

Mueller Buys Elcor in Electronics Market

Mueller Electric, Akron, OH, acquired Elcor Inc., Elyria, OH, a manufacturer of custom injection-molded parts, cable assemblies, power cords, cord sets, wiring harnesses and sub-assemblies.

Mueller Electric has manufactured electric and electronic components since 1908 and promotes itself as the inventor of the alligator clip. Along with its Ohio head-quarter operations, Mueller has locations in England and China. The company sells its products to consumers and more than 50 electronic distributors, including Digi-Key, Allied, Mouser, RS Components, Farnell and Arrow Electronics.

Mueller is presently involved in expanding a line of instrumentation cables for new and existing clients, specifically factory automation cables, as part of a multi-million-dollar demand for plants and factories to update production equipment.

As part of the acquisition, the company will inherit two major clients: Invacare and Nordson. Invacare is a large manufacturer of home and long-term medical equipment such as wheelchairs, disability scooters and bariatric equipment. Elcor currently produces many of the electronic components and cables needed for the motors used in these types of equipment. By aligning with Elcor, Mueller Electric will now be able to pursue many new avenues of opportunity in healthcare markets.

Nordson designs and manufactures dispensing equipment for industrial adhesives, sealants and coatings, such as that used for assembly in the automotive and medical industries.

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An Endeavor Business Media Inc. publication. Publishers of *Electrical Wholesaling* and *EC&M* magazines.

Contractors Getting Hammered by Surging Prices for Key Construction Materials

While electrical industry executives are keeping a close eye on soaring copper prices, price increases are a big factor across a broad swath of key building materials. Economists attribute these increases to growing market demand and the slow-but-sure impact of inflation, which had been chugging along at a historically low rate for quite some time.

Home builders are getting hit hardest with these price increases, with lumber prices setting records. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Producer Price Index (PPI) for construction materials, lumber and plywood pricing are up +49.6% year-over-year (YOY) through January. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), Washington, DC, tracks lumber pricing and often advocates for tariff relief on Canadian lumber from Capitol Hill whenever lumber prices start crimping demand for new homes by pushing housing prices past what buyers are willing to spend.

One of the most important lumber pricing metrics for the housing market is the *Random Lengths Framing Lumber Composite*, a weekly measure of lumber prices from the highest volume-producing regions of the U.S. and Canada. NAHB said in a recent post on www.nahb.org that, "Lumber prices have skyrocketed more than +180% since last spring. This price spike has caused the price of an average new single-family home to increase by more than \$24,000 since April 17, 2020. NAHB is working with government officials to develop solutions to these sharp price increases which threaten housing affordability across the nation."

In another post, NAHB said these price increases are "pricing out millions of potential home buyers and impeding the residential construction sector from moving the economy forward." The association estimates that for every \$1,000 increase in the

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Infrastructure Bill Could Pump Billions into the Electrical Construction Market

Once the ink is dry on the \$1.9-trillion COVID relief bill, Democratic leaders will dig into what will be an even more complicated piece of legislation — an infrastructure bill with a price tag that could easily top \$2 trillion.

While President Biden hasn't revealed many details of what he wants in what may be a historic infusion of federal funds into the nation's infrastructure, his "Build Back Better" infrastructure proposal that was a big part of his election campaign and a recently proposed program for infrastructure spending by the House of Representatives, point to billions of dollars in federal funding that would provide the electrical industry with all sorts of potential sales opportunities.

The COVID Relief Package (HR 133) that President Biden is expected to sign on March 12 appears to offer comparatively little in the ways of electrical sales

opportunities, other than electrical products needed in K-12 schools for retrofit projects involved with the installation of better air ventilation, handling and filtration systems, that could be funded by the \$54.3 billion in the bill earmarked for these facilities.

In contrast, an infrastructure bill would quite likely offer billions in federal funding for a broad array of applications loaded with electrical products including:

- Electric vehicle charging networks
- Another round of rebates for the installation of energy-electrical products in commercial, industrial and residential applications
- Commuter rail and light rail systems
- Airports and other air traffic facilities
- R&D for newer technologies like battery storage and cells and supporting existing renewables such as solar and wind

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Lumber Prices Join Copper Spot Pricing in Continued Surge

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price of an average new home, approximately 154,000 more households would be unable to afford it.

