployer pension funds. Without funding relief, many jobs will be lost and the economic recovery will be significantly slowed.

Providing defined benefit funding relief is directly related to improving the economy and employment. Unexpectedly large funding requirements will continue to require many employers to lay off workers, close plants, and postpone investments in order to fund their pension plans, which are long-term obligations. Several independent reports and studies have highlighted the direct link between unexpected funding obligations and the negative impact on employment.

Even with the relief provided by Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008 and the Treasury Department, minimum contributions requirements for 2010 and 2011 will still far exceed the minimum contribution requirements for 2008; in addition, many companies are not eligible for the relief and thus face daunting contribution obligations for 2009. To meet these short-term obligations, many employers will be forced to divert cash needed for current job retention and creation and investment in their organizations to their pension plans to fund long-term obligations.

Some have argued that plan sponsors can simply borrow the money to pay greatly increased pension plan contributions. However, access to credit remains limited. When the Association for Financial Professionals asked about actions taken since the start of the credit crisis, 73 percent reported freezing or reducing hiring, 65 percent reduced capital spending and 61 percent considered staff reductions and/or layoffs. Such actions will accelerate if plan sponsors are required to put much larger contributions into their pension plans.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important effort. We look forward to working with you and Congress to advance legislation that will promote our nation's economic recovery and reinvestment, while securing sound long-term pension plan funding.

Sincerely,

Aerospace Industries Association  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
Alliance for Children and Families  
American Benefits Council  
American Federation of Musicians of the U.S. and Canada  
American Forest & Paper Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Institute of Certified Public Accountants  
American Public Power Association  
American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)  
American Trucking Association  
ASPPA College of Pension Actuaries

Association for Financial Professionals (AFP)  
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union  
Bituminous Coal Operators' Association, Inc.  
Builders Exchange of Rochester  
Business Roundtable  
Committee on Investment of Employee Benefit Assets (CIEBA)  
Construction Employers 'Association of California (CEA)  
Construction Employers Association of Central New York, Inc. (CEA)  
Construction Employers Labor Relations Association of New York State, Inc. (CELRA)  
Construction Industry Association of Rochester (CIAR)  
Construction Industry Employers Association  
Direct Marketing Association  
Eastern Contractors Association, Inc.  
Edison Electric Institute  
Engineering & Utility Contractors Association  
Financial Executives International's Committee on Benefits Finance  
Financial Services Roundtable  
Food Marketing Institute  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Great Lakes Fabricators & Erectors Association  
HR Policy Association  
Indiana Manufacturers Association  
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers,  
AFL-CIO  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers  
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers(BAC)  
Ironworkers Management Progressive Action Committee Trust  
Jewish Federations of North America  
Johns Hopkins Institutions  
Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA)  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Association of Waterfront Employers  
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors  
National Coordinating Committee for Multiemployer Plans  
National Council of Chain Restaurants  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Education Association  
National Electrical Contractors Association  
National Federation of Independent Business  
National Federation of Nurses, (NFN)  
National Mining Association  
National Retail Federation  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
New York State Nurses Association  
Newspaper Association of America  
Ohio Chamber of Commerce  
Printing Industries of America

Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association  
Society for Human Resource Management  
SMACNA Rochester  
The Associated General Contractors of America  
The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC)  
The Broadway League  
The Business Council of New York State  
The ERISA Industry Committee  
The International Union of Operating Engineers  
The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades  
The Sheet Metal Workers' International Association  
The Truck Renting and Leasing Association  
United Neighborhood Centers of America  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers

Cc: The Members of the United States Congress

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## **Campaign for Quality Construction Endorses Presidential Commission on Pensions**

ICE and the Campaign for Quality Construction (CQC) wrote US Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, on November 16 to support a recent recommendation by the ERISA Advisory Council to establish a Presidential Commission to undertake an ambitious look at the structure of retirement benefit programs for American workers.

While life expectancy has increased, most Americans do not accumulate adequate retirement income to live in security. The dramatic downturn in equity markets has proven how quickly personal retirement and pension savings can diminish. The American workforce needs help to accumulate and protect their pension benefits. The challenges facing workers and employers have not gone unnoticed: in 2006, Congress enacted pension reform and, in 2008, reacting to the severe downturn in the market, provided some temporary relief. This is not enough, however. A study on private pensions and alternative approaches was released by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) in the summer of 2009 and, as early as 2007, a final report was issued by a group of 45 diverse experts from its "Conversations on Coverage" which provided ideas for pension proposals that could find support from both employers and employees alike. This issue requires the help of a bi-partisan and broad-based Presidential Commission to underscore the necessity for public policy changes and to push Congress to action on comprehensive policy initiatives.

It is the position of the six association members of CQC (ICE, FCA, MCAA, NECA, SMACNA, TAUC) that a Presidential Commission be formed and complete work swiftly; the

consequences of not doing so are grave and will not only affect employers and employees, but the government itself. Innovative and thoughtful public policy retirement and pension benefit initiatives are a must to steer us away from such a dire result.

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#### **Contact Us:**

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