



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 30, 2011

CONTACT: Brian Turmail
(703) 459-0238, turmailb@agc.org

CHARLESTON ADDING CONSTRUCTION JOBS FASTER THAN VIRTUALLY EVERY OTHER METRO AREA AS LOCAL INDUSTRY ADDS 2,300 JOBS BETWEEN JULY 2010 AND JULY 2011
Growing Public Sector Demand for Projects Like West Side Elementary School Helps Boost Construction Employment in 136 Out of 337 Metro Areas This Year

Charleston is adding new construction jobs faster than virtually every other metro area as the local industry grew by 15 percent between July 2010 and July 2011, the Associated General Contractors of America announced today. Association officials noted that 136 out of 337 metro areas added construction jobs during the past year, helped in part by demand for new schools, bridge repairs and other infrastructure projects.

“One of the main reasons construction employment is growing in Charleston is because of the public sector investments that are being made at the local, state and federal levels,” said Gene Thompson, president of the Contractors Association of West Virginia, the association’s statewide chapter, and vice president of South Charleston-based Ahern, a division of Kokosing Construction. “While the structures these new construction workers build are sturdy, the jobs they have are still fragile.”

Thompson said one of the reasons construction employment was growing in Charleston is public-sector investments in school buildings, interstate bridges, the airport and sewer lines. He said the public sector investments helped boost construction employment in Charleston by 2,300 during the past year. He added that it also helped create another 100 jobs in the Weirton-Steubenville area along the West Virginia, Ohio border, a 6 percent increase.

The association president announced the new employment figures during a visit to the recently completed West Side Elementary School in Charleston. He noted that publicly funded projects like the new school, repairs to 164 bridges and work on the local airport terminal helped Charleston top all but 4 other metro areas in the percentage of new construction jobs created.

Thompson added that the public sector projects were not just creating new construction jobs, they were giving a much needed boost to the broader economy. That is because the new construction activity stimulates demand for construction materials and equipment. It also puts more money into the broader economy by increasing sales at everything from the local lunch wagon to the internet retailers across the county.

He cautioned however that cutting public investments in infrastructure would put many local construction jobs at risk, hurt the local economy and force taxpayers to more in the long run to repair facilities than they would to maintain them now. “Cutting back on construction will hurt more than construction workers,” Thompson warned.

He added that while demand for new construction is boosting employment in many metro areas, construction jobs are still disappearing in too many places. Thompson noted that 148 metro areas lost construction jobs last year while another 53 had no change in employment levels. He said that is why the association would continue to push for measures to increase demand for construction projects that are outlined in the group’s “[Building a Stronger Future](#)” plan.

View the new construction employment figures by [state](#) or by [rank](#).

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