NAHB Chairman Chuck Fowke, a custom home builder from Tampa, FL, said in the post, “NAHB is urging President Biden and Congress to help mitigate this growing threat to housing and the economy by urging domestic lumber producers to ramp up production to ease growing shortages and to make it a priority to end tariffs on Canadian lumber shipments into the U.S. that are exacerbating unprecedented price volatility in the lumber market.”

Associated General Contractors (AGC), Arlington, VA, provides a very helpful monthly summary of trends in construction material pricing in an analysis of the PPI’s construction material data. In its most recent analysis of this BLS data, AGC showed that while copper and lumber had the largest YOY increases, #2 diesel fuel (+9.2%) and plastic construction products (+6.7%) were also tracking much higher on a YOY basis.

Along with NAHB, AGC also supports a review and reduction in trade tariffs for Canadian lumber. AGC said in a recent press release, “Price increases — some to record-setting levels — and long delivery delays are causing hardships for construction firms that are also experiencing challenges in completing projects with crews limited by illness or new work site procedures resulting from the pandemic. Association officials urged the Biden administration to review and rescind a range of trade tariffs in place, including for Canadian lumber, that are contributing to the price increases.”

“The extreme price increases, as reflected in the Producer Price Index report and other sources, are harming contractors on existing projects and making it difficult to bid new work at a profitable level,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist, in the release. “While contractors have kept bids nearly flat until now, project owners and budget officials should anticipate the prospect that contractors will have to pass along their higher costs in upcoming bids.”

Simonson said the other indicators of the record or historically high prices for construction material include the record set last month by the Framing Lumber Composite Price compiled by the publication *Random Lengths* mentioned earlier; record levels for several steel product prices; and the fact that

copper futures are at an eight-year peak.

There have also been reports of dramatic price YOY increases for Schedule 40 PVC conduit driven in part by rising prices for plastic resins and delays in offshore shipments and domestic production. According to a report at www.theplasticexchange.com, last month’s frigid winter weather shut down 80% to 85% of U.S. domestic resin production, much of which is along the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast.

Another indicator pointing toward rising prices for key construction commodities is the price of iron and steel scrap and copper scrap, which always rises when the economy heats up. According to the BLS PPI data for January (see chart on this page), iron and steel scrap is up the most YOY at +50.8%, followed by copper base scrap at +29% YOY, and stainless and alloy steel scrap at +26.7%

YOY. Alan Greenspan, former head of the U.S. Federal Reserve, followed steel scrap prices very closely as a gauge of economic activity.

The price increases all eventually find their way into the cost of construction projects, and as you can see in the chart, the BLS’ PPI for key types of residential and nonresidential construction projects have all increased over the past year. Single-family and multi-family construction showed YOY increases through January of +7.6% and +8.3%, respectively, in the PPIs for inputs to construction industries (excluding capital investments, labor and imports). By this measure, healthcare structures saw a YOY increase of +6.5%; commercial structures were up +5.7%; and industrial construction costs increased +5% YOY.

— Jim Lucy

Tracking Changes in Producer Price Index for Construction Materials and Project Segments		
Product or Construction Segment	3-Month % Change	12-Month % Change
Changes in Producer Price Indexes (PPIs) for processed goods important to construction		
#2 diesel fuel	24.6	9.2
Plastic construction products	2.5	6.7
Lumber and plywood	3.4	49.6
Steel mill products	12.2	7.4
Steel pipe and tube	6.4	3.5
Aluminum mill shapes	7.7	1.5
Copper and brass mill shapes	12.1	21.7
Sheet metal products	0	-0.4
Changes in PPIs for unprocessed goods important to construction		
Iron and steel scrap	53	50.8
Stainless and alloy steel scrap	23.3	26.7
Copper base scrap	16.1	29
Changes in PPIs for inputs to construction industries (excluding capital investments, labor and imports)		
New residential construction	0.2	7.6
Single-family	0.3	7.6
Multi-family	-1.4	8.3
New nonresidential construction	4.2	5.9
Commercial structures	4.4	5.7
Healthcare structures	3.8	6.5
Industrial structures	4.9	5
Power & communications structures	4.3	5.1
Educational & vocational structures	3.6	7.3
% Change in Producer Price Index (PPI) for New, Repair & Maintenance Work by Subcontractors		
Electrical contractors, nonresidential building work	1.2	-0.2
<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Producer Price Index - Preliminary data for Jan. 2021 (www.bls.gov/ppi)</i>		

