

BRENNAN

JOHN J. BRENNAN CONSTRUCTION

PASSION TO BE THE BEST

WINTER 2021

Four of Our Most Important Safety Rules on Project Sites:

- ◆ Ensure all employees go home safely at day's end
- ◆ Always be aware of surroundings
- ◆ Use proper personal protective equipment while working on a site
- ◆ Identify and communicate hazards at a project site before work begins

There is much more to safety at our work sites. Learn about our other precautions on page 2.

CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS: Passion Is Ingrained in Us

Passion to do our best — to be the best — is present in every job we do. It's part of what the founders of John J. Brennan Construction Company passed along to the following generations. I see it as "paying it forward" — each generation has aimed to leave a stronger, more successful, reputable company to the next Brennans in line.

My cousins Eric and Matt and I are the current generation that's leading the company farther into the future. As three generations of Brennans did before us, we're committed to ensuring there are opportunities and resources for subsequent generations to succeed. That's our passion.

This commitment is not exclusive to family members; it extends to our employees as well. We all want to ensure that every construction project we work on represents the client's vision and shows our quality and pride.

Successful outcomes are not the only proof of our employees' passion; it's also evident in the number of longtime employees in the company. More than 50 percent of our workforce has been with us longer than 10



David R. Brennan,
President & CEO

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WHERE WE ARE:

Derby-Shelton Bridge

John J. Brennan Construction Company crews and equipment will be on the Derby-Shelton Bridge over the next 18 to 36 months, installing new infrastructure for electrical distribution while the bridge is under renovation. The project entails replacement and upgrade of aging and deteriorated elements, phased construction and coordination with other contractors such as UI, and state and city personnel, as well as the public, who will still have access to one traffic lane. When the renovation is complete, the highly traveled bridge will have a second traffic lane heading east, two tracks for bicyclists, and a wider pedestrian walkway. Brennan's goals for this project are to fulfill expectations, work safely and efficiently, and complete the job on time.

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Safety is Brennan's Top Priority — All Day, Every Day

Diligence, precautions, protective equipment gets everyone home safely.

Heavy equipment. Cars whizzing by. Deep trenches. Flying debris. Slips and trips. Blind spots. Construction work sites can be dangerous places indeed, which makes safety the primary concern at John J. Brennan Construction Company. Our top priority is for all employees to go home safely every day, from those who work at our project sites, to the people who maintain and repair our trucks and keep our offices running smoothly.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) calls our business “a high-hazard industry that comprises a wide range of activities involving construction, alteration and/or repair.” In the course of an average day, construction workers may be exposed to any number of serious hazards, especially when they're working close to heavy equipment and traffic.

Brennan has built a strong safety culture during our extensive experience in the industry. We have hands-on management, specialized training and equipment, and tenured employees who are well-versed in safety precautions. We have designated personnel who promote our safety culture, from committed and involved owners to long-term, devoted, field personnel. Our safety committee is comprised of employees from the front line to senior leadership and meets monthly to discuss incidents, near misses, safety concerns and best practices. In the field, foremen have daily safety meetings to ensure their crews are aware of the surrounding hazards and focused on safety.

Awareness Saves Lives

We strive to maintain safety precautions in every aspect of our business to keep our work crews protected. Moreover, our employees know David, Matt and Eric Brennan share their level of concern about individual safety. Many of our employees have been with Brennan for more than 20 years, and the knowledge and expertise they have gained equip them with the skillset required to do their jobs safely, remain observant and keep their guard up.

We maintain these safety precautions to protect our valued employees.

Knowing a job site's surroundings is the best way to avoid dangerous situations and pitfalls. “Brennan's site supervisors and the safety team scout work areas in advance, identifying potential hazards and alerting crews well before they are due to start a job,” said Brent Moyer, Brennan's safety manager. “They create and communicate a daily safety plan and ensure it's carried out.” These plans may include barriers such as fences, cones, lights and signs, especially in an

area that is open to drivers and pedestrians. Depending on the extent of exposure to traffic, the supervisor must ensure a flagman is onsite to direct vehicles around the workers and equipment (or a police officer, depending on the area).

Where elevation and depths are concerns, situational awareness is a lifesaver. Again, site supervisors must determine in advance how the job will unfold and communicate with their crews: what tasks will be involved, what safety equipment will be necessary and what hazards



This work site in Ansonia shows just a few potential hazards Brennan employees face on the job, from heavy equipment moving around the workers, to deep trenches and uneven ground.

might exist. Workers who are more than six feet off the ground must have the right equipment to move around safely, including ladders, scaffolds, fall guards and safety gear. When working in trenches, the dirt walls around them must be shored to prevent life-threatening cave-ins, and barriers around the perimeter must be in place to ensure workers don't fall in. And while they're following safety precautions, they have to consider other requirements and regulations, such as calling utility companies before they start digging at a site.

