



minnesota construction association

March 2008

MINNESOTA CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Construction Views

The Official Organization of Minnesota's Construction Industry

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Wednesday,
March 19, 2008**

8:00 - 9:30 AM

**Concrete Technology
and Durability**

Daniel M. Vruno,
American Engineering
Testing, Inc.

Scott F. Wolter,
American Petrographic
Services, Inc.

**Wednesday,
April 30, 2008**

8:00 - 9:00 AM

**Project Managers-
Maximizing the Value
of a Precious Resource**

R.J. (Bob) Sniegowski,
P.E., & Jim Davidson
Larson Allen, LLP

CONCRETE TECHNOLOGY AND DURABILITY

Daniel Vruno & Scott Wolter,
American Engineering Testing, Inc.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008
8:00 - 9:30 am

American Engineering Testing, Inc.
550 Cleveland Avenue North
St. Paul, 55114

This breakfast seminar will begin with a concrete mix demonstration by Dan Vruno. He will review some of the basics of proportioning and will batch three different water/cement ratios, which will be cured by three different methods. Similar samples will be tested and attendees will estimate results based on what they have learned. During the second half of this program, attendees will learn about the structural condition assessment of concrete structures through the eyes of a petrographer, Scott Wolter.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION - SEE PAGE 3!



President's Column

By Phillip Baum

The construction industry is one of the largest industries in America and around the world. There seems to be many different reasons why we choose construction as our career path. It may be the intrigue of design and/or engineering, it may be the building process itself, it may be the business side or perhaps our families have had roots in construction. Whatever the reason, I believe most of us chose the industry because we enjoy problem solving and the technical issues that come up in the construction process.

Opportunities for educational development are available through MCA and I encourage you to take advantage of keeping yourself professionally at your best. Our monthly programs are designed to offer something for everyone throughout the year. For those that want to learn more about concrete mix design, concrete testing and structural condition assessment of concrete structures don't pass up this month's program. American Engineering Testing has invited us behind the scenes into their laboratory. We will see various concrete testing methods from Dan Vruno, P.E. with American Engineering Testing and Scott Wolter, P.G. with American Petrographic Services. This program will be of interest to Project Managers, Architects and Engineers as well as field Superintendents and Job-Site Foremen.

MCA is a non-profit association dedicated to educating and promoting the construction industry. Statements of fact and opinion in this publication are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect or imply the opinion of the members, directors or staff of MCA.

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DEMYSTIFYING THE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX

By John Csargo, CPA, MBT, CFP®

Blanski Peter Kronlage & Zoch, P.A. CPAs and Consultants

You've probably heard of it by now, but figuring it out is something that leaves most of us scratching our heads. The Alternative Minimum Tax, fondly referred to as AMT, was introduced by the Tax Reform Act of 1969 solely to target 155 high-income households that The Secretary of the Treasury discovered hadn't paid any taxes although they earned more than 200,000. Now, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that by 2010, if nothing changes, one in five taxpayers will have AMT liability and nearly every married couple with an income of over \$100,000 will fall under AMT.

So what exactly is AMT?

The easiest way to understand AMT is to see it as its own separate tax system; but one that also has some similarities to the regular tax system. The difference is, AMT uses a different set of rules (often less generous) for determining taxable income. Certain items excluded from income under regular tax rules are included for AMT purposes, while other deductions and credits permitted under the regular tax rules are disallowed - the theory being that people couldn't use certain types of deductions to lower their taxes.

Still with me? Simply put, if you make over \$75,000 and have a number of write-offs and exemptions, exercised stock options or own a business or property, you should run the numbers and fill out Form 6251.

If you think you will fall into the AMT category or already have, you are probably wondering what you can do to avoid it. The truth is, it isn't an easy

maneuver. The tax codes were drafted to circumvent moves that would allow you to reduce both your regular tax liability and your AMT liability. So you could reduce one, but increase the other. All is not lost though - we do have some planning strategies that may help you in the future. Sitting down with your CPA will also go a long way in preparing a plan that will make the most out of your tax situation. Until then:

#1. Don't plan on prepaying state and local income and property taxes that would be due the upcoming year. Although this enables you to have a bigger regular tax write-off, it is totally disallowed under AMT. If you are in AMT, prepaying could turn an expense that could be deducted the following year into an expense that will never generate any tax benefit at all. Since Minnesota has a high income tax rate, we are hit hard with this disallowance.

