

**CONSTRUCTION FORUM
BY THE NUMBERS...**

2023

**A "ROOM WITHOUT WALLS"
ENTERS ITS SECOND DECADE
OF SYSTEMS CHANGE
FOR INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH.**

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LETTER FROM TOM

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

To see how far Construction Forum advanced in its first 10 years you need only look at the photos of Forum activity hung on my office walls, then step out into our meeting space and examine the photos there.

Construction Forum was envisioned over a decade ago as “a room without walls” that anyone could enter. This room would be a place where the entire Region could participate in building relationships and working on issues, both large and small.

The photos in my office were mostly taken at events early in the Forum’s history. They feature, with few exceptions, large numbers of white males who were working in the construction industry at that time.

The photos in our meeting space show both males, females, and people of color of all ages. They represent construction management and labor, education, social services, community organizations, public policy influencers and others.

The earlier photos mostly show people watching presentations. The more recent shots feature engaged, energized working groups, involved in the Forum’s systems change projects which are designed to help facilitate a diverse and inclusive future construction workforce.

In 2019 Construction Forum adopted a new mission statement, “To facilitate the collaboration of all the stakeholders in the STL Region’s built environment in creating inclusive, robust employment and economic growth,” and, a vision of social equity, economic opportunity, and economic growth.

During our 10th anniversary year that mission and vision played out in quantifiable ways. We have always held that lasting change is not about inputs and outputs from programs – it’s about measurable outcomes.

Our metrics for 2023 exceeded 2022 in every category. With your support, we will be able to scale the effects of our measurable, accountable efforts for system change even further.



We are looking forward to a groundbreaking 2024, as we enter a collaboration with the Gateway South Innovation District, focused on technological innovation and the industrialization of construction. At the same time, we continue in the focused systems change, communication, collaboration, and convening that have become our hallmark.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

Tom Finan
Executive Director/Co-Founder
Construction Forum



SYSTEMS CHANGE RECAP

BRINGING ABOUT SYSTEMS CHANGE IN MEASURABLE WAYS

On December 14, 2023, an appreciation luncheon was held for over 40 volunteer participants in Construction Forum's Systems Change Workforce cohorts.

There are over 60 participants in these groups overall. At the luncheon, they heard about progress and projects in their respective groups at the two-year mark.

On August 31, 2021, the Forum set out to develop a program that could instruct and inform a broad audience on the complexity of the systems change needed to create a truly equitable, inclusive, and diverse construction workforce.

Attendees at a program on that date took part in a live poll. They were asked to rank the top five barriers to an inclusive workforce out of 22 possible choices. They chose Old Boy Network (63%); Knowledge Regarding Career Pathways (58%); Education Inequity (50%); Transportation (41%); and Racism in Hiring (38%). The group making the selection included construction professionals, building owners, educators, local and state public policy professionals, community agency representatives, and union representatives.

In March of 2022, they were split into cohorts around those topics. The cohorts were tasked with coming up with one "small win" project in their respective areas by the end of 2022. After delivering reports on their projects in December of 2022, all the groups asked to continue and refine their efforts.

There has been some tweaking of the names and configuration of the groups. Old Boy Network is now The New Network. Racism in Hiring is now Transformational Solutions. Education Inequity combined with Career Pathways.



IN 2023 THE PROGRESS REPORTED BY THE GROUPS INCLUDED:

Transportation has identified resources to address worker transportation, including auto dealers who will provide affordable vehicles, insurance brokers, legal assistance, driver training, carpooling, and credit unions which will make loans to new construction workers. These resources are being deployed on a website which will be updated by the group. It was created and will be maintained by the Forum.

Transformational Solutions has completed very successful career events with St. Louis Development Corporation and St. Louis County. They explored a worker hotline to address harassment on the job. They are now working on an industry summit to explore recruitment and retention issues, as well as a one-page flyer explaining the steps in reporting offensive actions and behaviors.

The New Network has deployed a survey to measure on-the-job culture for both office and craft workers. The purpose is to establish a "state of the industry" benchmark so companies can examine and improve their workplace cultures.

Career Pathways is creating an online career pathing tool in collaboration with STEM STL that can be used by job seekers, students, educators, and parents.

The Forum's Systems Change Workforce groups are emblematic of our approach: We COLLABORATE, COMMUNICATE and CONVENE to bring about MEASURABLE CHANGE.

PROGRAM NUMBERS

4,340 YOUTH AT 23 SCHOOL BASED-EVENTS

Construction Forum has become the “go-to” resource for employers, unions, educators, students and parents seeking to connect the future workforce with our industry. In 2023 the Forum facilitated that connection for **4,340 young people at 23 school-based events.**

Events on which the Forum collaborated included:

- Parkway West
- Hazelwood Central
- Harris Stowe
- Florissant Valley
- Virtual Stride Academy
- Wright City High School
- Farmington High School
- Girls’ 8th Grade Schools
- St. Mary’s High School
- Hazelwood School District
- Vitendo 4 Africa
- Valley Park High School/Kozeny-Wagner
- Mehlville High School
- St. Joan of Arc
- Riverview Gardens
- McKinley High School
- Sumner High School
- Hazelwood East
- Ferguson-Florissant SD
- Hazelwood West
- Missouri Virtual School Academy
- What’s Next Events
- Ferguson-Florissant Mock Interviews



282 EDUCATORS/ADULTS AT 5 CONFERENCES

Perhaps just as important in reaching youth with information is connecting with the parents and educators who will help guide the future workers’ career search. In 2023 Construction Forum assisted **282 educators/adults at 5 Career Conferences** with information about career paths in construction.

