Construction Management Moves Forward

CMAA launches a new series of programs and opportunities for the industry

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As the United States begins to reopen in our new COVID-19 reality, questions loom on the horizon regarding the U.S. and global economies and when will they return to pre-pandemic levels. I am not an economist, nor am I in a position to speculate, but I do know that the construction industry and specifically the construction management sector will find a path forward. The construction industry will likely face a bit of a bump, yet it may also be poised to actually help lead the recovery, much like it has done over the past 10 decades, when construction and infrastructure capital programs played a major role in the recoveries from virtually every major economic downturn.

Over these past couple of months, I have heard from many CMAA members about how their teams are dealing with changing regulations, scheduling disruptions and keeping their teams safe. I am encouraged with the stories of members working to build needed health care infrastructure facilities, accelerating and recalculating timelines and schedules on key capital improvement programs, and coming together to aid their communities. We as an industry should be very proud.

Last year, I wrote about how CMAA was examining the way in which we provide current and anticipatory technical knowledge and training, as well as learning on emotional intelligence, business development, and diversity and inclusion. We launched a series of member programs, benefits and educational training options, and we are proud of their success. Long before COVID-19 became such an integral part of our vocabulary, CMAA was already preparing for the next step in our industry engagement evolution. Just like many of you, the pandemic has forced us to reexamine our schedule and timeline for this progression.

In the coming months, we will launch a whole new series of programs and opportunities for the industry. These programs will:
• Use alternative educational program formats.
• Engage professionals from early career up through the C-suite.
• Create both communities and relationship-building opportunities outside of CMAA’s two successful national events.

It is CMAA’s obligation to provide our members with the tools to imagine the future while addressing their present needs in a manner that works for their schedules and preferred styles of communication and engagement.

Our new reality requires us to both think differently and deliver differently. Regardless of these current challenges, the CMAA Board of Directors, staff and volunteers continue to deliver on our mission to promote the profession of construction management and the use of qualified construction managers on construction projects and programs.
If you can **imagine** it, we can **manage** it.

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Navigating the Pandemic: Q&A With CMAA Leadership

CMAA asked two members of its Board of Directors for their insights on trends in the construction management business, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, as well as the impacts each has seen within their own organizations and how restrictions have affected construction project job sites.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit in mid-March, what trends were you seeing in the construction management sector? Which of these were you most excited about?

Agnes Weber, PE, CCM, Senior Vice President, TRC, and Chair Elect, Board of Directors, CMAA: Pre-COVID-19, there was a significant amount of positive energy and funding secured to start momentum on construction projects throughout the nation. Key areas that were becoming more robust were those with projects centered around alternative energy, electric vehicle charging stations, home building, oil and gas, and transportation. There was also a movement toward healthy infrastructure funding throughout the country, including both local and federal funding packages. It was exciting to see an increased interest in alternative delivery methods for public works projects.

How has COVID-19 impacted your projects and teams?

Weber: To a large extent, there were minimal impacts since construction activities in most geographic areas were considered an essential service. Yet, there were slowdowns and complete shutdowns of projects in certain isolated instances, due to agencies grappling with stay-at-home orders and contractors’ implementations of new policies and procedures for employee safety. Projects that were not in construction were delayed during the award and bidding phases due to the staffs adjusting to working away from their offices. On the flip side, there are examples of ongoing transportation construction being accelerated due to reduced pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

Crosson: With the decrease in travel due to COVID-19, there is less funding coming through the motor fuel tax. This reduces or eliminates some gains seen through the states’ efforts mentioned above. This impact in available funding could affect/limit infrastructure construction projects, not only in 2020 but into 2021 as well.

As cities and localities begin to lift restrictions on construction projects and sites across the country, how can CMs help owners navigate the various regulations and policies while ensuring site compliance and team safety?