Rebates, R&D & Project Funding in Any Infrastructure Bill Could Be Very Good News for Electrical Market

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- Electric utility grid
- High-speed internet to underserved urban and rural areas

President Biden's "Build Back Better" infrastructure proposal offered insight into just how big of an investment he believes is needed. A post on www.joebiden.com, his campaign website, read in part, "It seems each Congress and every new Administration includes infrastructure as a top priority. Despite broad support from diverse coalitions, however, too often they fail to act. Our nation must launch a massive investment program in transportation, energy, water and communications technologies.

"Doing so will repair our crumbling roads, bridges and transit and the current gridlock in our major economic hubs that harm our productivity, global competitiveness and quality of life. It will propel public and private efforts to decarbonize our economy in a meaningful way and close the digital divide by expanding broadband and internet access. This effort also provides an opportunity to ensure the benefits and jobs from infrastructure investments are shared with communities that have borne disproportionate burdens in the past."

Any infrastructure bill passed in Congress will most likely include elements of the Climate Change proposals that have been discussed in the halls of Congress by legislators and trade group lobbyists over the past few years. But a healthy chunk of any infrastructure spending will go toward repairing the nation's network of roads and bridges, which have in many cases suffered from years of neglect. While some of this spending will go to street and highway lighting, other parts of infrastructure spending proposal will be of more interest to electrical manufacturers, distributors, reps and contractors.

The most recent of these proposals is the CLEAN Future Act announced on March 2 by leaders of the House of Representatives' Energy and Commerce Committee. Aimed at cutting greenhouse gases and a "clean energy transition" for large parts of the U.S. economy, the proposal offered some ideas on the level of funding for the infrastructure investments outlined above. The scope of the CLEAN Future

Act is mind-numbingly large, and it would pump billions of dollars into the electrical construction and utility industries if many of its energy- and grid-related proposals were ever passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Biden. To give you an idea of just how big the dollars could be for the electrical market, *Electrical Marketing's* editors highlighted several ideas in the CLEAN Future Act that we think would have the most sales potential for the electrical market.

Electric vehicles (EV). The proposal includes all sorts of funding in the EV arena, including the authorization of \$100 million per year from 2022-2031 for a DOE program that would provide rebates to eligible entities that install publicly accessible electric vehicle supply equipment. The CLEAN Future Act is loaded with billions of dollars for manufacturers of equipment for plug-in EVs, as it would authorize \$2.5 billion per year from 2022-2031 for the DOE to "accelerate domestic manufacturing of batteries, power electronics, and other technologies for use in plug-in vehicles."

Building energy efficiency. The CLEAN Future Act is currently proposing massive funding in this area, including \$500 million for workforce training; \$8 billion in rebates for home retrofits; and a whopping \$17 billion-plus for the Department of Energy's existing Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program.

Funding for states to transition to a net-zero economy. Along with providing \$200 million in funding to help states prepare plans to tap into an existing EPA program in this area, the House Committee's press statement said the CLEAN Future Act would establish a "Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator" with \$100 billion to help states, cities, communities and businesses transition to a clean energy economy.

According to the House's infrastructure proposal, "The Accelerator will leverage public and private funds to provide financing for clean energy technologies and infrastructure, climate resiliency, building efficiency and electrification, industrial decarbonization, transportation electrification, and more."

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Around the Industry

NEMRA launches new website

The new website recently launched by the National Electrical Manufacturers Representatives Association (NEMRA), Indianapolis, www.nemra.org, offers users a host of new features, including a revamped searchable membership database; company profile and editing abilities (administrators only); ability to pay membership dues online; one location for all professional development programs; services and market insight reports in one location; new NEMRA Service Provider pages where visitors can direct message companies; a blog/news area; new pages for the NEMRA Board of Directors & NEMRA Manufacturers Group (NMG) Committee; and a new branding page with downloadable NEMRA logos.

