Thanksgiving marks the start of another Holiday Season and the end of yet another year. This next month will be filled with family gatherings, holiday shopping, Hanukah, and Christmas and New Year’s Eve parties.

This year, our fall season was one of a kind to say the least. Every four years we go through the process of electing a new President, but this year was unique. It was unique on many levels. We had an unusual choice between our two major candidates; a female candidate for the first time in our history, and a non-politician. The debates and rhetoric, in my opinion, brought out the worst in both candidates. Civility has seemed to have disappeared amongst our politicians, at the national, state, and local levels (at least in Nebraska). As we approach the Holiday Season, we need to reflect, not on the negatives of this past election season, but on the positives of living in a country where we can still debate the direction that we want to see our country move. And now that the election has been decided, we pray that our President-Elect will have the wisdom to lead and the support of the American people to do so.

Thanksgiving is truly a time to reflect on the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us and our families wherever they may be. We give thanks for living in America where we are truly free to live as we please and to worship as we please. We are truly blessed to live in a society where we have the opportunity to voice our opinions freely.

As Cindy and I reflect on our year, we as a family have much to be thankful for. God has continued to bless us with good friends and good health. Our daughter, Mary, continues her work with Woodmen Life Insurance Company, daughter Sarah, is a first-time mother and learning how to function with minimal sleep, and Anna, the accountant, still works for the accounting firm, KPMG, and is based out of their Omaha office. She travels most every week but finds time to use her frequent flyer miles and Marriott points!

As we reflect upon our many blessings, it is also important to reflect upon those among us who are less fortunate in health and prosperity. We extend our sympathies and prayers to those families that have lost a loved one this past year. We have experienced the loss of loved ones within the MICA family of members. At this time of Thanksgiving, we reflect on their lives and how we have been blessed with knowing them and sharing in the memories.

The concern for others and the willingness to help out has been and continues to be an endearing trait among MICA members. As current members struggle, you are there to support them. As new members join our MICA family, you all welcome them and make them feel at home. But most of all, you are all willing to help them become better insulation professionals. You come from such diverse backgrounds, but you all reflect true Christian values in your personal and professional lives. Our association is truly blessed to have such strong members. Cindy, our daughters, and I are most grateful to be a part of MICA and to have MICA a part of us. You have made and continue to make MICA a blessing to our family.

Tom Shimerda, MICA Executive Secretary
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

TO: THE MICA MEMBERSHIP

Well, it’s that time of the year where we typically consider the things we are thankful for. I know that I have much to be thankful for. I have a great wife, a great family, a great God, a great job, great friends, and on and on. I have much to be thankful for and too often I forget these things. I was listening to the radio just the other day and the DJ was talking about having a bad day. The DJ challenged the listeners to just consider one little thing to be thankful for. As I considered those words, I thought of one little thing to be thankful for, and then another, and then another…… all of a sudden, bad day put in a much better perspective. Well done, Miss DJ!

I am also thankful to be part of such a great trade association like MICA. In October, I heard from multiple sources how fortunate we are to have such a strong association. I want to thank each of you for your part in making us a vibrant, well participated, well-educated group of members. Please don’t take the group for granted, and I want to thank all of you for the great friendships that have developed over the years. I was speaking with some of my competitors in October, and I stated that as competitors, we obviously have rivalry, but they are worthy rivals that deserve respect. That’s what our association is built on, respect leading to friendship. Again, thank you.

Ok, enough mushy stuff. Get out there, enjoy your turkey and other “fixins”. Enjoy family and friends. Enjoy a little football (if that’s your thing). Enjoy everything that the season entails and please don’t forget to stop and consider at least one little thing to be thankful for.

George Shimada
MICA President

My 3 Site Visit Questions

In my brief career, I have spent time making site visits to verify that the project was performing to estimate. When I was new to the trade, this was an overwhelming task. How was I supposed to find out? Of the hundreds of things that are considered in an estimate, what information do I ask for? What metrics dictate if a project is going well overall? How do I know that the job isn’t actually going well, and it’s the estimated data that’s incorrect? All of these questions are in play and many more.