These events were: MODOT Civil Rights Compliance Symposium, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, McCarthy Show Me Careers, St. Louis School-Business Partnership, and Pattonville School District.



243 EMERGING LEADERS AT 4 EVENTS

Construction Forum’s Emerging Leaders Group was formed to provide networking opportunities and **a voice for those whose careers are on the rise** in the St. Louis Region’s built environment.

The Group — 200-plus members strong — represents a very diverse cross-section of careers in the built environment. From skilled-craft workers to attorneys, project managers to human resource directors, the ELG is an inclusive and encouraging resource for the people who will help shape the future of the St. Louis Region.

ELG also focuses on bringing along the industry’s next generation and giving back to the community. From after-school programming to assisting the Forum’s education outreach to youth, parents, and educators, members of the ELG have stepped up.

In 2023 **four events attracting 243 Emerging Leaders** were held in partnership with the Hispanic Chamber, Terracon, Clayco, and DIRTT, Built & Coltrane.

1,668 POTENTIAL WORKERS REACHED AT 13 COMMUNITY EVENTS

Besides career outreach to youth in classroom settings, Construction Forum collaborates with nonprofit organizations, unions, employers, and government agencies to organize opportunities at the community level. In 2023 the Forum was responsible for connecting with **1,668 potential workers** through such collaborations.

Our partners/events were:

- OSHA Conference
- Women In Construction Week
- Patrick Henry Garden Bed
- Regional Youth Employment Coalition
- Build My Future
- Project Lead the Way
- Northside Economic Empowerment Center
- Dream Builders 4 Equity
- Yeah, I Built That Hands-On Construction Career Showcase
- Construction Career Showcase
- Hispanic Chamber Fair
- National Night Out
- Urban Expo



24 ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVED WORKFORCE LITERATURE

Construction Forum serves as both a resource and a proactive distributor of construction workforce literature. This literature includes both items developed internally by the Forum team and materials received from our partners.

Organizations receiving literature in 2023 were:

- OSHA-SLU Gateway Regional Conference
- McCarthy
- SITE Improvement Association
- AGC of Missouri
- Mid America Carpenters Regional Council
- Painters District 58
- Missouri Laborers-Employers Cooperation & Education Trust (LECET)
- St. Louis Development Corp.
- St. Louis County Workforce Development
- SLATE
- BUD Program
- Hispanic Chamber
- Vitendo 4 Africa
- BJC Trailer
- SM Wilson & Co.
- Clayco
- STEMSTL
- Missouri Women in Trades
- Kozeny-Wagner
- RG Ross
- North Tech and South Tech High Schools
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Missouri Connect Apprenticeship
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 36

MAKING THE NUMBERS COUNT

If the activities recounted on the preceding pages were the sum of Construction Forum's 10th anniversary year it would be cause for celebration.

But community outpourings of thanks for our work over the years, the generous donations from the Built Community, and the extra efforts of the Forum team members ensured that 2023 was extra special no matter what angle you looked at it from.

At our stupendous fundraising/awards event at Armory STL in May our team and volunteers ran a seamless extravaganza that netted \$43,141. Executive Director/Co-Founder Tom Finan got to sit back and soak it all in – clad in a fright wig, lab coat, and sunglasses as “Doc Finan”, a walking meme for the Back to the Future-vibe theme of our anniversary year: “The Future is Now”. It was nothing short of a “family” celebration. That celebration included recognition of our fellow collaborators in this space with “The Future Is Now Awards”.

Some of the Forum's top supporters commemorated the year by pledging to make three-year pledges collectively totaling almost \$100,000 a year. These funds are critical in giving us the runway we need as we find permanent, sustainable funding for scaling our work.

From our beginnings in 2013, the Forum's operating model has been to squeeze the maximum impact out of every penny of our supporters' funds. In 2023 our total expenses were \$482,000. With a total staff of four we reached thousands of people with tools, programs, and services supporting inclusive workforce and economic growth, as was outlined in the previous pages of this report.

We also continued in our role as a communicator, convener, and collaboration builder. Our newsletter had 850K sends and 289K opens (35%) with a 17% clickthrough. The website had 101.3K page views by 54.8K visitors in 80.95K sessions. Our in-person events in 2023 had 1,114 persons registered.

If you believe in the Forum's mission, To facilitate the collaboration of all the stakeholders in the STL Region's built environment in creating inclusive, robust employment and economic growth, please consider supporting our work with financial or in-kind donations as we begin our second decade.

If you're already supporting our work, thank you so much. You can reach me by cell at 314-743-7505, or by email tom@constructforstl.org.



THE FUTURE IS NOW.

**CONSTRUCTION
FORUM**

OUR MISSION

To facilitate the collaboration of all the stakeholders in the St. Louis Region's built environment in creating inclusive, robust employment and economic growth.

OUR VISION

Social Equity, Economic Opportunity, Economic Growth.

OUR TEAM



Tom Finan
Executive Director/Co-Founder



Dede Hance
Director of Administration



Diana Wilhold
Deputy Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer



Kacey Crawley
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