Associated Building Contractors' Backlog Index increases in February

The Construction Confidence Index published monthly by Associated Building Contractors (ABC), Washington, DC, had some good news for the construction industry. Its Construction Backlog Indicator rose to 8.2 months in February, according to an ABC member survey conducted from Feb. 22 to March 3.

The ABC Backlog Index is up 0.7 months from January's reading, but is still 0.7 months lower than in February 2020. Its readings for sales, profit margins and staffing levels also increased in February. All three indices are now above the threshold of 50, indicating expectations of growth during the next six months, but below February 2020 levels.

"The expectation that rapid economic recovery could begin later this year has now swept through the nonresidential construction sector, which is surprising, as I anticipated this segment would be less upbeat," said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu in the press release. "After all, commercial real estate fundamentals have been compromised by behavioral and policy shifts motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Public finances have also been affected negatively, which could diminish demand for construction services going forward. Rapidly rising materials prices are also creating concern, as they would have a tendency to further squeeze industry profit margins.

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Industry Events

April 28-30, 2021

NAED Adventure

Baltimore; www.naed.org

May 24-26, 2021

NAED National Meeting

Marco Island, FL; www.naed.org

June 22-25, 2021

NAED Women in Industry Forum

San Antonio; www.naed.org

June 27-29, 2021

EASA Convention

& Solutions Expo

Ft. Worth, TX; www.easa.com

Aug. 17-18, 2021

LEDucation Trade

Show & Conference

New York; www.leducation.org

Sept. 13-15, 2021

IDEA E-Biz

Dulles, VA;

www.idea4industry.org

Oct. 9-12, 2021

National Electrical Contractors (NECA) Trade Show & Conference

Nashville, TN; National Electrical Contractors Association, www.necashow.org

Oct. 25-29, 2021

Lightfair Trade

Show & Conference

New York; www.lightfair.com

Status: Rescheduled from May 2021

Nov. 8-10, 2021

NAED Eastern Conference

Austin, TX; www.naed.org

Dec. 8-9, 2021

Upper Midwest Electrical Expo

Minneapolis; www.ncel.org

Jan. 17-19, 2022

NAED Western Conference

Palm Desert, CA; www.naed.org

Feb. 21-23, 2022

NAED South

Central Conference

Phoenix, AZ; www.naed.org

Surging Retail Imports Expected to Boost Container Port Traffic in First Half of 2021

Imports at the nation's largest container ports handling retail goods are expected to grow dramatically during the first half of 2021 as increased vaccination and continued in-store safety measures enable additional shopping options, according to the monthly Global Port Tracker report by the National Retail Federation (NRF) and Hackett Associates. Container port traffic is an economic indicator because of the impact of purchases of consumer goods on the overall U.S. economy.

"NRF is forecasting what could turn out to be record retail sales growth in 2021, and retailers are importing huge amounts of merchandise to meet the demand," Jonathan

Gold, VP for supply chain and customs policy, NRF, said in a press release. "The supply chain slowdown we usually see after the holiday season never really happened this winter, and imports are already starting to grow again."

U.S. ports covered by Global Port Tracker handled 2.06 million TEUs (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units) in January, the latest month for which final numbers are available. That was down -2.3% from December as the busy holiday season came to an end. But with a +13% year-over-year increase, it was the busiest January since NRF began tracking imports in 2002 and the first time the month has ever topped the 2 million TEU mark.