Over time, I have asked project staff for many reports to analyze. I’ve asked estimators for all of their data. I’ve compared and run different calculations. I will tell you that to get to the nitty gritty of how a project is not performing correctly, you do need to do these things.

However, we are very busy individuals, wearing so many hats, that we can’t possibly do this for every job. Is there a fast method to walk on a new site and decide if a detailed drill down review is required? I believe there is. I believe that within three questions, you can know if a job has the potential to go well or if you need to spend time evaluating further.

Question #1: What is the overall estimated productivity for this particular job? Granted, there may be more than one number if there are different units of measure, i.e. LF/hour vs. square feet/hour. You do need those numbers separate. What I am NOT saying is to ask for productivity of every different size of pipe or every different type of fitting. Does the project manager/site superintendent even know what overall productivity he/she should be aiming for?

I am continually surprised at companies where management doesn’t give this information to project management. I always hear the statement, “If I tell the foremen the productivity, they will only perform to that level.” Let’s face it, most of us would be ecstatic if our site staff would just meet this productivity! In today’s market where competition is alive and well, I would challenge you that none of us are bidding slow productivities to be

(Continued on page 6)
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I believe that giving the project staff all pertinent information is important. If they don’t have estimated productivity, how do they know if they are doing well or not? How do you hold them accountable if you haven’t given them goals to achieve?

**Question #2:** What is actual productivity? You must expect your project staff to know this number. My opinion: if your superintendent doesn’t know actual productivity, that individual is not superintendent material and should be removed from their position.

If both questions #1 and #2 are known numbers, your project staff and you now know if the job productivity is doing well or not. Granted, even if you are making productivity, your site may still be losing labor dollars if your average actual wages are higher than estimated. However, in my experience, a job that loses large money is losing due to lack of productivity.

**Question #3:** Is the overall project on schedule? Again, your superintendent better be able to answer this question and if they can’t evaluate whether they are the right person for the job. If the project is on schedule, you have a much higher probability of hitting your estimated costs. If the job is behind schedule, you may be forced into situations you did not originally estimate, and your labor cost is likely to rise.

In most of the site visits where I was sent to evaluate under-performance, one or more of these questions could not even be answered by the site personnel. If one or more of the questions are unanswered, I would suspect that the site is in trouble and needs management attention and likely site management changes. In sites that can answer these 3 questions, you at least know that the project staff is cognizant of what is happening on site and you can evaluate the metrics to decide how a job is performing. I at least would feel fairly positive that an inept site staff is not a cause of under-performance.

To end, I know you might be wanting to ask me, “what about the other costs such as material or third party rentals or subcontractor costs?” You do need to pay attention to these, and they do cause jobs to lose money. However, I am interested in quickly finding the real troubled jobs. Yes, we can lose money by mismanagement of materials and other costs, but let’s face it; labor costs are where most of us lose large amounts of money on the loser jobs. If I can correct the labor issues, most of the time, projects turn out profitable.
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IN 2017, SOME TAX BENEFITS INCREASE SLIGHTLY DUE TO INFLATION ADJUSTMENTS, others are UNCHANGED

The Internal Revenue Service announced the tax year 2017 annual inflation adjustments for more than 50 tax provisions, including the tax rate schedules, and other tax changes. Revenue Procedure 2016-55 provides details about these annual adjustments. The tax year 2017 adjustments generally are used on tax returns filed in 2018. The tax items for tax year 2017 of greatest interest to most taxpayers include the following dollar amounts:

The standard deduction for married filing jointly rises to $12,700 for tax year 2017, up $100 from the prior year. For single taxpayers and married individuals filing separately, the standard deduction rises to $6,350 in 2017, up from $6,300 in 2016, and for heads of households, the standard deduction will be $9,350 for tax year 2017, up from $9,300 for tax year 2016.