#2. Be selective if you are buying bonds. Municipal bonds are fine as long as they don't fall under the "private activity" bond category. So, for instance, a bond to build a baseball stadium is likely a private activity bond, while a municipal bond to build a library or school would be allowable.

#3. If you are lucky enough to be in a capital gains situation, you might want to look at selling off investments that aren't doing well, or what we refer to as "harvesting losses." These deductible capital losses will offset the capital gains and lessen your AMT liability.

#4. Incentive stock options can be a huge AMT liability if you don't plan

well. Normally, when you exercise incentive stock options you don't report anything for regular income taxes, but you do have to report the income for AMT purposes. You might need to look at spreading the option exercise out over a few years to reduce your liability.

#5. If you find you're already in AMT, your effective tax rate will most likely be less than the regular tax rate, which can go up to 35 percent. It might make sense then, to take in additional income as you would be paying 26-28 percent instead of the possible 35 percent. You might consider accelerating income into the lower tax rate AMT puts you in. Another silver-lining is the fact that the portion of the tax that is considered AMT you may be able to take in the future as a "minimum tax credit" so be sure to keep track of it year to year.

It is hard to understand, definitely not doing what it was intended to do in the beginning and frustrating to those that fall under it when they shouldn't. Will it change? Possibly, but don't hold your breath. Congress most likely will keep putting one-year patches on it to ease some of the pain. In the meantime, be aware, plan carefully and most certainly call your CPA to discuss these and other ways to reduce your tax liability.

About the Author: John Csargo, CPA, MBT, CFP®, is a Shareholder at Blanski Peter Kronlage & Zoch, P.A. - CPAs and Consultants. Csargo leads the firm's Professional Services Task Force and Tax Advisory Group. He spends most of his time advising individuals and businesses on all areas related to tax planning.



KRAUS-ANDERSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, one of the Midwest's oldest and largest commercial general contractors and construction managers, has named **TERRY HART** director of operations of the Circle Pines office. He will oversee the day-to-day operations of that office.

Industry veteran Terry Hart returns to Kraus-Anderson after serving two years as a construction executive with a Twin Cities energy group, where he worked on the development and construction of wind power-generating facilities. He joined Kraus-Anderson in 1994 and became a corporate vice president.

Throughout his career, Hart has managed projects in a wide range of industry sectors, and is regarded for his management of K-12 public education projects, including Moorhead Public Schools, Elk River School District, Milaca Schools and Forest Lake Area Schools.

Hart received his Architectural Drafting and Estimating degree from Dunwoody Industrial Institute, Minneapolis.

The 8200 Tower, currently under construction as the fifth office building in Normandale Lake Office Park in Bloomington, was awarded Leadership in Energy and Design Core and Shell (LEED-CS) Gold Level pre-certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). Developed for TIAA-CREF by **UNITED PROPERTIES**, the tower will be an 11-story, 275,000-square-foot office building and is scheduled for completion in spring of 2009.

"Striving to reduce the environmental footprint of our real estate portfolio across the United

States, through pursuing LEED standards and other initiatives, is key to our investment philosophy which seeks to deliver consistent growth, and reflects the values of our clients," said Steven Bither, Director, Real Estate Asset Management, TIAA-CREF. "We believe implementing sound environmental practices creates a win-win situation for TIAA-CREF clients and the Minneapolis area business community."

LEED-CS certification is a USGBC green building rating system to evaluate building project exteriors. The certification includes base building elements like structure and building-level systems like central HVAC. Pre-certification is formal recognition by the USGBC of the goal to develop a LEED-certified building.

"Normandale Lake has a reputation as the premiere office park in the Twin Cities and it is important for the Park to

retain its market leadership. Increasingly, the best new commercial developments incorporate green design, so a LEED building was a necessity," said Bill Katter, vice president for United Properties. "It is United Properties' first green building and we believe sustainability will be a market-driven priority for future office projects. Green is not only a socially responsible choice, but will prove to be a smart business choice over the long run."

