



PROFESSIONAL CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATORS ASSOCIATION

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\$90 million Orlando Creative Village student housing project gets green light

The 15-storey project is being developed by Ustler Development Inc. and KUD International LLC at North Terry Ave, and West Livingston St. The project team is now "full into design," Brooke Myers, a partner in Creative Village, was quoted as saying in Orlando Business Journal (OBJ).

The student housing project will be on what's known as Parcel J and will have 600 beds, a parking garage, ground-floor retail and restaurant space, and four floors of education space, including Valencia College's Walt Disney World School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts.

The building's design will be "integrated with the downtown campus," Ustler Development president Craig Ustler said in a previous OBJ interview. It also will include a "dramatic mix of facades dominated by glass on the first five floors."

Construction is expected to start this summer.

By Mark Buckshon, Florida Construction News

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Construction staff wages expected to rise 3.4% in 2017

Construction staff wages grew by 3.6% in 2016, according to the latest Contractor Compensation Quarterly from research firm PAS. PAS also predicts that wages will rise by an average of 3.4% in 2017, though the predictions are often 0.5% low, according to the Associated General Contractors of America.

The research group looked at positions like chief estimator, project manager and superintendent, and it did not include data about skilled trade workers. PAS noted that not every position would see the average increase, and it found that field-related positions, in particular, grew at a more rapid pace.

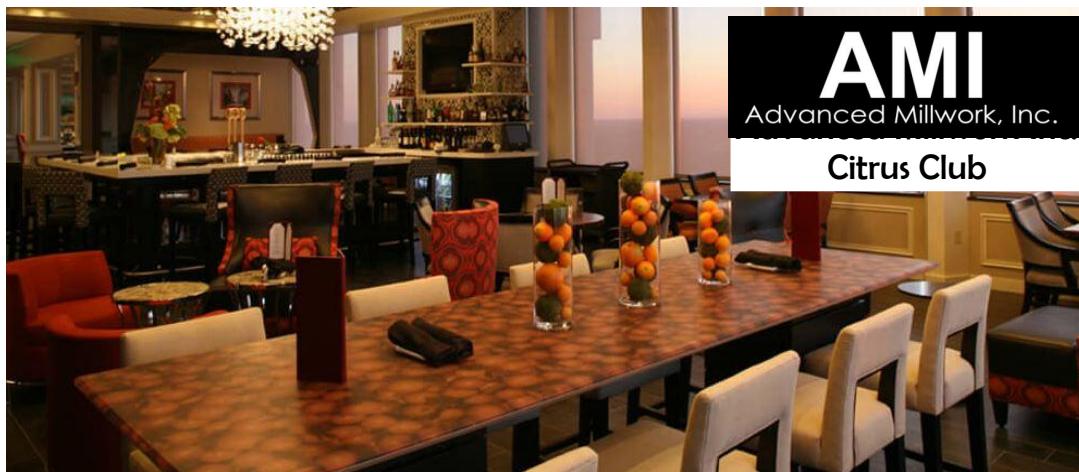
Pay for entry-level project engineers (PE) increased 5%, and experienced PE wages grew 6.8%. Other positions that garnered higher-than-average raises were senior project managers (5.5%), project superintendents (6.1%), risk managers (6.7%) and safety directors (8%).

As PAS stated in its report, wages are important, but as growth starts to level off, other forms of compensation are becoming key in attracting and retaining employees. More companies are moving to a "total rewards" approach to compensation — a strategy that involves offering more programs like career development and work-life balance opportunities. This is not just a magnanimous overture on the part of employers, but a necessity as the industry struggles to reign in skilled talent to fill these positions.

Marianne Monte, chief people officer at Shawmut Design and Construction in Boston, told Construction Dive in January that development programs attract employees and keep existing ones more satisfied in their positions. After a year on the job, Shawmut offers workers a chance to participate in an employee stock ownership plan, which Monte said allows employees to feel like a more integral part of the company.

