

**JOBSCOALITION 2017**  
 Rev. Stephen E. Tucker  
 President, JOBS Coalition

## 2017: BRACING FOR CHANGE IN A NEW ERA

*Uneasiness emerges with incoming administration, Coalition continues to vie for face time with D.C. mayor*

The November 2016 presidential election sent a very clear message: A new era of change is coming.

By Rev. Stephen E. Tucker

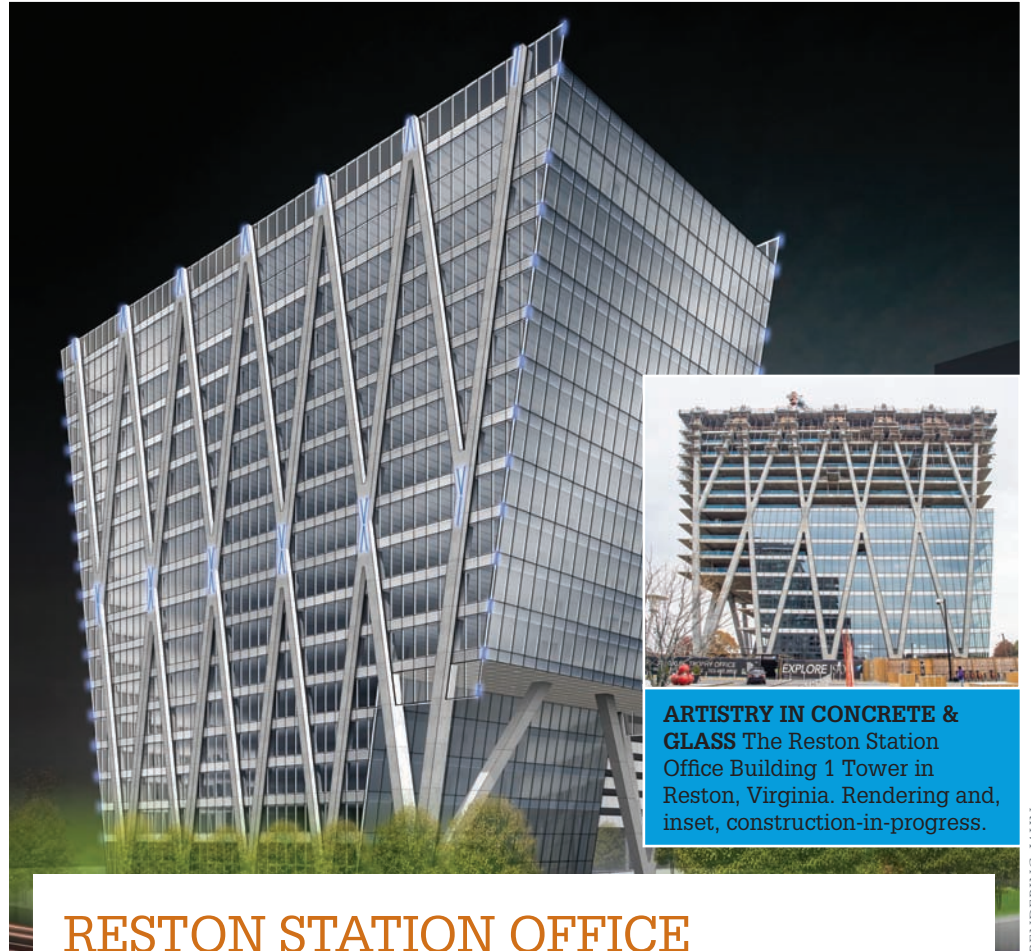
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## MAKING STRIDES: JOBS COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005. □



**ARTISTRY IN CONCRETE & GLASS** The Reston Station Office Building 1 Tower in Reston, Virginia. Rendering and, inset, construction-in-progress.

## RESTON STATION OFFICE BUILDING PROJECT: A TOWERING ACHIEVEMENT FOR MILLER & LONG

Collaboration with Davis Construction, Comstock Marks Innovative Design

The “J-Team” knows concrete. For this 10-man crew with Miller & Long Concrete Construction, the bottom line is always to get the job “done right” and to get it done “to perfection,” says Mike Vargas, senior labor foreman for Miller & Long. The mornings can start as early as 5 a.m. before getting down to business – from setting the concrete placing boom to carrying out the pours and eventually removing the formwork, or molds for shaping concrete, and framing. The ringleader is Senior Superintendent Jay Schnarrs, the inspiration for the team’s moniker. And the man behind him is Vargas, who works alongside a selective lineup of eight skilled craftsmen with years of history behind them.

