

EDITOR'S NOTE

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As we move into the year 2006, many construction site preparation firms proceed with a cautious optimism. While rising energy costs, health care costs and material costs are a growing concern—along with finding suitable employees—design and construction firms look on the bright side. The majority perceive 2006 as another year for growth.

The highway and bridge sector in particular is one to watch, according to reports. With the passing of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) last August, transportation projects should be on the rise. The act provides every state with more funding, which could help in paying for those costlier project materials. The passing of SAFETEA-LU presents many opportunities to those in the A/E/C market—at least through 2009 when it expires.

Particular areas of business deserve attention from design and construction firms as well, including training, communication with clients and equipment dealers, and the opportunity to take advantage of new equipment offerings in the market. Unfortunately, the obstacles of obtaining and retaining valuable workers for precious jobs are expected to continue as market attrition continues and newcomers filter in slowly—some experienced, some not. Managers who do

establish solid teams should evaluate employee performance routinely. It is the responsibility of owners, supervisors and project managers to implement solid training on all aspects of the job for their crew members and operators. Without efficient training, performance will be lacking and productivity will suffer. You can't just put a kid on a bicycle and tell him to pedal.

To ensure the success of training, effective communication with employees is mandatory. Don't assume that the class you signed Bob on for is the "end-all, be-all" of training. He might not get what he needs from that one session, and communicating with him following the event will give you the answer. It seems that too many people in charge overlook their responsibility to communicate. Workers on any level carry the same responsibility; if they are not able to perform some aspect of their jobs, they need to inform their supervisors so as to establish a resolve. Failing to communicate can also mean certain death when it comes to equipment purchases.

As we proceed—many of us with caution and optimism—into this year, be smart in your decisions and keep informed of new developments in the construction market through valuable industry publications like *SITEPREP*. We welcome your feedback. **SP**

