

# Community Service

## Two More Board Responsibilities

Berniece has two new board positions -- one with the Girl Scout Council of Nation's Capital and the other with the Friends in Action of the Eastern Panhandle.

## Friends in Action of the Eastern Panhandle

FIAEP is a 5 year-old non-profit agency serving Jefferson and Berkeley Counties dedicated to helping underprivileged (low-income) families identify their strengths and develop attainable and manageable goals that guide them toward greater self-sufficiency and personal well being through mentoring friendships. FIAEP is comprised of a network of people of various faiths and ethnic backgrounds whose common interest is to provide caring outreach to low-income families in our community.

Families are introduced to FIAEP by a local social service agency. Each family is linked with a mentor team, made up of 5-8 volunteers, for a period of one year. Mentors help families become more independent and plant seeds of hope by offering support such as:

- serving as role models and providing emotional support,
- helping with budgeting and parenting skills,
- tutoring a child or helping a parent acquire a GED, or obtain a job, and
- celebrating the good times and helping get past the rough spots.

"Berniece and Minghini have been friends in Action 'Adopt a Family' sponsors for the past three years, proving the funding for Friends in Action to provide mentoring services to a needy family each year. In November Berniece was invited to serve on the Board of Friends in Action which she graciously accepted AND has also accepted the nomination to serve as a Board officer in the position of Secretary. We are really pleased and blessed to have the benefit of Berniece's many years of service to the Board of the Girl Scouts and other boards, her extensive business and management experience, her on-going service to the community and her passion for making a positive difference in the lives of others."

Ann Conlan, FIAEP President

DID YOU KNOW THAT IN Berkeley County...

- 11% of all families with children under 18 years of age fall below the poverty level
- 21.9% of female head of households with children under 18 fall below the poverty level
- 46.9% of female head of households with children under the age of 5 are living below the poverty level

\*According to the most recent US Census Bureau report

## United Way's Day of Caring

This year the Minghini's team replaced broken decking boards for one of East Ridge's facilities.

## Super Susan

We'd like to take this opportunity, to mention one of the unsung heroines of our community, Susan Sanders, who has worked in key administrative positions at the Martinsburg/Berkeley Chamber of Commerce for the past 31 years. Obviously, she is one of the super resources that support our business community. Thank you Susan for your many years of outstanding service! ■



Susan Sanders, Office Manager  
Martinsburg/Berkeley County  
Chamber of Commerce

# Staff News

**Berniece Receives Top Award**  
VP Berniece Collis was recognized as the Martinsburg/Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce's Business Person of the Year. Berniece received the Chamber's prestigious C. Lesley Golliday Award In November at its Annual Banquet. She is the first business woman to be awarded this distinction in the history of the Martinsburg/Berkeley Chamber of Commerce.



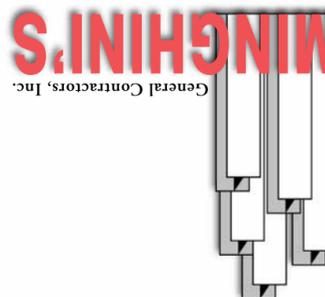
Minghini's made a scarecrow to be placed in downtown Martinsburg. Pictured are Berniece, Carlie Watson, Allie Shroades, Emma Shroades, Morgan Collis, David Shroades and Tia Collis. The Lion's share of the work was completed by David and Tia...the rest of us had fun stuffing the scarecrow with straw!



Morgan Collis graduated from the Barr Construction Institute's Carpentry Apprenticeship Program in August 2009.



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# BLUEPRINT for Progress

Wishing All a New Year Full of Blessings

CONSTRUCTION NEWS & INFORMATION FROM MINGHINI'S GENERAL CONTRACTORS, INC.

## RECOVERY OR RECESSION? US AND LOCAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

With conflicting news from various economic sectors, it is difficult for even the most astute to forecast whether the nonresidential construction sector is in recovery or still receding. This fall industry numbers indicated that the construction volume continued to trend lower on a monthly basis, an indication that nonresidential construction remained mired in its own recession, according to Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC) Chief Economist Anirban Basu.

"Given a still tight credit and weak labor market, building construction is not positioned for recovery in the near term," stated Basu.

Private nonresidential spending continues to slump and is down 20.6 percent from one year ago, according to the December 1 report by the U.S. Census Bureau. Total nonresidential construction, which includes both private and public construction, fell 10.5 percent on a year-over-year basis to \$652.2 billion. The graph from ABC graphically depicts the Construction Industry's situation.

Residential construction is still down 22.9 percent from October 2008. Total construction spending is unchanged from September and down 14.4 percent year-over-year.

This means that over the course of three years, the nation's construction industry has turned upside down, said Basu. Three years ago, residential construction was entering its worst slump in generations, with

housing starts collapsing and many homebuilders failing. Nonresidential construction, by contrast, was still in the midst of its growth cycle; one that would last well into 2008.

Today, residential building is now in expansion mode, however, nonresidential building construction remains very much in the midst of its cyclical downturn. Certain forms of nonresidential construction have held up relatively well, including segments susceptible to public financing and public policy, such as highway/street construction and sewage/waste disposal-related construction. Yet, it remains to be seen whether those subsectors that were down for the month of October will continue to slide.