By Arnesa A. Howell

At the intersection of Wiehle Avenue and Reston Station Boulevard sits the architecturally unexpected – and the J-Team’s latest project. It’s a sleek structure of blue-black glass and steely gray concrete framework that climbs 16 floors above a platform slab. Geometric “tree” columns branch out at the north end of

the building and giant “X” columns crisscross the east- and west-facing exteriors, design elements in stark contrast to the surrounding brick office buildings. It’s a massive project, during which Miller & Long poured 18,000 cubic yards of concrete (enough to fill 1,800 concrete mixer trucks).

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**W**hile it's still too early to predict the magnitude of these changes, the new president has sounded the alarm that every corner of the country should brace itself for a hit to American capitalism. Just weeks before the inauguration of the next president of the United States, the jobs issue had already taken center stage.

Before taking office, Donald Trump's intervention initially touted saving more than 1,000 union jobs at Carrier's Indiana facility from moving to Mexico. That number swiftly came under scrutiny as reports emerged of a number closer to 700. A union leader who took Trump to task on the facts faced a tweet attack by the then-incoming president. In the wake of this development, questions still remain over the economic and employee impact of the Carrier deal.

But it's not only big companies involved. In our "neck of the woods," the JOBS Coalition, nonprofits, faith-based and community organizations, and District government agencies in the workforce development world also need to get ready for change. Why? For one, the District of Columbia passed sweeping legislation over the summer that would increase the minimum wage for workers to \$15 by 2020. In the face of such progress, however, there is cause for concern: Trump has nominated Andrew Puzder – a fast-food executive who has opposed increasing minimum wage and expanding overtime pay for workers – for Secretary of Labor, putting the "Fight for \$15" in jeopardy.

This raises the question, "What will be the incoming administration's position on union and non-union workers and jobs, given Trump's wooing of union workers on the campaign trail and chastisement of union officials in Indiana?"

There are also other disconcerting cabinet picks, particularly the announcement of Dr. Benjamin Carson as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. We know that housing is a key component of successful reentry for ex-offenders. And there are already plenty of barriers in place for this population ahead of the transition to this new administration. Across the D.C.-area, those returning home after incarceration are most likely to be people of color. They are most likely to face homelessness and struggle with finding affordable housing. Given some of the campaign rhetoric towards diverse populations and the uncertainty as to how Carson will address subsidized housing, we are uneasy about this appointment.

On January 14, the Rev. Al Sharpton led a "We Shall Not Be Moved" march and rally for jobs, justice and fair housing in the District. These are the issues that have consistently been top priorities for us.

In 2016, the JOBS Coalition remained firm in its support for young students to shape

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**IN STEP** Miller & Long Chairman John McMahon, Miller & Long Superintendent Leon Hann and Davis Construction President Jim Davis walk the tower's third floor during the Topping Out Party in November 2016.



**ON THE EDGE** A group takes in the view from the office building that is a gateway to Reston.

**A Towering Achievement** *Continued from page 1*

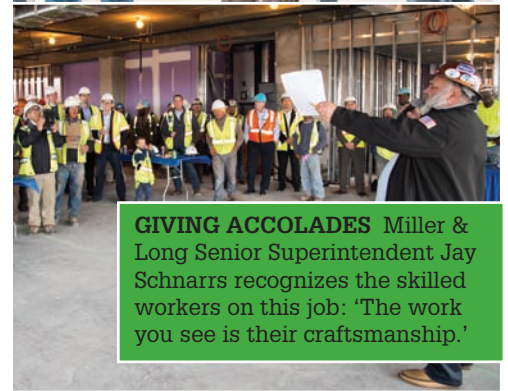
This is the new Reston Station Office Building 1 Tower, a collaborative project between real estate developer Comstock Partners, general contractor Davis Construction, and Miller & Long Concrete Construction, which has participated in all phases of development of Reston Station, starting with a multi-level, below-ground garage in summer 2011. The Reston Station project is a mix of office, residential, retail and parking – with future plans for a hotel and additional office space, according to Davis Construction.

"The best projects are always ones where the contractors and subcontractors, design team and general contractor, and the owner all know what their mission is, and they work very hard in the beginning to make sure the project – all things – are thought through on everybody's behalf," says John McMahon, chairman of Miller & Long Concrete Construction.

McMahon heralded the building for its unique characteristics: angles, crosses and tree columns that make up the exoskeleton. "Part of the structure becomes the façade," he explains, noting that other Reston structures don't visually "express themselves the way this one does."

The tower slopes outward, expanding its footprint at each floor to more than 300,000 square feet overall. The sixth floor hovers over the base "cantilever-style," supported by tree columns – a nod to the engineering.

The innovative design tested – and brought out the best in – Vargas and the team.



**GIVING ACCOLADES** Miller & Long Senior Superintendent Jay Schnarrs recognizes the skilled workers on this job: "The work you see is their craftsmanship."

"It was something new, and I loved the challenge and I tackled it. I'm real happy with myself and my crew," says Vargas, explaining that the design was both a highlight and challenge because they were creating the skeletal scaffolding for the concrete forms six floors up from street level. "Because my guys who are up at this elevation, they were the ones hanging off these formworks."

Architect Helmut Jahn, of the architectural firm JAHN, is the director of design for the office tower and known for works internationally. Philip Castillo, a partner at JAHN and principal architect for this project, says JAHN originally interviewed with Comstock Partners to design the residential building, but that award went to another firm. He says Comstock then asked if JAHN were interested in the office building (yes, they were), and "commissioned us to be the architects."

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**FIT TO A 'T'** In appreciation, workers are given T-shirts celebrating the Reston Station Office Tower.



### A Towering Achievement *Continued from page 2*

“We went through the concept design process quickly,” says Castillo from his office in Chicago, and that process took “about a couple months” in 2012.

It’s a vision that came to life through customized formwork and computer modeling, according to those working closely with the project.

“To have a Helmut Jahn building in Reston, Virginia is a very unusual thing – and this developer was bold to do it,” says Jim Davis, president of Davis Construction. “It’s a building that people will look at for many, many years as really being a

cutting-edge building and bringing great architecture to Reston.”

### A Nod to Craftmanship

It’s almost noon on a Wednesday morning in November, and pockets of construction workers gather on the third floor in the yet-to-be completed Reston Station office tower, nicknamed OB1. The concrete surroundings and open space keep the air chilled as some 150 skilled laborers, including carpenters, concrete masons and plumbers, mix and mingle with project stakeholders for a celebratory “Topping Out” party. On this day, the focus is to acknowledge the work that has been done, gift the crews with a “thank you” lunch, and signal the last big concrete pour: the rooftop.

“Craftmanship and pride – I felt like those were the two underlying themes that guided us,” says Josh Majerowicz, superintendent for Davis

Construction, standing before the crowd. “Our work speaks for us when we’re not around, and I think this building will say great things about us.”

Next, Schnarrs steps forward to personally recognize those craftsmen working OB1, riffing off names and titles: Engineering. Carpenter foreman. Carpenters. Rubber finishers. The pouring crew. And the vibrator man, whose job is to make sure there are no air pockets or imperfections in the concrete, key to securing the stability of the building.

A voice breaks through the rundown: “Come on up so we can see you!”

There are whistles in agreement, and Schnarrs continues.

By all accounts, this job took on a heightened level of precision. Unlike regular jobs that could be patched and rubbed to smooth out the concrete, says Vargas, this one was poured in place. “So as I poured it, I had to make sure my guys were on top of the vibrators, making sure all the points were being hit right, making sure I wasn’t having any honeycombs or any imperfections in the concrete because it was cast in place,” he explains.

And dropping tons of concrete into these specialized molds – some 60 feet tall – is no easy task. “When you pour tons of concrete and vibrate it, it wants to burst,” says McMahon. “The form cannot move at all.”

### Countdown to Completion

With its divergent angles and trapezoid shape, the office tower is the hallmark of Reston Station. So far, it’s on schedule for completion on July 25, according to Davis Construction Project Manager Kevin West. Started in January 2016, the office building is built over a parking garage that runs seven stories deep.

“It has 27 football fields of concrete below grade,” says Davis, adding that Fairfax County has been a key partner as well. “This is a public-private partnership with Fairfax County and they were required to build 2,300 parking spaces for the Silver Line Metro.”

Davis proudly points out: “This is the biggest underground parking garage east of the Mississippi.”

Davis Construction and Miller & Long have worked hand-in-hand since the beginning.

“As the garage podium slab was completed previously, Miller & Long was the first major trade to start the tower, and [we] mobilized at approximately the same time as Davis Construction,” asserts Tony Horos, project manager at Miller & Long, reflecting on an earlier phase in the project.

“It’s a huge success for Fairfax, huge success for residents here because now they’ve got the Metro, and now for companies having these great construction jobs,” adds Davis.

With roughly six months to projected completion date of the tower, the finish line is in sight. Miller & Long has poured the last of its structural

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## JOBS Coalition Pathways

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The *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is the exclusive property of the JOBS Coalition, 702 Otis Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20010; 301-262-0560. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is dedicated to disseminating information that will help strengthen the city’s apprenticeship training and job placement programs, broadening the scope to reach the young, the underserved, the unemployed and the returning ex-offender. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is published by the JOBS Coalition.

**JOBS Outlook 2017** *Continued from page 2*  
their future through the Academy of Construction and Design at IDEA Public Charter School. The Coalition played a key role in reaching out to churches, pastors and neighborhood residents to gain support for the school and the students who completed the “microhouse” project, now for sale.

We also continued support for ex-offender reentry programs, important to improving employability and strengthening families after release. Unfortunately, one of the most prominent supporters of this returning citizen outreach, Rep. Danny Davis (D-Ill.), lost his grandson last year to the heavy violence in Chicago. Our prayers go out to him and his family.

Furthermore, apprenticeships will remain a priority issue in the coming year as we build on the accomplishments of the Academy of Construction and Design, and the efforts of the District’s Department of Employment Services, to provide – and hopefully expand – skilled jobs training. This type of outreach can be critical in helping to uplift young black men who have dropped out of high school.

The opening of the MGM National Harbor resort and casino in Prince George’s County is being celebrated as an economic boom for the region, bringing jobs, income and an economic boost to county residents. While we support the hiring of the unemployed, it’s important to acknowledge the other side of the coin. We know

that gambling can be a detrimental and addictive enticement for people – especially returning citizens and young adults – who can ill afford to gamble away family resources.

Also in this vein of workforce development, we are keeping a pulse on the future contract to build a new FBI headquarters. Right now, we don’t know how much this initiative will become mired in politics (As The Washington Post recently reported on Dec. 2, two top bidders for the contract have “deep ties” to Trump). But we do know that hundreds of jobs will be at the forefront of this massive project. The question remains whether ex-offenders will be given an opportunity to qualify for these jobs.

As we look to 2017, one of our action goals is to get a seat at the table with the city’s mayor, Muriel Bowser. We have yet to do that. She is the first mayor that we have not been granted access to sit down with and discuss workforce development, career and technical education, and returning citizens – key issues for the JOBS Coalition and the District of Columbia. As underscored in a recent article of The Washington Post titled, “Is the D.C. Mayor Losing Control of Her City?” there is an increasingly tense relationship between Bowser and some members of the D.C. Council. The mayor could use our support on issues with which we agree. And a meeting would reveal those areas of agreement. I hope Ms. Bowser aspires for the end of her term to be fruitful and productive, and one embracing a collaborative spirit. □



**TEAM PLAYERS** Miller & Long and Davis Construction have a longstanding relationship of partnering on projects.

**A Towering Achievement** *Continued from page 3*  
concrete and expects to wrap up on-site within the next couple of weeks. Its tower crane will stay as work is finalized on the window settings. But once disassembled, the Miller & Long imprint will remain.

The lasting impression to passersby is one of architectural beauty, where the eyes are immediately drawn to the slopes and X’s of the concrete, says Britt Hurlock, senior vice president of construction for Miller & Long Concrete Construction. He describes these as unique traits that make this project “special.”

Concludes Hurlock: “The final product that Miller & Long has produced with that concrete ... it’s going to leave a legacy of beauty for 100 years to come.” □



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