



Construction Industry Round Table

Opinion Poll Results

A force for positive change in the design / construction industry

The following represent the results of various polls taken by CIRT of its CEO members. Multi-question polls are described by their issue background and results are accessible through the links below.

- **October 2005** – Should Congress redirect some of the funds from the over 6,000 lower priority highway earmarks to more pressing infrastructure needs caused by Hurricanes Katrina & Rita? Nearly two thirds (59%) of CIRT's members said that money should be spent on more urgent projects; 34% feel that money should NOT be shifted; and 7% of the members were unsure.
- **October 2005** – Illegal entrance into the U.S. is an explosive issue with alternative approaches being suggested to address this matter, which approach should be supported? Thirty-five percent (35%) of the membership believe in the creation of a guest worker plan, but no amnesty; another 35% believe there should be tougher border controls and limit time as guest workers; 26% of the members feel that illegal aliens should be allowed to convert to permanent legal status (i.e., amnesty); and only 3% believe there should be no change in the status quo.
- **June 2005** – Is it appropriate for the FCC to force AT&T and SBC to divest (get rid of) their business customers before allowing their merger to proceed?
Not surprisingly, 60% of CIRT's members believe customers should decide who they want as their telecommunications service provider, with only 20% viewing this decision as something within a bureaucrat's purview as part of a divestiture scheme, and another 20% Not Sure as to this matter.
- **March/April 2005** – Of the alternatives being considered to make taxes, simpler, fairer, and more growth oriented, which do you favor as being the most likely to reach these goals? Almost 2/3rds of CIRT's members (63%) favor a **flat tax** approach to federal taxes (38% with a few major exemptions and 25% with no exemptions), vs. only 38% that favor a consumption-based tax system (of which 25% would make changes to the current tax approach with more consumption based elements like expanded IRAs, elimination of dividend, capital gains, and/or corporate taxes; and only 13% favoring a national sales tax). Of particular interest, none of the CIRT members agreed that we should "leave the federal tax system as it is."
- **February/March 2005** – What are the key barriers to an expanding, robust growth in the design and construction market? When the CIRT members were given a chance to identify the top barriers they focused on the following items: (1) **73.9%** saw the lack of sufficient private funding sources and/or adequate reliable public funding as the most problematic, (2) **56.5%** thought regulatory delays and barriers caused the problem, (3) **34.8%** believe litigation impediments and costs burden growth, (4) **30.4%** found retaining sufficient numbers of skilled employees/laborers as the source of concern, (5) **26.1%** identified insurance and bonding limits as the problem, and (6) **21.7%** concluded environmental and other opponents as the culprit – among other items that finished much lower.
- **September-October 2004** – What approach do you favor in terms of the TEA-21 Reauthorization (one-two year extension, immediate passage with lower funding, and/or a 6-year bill that may not pass until 2005). CIRT's members were very prophetic when 43% responded they would support a 6-year bill even if it meant waiting until 2005, and another 43% opted for a "quick" one-two year extension, while only 14% opted for immediate passage with lower funding levels.
- **June 2003 - [TEA-21 Reauthorization]** - If an accommodation can't be reached on funding a new Transpt bill at a higher level, do you support a 1-yr extension of TEA-21 to give Congress & the White House more time for a deal? Yes, 71%; No, 14%; and Not Sure, 14%. Of the various methods to increase revenue into the highway trust funds being discussed as part of the TEA-21 reauthorization, which do you favor? Pass a one-time increase of 4-6 cents, 13%; Index the gas tax, 38%; Combination of the above, 50%.

- **May 2003** - [Information Security in Federal Agencies] - The design and construction industry's leading CEOs, represented by CIRT, provided feedback on their experiences, and views with respect to information security by federal agencies. (Often these firms supply information on behalf of their clients in response to various enforcement or regulatory matters as well as performing billions of dollars in public works). Their feedback included the following:

50% are concerned or sometimes concerned about how well business proprietary or sensitive information they provide federal agencies is secured within the agency. [35% were not concerned, and another 15% were not sure.]

The top three reasons for the apparent failings with respect to internal security given by the CEO's are: (1) lack of internal controls/access by employees, (2) deficient or improper training and awareness, and (3) human error.

- **February 2003** - Do you believe the President's stimulus package to eliminate the double taxation on corporate dividends will have a positive impact on your firm and/or the economy generally? Yes, with respect to my firm and the economy - 35%; Yes, with respect to the economy generally, but not necessarily my firm - 24%; No - 29%; Not Sure - 12%.
- **November 2002 - World Class Performance Questionnaire** - In preparation for the national conference held by the Construction Users Roundtable (Nov. 11-13th) a questionnaire was conducted by the Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT) of its member CEOs in attendance at its fall conference. The question put to the design and construction CEOs was, what aspects or elements are needed from owners to achieve "world class performance" on projects. The "raw" or open-ended responses fall into five major categories or topic areas as follows (in descending order):

(1) PARTNERING/COMMUNICATIONS

- Open communications
- Use of partnering
- Earlier participation in projects
- Early planning and coordination
- Available owners
- Clear scope of work
- Understanding of the owner's business case
- Partnering with suppliers
- Work as team members
- Commitment to partnering
- Their perspective on value added
- Their priorities on project issues

(2) DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- Need decisions to be made promptly
- Settle all conflicts quickly
- Quick resolution of issues without litigation
- Timely decisions
- Timely resolution of open questions
- Action oriented owners
- Decision-making

(3) CONTRACTUAL MATTERS

- Fair compensation for efforts
- Cost controls
- Reasonable contract terms
- Clear understanding of responsibilities/risks
- Clear definition of requirements
- Balanced contract terms
- Control of subs

(4) HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS-BEHAVIOR

- Trust among all parties involved
- Competent and reasonable owner's reps
- Knowledgeable owners

(5) MISCELLANEOUS/TECHNICAL

- Quality commitment
- Open architecture for technology utilized
- Control of owners organization (?)

- August 2002 - [Post 9/11 Preparedness Survey](#)**
Issue Background: The design and construction community's preparedness in meeting the next terrorist threat is vital to the protection, mitigation, and/or recovery needed to secure critical infrastructure assets. With the advent of the first anniversary of 9/11, the community's state of preparedness is of great importance.
- July 2002 - [With fixed-price construction contracts resulting in negotiations and/or suits for payment of cost overruns and change orders, do you view it as acceptable accounting practice to recognize at least part of these "unbilled receivables" as potential revenue?](#)**
Yes - 6%; No - 59%; Not Sure - 0%; Possibly, depending on the circumstances - 35%.
- June 2002 - [Should the President veto the terrorism reinsurance bill if the final version allows for punitive damage claims in lawsuits?](#)** Yes - 100%; No - 0%; Not Sure - 0%.
- April 2002 - [Insurance and Bonding Challenges](#)**
Issue Background: In the aftermath of 9-11 and a generally unfavorable economic cycle, the design/construction community has experienced significant and sometimes dramatic changes to the affordability and availability of both insurance policies and especially surety (bonds) markets.
- July 2000 - [Bid-Listing Requirement](#)**
Issue Background: H.R. 1859 (formerly H.R. 4012 in 2000) would require prime bidders on federal construction contracts (of over \$1M) to list all subcontractors whose work is over \$100K on the project. The so-called "bid-listing" requirement would reinstate a contracting policy dropped during the Reagan Administration.
- April 2000 - [Infrastructure R&D Levels](#)**
Issue Background: R&D levels in the design and construction industry are low in comparison to other professional industry areas, what elements either impede or promote funding levels must be better understood before any improvements can be made.
- March 2000 - [Health Care Coverage "Patients Bill of Rights"](#)**
Issue Background: Both Houses of the U.S. Congress are in conference debating provisions of a possible "Patients Bill of Rights" (H.R. 2990). The House version includes a provision that permits a patient the right to sue not only his/her HMO, but also the employer who provides the health plan coverage as a benefit.
- November 1999 - [Blacklisting](#)**
Issue Background: On July 9, 1999, the federal government published a proposed procurement rule that directs contracting officers to review a firm's compliance with labor, tax and environmental laws when making pre-award responsibility determinations. In addition to compliance with these laws, the rule requires contractors to exhibit necessary workplace practices, including training, worker retention, and legal compliance. (See *Federal Register* 7/9/99 and/or *ENR* 7/19/99, p. 10, for further details.)