Monte said a flexible working schedule is another big draw, as work-life balance becomes a greater priority among employees across all age groups. Started in 2016, the company's ShawmutFlex program includes shorter workweeks, the chance to telecommute and share jobs, as well as an opportunity to work part-time in both field and administrative positions.

Millennials, especially, stand to turn the tides when it comes to changes in the workforce.



The demographic's push for flex time and cross-training, along with better work-life balance, will likely continue to ripple out through the industry.

by Kim Slowey
Construction Dive

\$43.5 million Millennium Middle School breaks ground in Sanford

Local contractor Wharton-Smith Inc. is the project's general contractor. The building was designed by SchenkelShultz Architecture.

Designed with a focus on the performing arts, the 221,741 sq. ft. structure will house 1,900 students. The state-of-the-art school will also feature formal and informal collaborative spaces and innovative technology to enhance the learning experience. To accommodate the school's arts magnet program, the design includes orchestra, band, vocal, drama and 2D and 3D digital labs. Additionally, the new middle school will have an 800-seat auditorium located in the front of the school with a separate, controlled entrance for community and district events.

The estimated completion date is August 2018.





BOARD POSITION UPDATE

Unfortunately Aaron Smith with PCL has been transferred to a project out of state and will be unable to fulfill his term as President of the Chapter.

Chris Joyce of Tharp Plumbing Systems Inc. will step up from President Elect to fill the role of President for the 2017/2018 year.

Up to 25% of U.S. shopping malls may close in the next five years, report says

Between 20% and 25% of the nation's shopping malls will close in the next five years, according to a new report from Credit Suisse that predicts e-commerce will continue to pull shoppers away from bricks-and-mortar retailers.

For many, the Wall Street firm's finding may come as no surprise. Long-standing retailers are dying off as shoppers' habits shift online. Credit Suisse expects apparel sales to represent 35% of all e-commerce by 2030, up from 17% today. Traditional mall anchors, such as Macy's, J.C. Penney and Sears, have announced numerous store closings in recent months. Clothiers including American Apparel and BCBG Max Azria have filed for bankruptcy. Bebe has closed all of its stores. The report estimates that around 8,640 stores will close by the end of the year.

Retail industry experts say Credit Suisse may have underestimated the scope of the upheaval.

"It's more in the 30% range," Ron Friedman, a retail expert at accounting and advisory firm Marcum said of the share of malls that he predicts will close in the next five years. "There are a lot of malls that know they're in big trouble."

By ignoring new shopping centers being built, the research note took an overly simplistic view of the changing landscape of shopping centers, said analyst David Marcotte, senior vice president with Kantar Retail.

"There are still malls being built," Marcotte said. "Predominantly outlet malls and lifestyle malls."

The change may not affect all sectors of the mall economy evenly.

Paula Rosenblum, co-founder and retail analyst at RSR Research, believes the report overstates the risks, and says lower-tier shopping centers in particular would bear the brunt of the blow.

"The problem with a lot of these studies ... is they look at what's dying, they don't look at what's being born," Rosenblum said.

But analysts agreed that to survive and stay relevant, malls need to make serious changes.

"A lot of malls are being redone. We are seeing mixed-use, many more restaurants and service providers, and less clothing stores," Friedman said. "You're going to see a future where you'll be living at the mall."

"If you have food and entertainment, that gives you a court to build around," Marcotte said. "Once you get past that you need to create a space that is lifestyle oriented."

Rosenblum says shopping centers will be driven by the demands of millennials and members of Generation Z behind them, who are more likely to spend money on entertainment rather than just clothing.

Malls, Rosenblum said, "are going to become more of a destination, not just for shopping but for activities and experiences."

by Makeda Easter, LA Times



MEETINGS & EVENTS

MONTHLY MEMBER MEETINGS

ALL MEMBER MEETINGS ARE HELD AT
5:30 PM, IN THE CITRUS CLUB,
255 S ORANGE AVE, ORLANDO, 18TH FLOOR

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