The 8200 Tower will also be included in TIAA-CREF's energy benchmarking program based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's EnergyStar program. Through this program, encompassing its office property holdings, TIAA-CREF has evaluated the energy usage of each of its properties in order to identify viable strategies to reduce their energy intensity. The program will serve to lessen the organization's impact on the environment as well as save energy costs and in turn help increase returns on its investments for the benefit of its clients.

"The building has already generated interest from a number of tenants who want to be in a green building," said Tom Tracy, vice president - office brokerage, United Properties. "It offers tenants cutting edge design while being energy-efficient and socially responsible."

The building's high-efficiency mechanical systems, storm-water design and low-emitting materials were among the key contributing factors to the LEED pre-certification. The 8200 Tower will be skyway-connected to the other buildings within the office park and feature an adjacent six-level parking deck. The design will reflect the style of other buildings within the office park, which offers landmark-quality architecture. The amenity package includes Kincaid's Steak, Chop & Fish House, New Horizon Academy, conference/training facilities, exercise facilities, additional full-service restaurants and delis, convenience stores, an easily accessible location and, nearby walking trails and paths.

Adolfson & Peterson Construction is the general contractor and Edward Farr Architects is the architect for the project. United Properties will handle the leasing and property management of the tower, as it currently does for the office park.

Benfield, the world's leading independent reinsurance and risk intermediary, will be the anchor tenant of the 8200 building, occupying more than 100,000 sq. ft. The location will serve as the London-based company's U.S. headquarters.

Long-term tenants of the office park include Microsoft Corporation, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Watson Wyatt Worldwide, Wachovia Securities and LSI Logic.

KRAUS-ANDERSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, one of the Midwest's oldest and largest commercial general contractors and construction managers, has named two executives to senior posts. **MARK COUDRON** has been promoted to senior vice president of Kraus-Anderson's Minneapolis Business Group, which oversees offices in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Bemidji. Replacing Coudron as director of operations of the Minneapolis office is **CRAIG FRANCOIS**, who will direct the day-to-day operations of that office.



Mark Coudron joined Kraus-Anderson in 1978 and has served in various management positions, most recently as senior vice president of the Minneapolis office. He has directed many of Kraus-Anderson's major construction projects, including the 816-room Hilton and Towers Hotel in Minneapolis; the 1,400,000-square-foot, five-story 3M Company Research and Development

complex in Austin, Texas; and the Four Winds Casino and Hotel project in New Buffalo, Michigan. Some of Coudron's key clients are Boston Scientific, Regions Hospital, Fairview Health Services and Lakes Entertainment.



Craig Francois began with Kraus-Anderson in 1979 and has served in several management capacities, most recently as vice president. Since becoming a company vice president in 1992, he has led numerous projects in Minnesota, Iowa and Texas. Most notably, he served as team leader for over 400 projects totaling more than \$1.1 billion at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International

Airport. He has also managed construction projects for Macy's at Mall of America; Canterbury Downs in Shakopee; Mayo Clinic and Centerplace Galleria in Rochester; Unisys in Eagan; and Northwestern Life Insurance Company in Minneapolis. Francois received his B.S. in Construction Engineering from Iowa State University.

KRAUS-ANDERSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY has won the *Award of Excellence* in the Office Multi-Tenant category (up to 75,000 square feet) from the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) for the construction of Metro Urology's Woodbury, Minn. clinic, Cornerstone Specialty Medical Centre.

Located on Century Avenue and Lake Road in Woodbury, Minn., Cornerstone Specialty Medical Centre's new 56,970-square-foot facility brings comprehensive medical care to the rapidly growing corridor east of the Twin Cities. The project is the successful result of thorough planning and synergy

among anchor tenant Metro Urology and its partners. Frauenschuh Commercial is the development coordinator of the project and Pope Associates is the architect. The project broke ground in September 2006 and took occupancy in August 2007.

The two-story facility that includes state-of-the-art imaging and pathology services, consolidates and expands Metro Urology under one roof. A significant portion of the building will be occupied by Metro Urology, providing comprehensive adult and pediatric urological services in an outpatient setting; clinical research; and medical education in the greater Twin Cities and Western Wisconsin. Building tenants include Minnesota Oncology Hematology, P.A., (MOHPA) and the Center for Diagnostic Imaging (CDI). Hospital Pathology Associates (HPA) occupies space with Metro Urology as a part of its pathology partnership.

"Metro Urology had a vision to create a center of excellence for urologic care for the East Metro and Western Wisconsin," said Randy Thompson, executive director of Metro Urology. "With the leadership of Kraus-Anderson, Frauenschuh Commercial and Pope Associates, I am thrilled that our vision has been realized."

The building is designed to grow into the future. Careful planning is reflected in the architectural details, which blend classic and contemporary design with natural materials. The warm brick exterior is accented by a signature, corner stone tower. The interior features slate, cherry woodwork and other natural materials to provide a comfortable, attractive and calming setting. Its design accommodates vertical expansion to a third floor. The first floor was designed with extra clear height for maximum flexibility as technology moves forward.

"This project took years to pull together," said Dean Williamson, senior vice president at Frauenschuh Commercial, which has extensive health care development expertise. "The City of Woodbury also took a lead role in this collaborative effort that all parties will be proud of for years to come."



KARIE JOHNSON, AIA, director of virtual construction for **ADOLFSON & PETERSON CONSTRUCTION**, was selected as one of 40 "architectural/engineering/construction-industry superstars" in *Building Design + Construction's* third annual "40 Under 40" recognition program. She and 39 other young professionals from across the US were chosen from among 275 entrants

and are featured in the January 2008 issue of the magazine. They represent the architects, engineers, contractors, designers and developers who are leading and shaping the industry.

By her peers' own accounts, Karie is someone whose insight and high-energy personality had her exploring design and project technologies in their earliest forms. Her interest has led to the establishment of a solid reputation in the architectural and construction fields and advanced the use of these technologies as premiere collaborative tools in the design and construction delivery process.

She represents, for her Adolfsen & Peterson co-workers, management, associates and the young people she coaches, the creative link to using powerful visual tools to maximum advantage. Her skills come in to play during the pre-construction phase of a project to determine the scope and requirements. With more than fifteen years experience in design, project management and business, her role with A&P is to implement cost-saving processes using Building Information Modeling (BIM). She develops 3-D models and other visualization tools that detect design conflicts and integrate project schedules.

Karie has a bachelor of architecture degree from the University of Minnesota and is pursuing a bachelor of applied science in construction management from the university. Prior to joining A&P, she worked for Mortenson Construction, and Stageberg Beyer Sachs, a Minneapolis architectural firm. She has been on the project teams of hospitals; research labs; industrial, higher education and sports facilities; and performance centers, and is a board member of AIA Minneapolis.

JOEL PETERSON has joined **HOWARD R. GREEN COMPANY** as a water resources project manager in its St. Paul office. Peterson has over ten years of experience working in water resources engineering and academia. His areas of expertise include storm-water design, wetland mitigation, statistical analysis and data management, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, geomorphology and fluvial processes, water quality modeling and erosion control. He has served as lead project engineer on several projects for the US Army Corps of Engineers and has worked on projects for various watershed districts, higher education and governmental agency clients.

Peterson graduated from Purdue University with a Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural and Biological Engineering. He has a Master of Science in Agricultural and Biological Engineering from Penn State University, with a Bachelor of Science in Biosystems Engineering from the University of Minnesota. Peterson is a registered engineer in Minnesota and an active member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers and the National Society of Professional Engineers.

KRAUS-ANDERSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY (KA) today announced the development of its *Future Builders Scholarship* program. The new program offers funding for two

\$1,000 scholarship opportunities. The scholarships are specifically intended for high school seniors pursuing a degree in Commercial Construction Management. In a joint venture with the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Administrators (MACTA), Kraus-Anderson will extend one award to students in the Metro area and designate the other to students throughout greater Minnesota.

