



Women Rising Up in Construction

A modern monthly update for women construction owners, executives, leaders, partners, and future industry professionals.

Welcome to the latest edition of the WCOE Monthly Newsletter.

This publication keeps our community informed, inspired, and connected as we continue building opportunities for women construction owners, executives, leaders, and future professionals.

WCOE provides education, training, webinars, mentorship, networking, advocacy, and business-development resources that help women grow stronger companies and become more visible leaders in the construction industry.

This Issue at a Glance

46 New Members	5 New Corporate Alliance Partners	DMV New Mid-Atlantic Chapter In Formation	Aug. 26 Next Free Cocktail Zoom
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♥ Recognizing Our CAP Sponsors

Thank you to the Corporate Alliance Partners supporting WCOE's mission.

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Stay Connected

Visit womenbuildamerica.com for event updates, sponsor highlights, photos, vignettes, panel videos, and member resources. Follow WCOE on LinkedIn for current announcements and advocacy updates.

✦ President's Message

A note from Karen Barbour, National President of WCOE.

Happy early Fourth of July. As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of Independence Day, I am reminded of how far women have come and how much work remains. I hope to see the Equal Rights Amendment pass in my lifetime. Mississippi did not officially ratify the 13th Amendment until 2013; I hope our path forward is faster and stronger. As women, we must remain vigilant, build a bigger voice, collaborate, and support one another. That is the passion behind my work as I step into my new role as National President of WCOE.

We are excited that a new chapter is forming in the DMV region (DC, Maryland, and Virginia), with an advisory board now established to bring it to life. Year to-date, WCOE has welcomed 46 new members and five new Corporate Alliance Partners. Our Free Cocktail Zoom events continue to gain momentum, and the next event is scheduled for August 26, featuring Faye Allen of Rimkus, London, who will present her new book, *Building Women: How Everyone in Construction Can Win*.

Our Fall Conference will be held October 19-20 at the Coronado Island Marriott Resort & Spa in San Diego. The April Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C. was sold out, and we invite you to view sponsor highlights, photos, video vignettes, and panel discussions at womenbuildamerica.com. Please also follow WCOE on LinkedIn for the latest updates.

I would also be remiss if I did not recognize the WCOE Resource Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by Ida Brooker and Deborah Wilder. The Resource Center has major initiatives underway, including a new website, the launch of an Ambassadors Program, and a growing lineup of free member education and training webinars.

Sincerely,
Karen Barbour
The Barbour Group, LLC | President



◆ Past-President Message

A message of gratitude from Elisabeth DeCoursey.

Thank you for taking a chance on WCOE.

The past two years have been a privilege and one of the most enlightening chapters of my life as a business owner. Our members, partners, and sponsors prove that when we work together, we become stronger. We are plumbers, electricians, engineers, carpenters, lawyers, consultants, architects, and so much more — but above all, we are people who took a chance on ourselves. Thank you for taking a chance on me. — Elisabeth DeCoursey

■ Upcoming Events

Register early, invite a colleague, and stay connected with the WCOE community.

AUGUST 26

Free Cocktail Zoom Event

Guest speaker Faye Allen of Rimkus, London will discuss her new book, *Building Women: How Everyone in Construction Can Win*.

[Register Here](#)

OCTOBER 18-19

Fall Conference | San Diego

Join WCOE and the California Chapter at the Coronado Island Marriott Resort & Spa for workshops, DBE updates, networking, and the launch of the WCOE Resource Center Ambassadors Program.

Link: www.wcoecalifornia.com/annual-conference

Save the Date

March 13-16, 2027 | Leadership Summit | Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Planning is already underway for 2.5 days of timely education, private-sector insight, government-agency updates, business-building

ideas, and high-value connections. Come early to enjoy the Smithsonian museums, Ford's Theatre, the Library of Congress, Mount Vernon, the National Cathedral, and more.

October 6-8, 2027 | Midyear Meeting | New Orleans

WCOE is exploring New Orleans for the 2027 Midyear Meeting, including an awards gala on October 8. More details will follow.

★ Member Spotlight

Glenele Oberrich | Alta Group



Glenele Oberrich
Alta Group

Glenele Oberrich has built a career in construction, engineering, and infrastructure, beginning with early exposure to heavy civil construction through her father's work in Colorado. His advice that engineering could open a door into an industry that did not traditionally hire women shaped her education and career path.