One of the most striking aspects of the construction spending report is the reversal of fortune in the category of manufacturing-related construction. This segment has been one of the primary stabilizing segments of nonresidential construction for many months, but with the slowing of refinery-related construction, that segment is now in decline. ABC predicts a significant decline in manufacturing-related construction next year," said Basu.

Nevertheless, Reuters recently reported that US architecture billings have returned to pre-crisis levels with last October's billings index up three points. The report said that



this leading indicator of US non-residential construction could potentially provide an early signal of recovery in the Industry. Non-residential construction includes commercial and industrial facilities like hotels, office buildings, schools, hospitals, retail facilities and other institutions. The American Institute of Architects Billings Index, which began in 1995, is considered a forecast of construction spending 9 to 12 months in the future.

Moreover, nearly four of five economists surveyed by USA Today said the stock market rally since last March is heralding a sustainable recovery -- which would mean the country would neither slip back into recession nor would the Dow Jones Industrial average plunge anywhere near its crisis low of 6547.05. While the economy grew a healthy 3.5 percent annual rate in the third quarter of 2009, most of the 46 economists surveyed believe the recovery will be slow, or U-shaped, as expansion decelerates. ■

## Completed Projects

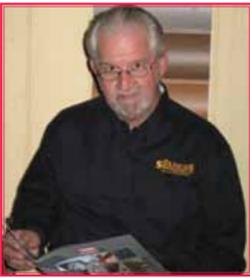
- Eagle School Intermediate Addition, Martinsburg, WV
- Dr. Rahimian Build Out, Martinsburg, WV
- Winchester Family Health Build Out, Winchester, WV

## New Projects

- South Jefferson Elementary School Addition, Summit Point, WV
- Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority Renovations and Addition, Martinsburg, WV



Jefferson County Emergency Services  
Ranson, WV



## Supplier Profile

Wayne Stotler is no stranger to the Tri-State Building Industry having worked for 84 Lumber for 11 years prior to becoming a sales representative with Sellmore Industries a year ago. Sellmore's retail location is in Hagerstown. The company manufactures and distributes a wide range of building products for the professional and residential customer, including new or replacement vinyl windows, exterior components like vinyl siding, shingles, doors and rubber roofs, plus interior doors and much more. Wayne notes, "If you need it for building, it's likely that Sellmore can source the material for you." Having worked with Minghini's on many projects over the years, Wayne says he wishes all contractors were as enjoyable to work with. "It would make the business a breeze." Wayne says that he has a great relationship with everyone at Minghini's from Don and Glenda, to Craig and the building crew. ■

Wayne Stotler  
651 North Prospect,  
Hagerstown  
Sellmore Industries Inc.  
Cell:304/283-0812 Store:  
301/790-2304  
w.stotler@sellmore.com or  
lumberjak278@aol.com

## Professional Associate

For the past 18 years, Wes Mumm has been associated with Ameriprise as a Financial Advisor providing financial planning advice, products (stocks and insurance) and account management services. Ameriprise used to be called American Express Financial Advisors and the company helped pioneer the concept of personal financial planning more than 30 years ago. Wes has handled investments for the Collises and Minghini's for a number of years using the Ameriprise "Dream, Plan, Track" approach to financial planning. According to Berniece, "Wes does a great job of advising and guiding us so we can make informed decisions about our investments." ■



Wes Mumm, Senior Financial Advisor  
Ameriprise, Hagerstown  
Wesley Mumm, Chfp, Senior Financial Advisor  
Ameriprise,  
Hagerstown, 301/846-0167  
Wesley.j.mumm@ampf.com

### Minghini's Chosen Again!

For the third year in a row, Minghini's was chosen as the top regional commercial contractor in the Martinsburg Journal newspaper's People's Choice Award. Thanks to all those who voted for Minghini's. We will continue to strive hard to merit this distinction. ■

## Local Outlook from ABC



Joan Warner, President  
ABC - Cumberland Valley  
Chapter

On the local construction scene, according to Joan Warner, President of the Associated Builders & Contractors – Cumberland Valley Chapter, "2009 has been a challenging year for many of our contractors. The effects of the economic recession have been a battle and many have experienced hardships. Some ABC employers in the Cumberland Valley area are experiencing financial burdens. With the impact of the diminishing contracting job opportunities, numerous members are expressing concern and apprehension about the overall local economy, declining revenues, shrinking project backlogs, and potential lay-off of their employees.

ABC employers are continuously in the pursuit of new projects searching in new geographical areas just to increase their finances in order to maintain their operational expenses. Prior to the downturn in our economy the construction industry was experiencing extreme shortages of skilled workers in the trades. The aging workforce (average age of skilled workers is 47 years) has added to the problem. ABC contractors were having difficulty in recruiting qualified employees into their employment.

The Barr Construction Institute (BCI), the education division of ABC, has expanded its current programs and added new training and education programs for future workforce requirements. Despite the economic downturn, The BCI training and education has remained stable. Dislocated, unemployed, and disadvantaged workers are taking classes in hopes of becoming employable when the economy emerges from the present recession.