MIKE SMOCZYK, director of education for Kraus-Anderson University, the company's professional development program, says the scholarships are a part of a broader company effort to encourage and support students entering the construction industry. KA's Bemidji office for years has managed two highly successful programs. For over 15 years, the company has provided five \$500 scholarships to Bemidji High School seniors pursuing college or trade school degrees in the construction industry. In addition, since 1995 KA has managed a solid endowment program, which last year awarded six \$1,000 scholarships at Bemidji State University in Industrial Technology (with a Construction Management emphasis).

Students interested in applying for a scholarship must complete an application, including a current high school grade transcript, recommendation letter from a high school instructor, a one-page statement describing their goals for a career in the construction industry and their plans to attend a post-secondary construction program. Payment of the awards will be made directly to the scholarship recipients after submitting an official first-semester college transcript indicating at least a 2.0 grade point average and enrollment in a post-secondary construction program. Students may download a scholarship application from KA's website (www.krausanderson.com).

To learn more about Kraus-Anderson's Future Builders Scholarship contact Mike Smoczyk at 8625 Rendova Street NE, P.O. Box 158, Circle Pines, Minn. 55014; 763-792-3674; or mike.smoczyk@k-a-c.com.

The Minnesota office of the construction company **ADOLFSON & PETERSON, INC. (A&P)** has earned more recognition for its outstanding safety program: the 2008 CHASE Achievement - White Level. CHASE is the **CONSTRUCTION HEALTH AND SAFETY EXCELLENCE** - Minnesota partnership forged in 2003 between Associated General Contractors of Minnesota and MNOSHA. It is a significant initiative designed to reduce injuries and fatalities from the major hazards found on construction sites.

Sr. Vice President of Minnesota Operations **DAVID MOLDA**, and Vice President of Field Operations **STEVE FRITZ**, received the award at the annual AGC of Minnesota convention at the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis in January. The partnership charter promotes the value of a safe, healthful

work environment in construction and seeks more mutual trust and respect among all parties - project owners, workers, contractor management, and OSHA.

CHASE focuses on the four hazards that are leading causes of death on construction sites: falls, "struck by" incidents, "caught in or between" incidents, and electrocution. The primary goal is a three-percent reduction annually in the number of injuries, illnesses and fatalities that result from these hazards in particular. The other goals are strategies that pursue this reduction, including promoting open lines of communication between MNOSHA and the industry.

A&P has long focused on its safety program and has one of the lowest EMRs (experience modification rating) in the construction industry at 0.50. In 2007 the company was recognized by MNOSHA's safety and health program, MNSHARP, for safety achievements at the Minnesota Correctional Facility - Faribault worksite. It was only the second Minnesota project to earn the recognition.

Would you like to see your name or your company's name in the **Member To Member** section of *Construction Views*?

If so, please send all company press releases, announcements and updates to:

Corinna Hastings

Executive Director and Editor

chastings@harringtoncompany.com

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4248 Park Glen Road

Minneapolis, MN 55416

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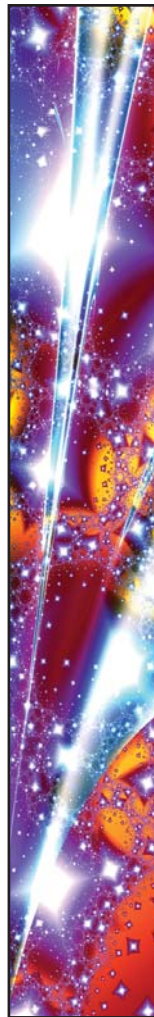
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- Recognized in issues of the MCA's Newsletter *Construction Views*



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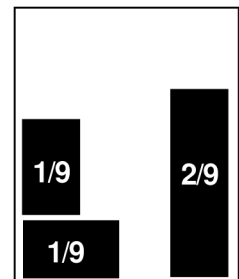
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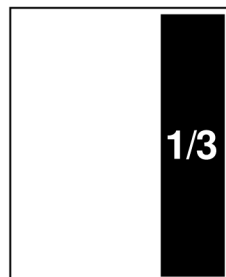
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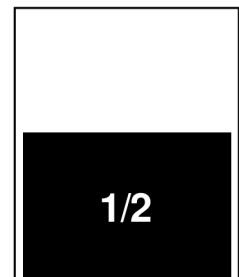
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