Situational awareness is crucial for drivers of trucks and other heavy equipment at construction sites. “Equipment operators must have a spotter and pay attention to his signals while backing up or moving equipment,” says Howie Vagt, general superintendent of site operations at Brennan. “If they don't have a spotter, they have to get out and look. They always need to know what's around them.”

Everyone is responsible for safety

Whether the project is near traffic or off-road, everyone working on the site has personal responsibility regarding safety, particularly when it comes to protective gear. Long before the pandemic made PPE (personal protective equipment) a household term, these three letters guided and protected construction workers at job sites — it's their key to safety and going home in one piece. Hard hats protect against head injuries, gloves prevent cuts or burns on hands and fingers, ear protection preserves hearing around loud machinery and full-face shields are a must when cutting or grinding material. Safety glasses prevent small, airborne particles from injuring eyes, and other types of injuries can be avoided with goggles, respiratory protection, steel-toed boots and job-specific clothing such as welding leathers or fire-resistant gear. Of course, bright, reflective vests are a must on any site.

Situational awareness, constant observance of safety measures, and preparation will help ward off problems and injuries. The bottom line, says Joe Keane, safety director at Brennan: “We don't become complacent or too comfortable; we must always maintain awareness of our surroundings and potential job hazards. That's how we go home safely each day.”

BRENNAN BRINGS DOWN AN EYESORE

Three Months of Planning Over in Six Hours

A drone hovered over two buildings on Main Street in Derby on July 11, recording a bird's-eye view of John J. Brennan Construction Company's best work under intense pressure. On the street below was a dilapidated, four-story apartment building, abandoned six years earlier, that was literally falling apart, and an adjacent, vacant structure.



The first strike

It was a Sunday morning, so traffic on the much-traveled state highway was lighter than usual — a deliberate part of the demolition plan. Brennan's drone captured a large excavator on the road, closing in on the apartment building, its arm moving steadily toward it, poised to make the first strike. A safe distance away stood invested bystanders: David, Matt and Eric Brennan, owners of the construction company.

Merely six hours later, both buildings were gone — a precarious job carried out by a man and a machine, with no mishaps. The Brennans were beaming as they congratulated the excavator operator, Ken Petrovich.

There were more congratulations later at Brennan headquarters, because this accomplishment wasn't as simple as it seemed. Three months of planning and training, involving many other employees behind the scene, went into preparation for the Derby demolition.

Perspective of the 'man on the ground'

"The demolition came out pretty spectacular; everything worked out the way it was planned," says David Brennan, company president. "A project like this has a lot of moving pieces that fit together like a puzzle. Everyone gets involved, from junior laborers to senior site managers; from the receptionist to billing, to accounting, to the owners. Successful outcomes take commitment from everyone, covering every detail from top to bottom."

Brennan also noted the critical assistance Derby Mayor Richard Dzieken provided. "The mayor, his chief of staff, Andrew Baklik, and

state Department of Transportation employee Francis Phelan helped us get one side of the highway closed that day. We were grateful for their efforts; their cooperation was instrumental to accomplishing the demolition safely."

Project planning began in April with determination to leave nothing to chance. One realization was that the job needed an excavator with an exceptionally long reach to get it done most efficiently, so they rented a larger excavator.

Besides equipment and logistics, there were safety concerns, especially since the demolition was to be conducted with one highway lane still open to traffic.

"We prioritized doing it safely," says Petrovich, who walked the site three days before the demolition with Brennan foremen Bruce Eye and Victor Campos. "We had to make sure we didn't miss anything. And on the day of actual demolition, before doing anything, we reviewed the plans again."

They also had a final walk through the site. "To prepare, you have to walk through the actual construction. Walk through and around it; see where it is physically strong and physically weak. Safety is always the first consideration, because an accident could harm someone, and at the very least it would be counterproductive to what we're trying to accomplish," Petrovich explains.



Dust clouds escape

"I'm always thinking two or three steps ahead. During a demolition, you have to anticipate where that piece will fall or that part will lay down. It all comes back to building off experience that you already have. Thankfully, there were no surprises with this job, but if you're experienced, you're more capable to handle any surprises. Experience molds you so you're prepared for the unknown."

Practice is important too, and Petrovich says that also comes from experience. "You can't just ask a regular operator to knock a building down. I've done a dozen demolitions for Brennan; they asked me to do the Derby demolition because I have the experience."

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Main Street Demolition *continued from page 3*

When the job was done, Petrovich says, “I was happy because management was happy, and the Derby officials were happy. After the building came down, there was a sense of relief and gratitude that it was successful and safe. Everybody was smiling.”

Campos emphasizes that “planning accordingly is everything; it’s how to get the job done right and ensure no one is injured. We had to consider every detail, from the active restaurant next door, to the barriers we would need to keep people away. We had to see how we were going to do this demolition; how we were going to attack it. We didn’t want to just go in and knock things over; we had to figure it out structurally.”

They tested the structures ahead of time to see if the wood had termites or other issues, and to determine what sections were solid and what weren’t. “A couple of spots had rot and were frail. We did a visual inspection and tapped at it to check it out, to see what was frail or not frail,” says Campos.

Prioritizing safety

On the morning of demolition, Campos was thinking about “the safety of our guys. Making sure the work was done properly and not rushed. Not just knocking it down, but also being aware of everything around us, to make sure nobody was hurt. That was the main focus prior to starting and throughout.”

The outcome was satisfying for Campos. “We did a good job, and we did it properly. Nobody was hurt, and Fratelli’s Restaurant next door wasn’t disturbed. We took down two buildings and left a clean, open lot. It became nicer scenery than the eyesore that was there before.”



The end is in sight



...And done

EMPLOYEE SHOWCASE — Ken Petrovich



Ken Petrovich, heavy equipment operator at John J. Brennan Construction Company, has held various positions since he started there 25 years ago, building his skill set over time.

“Ken is loyal, talented, dependable and a true asset to the projects he works on,” said David Brennan, company president. “He started from the bottom in terms of experience, and he has learned and become a very talented operator. The quality of his work speaks for itself.”

Howie Vagt, general superintendent of site operations, recalled Ken’s

early days with the company, when he “started as a young guy, aspiring to be an equipment operator, and he worked his way up to being one of our most valued and talented operators. He has a strong work ethic, and he’s loyal and reliable.”

Petrovich can be found at project sites or at work on utility repairs or installations. “He’s adept at maneuvering equipment in difficult conditions, such as the Derby building demolition. He had to work between two buildings, surrounded by passing cars, but the project went off without a hitch.”

Three Recent Retirees — 111 years Combined Service



DAVE POCHY accepts a plaque from David Brennan, expressing appreciation for his 24 years as an employee. At work, he was an excellent mechanic, easy to get along with and personable. “We will remember Dave’s knowledge and dedication; he knew the company, the industry and our fleet,” Brennan said. “He transitioned our garage to the high-functioning department it is today. Dave is a genuinely nice guy who put in extra effort to help, especially when we needed him in the field.”



JOHN QUEIROGA receives congratulations from Eric Brennan recently on his retirement after 47 years with the company. He provided leadership in the field, and he was known for his steady hand and calm demeanor under pressure. “John always was willing to discuss new ideas and methods, and he had a phenomenal reputation with our customers,” Brennan said. “He has taught and shaped many of our current employees, and he helped build our utility division to what it is today.”



LEON KAZLAUSKAS says goodbye to Matt Brennan, ending a career that spanned 40 years. “Leon developed Brennan’s presence in northern Connecticut, especially Litchfield County,” said Brennan. “He worked hard, had a strong work ethic and was there when we needed him. Leon was our ‘go-to guy’ for local knowledge and relationships, built on experience and trust. He knew our work and our people, and he was creative and good at improvising.”

Passion Is Ingrained in Us

years, and a good number have put in 20, 30 and even 40 years. Given the current business environment, with so many people walking away from their jobs, this is remarkable.

Our passion was on public display in a project we completed in just one day this past July: demolition of a multi-story building in downtown Derby that was deteriorating and causing a dangerous situation for passersby (see page 3). Anyone watching that day saw one Brennan employee using an excavator to bring the building down successfully, with no mishaps, in six hours. But in this case, appearances were deceiving. There was a force behind that project, planning every

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intricate detail for weeks before and reviewing the plans repeatedly until everyone was sure there would be no glitches.

That’s how we work, planning out jobs from top to bottom, coming in early on project days to check all the equipment, working safely and efficiently and leaving the space clean when we’re done. Sometimes the work is underground or in confined spaces, but our workers still show up with confidence and get the job done right. They have passion for the work. That’s something job-hoppers would never understand.

David Brennan



We’re digging out our Party Hats!

John J. Brennan Construction Company will celebrate **125 years** in business next year with a special issue of our newsletter, following the company’s history, growth, and impact in the state. **Watch for it in 2022!**