

The Next Generation of Construction Workers

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The Associated Builders and Contractors organization estimates that the construction industry will need approximately 150,000 to 200,000 new workers by the year 2014. On the surface this projection would seem to indicate good times for the industry, but, if we also consider the fact that there is an aging work force that is approaching retirement, we see that this projection will not meet the industry's needs.

Some people believe that this approaching problem of adequate labor can be best solved through immigration, or the importation of workers from neighboring countries. Maybe we should actually be considering a home grown solution.

The question seems to be how to get more of our youth interested and involved in obtaining skills that will prepare them for careers in the construction industry. Several states like New York, Florida, and California have undertaken programs to introduce teenagers and young adults into the construction industry. But, here in Boston, we already have a solution that works.

YouthBuild Boston is a community based program with a 17 year history in assisting inner-city youth "in gaining the occupational, educational, and leadership skills necessary to become responsible, contributing members of our society", and in particular, the local construction industry.

Since its inception in 1990, YouthBuild Boston (YBB) has been dedicated to improving the lives of young adults who face extensive barriers toward reaching self-sufficiency. It was established primarily as a job training and community redevelopment program. Its' mission is to improve opportunities for Boston's young people by teaching them skills that will equip them to support themselves, and to develop personal and neighborhood responsibility.

Since 2001, YBB has placed 86% of its students in jobs. Fourteen percent (14%) of its' graduates have enrolled in educational or job training programs, and, 69% have obtained their GED or high school diploma.

YouthBuild corps has built more than 74 units of affordable housing. YBB has also remodeled facilities where other community-based organizations can incubate, and expand their services.

Due to its' success, YBB has:

- Served as a catalyst for the creation of the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's YouthBuild Initiative in 1991.
- Been prominently featured in the Commonwealth's Federal School to Work Plan, and
- Been profiled by the U.S. Dept. of Labor in its' Building Skills for the New Economy, Innovative Initiatives Best Practices publication

Recently the agency played a key role in the creation of the Building Careers Partnership (BCP). The BCP is comprised of the executive directors of the Private Industry Council, the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, trade unions and construction company executives. The group's mission is to create and expand opportunities in the building trades for Boston's youth.

Today, YBB provides young people with personal and professional development through construction skills training, computer technology, educational instruction, civic engagement and service to the community.

If we are to meet the future labor demands of our industry, while providing opportunity for "those that may have been left behind", we should consider putting our collective weight behind organizations like YouthBuild Boston.

Choate Bridge Nomination

By Anni H. Autio, PE, CDM,

BSCES History & Heritage Committee Chair

BSCES' History and Heritage (H&H) Committee intends to submit the Choate Bridge (1764) located in Ipswich, MA for nomination as a 2007 ASCE Civil Engineering H&H Landmark based on its preserved dry stone wall construction. The Choate Bridge is the first masonry arch bridge in Massachusetts and the second masonry arch bridge in the United States. Research conducted by Tufts University students, Emma Francis and Julia Carroll under the guidance of Brian Brenner, suggests that a portion (the western parapet and central pier) or all of the original bridge may have been dry stone wall construction. Given that a "Dry Stone Conservancy" effort exists, this may assist in demonstrating the historic significance of this local landmark to ASCE's H&H Committee members.

Colonel John C. Choate, who lived in Ipswich and served as Essex Country Treasurer at the time, oversaw the construction of the bridge in 1764. The earlier pedestrian and then cart bridge had become too narrow to accommodate the increased traffic. The original construction dimensions of the Choate Bridge were 80 feet and six inches long and 20 feet and six inches wide. In 1838, the bridge was widened to 35 feet and six inches to accommodate another lane of traffic.

The Choate Bridge was not constructed without controversy. The keystone principle used in the bridge construction was not well accepted. Locals loudly voiced their opinions that the bridge would collapse by its own weight once the supporting timbers were removed. The threats were so strong that Colonel Choate's life became in danger up to the opening day. On that momentous morning in October 1764

Events

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10.2.07 – 11.13.07

*Joint Waterways
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Sea Grant Workshop*

10.11 – 12.07

*Geo-Institute Group
One-Day Seminar*

11.3.07

*Joint Engineering
Management Group
and ACEC/MA Event*

12.6.07

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October 2007

Volume 32 Number 2

NEWS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS SECTION/ASCE

Structural