Let the Good Times Roll: NEMA Executives Stay Bullish in February EBCI Index

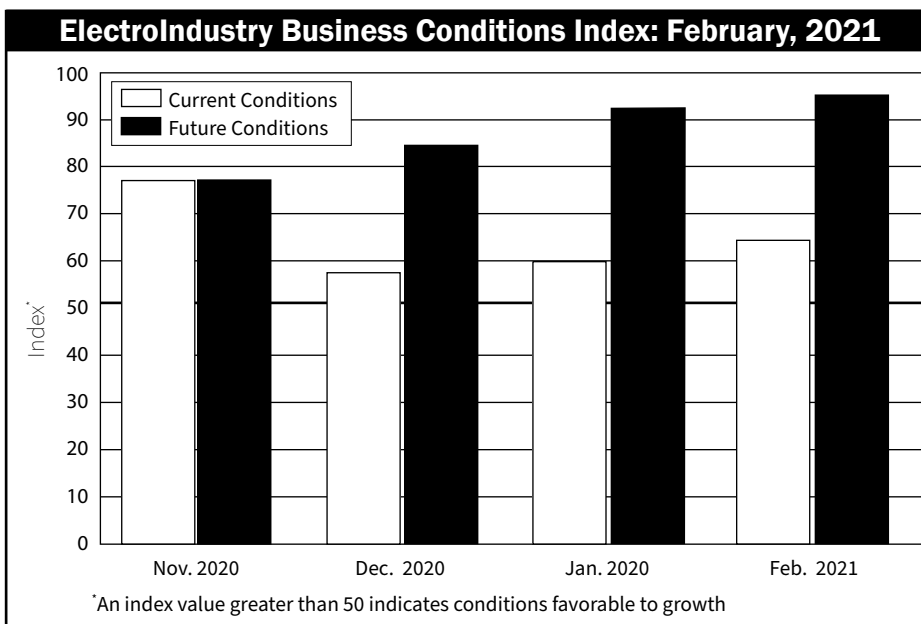
Although NEMA's economists noticed some concern about the fleeting nature of optimism regarding business conditions, the current conditions component expanded to 64.3 points in February, compared to 60 points last month.

The ElectroIndustry Business Conditions Index (EBCI) is a monthly survey of senior executives at electrical manufacturers published by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), Rosslyn, VA. Any score over the 50-point level indicates a greater number of panelists see conditions improving than see them deteriorating.

This month NEMA asked the first in a series of occasional questions about matters

that may affect business conditions. The inaugural topic concerned the effect that congestion at ports of entry in the U.S. had on panel members' businesses. Nearly 43% reported little or no effect, but a substantial minority of almost 36% reported that the bottlenecks had affected their businesses a lot or a great deal. One respondent indicated having to switch to air freight because of shipping stagnation.

The smattering of responses suggesting unchanged conditions ahead did not keep the future component from hitting a new series high of 96.4 points in February, up three points from previous record that was set just last month.



January's Value of New Construction Data Picks Up with +5.8% YOY Increase

Construction spending during Jan. 2021 was estimated at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1,521.5 billion, +1.7% above the revised Dec. 20 estimate of \$1,496.5 billion. The Jan. 21 figure is +5.8% above the Jan. 2020 estimate of \$1,437.7 billion.

Private construction. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, spending on private construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1,160 billion, +1.7% above the revised December estimate of \$1,140.9 billion. Residential construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$713 billion in January, +2.5% above the revised December estimate of \$695.7 billion. Single-family construction had a larger YOY increase than any of the other large construction segments, with a +24.2% boost to \$376.2 billion. Multi-

family construction also had some impressive YOY growth, with a +16.9% increase to \$92.7 billion.

Nonresidential construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$447 billion in January, +0.4% above the revised December estimate of \$445.2 billion.

Public construction. In January, the estimated seasonally adjusted annual rate of public construction spending was \$361.5 billion, +1.7% above the revised December estimate of \$355.5 billion. Educational construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$89.9 billion, -0.1% below the revised December estimate of \$90 billion. While it's a comparatively small segment of the market, public safety construction had the largest percent increase, with a +26.4% increase over Jan. 20 to \$16.2 billion.

Around the Industry

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“Despite these factors, contractors now expect sales, staffing levels and profit margins to expand over the next six months. The way to reconcile downbeat macroeconomic considerations with growing contractor confidence is to analyze backlog.

“Backlog has been edging higher for several months and rose sharply last month as projects that had been mothballed are coming back to life. Based on survey responses completed in February, projects are reinitiating more rapidly than previously anticipated, driving up both backlog and contractor sentiment. Respondents also appear to view additional federal stimulus as another reason to be optimistic about the near-term.”

Four community solar projects completed in Maryland

ForeFront Power and TurningPoint Energy recently announced the completion of four Maryland-based community solar projects. The Leigh Friend Solar Project was completed this month, and three additional projects (Kingsville, Croom Rd. and South Osborne Rd.) began delivering power to residents in late 2019.