The personal exemption for tax year 2017 remains as it was for 2016: $4,050. However, the exemption is subject to a phase-out that begins with adjusted gross incomes of $261,500 ($313,800 for married couples filing jointly). It phases out completely at $384,000 ($436,300 for married couples filing jointly.)

For tax year 2017, the 39.6 percent tax rate affects single taxpayers whose income exceeds $418,400 ($470,700 for married taxpayers filing jointly), up from $415,050 and $466,950, respectively. The other marginal rates – 10, 15, 25, 28, 33 and 35 percent – and the related income tax thresholds for tax year 2017 are described in the revenue procedure.

The limitation for itemized deductions to be claimed on tax year 2017 returns of individuals begins with incomes of $287,650 or more ($313,800 for married couples filing jointly). For tax year 2017 returns of individuals begins with incomes of $287,650 or more ($313,800 for married couples filing jointly).

The Alternative Minimum Tax exemption amount for tax year 2017 is $54,300 and begins to phase out at $120,700 ($84,500, for married couples filing jointly for whom the exemption begins to phase out at $160,900). The 2016 exemption amount was $53,900 ($83,800 for married couples filing jointly). For tax year 2017, the 28 percent tax rate applies to taxpayers with taxable incomes above $187,800 ($93,900 for married individuals filing separately).

The tax year 2017 maximum Earned Income Credit (Continued on page 13)
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amount is $6,318 for taxpayers filing jointly who have 3 or more qualifying children, up from a total of $6,269 for tax year 2016. The revenue procedure has a table providing maximum credit amounts for other categories, income thresholds and phase-outs.

For tax year 2017, the monthly limitation for the qualified transportation fringe benefit is $255, as is the monthly limitation for qualified parking.

For calendar year 2017, the dollar amount used to determine the penalty for not maintaining minimum essential health coverage is $695.

For tax year 2017 participants who have self-only coverage in a Medical Savings Account, the plan must have an annual deductible that is not less than $2,250 but not more than $3,350; these amounts remain unchanged from 2016. For self-only coverage the maximum out of pocket expense amount is $4,500, up $50 from 2016. For tax year 2017 participants with family coverage, the floor for the annual deductible is $4,500, up from $4,450 in 2016, however the deductible cannot be more than $6,750, up $50 from the limit for tax year 2016. For family coverage, the out of pocket expense limit is $8,250 for tax year 2017, an increase of $100 from tax year 2016.

For tax year 2017, the adjusted gross income amount used by joint filers to determine the reduction in the Lifetime Learning Credit is $112,000, up from $111,000 for tax year 2016.

For tax year 2017, the foreign earned income exclusion is $102,100, up from $101,300 for tax year 2016.

Estates of decedents who die during 2017 have a basic exclusion amount of $5,490,000, up from a total of $5,450,000 for estates of decedents who died in 2016.

FEDERAL COURT ISSUES HISTORIC RULING IN EEOC LAWSUIT: CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 PROHIBITS SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) this month announced that a federal court has denied a motion to dismiss a sex discrimination lawsuit filed by EEOC, ruling that sexual orientation discrimination is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

On March 1, EEOC filed the U.S. government's first sex discrimination lawsuit based on sexual orientation. U.S. EEOC v. Scott Medical Health Center (Case 2:16-cv-00225-CB), in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh. In its complaint, EEOC charged that a gay male employee was subjected to sex discrimination in the form of harassment because of his sexual orientation and then forced to quit his job rather than endure further harassment. In response to EEOC's lawsuit, the defendant filed a motion to dismiss the case.

In a decision issued on Nov. 4 by U.S. District Judge Cathy Bissoon, the court denied Scott Medical Health Center's motion to dismiss EEOC's case. In its ruling, the court found that sexual orientation discrimination is a type of discrimination "because of sex," which is barred by Title VII. Applying decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court finding that Title VII's ban on sex discrimination includes adverse treatment of workers based on "sex stereotypes," i.e. pre-conceived ideas of how a man or a woman should act or think, the federal court stated, "There is no more obvious form of sex stereotyping than making a determination that a person should conform to heterosexuality."