Weber: Construction managers (CMs) can assist clients in ensuring they have the most current information related to regulations, policies and protocols; providing reports and verification that policies and protocols are being followed; and implementing high-tech solutions that support a commitment to health and hygiene. The guidelines being issued by the CDC are fluid, as it updates and issues rules as it learns more about the disease and how it spreads. CMs need to be on the forefront of responding efficiently and effectively managing costs of construction projects around the new normal. We must provide oversight and development of policies, procedures and protocols that do not burden the project personnel and budget with undue complexity and/or costs. CMs should also bring best practices and lessons learned from other projects and clients into their own workspaces. At TRC, we have been implementing changes such as conducting outdoor meetings where employees stay 6 ft apart, heightening cleaning of equipment and implementing a no-tool-sharing policy. As we continue to learn, we also share these practices with our clients.

What role do you see construction, CMs and CMAA potentially having in the economic recovery?

Weber: History has numerous examples of the construction industry being a driver of economic recovery. Construction’s ability to quickly ramp up allows for deployment of large numbers of trade, administrative and professional individuals onto project sites. CMs should aim to be trusted advisors and resources for owners by identifying additional costs and risks through project development. This includes the critical task of maintaining site health and safety in every aspect, doing all that we can to keep sites operating. CMAA strives to educate owners on the benefits of having a qualified professional CM on their projects. CMAA continues to provide its membership with best practices, education and training while also promoting construction management to the next generation of professionals.

Crosson: Investment in infrastructure has historically been a very effective way to stimulate the economy. CMs and CMAA will be the leaders of this recovery. The CMAA code of ethics and standards of practice for CMs are the right tools for effective management of program/project schedules, costs, quality, safety, scope and function.
Keep your professional development plans on track during these challenging times to help career growth and prepare you for success in the future.

Let CMAA help you get there.

CMAA has a library of online professional development opportunities available in areas that include industry best practices, diversity & inclusion, technology, sustainability, leadership, construction management processes, risk management, and more!

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CMAA Forums and CMAA2020!

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What’s New in Construction Management Credentialing

To give some insight into new programs and changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Robb Gries, current chairman of the Construction Manager Certification Institute (CMCI), answers a few key questions for professionals below.

What are the new Construction Manager-in-Training (CMIT) stackable credentials, and why are these so important to the sector?

These are professional credentials that focus on the fundamentals of construction management practice and offer a professional development pathway for construction professionals to learn how to become competent, successful construction managers (CMs). The program offers an opportunity for anyone in the military, trades students or other industry professionals to demonstrate that they possess both the knowledge and experience to be a professional CM. As we know, ensuring a strong flow of qualified individuals into the profession is very important both now and into the future.

How does this differ from the original CMIT program?

The CMIT stackable credentials provide the basic foundation and fundamentals for CMs, and then they build upon the CM's knowledge and experience. This allows for these credential holders to demonstrate to both their employers and clients that they are prepared for different aspects of construction project responsibilities. I believe this also allows supervisors to gauge whether or not their personnel can handle larger assignments.

The CMIT program is now divided into four sequential levels, with each level demonstrating an individual’s growing professional competence and experience within the field of construction management. The program begins with the CMIT and then continues the knowledge growth throughout the following levels 2, 3 and 4. Each level will consist of online training, examinations and professional experience.

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Who is now eligible to become a CMIT and advance throughout the levels?

To earn a CMIT level, a candidate must meet all of the requirements at that level and any previous levels. The levels are cumulative and must be completed in order if the individual wishes to earn the next level of the CMIT credential. Achieving CMIT levels 1–4 will assist in the eligibility toward the CMCI mid-level credential that is currently in development. The mid-level credential will further lay the groundwork to become a Certified Construction Manager (CCM).

Can you please provide some additional insight into the CCM Program?

The CCM is an ANSI-accredited credential that provides CMs with a designation that reflects their knowledge and experience. I believe that owner organizations want to know that they are hiring someone who has demonstrated leadership and knowledge by an example. This is what the CCM represents and why it is used as a preference for many large construction projects. I also believe that service providers use the CCM to compete for new business by showing that their CMs are among the best in the industry and that owners can trust that they will reduce risks on their projects.

Has the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the CCM program?

The CCM exam is offered year-round at more than 1,200 testing centers around the world, and many of these sites had to close or are now operating with restrictions. With the pandemic, CMCI had to look at the exam process and launched live remote proctoring (LRP) as an option for candidates to safely take the CCM exam from their home or office.

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