Together, these four projects created over 150 jobs and represent 9.8 megawatts-DC (MW) of solar power being delivered to over 1,300 households in Garrett, Prince George's and Baltimore Counties. This solar energy will provide tens of thousands of dollars in county revenue over the 25-year lives of the projects.

These projects were awarded to and developed by TurningPoint Energy as part of the State of Maryland's Community Solar Pilot Program. ForeFront Power purchased the projects in 2019, constructed the projects and now serves as the long-term owner and operator. ForeFront Power and TurningPoint Energy are collaborating on three additional community solar projects in the state that will enter operation in the coming quarters.

Community solar projects offer all the benefits of solar to those unable to install solar at their home. These projects enable individual households, whether they rent or own, the ability to source electricity from a community solar project at a discount to current utility rates.

Value Of New Construction Put In Place — January, 2021

Value of Construction Put-in-Place (\$ billions, seasonally adjusted annual rate)

	Jan. '21 ₁	Dec. '20 ₂	Mo. % Change	Jan. '19	YTY % Change
Total Construction	1,521.5	1,496.5	1.7	1,437.7	5.8
Total Private Construction:	1,160.0	1,140.9	1.7	1,086.4	6.8
Residential	713.0	695.7	2.5	589.1	21
New single family	376.2	365.1	3	302.8	24.2
New multifamily	92.7	92.1	0.7	79.3	16.9
Nonresidential	447.0	445.2	0.4	497.3	-10.1
Lodging	24.0	23.8	0.7	31.0	-22.7
Office	68.7	68.9	-0.2	71.9	-4.4
Commercial	74.7	76.1	-1.8	81.4	-8.3
Health care	36.6	36.1	1.2	38.7	-5.5
Educational	16.3	16.2	0.4	19.3	-15.7
Religious	3.1	3.1	-0.4	3.6	-12.6
Amusement and recreation	11.3	11.1	1.6	14.5	-22.1
Transportation	15.7	15.6	1	16.2	-2.7
Communication	22.2	21.9	1.1	22.6	-2
Power	107.6	108.4	-0.8	119.6	-10
Electric	72.7	73.5	-1.1	82.7	-12.1
Manufacturing	65.6	62.6	4.9	76.9	-14.7
Total Public Construction:	361.5	355.5	1.7	351.3	2.9
Residential	9.4	9.1	3.1	7.6	23.7
Nonresidential	352.0	346.4	1.6	343.7	2.4
Office	10.8	10.7	0.9	11.4	-5
Commercial	3.7	3.8	-4.4	3.7	-1.6
Health care	9.6	9.5	0.9	8.8	9.1
Educational	89.9	90.0	-0.1	89.1	0.9
Public safety	16.2	15.9	1.6	12.8	26.4
Amusement and recreation	13.8	13.8	0.1	14.3	-3.8
Transportation	40.9	41.4	-1.2	41.1	-0.6
Power	6.6	6.6	0.2	6.9	-4
Highway and street	107.8	101.9	5.8	101.2	6.5
Sewage and waste disposal	26.2	26.7	-1.9	25.8	1.7
Water supply	17.8	17.6	1.3	17.4	2.6
Conservation and development	7.6	7.1	6.3	9.7	-22.2

1—Preliminary; 2—Revised

Note: The U.S. Census department changed its construction categories beginning with its May 2003 statistics.

With the changes in the project classifications, data now presented are not directly comparable with those data previously published in the regular-format press releases and tables. Direct comparisons can only be made at the total, total private, total state and local, total federal, and total public levels for annual and not seasonally adjusted monthly data. For more information, check out <http://www.census.gov/const/www/c30index.html>.

Billions for EVs & Schools in Infrastructure Proposal

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Public school funding for energy-efficiency improvements and renewable energy. The CLEAN Future Act would authorize \$100 million per year from 2022-2031 for a grant program that would fund energy improvements in schools such as “air quality, daylighting, ventilation, electrical lighting, and acoustics, and facilitate installation of renewable energy technologies.

Rebates for industrial facilities that invest in more energy-efficient facilities. Manufacturers would have access to \$1 billion per year in DOE rebates from 2022-2031 if they upgrade their facilities to improve energy and water efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emission with a DOE-qualified technology. “Qualified entities with over 500 employees are eligible for a rebate that is 25% of the overall cost of a qualified technology, and qualified entities with under 500 employees are eligible for a 40% rebate,” according to the proposal. “Qualified entities can also apply for additional rebates for qualified technologies made in America, that facilitate the switch to a low- or zero-carbon energy source, and that are used to manufacture Carbon Star products.”