The federal court then concluded, "That someone can be subjected to a barrage of insults, humiliation, hostility and/or changes to the terms and conditions of their employment, based upon nothing more than the aggressor's view of what it means to be a man or a woman, is exactly the evil Title VII was designed to eradicate." While the federal court made a legal ruling in the case, to date there has been no trial or factual finding whether discrimination occurred.

The court's decision is consistent with EEOC's reading of Title VII's sex discrimination ban. As the federal law enforcement agency charged with interpreting and enforcing Title VII, EEOC has previously concluded that harassment and other discrimination because of sexual orientation is prohibited sex discrimination. On July 15, 2015, EEOC, in a federal sector decision, determined that sexual orientation discrimination is, by its very nature, discrimination because of sex. See Baldwin v. Dep't of Transp., Appeal No. 0120133080 (July 15, 2015).

In that case, EEOC explained the reasons why Title VII's prohibition of sex discrimination includes discrimination
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because of sexual orientation: (1) sexual orientation discrimination necessarily involves treating workers less favorably because of their sex because sexual orientation as a concept cannot be understood without reference to sex; (2) sexual orientation discrimination is rooted in non-compliance with sex stereotypes and gender norms, and employment decisions based in such stereotypes and norms have long been found to be prohibited sex discrimination under Title VII; and (3) sexual orientation discrimination punishes workers because of their close personal association with members of a particular sex, such as marital and other personal relationships.

Addressing emerging and developing issues, especially coverage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals under Title VII's sex discrimination provisions, is one of six national priorities identified by EEOC's Strategic Enforcement Plan (SEP).

The Scott Medical Health Center lawsuit was investigated by EEOC's Pittsburgh Area Office, a component of EEOC Philadelphia District Office, which oversees Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and parts of New Jersey and Ohio.

EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov.

**DODGE DATA & ANALYTICS: PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP LIKELY TO BE A PLUS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

The election of Donald J. Trump appears to be a welcome development for the U.S. construction industry, according to forecasters at Dodge Data & Analytics. With his background and experience in construction and real estate development, President-elect Trump understands the important role that construction plays in the growth of our economy and the vitality of our cities.

During the course of their campaigns, both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton highlighted the need for increased federal investment in infrastructure. Under President-elect Trump’s latest proposal, up to $550 billion in federal funds could be invested, presumably over a five-year period, in infrastructure and publics works projects.

(Continued on page 20)
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“The broad proposal for increased federal funding should support the public works sector, either directly or indirectly, by keeping attention focused on the need to upgrade infrastructure,” said Robert Murray, Chief Economist, Dodge Data & Analytics. “The ways in which the Trump proposals will affect construction will become clearer as more details come forth, including how these proposals make their way through Congress. For the moment, it’s still believed that total construction starts in 2017 will increase 5%, with some dampening for healthcare-related projects accompanied by improvement for public works construction.” President-elect Trump’s emphasis on upgrading and developing public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, airports, transit systems and ports will, with the approval of the 115th Congress, bring much needed revitalization to U.S. infrastructure and create favorable business conditions across the design and construction industries.

While the specifics of federal infrastructure investment in 2017 and beyond will become clearer in the months ahead, the ideas already proposed should help spur Congressional action on two existing legislative items, including the Water Resources Development Act and the 2017 Federal Appropriations Bill, which make provisions for infrastructure spending on water management, transportation and energy infrastructure.

The election has also already provided some clarity on likely construction at the state and local level. Voters have given their approval for several major construction-related measures in California, Colorado, Texas and North Carolina with a combined value upwards of $136 billion for education and transportation sector construction.

Dodge Data & Analytics will continue to closely monitor legislative developments and industry trends, watching for a possible upside to our forecast, to ensure that design and construction businesses are equipped to capitalize on the opportunities that lie ahead. We are encouraged by the tone of the latest developments.

EEOC POSTS WEBINAR RECORDING ON NEW EEO-1 REPORT

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has posted online a recording of its Oct. 26, 2016 webinar for employers about the new Employer Information Report or EEO-1 at https://www.eeoc.gov/employers/eeo1survey/2017survey-webinar.cfm. This webinar provides an overview of the EEO-1, describes the process of reporting and submitting summary pay and hours worked data, and gives examples of how to enter the data on the new form. A recording of the webinar, the presentation slides, and other resources related to the new EEO-1, including the new form, a Fact Sheet for Small Business, and a questions and answers document are available on EEOC’s 2017 EEO-1 Survey page.

Starting March 2018, the EEO-1 will collect summary pay and hours worked data, in addition to demographic information, from certain employers. The new information will improve investigations of possible pay discrimination, which remains a contributing factor to persistent wage gaps.

OSHA ISSUES FINAL RULE UPDATING WALKING-WORKING SURFACES STANDARDS AND ESTABLISHING PERSONAL FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a final rule updating its general industry Walking-Working Surfaces standards specific to slip, trip, and fall hazards. The rule also includes a new section under the general industry Personal Protective Equipment standards that establishes employer requirements for using personal fall protection systems.

"The final rule will increase workplace protection from those hazards, especially fall hazards, which are a leading cause of worker deaths and injuries,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. “OSHA believes advances in technology and greater flexibility will reduce worker deaths and injuries from falls.” The final rule also increases consistency between general and construction industries, which will help employers and workers that work in both industries.

OSHA estimates the final standard will prevent 29 fatalities and more than 5,842 injuries annually. The rule becomes effective on Jan. 17, 2017, and will affect approximately 112 million workers at seven million worksites.

The final rule’s most significant update is allowing employers to select the fall protection system that works best
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for them, choosing from a range of accepted options including personal fall protection systems. OSHA has permitted the use of personal fall protection systems in construction since 1994 and the final rule adopts similar requirements for general industry. Other changes include allowing employers to use rope descent systems up to 300 feet above a lower level; prohibiting the use of body belts as part of a personal fall arrest system; and requiring worker training on personal fall protection systems and fall equipment.

NEW CONSTRUCTION STARTS IN 2017 TO INCREASE 5% TO $713 BILLION ACCORDING TO DODGE DATA & ANALYTICS

Dodge Data & Analytics (http://www.construction.com) released its 2017 Dodge Construction Outlook, a mainstay in construction industry forecasting and business planning. The report predicts that total U.S. construction starts for 2017 will advance 5% to $713 billion, following gains of 11% in 2015 and an estimated 1% in 2016.

“The U.S. construction industry has witnessed signs of deceleration in 2016, following several years of steady growth,” stated Robert Murray, chief economist for Dodge Data & Analytics. “Total construction starts during the first half of this year lagged behind what was reported in 2015, raising some concern that the current construction expansion may have run its course. However, the early 2016 shortfall reflected the comparison to unusually elevated activity during the first half of 2015, lifted by 13 very large projects valued each at $1 billion or more, such as a $9 billion liquefied natural gas export terminal in Texas and a $2.5 billion office tower in New York City. As 2016 has proceeded, the year-to-date shortfall has grown smaller, easing concern that the construction industry may be in the early stage of cyclical decline. Instead, the construction industry has now entered a more mature phase of its expansion, one that is characterized by slower rates of growth than what took place during the 2012-2015 period, but still growth. Since the construction start statistics will lead the pattern of construction spending, this means that construction spending can be expected to see moderate gains through 2017 and beyond.”

“On balance, there are a number of positive factors which suggest the construction expansion has room to proceed. The U.S. economy in 2017 is anticipated to see moderate job growth, market fundamentals for commercial real estate should remain generally healthy, and more funding support is coming from state and local bond measures. Although the global economy in 2017 will remain sluggish, energy prices appear to have stabilized, interest rate hikes will be gradual and few, and a new U.S. President will have been elected. For 2017, total construction starts are forecast to rise 5% to $713 billion. Gains of 8% are expected for both residential building and nonresidential building, while non-building construction slides a further 3%.”

The pattern of construction starts by more specific sectors is the following:

- Single family housing will rise 12% in dollars, corresponding to a 9% increase in units to 795,000 (Dodge basis). Access to home mortgage loans is improving, and some of the caution exercised by potential homebuyers will ease with continued employment growth and low mortgage rates. Older members of the Millennial generation are now moving into the 30 to 35 year-old age bracket, which should begin to lift demand for single family housing.

- Commercial building will increase 6% on top of the 12% gain estimated for 2016. Office construction is showing improvement from very low levels, lifted by the start of several signature office towers and broad development efforts in downtown markets. Hotel construction should show some improvement from a very subdued 2016, and warehouses will register further growth. Hotel construction, while still healthy, will begin to retreat after a strong 2016.

- Institutional building will advance 10%, resuming its expansion after pausing in 2015 and 2016. The educational facilities category is seeing an increasing amount of K-12 school construction, supported by the passage of recent school construction bond measures. More growth is expected for the amusement category (convention centers, sports arenas, casinos) and transportation terminals.

- Manufacturing plant construction will increase 6%, beginning to recover after steep declines in 2015 and 2016 that reflected the pullback for large petrochemical plant starts.

- Electric utilities and gas plants will fall another 29% after the 26% decline in 2016. The lift that had been present in 2015 from new liquefied natural gas export terminals continues to dissipate. Power plant construction, which was supported in 2016 by the extension of investment tax credits, will ease back as new generating capacity comes on line.
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- Kaowool®, Cerablanket® (RCF) fiber
- Denka® Polycrystalline (PCW) fiber

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- Provides significant energy savings compared to other tested AES and RCF fibers
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THE PASSING OF ROY COOK

We are saddened to report the death of another long-time MICA member, Roy Cook of Cook Brothers Insulation in Kansas City. Roy and his brother, Andy, were very active in MICA when Cindy and I started. We would see Roy and his wife, Betty, and Andy and his wife, Karen, at both MICA and NIA events. Their support and willingness to help MICA and the insulation industry is another legacy passed to their sons. In recent years, Roy’s son, Jeff has been the face of Cook Brothers in MICA. We extend our prayers and sympathies to Betty, Jeff and Mary, and the extended Cook family. Below are excerpts from Roy’s obituary:

It is with deep sorrow that we notify you that Cook Brothers has lost the patriarch of the company, Roy Cook. Roy lost his battle with cancer on October 26, 2016, after several months of fighting. Roy, along with his brother Andy, and Robert VanKeuren, founded Cook Brothers Insulation in 1983 and built it into the most respected company in the business. His unyielding dedication to providing a superior product while still maintaining competitive pricing, is the stamp he has left on Cook Brothers and on his two sons, Jeff and Dan. That tradition of excellence will always be at the core of everything done at Cook Brothers, and is a living legacy to the man who started it all.

Roy L. Cook passed away at home October 26, 2016. He was born March 13, 1938, in Hamden, Mo., to Oscar and Ila Porter Cook. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Betty, sons, Dan and Jeff, six grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, one great-great grandchild, sisters, Twila (Herb) Smith, Lila Rogers, Independence, Mo., Frances Asher, Louisville, Ky., brother, Andy (Karen) Cook, Raytown, Mo., and a number of nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother, Sam Cook and sister, Ivah McNeall. He was an owner of Cook Bros. Insulation, Inc., for 32 years.

Cards of sympathy may be sent to the Cook family in care of White Chapel Funeral Home, 6600 NE Antioch Rd, Gladstone, MO 64119. Memorials may be made to Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, Briarcliff Church or NorthCare Hospice.
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**Dodge Momentum Index Moves Higher in October**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dodge Momentum Index</th>
<th>Oct-16</th>
<th>Sep-16</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>142.8</td>
<td>134.6</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Building</td>
<td>122.2</td>
<td>120.5</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dodge Data & Analytics

The Dodge Momentum Index grew 4.1% in October to 133.6 from its revised September reading of 128.3 (2000=100). The Momentum Index is a monthly measure of the first (or initial) report for nonresidential building projects in planning, which have been shown to lead construction spending for nonresidential buildings by a full year. October’s gain nearly reversed the loss in September, and returns the Momentum Index to the rising trend that began earlier in the year. The commercial component of the Momentum Index rose 6.1% in October, and is 20% above last year. This suggests that despite being in a more mature phase of the building cycle, commercial construction has room for further growth in the coming months. The institutional component of the Momentum Index increased 1.4% in the month, and is now 10% higher than one year ago.

In October, 12 projects entered planning each with a value that exceeded $100 million. For the commercial building sector, the leading projects were a $250 million office building in Somerville, MA. The leading institutional projects were a $250 million hospital in New York, NY and a $140 million high school in Upper Arlington, OH.

**EEOC Issues Fiscal Year 2016 Performance Report**

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) secured more than $482.1 million for victims of discrimination in private, state and local government, and federal workplaces during fiscal year 2016, which ended Sept. 30, the agency reported in its annual Performance and Accountability Report published on Nov. 15.

This includes $347.9 million for victims of employment discrimination in private sector and state and local government workplaces through mediation, conciliation, and settlements; $52.2 million for workers harmed by discriminatory practices through agency litigation; and $82 million for federal employees and applicants. Importantly, in each of these categories, the agency obtained substantial changes to discriminatory practices to remedy violations of equal employment opportunity laws and prevent future discriminatory conduct.

"For over 50 years, EEOC has worked to fulfill our nation’s shared vision of equality and justice for all, said Chair Jenny Yang. "To achieve this vision, the agency has undertaken a comprehensive effort to strategically deploy its resources to matters where government focus is most needed. We are proud of our efforts to foster constructive solutions that promote prosperity for all our workers, employers and communities."

Significant agency accomplishments in fiscal year 2016 include the following:

EEOC increased the number of charges staff resolved to 97,443 charges, 6.5 percent more than the charges EEOC received. This resulted in a reduction of charge workload by 3.8 percent to 73,508, a 2,900 charge reduction compared with fiscal year 2015. The agency also handled over 585,000 calls to its toll-free number and more than 160,000 pre-charge inquiries in field offices, reflecting the significant public demand for EEOC's services.

EEOC helped workers obtain relief by resolving over 15,800 charges of discrimination through the agency's administrative processes-settlements, mediations, and conciliations. Systemic cases address patterns or practices of discrimination or policies that have a broad impact on a region, industry, or a group of employees or job applicants. In fiscal year 2016, EEOC resolved 273 systemic investigations before filing litigation, obtaining more than $20.3 million in remedies. In litigation, EEOC resolved 21 systemic cases, six of which included at least 50 victims of discrimination and two of which included over 1,000 victims of discrimination.

The agency's outreach programs reached 315,000 people during the year through participation in 3,700 no-cost educational, training and outreach events. EEOC also revamped its Youth@Work website to provide updated resources for America's next generation of workers. To help small businesses, EEOC launched the online Small Business Resource Center to provide a one-stop shop to help small businesses access information about employer responsibilities to prevent or eliminate discrimination on the job.

In fiscal year 2016, EEOC’s legal staff resolved 139 merits lawsuits in the federal district courts for a total monetary recovery of $52.2 million. EEOC filed 86 lawsuits alleging discrimination during fiscal year 2016 and achieved a favorable resolution in approximately 90.6 percent of all district court resolutions. The filings include 55 individual suits and 13 suits involving multiple victims or discriminatory policies, and 18 systemic suits.

In our federal sector program, the agency resolved 6,792 hearings complaints and secured more than $76.9 million in relief for federal employees. EEOC also resolved 3,751 appeals of agency decisions on federal sector complaints, including 47.3 percent of them within 180 days of receipt, and secured more than $5.1 million in relief.
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