

A message from the CEO...**Influencing policy is crucial in 2020**

As we enter the final month of 2019, I see a very different 2020 for the Construction Industry. Business demand appears to continue down the strong side for the near future. However, the political landscape has changed quite a bit and it will impact your business – how much will depend on what you are willing to do in the next 90 days.

There are a lot of new faces in the Legislature for 2020 and the fact the Virginia Legislature has turned from Republican to Democrat is important, but not nearly as important as the fact so few members in the Legislature have just more than 10 years' experience on core issues related to commercial construction. Over the next 90 days our membership needs to compete with every other organization in getting our message to these newer and newly elected officials on issues important to commercial construction. Our plan is simple and important. We have three core areas we want to focus:

1. AGCVA is actively pursuing remedies to the workforce shortages many members face. We have not seen significant outcomes from government yet, so we are doing much of the work ourselves. *Build Your Future Virginia* is growing with the website Virginia.byf.org. We have presented to over 20,000 students in 2019. Districts have locally targeted school counselors to bring more awareness to the well-paid careers in construction. But we need additional support from legislators to ensure the message gets to parents in 2020. We will seek support from government to adequately support pathways to the construction careers we offer those who are ready to work. Support for Career Technical Education will be crucial in 2020.
2. Virginia's antiquated Statue of Limitations hangs over every contractors' head for eternity on any public project. The only way to get this solved is by our members talking with legislators Before Jan. 8, 2020. We have a solution that ensures quality builders will still work on public projects. But the message must get to the legislators before they come to Richmond in early January. Each District will be charged with meeting and talking to specific legislators and seeking their continued support. We have been talking with the Department of General Services, worked with members to respond to their survey, attended public hearings this summer and continue to discuss a resolution that all sides can live with. The drum beat must continue.
3. AGCVA will continue to ensure public procurement is open, fair and transparent. It's a simple concept, but difficult for someone who is not used to the procurement process to grasp, as they navigate the rules associated with any public purchasing. Citizen legislators provide all of us a public service, and all legislators work diligently to understand all sides of an issue before they vote. Our role at AGCVA, is to leverage our members clout as a united voice to help these citizen legislators better understand the impact of the decisions they and make.

What can you do between now and early February? Contact your District Manger and let them know you are able and willing to meet with your local legislator and provide your own perspective on how issues will impact your business and your employees. We are setting up meetings with legislators and letting them know the core issues that will keep the Commercial Construction Industry moving right along.