Before earning her civil engineering degree, Glenele worked as a land surveyor in Utah. After moving to California, she completed her degree while working as a project engineer and project manager on complex San Francisco Bay Area infrastructure projects, including bridges, flood walls, utility relocation, microtunneling, airport fuel-line work, and other major public works projects.

Glenele founded Alta Engineering Group, now Alta Group, through professional referrals and became known for completing construction projects and securing the release of retention. She later obtained her California Contractor's A license and expanded from construction management into contracting. Alta performed public infrastructure work, earned Local Business Enterprise and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise certifications, and added a C-50 reinforcing steel license to diversify revenue and compete as a reinforcing steel subcontractor in California and Nevada.

"I love being a small business owner and supporting my community by reinvesting locally and creating stable, long-term employment with a healthy work-life balance. Alta's work is grounded in technical competence, integrity, and proven performance on complex infrastructure projects."

WCOE was excited to welcome Glenele at the Spring Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., and looks forward to seeing her at the Fall Conference in San Diego.

+ New Members — We Are on a Roll!

Welcome to the newest members of the WCOE USA community.

WCOE USA is a national organization that promotes women business owners and executives in construction. We are here to support members through connections, friendship, mentoring, advocacy, and opportunity.

California

- [Carrie Schmidt, BC Schmidt Construction, Inc.](#)
- [Christina Manville, Lockton Insurance Brokers, LLC](#)
- [Danielle Marshall, Emfor Group](#)
- [Jackie Pyle, Red Rock Sales & Marketing Inc.](#)
- [Juliana Choy Sommer, Priority Architectural Graphics](#)
- [Kellie Avila, Avila Construction Services DBA Avila Traffic Safety](#)
- [Gabrielle Divers, Accurate Firestop, Inc.](#)
- [Glenele Oberrich, Alta Group, Inc.](#)
- [Allison Etkin, Akerman, LLP](#)
- [Andrea Khoury, Akerman, LLP](#)
- [Heather Frish, Seyfarth Shaw LLP](#)
- [Keely Lambert, Mark III Construction](#)
- [Rigoberto Salas, Final Cleaning Solutions, Inc.](#)
- [Natane Rogers-Engle, SR Diversified](#)

Pennsylvania

- [Melissa Martin, MC Builders Construction - Pennsylvania](#)
- [Selina Freytas, G. Adams Restoration LLC DBA Adams Construction Group, LLC](#)

New York

- [Claire Reffitt, Deborah Bradley Construction & Management Services, Inc.](#)
- [Katie Gallait, Grassi Advisors](#)
- [Michele Koslab, LeChase Construction](#)
- [Nadia Savage, City of White Plains, NY](#)
- [Shahona Griffith-Jenkins, Capital Accounting Management](#)

Florida

- [Sonya Sawdon, Icon Construction Enterprises LLC DBA Asphalt Icons](#)

District of Columbia

- [Jennifer G. Hart, Hart Line Construction](#)
- [Joyce Debrot, J and J Elevator Services, Inc.](#)
- [Tamara McNulty, Lewis Brisbois](#)

Rhode Island

- [Amanda Silva, Switchplace](#)

Illinois

- [Catherine Tojaga, CT Mechanical \(rejoined as a member\)](#)
- [Donna Stevenson, Stevenson Crane Service, Inc.](#)
- [Naomi Calmatuianu, Jade Carpentry Contractors, Inc.](#)

Kansas

- [Maria Stauffer, TPP Accountants](#)
- [Melinda Rocha, CJ Industries](#)
- [Tonya Bair, Bair Companies Tandem Trucking LLC](#)

Maryland

- [Angela Manley, Dead Industries](#)
- [Amy Philips, EFI Global, Inc.](#)
- [Carl Finch, Adams Environmental Engineering Group, LLC](#)
- [Shana Carroll, D W Kozera Inc.](#)
- [Stacey Vansant, Contractor Compliance and Monitoring, Inc.](#)
- [Susie Comer, Comer Construction, Inc.](#)
- [Terry Egley, Integrity Construction Group, Inc.](#)
- [Dee Cutler, The Barbour Group, LLC](#)

Texas

- [Tam Gillespie, Switchplace](#)
- [Ann Graves, Professional Educator](#)
- [Zara Mirza, Pecklar & Abramson](#)

Virginia

- [Carolyn Robbins, Marsh McLennan Agency](#)
- [Danmei Gui, Structural Engineering Group Inc.](#)
- [Sharron Coley, Vets Produce](#)



Chapter Corner

Updates from WCOE chapters and regional leaders.

CALIFORNIA

Lifetime Achievement Recognition

In May, Caltrans District 11 awarded Rebecca Llewellyn of Payco Specialties a Lifetime Achievement Award for her many years of service on the local small business council. Rebecca is a WCOE Charter Member and past National President.

Caltrans also reported it would submit DBE goals to the U.S. Department of Transportation shortly after the July 16 CUCP recertification deadline. Recertifications may continue, and Caltrans is actively pursuing the reestablishment of construction goals as soon as possible.

MARYLAND / DMV

New Chapter in Formation

The WCOE Maryland/DMV Advisory Board is meeting in August to form the new chapter. More details will follow as planning develops.



Legislative News

WCOE Washington Update by Dana Thompson | As of June 26, 2026.

What WCOE is watching now

- Congressional recess and opportunities to reach local offices
- DBE program protection and BUILD America 250 Act advocacy
- Rule of Two bill advancement and NDAA amendment strategy
- Sole-source threshold increase proposal
- WOSB contracting program elimination bills with no new cosponsors
- 2026 election outlook and key House races

Congressional Summary: July 4 Recess and a Look Ahead

The Senate and House are out of session and are scheduled to return for formal legislative business on Monday, July 13. The recess is a valuable time for members to reach out to their Congressional delegations through local offices or campaign events.

Contact resources: [House.gov](#), [Senate.gov](#), or the Capitol Operator at [202.224.3121](tel:202.224.3121).

Several legislative items remain stalled or entangled with one another, including the SAVE Act, supplemental war funding, the housing bill, and the NDAA. Because the NDAA is considered a must-pass bill, it continues to attract amendments that may matter to construction and small business.

Action Needed: Support the BUILD America 250 Act and Protect DBE

WCOE members were harmed by the court case affecting the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program and the subsequent Department of Transportation Interim Final Rule that drastically changed the program. WCOE knew Congress might not reauthorize the program in the Surface Transportation bill, but WCOE prevailed at the committee level.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved the bipartisan BUILD America 250 Act on May 22 by a vote of 62-2 with DBE reauthorization included. There is strong reason to believe the bill, with the DBE program, can pass the full House, but WCOE members must keep the pressure on. **Write your House member before their return to Washington, D.C. on July 13 or call local offices during the July 4 recess.**

Member Message to Congress

The BUILD America 250 Act was approved by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee by a vote of 62-2 and will soon come to the House floor for consideration. The committee bill reauthorizes the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, which helps safeguard local small construction businesses, related industry jobs, and the health and stability of regional economies.

Protecting the DBE program in the final bill means protecting the livelihoods and prosperity of families and neighborhoods across our state and across the nation. The program supports more than certified DBE firms; it strengthens local tax bases, community investment, and the economic multiplier effect that comes when construction contracts go to local businesses that work with other local businesses.

Please make sure your vote on the BUILD America 250 Act safeguards the DBE program and supports your small business constituents.

RULE OF TWO

Status and Path Forward

H.R. 2804, the Rule of Two bill, was voted unanimously out of the House Small Business Committee and now awaits a floor vote. Bipartisan supporters have also submitted Rule of Two language as an amendment to the must-pass NDAA, which could provide a faster path to enactment. The Rule of Two requires a contracting officer to set aside a procurement for small businesses, including WOSBs, when two or more responsible small businesses are expected to submit offers at a fair market price.

SOLE SOURCE

Threshold Increase Amendment

A House NDAA amendment would raise sole-source thresholds from \$7 million to \$10 million for manufacturing contracts and from \$4.5 million to \$8 million for all other contracts. Supporters believe this would give agencies more flexibility for complex or urgent procurements and expand opportunities through sole-source awards.



WOSB Contracting Program: WCOE Opposes Elimination Bills

Rep. Grothman (R-WI) and Senator Lee (R-UT) introduced H.R. 8511 and S. 4390, the "Ending Discrimination in Government Contracting Act," to eliminate the Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) contracting program. WCOE opposes these bills and has reminded members of Congress to stay focused on the facts and prevent efforts to undermine the WOSB program. Fortunately, neither bill has garnered any cosponsors.

2026 Midterm Elections: House Races to Watch

WCOE encourages members to do more than vote in November. Members should track primary dates, support candidates who understand their business interests, and remain engaged throughout the election cycle.

The battle for control of the U.S. House is highly competitive. Key states and districts to watch include AZ-1, AZ-6, CA-22, CA-48, CO-8, Iowa, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Thank you