In addition to these financial incentives, the CLEAN Future Act includes a “nationwide Clean Electricity Standard (CES)” that requires electric utilities to obtain 100% clean electricity by 2035, and “invests heavily in clean energy, distributed energy resources, grid infrastructure, and microgrids.”

It’s way early to say which proposals in the CLEAN Future Act described here will ever be signed by law. But it’s not a bad idea to track the progress of it and any other infrastructure proposals that the House of Representatives or U.S. Senate come up with, because the chance of some sort of infrastructure legislation being passed in the Democratic-controlled Congress would appear to be pretty decent, and any bill would most likely contain big-time funding for the installation of electrical equipment.

The challenge will be figuring out how to access the available funds in the various DOE or EPA programs and getting to know the various government entities that will manage them.

— Jim Lucy

People

Omni Cable (West Chester, PA): **Todd Sweeney** joined the company as VP of business development, bringing more than 12 years of industry experience to the team. Prior to joining OmniCable, Sweeney spent the last two years with A-Z Wire and Cable as senior VP of sales and corporate strategy. He also has held management posts at General Cable (now Prysmian), Contech Construction Products and GE.

MaxLite (West Caldwell, NJ): The company recently realigned its sales leadership structure to enhance collaboration and drive growth in the utility business channel. To better connect its commercial and residential products and services with utility programs and third-party implementers, MaxLite has moved the C&I Utility team, led by vice president **Frank Molander** into a combined business unit reporting to **Vincent Alonzi**, executive VP of utility, retail and national accounts. The newly merged leadership team includes industry veterans **Stan Mertz**, VP of residential utility programs, and **Don Becker**, director of C&I utility programs. The ESCO and Government sales channel, led by VP **Stephen Mitchell**, will also report to Alonzi, allowing for better focus on key partners at the regional and national level.

In addition to his current responsibilities overseeing the C&I Utility and Horticulture teams, Molander will take on a new role leading sales operations across MaxLite.

Robroy Enclosures (Belding, MI): **Cindy Stowell** retired after 20 years with the company. She joined Robroy Enclosures in 2001 and retired as the company’s human resource administrator. She also served as a long-time administrative assistant to the president of Robroy Enclosures.

W.W. Grainger (Lake Forest, IL): **Julie Myerholtz** joined the company as VP, chief information security officer (CISO) and will manage the company’s cybersecurity vision and strategy and collaborate with customers, suppliers, Grainger leadership and the board of directors on information security-related matters.

Myerholtz has more than 20 years of experience in enterprise risk management, information security, data privacy and IT operations and governance. She most recently served as CISO at First Solar, a solar panel manufacturing company. Prior to that, she spent eight years at PricewaterhouseCoopers of manufacturing, utility/

energy and technology clients.

EMCOR Group (Norwalk, CT): Retired U.S. Army Major General **Ronald Johnson** was elected to the company’s board of directors, effective March 1. General Johnson, 66, has more than 40 years of strategic leadership and management experience, as well as a broad range of technical and operational knowledge. He currently holds several leadership positions at the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Georgia Tech.

Prior to joining Georgia Tech, General Johnson was senior VP referee operations for the National Basketball Association (NBA) and was responsible for establishing and leading this new department to ensure the integrity and high quality of the NBA officiating program, including overseeing 62 NBA referees, 31 WNBA referees, and 37 D-League referees.

Johnson entered the private sector in 2008 after a 32-year career in the U.S. Army.

Electrical Marketing

Subscriptions: 877-382-9187

(8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Central Time)

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Subscription rates:

Electrical Marketing now offers a special \$99 introductory subscription rate for the 1st year only. Renewals come at the \$199/year standard rate for all digital access and print subscription. Group subscription discount rates are also available.

Electrical Marketing is published twice a month by Endeavor Business Media, 9800 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66212. For subscriber services, write to Electrical Marketing, P.O. Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257 USA; call (847) 559-7598; Toll-free: (877) 382-9187; Fax: 847-291-4816

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