Most contractors are looking forward to 2010 and are in hopes that the outlook will be much improved. Some believe that the first quarter for the construction industry might continue to be slow. However, even with the forecasts for a subdued economic recovery, most contractors hope that the job loss will slowly turn around."

ABC is a national trade association with over 25,000 firms across the nation, and locally over 200 employers are members of the Cumberland Valley Chapter. ABC has been providing construction industry-related services to its members for over 50 years.

Membership services include business contacts and referral, apprenticeship, management education, craft training, safety hotline, lobbying, employee benefits, and legal hotline.

To register for an upcoming meeting or to obtain additional information about membership, please contact Joan Warner, ABC President, at 301-739-1190. ■

## Editor's Insights

By Berniece Collis



Berniece Collis  
Vice President

These are exceptional times for any business, but especially for the Construction Industry. I'm no economist, but like most business owners I try to stay abreast of where the economy is headed and the latest financial news. The economic crisis that crippled the US and many other areas of the world a year ago seems to be running its course. Several major countries, like France and Canada, have recovered. Others may be

## Strategic Vision in Uncertain Times

close behind. While our Country and Industry certainly haven't recovered as of yet, there are optimistic signs pointing to a light at the end of the tunnel.

In spite of the layoffs, unemployment, weak dollar and struggling Industries such as ours, we have many things to be thankful for when one considers what happened in the 1928 stock market crash. To my way of thinking, the primary thing all of us can do is to keep the faith, remain committed to our personal and professional goals, and do everything possible to help each other through these difficult times.

So strong is Craig's and my conviction that positive action by individual businesses can only improve the situation, we ran a billboard campaign encouraging developers to move ahead with their plans, instead of shutting down and stagnating. We all

have to step up to the plate and invest our time and money in this economy. At the same time we have to be cognizant of the less fortunate and the need to keep our institutions, like the Girl Scouts, strong and functioning.

In 2010 we must move ahead with our plans even if it means they are a bit less grandiose or that the schedule is longer.

In every adverse situation, there are opportunities. Owners and managers with vision and courage in these uncertain times will make strategic decisions that enable their businesses to prosper in the long term – although the interim wait may be decidedly uncomfortable.

Best Wishes for a prosperous New Year,

Craig, Berniece, Don, Glenda and the entire Minghini's Construction Team ■

## Client Profile



Lisa Melcher with her daughter  
Christina and grandson, Anthony.

Lisa Melcher, Manager  
Shenandoah Village  
Apartments, Martinsburg  
304/263-2944  
shenvillage@aol.com

Shenandoah Village Apartments is a community of 12 apartment buildings providing quality living for 144 families in Martinsburg. Lisa Melcher has been the manager of the complex since 2007. She handles rental relations, administration, bookkeeping, and manages the building maintenance. While Minghini's has provided construction services for this client for the past 20 years, the current project involving the renovation of all 12 buildings is the most comprehensive project to date. From replacing the brick exteriors with siding, to replacing doors, windows and gutters ... Minghini's is undertaking a complete "reno" to make the buildings more aesthetically pleasing as well as operationally functional.

A real people person, Lisa says the interaction with her rental families to help people find suitable homes is what she enjoys most about her work. She is also impressed with how supportive Gary Lewis, the owner of Shenandoah Village, is to the community's administrative and renovation needs. According to Lisa, Minghini's is extremely efficient to work with and Craig personally goes above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that his customers are happy and well served.

"Shenandoah Village Apartments has experienced a very, very busy year, trying to get the remodel in order, while keeping the tenants in their apartments. We did not have to relocate anyone. With all of us working together, it will be a huge success!" states Lisa. ■



By Elizabeth Guthrie  
Partnership Specialist  
2010 Census  
304/218-1632  
elizabeth.j.guthrie@census.gov

## 2010 Census Part 2

The 2010 Census is approaching and many partnerships have been made with the U.S. Census Bureau. In fact, a Complete Count Committee has been established by the Berkeley County Commission with representatives from all aspects of the community to best serve this area. Every person living in the United States must be counted in the 2010 Census – including people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, citizens and noncitizens.

The Census is currently in the process of recruiting part-time, temporary Census workers for jobs starting after the 1st of January. If you are interested, call 1-866-861-2010 to schedule your employment test. In addition to the recruitment campaign, the U.S. Census Bureau is deeply engaged in an informational campaign to assist our community and beyond to understand the importance of the census and

encourage people to complete and return their 2010 Census forms.

Census data are vital to our communities. The data collected in the census directly affect how more than \$400 billion in federal funding is distributed annually to state, local and tribal governments – including our community. In fact, census data help guide local planning decisions, such as where to provide additional social services, build new roads, hospitals and schools, and where to locate job-training centers. For businesses, census data are critical to help companies make strategic

and fiscally sound decisions that can spur and sustain economic development and growth.

### How you can help

As an important member of our community, you can get involved by letting your family, friends, neighbors, business associates, industry contacts and others know that:

- The census is easy. One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

- The census is important. Census data guide decisions that can help improve services to our community, including schools, hospitals, housing, roads and more.

- The census is safe. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities.