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SHORT CUTS

The economy is bad. Really, really bad.

Well, at least the construction industry in Michigan has reopened. That's one major drop of glad tidings in a sea of horrible economic news that has emerged in our state and across the nation as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

A number of economic and employment benchmarks were released earlier this month provide the fullest impact yet of the virus on the U.S. economy. Following is a sampling:

- A record 20.5 million U.S. jobs were lost in April as the nation's unemployment rate jumped to 14.7 percent, the Labor Department reported May 8. That's a post-World War II record. And the "real" unemployment rate, which includes workers not looking for jobs and the underemployed, surged to 22.8 percent.

Historically, April's unemployment rate topped the post-war record of 10.8 percent in November 1982 but was short of the Great Depression high estimated at 24.9 percent. During the Great Recession, the jobless peak was 10 percent in October 2009.

Michigan hadn't reported its jobless rate when we went to press earlier this week. But in the first week of May more than 1.3 million Michigan workers had filed for unemployment benefits since mid-March when the state announced its first cases of COVID-19. That would equate to about 26 percent of the state's workers experiencing job disruption.

Michigan earlier this month ranked fourth in the nation for unemployment claims behind California, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas.

- Unemployment insurance checks are being sent out by Michigan and a few other states in excess of \$800 million a week. A May 7 analysis by Lansing-based Anderson Economic Group (AEG) said "we estimate that the effective 'payroll' of state unemployment offices is now in excess of \$16 billion per week." Group Principal and CEO Patrick L. Anderson said "states are quickly becoming one of the largest sources of household income in the country. The scale and magnitude of these benefits is changing the way Americans view work during this coronavirus depression."

The AEG said "multiple states have crushing unemployment as a share of their overall workforce, including Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington (over 20 percent in mid-April), as well as New Jersey, Massachusetts, and California, and New York (all over 15 percent).

- The U.S. construction industry reported 975,000 jobs lost in April. Worse off were education and health services (-2.5 million), professional and business services (-2.1 million), retail (-2.1 million), manufacturing (-1.3 million) and other service industries (-1.3 million).

- The April U.S. unemployment numbers show a stark contrast to a solid job market for the first 10 weeks of the year. U.S. jobs jumped in February by 230,000 (jobless rate 3.5 percent), part of a string of positive job gains that had gone nearly unabated for the previous decade. Then March's jobless numbers came in: impacted mid-month by the virus, job losses were reported at 870,000.

- Although multiple states are relaxing business openings, more than 60 percent of the U.S. economy still remained under stay-at-home orders earlier this month.

Quotable

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear."
—Rosa Parks, 1913-2005

Michigan construction is back open for business

'My biggest fear... that our workforce will get lackadaisical about PPE'

By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

DETROIT — Mike Haller is the chief executive officer of Detroit-based Walbridge, Michigan's second largest general contractor and a consistent employer of union crafts. Last week he gave us his take on what the construction industry is looking at as it restarts in a COVID environment.

"The number one issue is the health and safety of our direct employees at Walbridge, and the health and safety of our subcontractors and of our tradespeople," said Haller. "To address that, we have spent a lot of time developing and putting protocols in place for our workforce to deal with the COVID virus. We have spent a

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Photo credit: OSHA

Remember work two months ago? Things are gonna change...

Under Gov. Whitmer's May 1 order, Michigan construction sites must adopt a set of best practices to protect their workers from infection. Those practices include:

- Designating a site supervisor to enforce COVID-19 control strategies.
- Conducting daily health screenings for workers.
- Creating dedicated entry points, if possible, or issuing stickers or other indicators to assure that all workers are screened every day.
- Identifying choke points and high-risk areas (like hallways, hoists and elevators, break areas, water stations, and buses) and controlling them to enable social distancing.
- Ensuring sufficient hand-washing or hand-sanitizing stations at the worksite.

COVID evasion measures to be a constant presence on Michigan jobsites

By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

LANSING — The headline reads "Michigan construction industry is back open for business." The rest of the story is a bit more complicated — not unlike everything else related to the COVID-19 crisis.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on May 1 issued Executive Order No. 2020-70, which became effective on May 7 and provides for "re-suspension of some types of work that present a very low risk of infection, including construction, real-estate activities, and work that is traditionally and primarily performed outdoors."

Whitmer made the announcement at a press conference that included representation from the state's labor union leadership and construction contractors. One estimate, from OxBlue, a technology company based in Atlanta, said Michigan saw a nation-leading 81 percent drop in construction activity since the governor's order to halt most construction in the state took effect on March 24.

"The data shows that we're ready to lift some of these restrictions while also encouraging Michiganders to continue doing their part under the governor's Stay Home, Stay Safe order," said Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Chief Medical Executive Dr. Joneigh Khaldun. "The steps the governor is taking today will help ensure protections for workers and their families from COVID-19 while allowing for work in lower-risk fields to resume. We will keep monitoring the data closely and work with our partners across state government to mitigate the spread of COVID-19."

The governor's original order shutting down construction declared most — but not all — of the industry "nonessential." Some health care construction continued, as did work on power plants and some road work — although, many workers in construction who could have gone to work chose not to because of the threat of being infected by the virus.

Michigan was one of just a handful of states whose governor applied the nonessential tag to most construction. Other gov-

ernors accepted the argument that workers in construction were already accustomed to the use of PPE and social distancing, two important practices in halting the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Leaders in the Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council, President Steve Claywell and Secretary-Treasurer Patrick Devlin, have maintained that during the COVID crisis, workers should be supported with a fair system of jobless benefits and no fear of employer reprisal if they haven't been working according to the

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It may be a while until normal returns

By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

Just because Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has allowed construction to resume in Michigan, it doesn't mean that it will resemble what we would consider "normal" — at least not at first.

While the construction industry has moved along with minimal disruption in some states over the past two months, the Associated General Contractors reported that 40 percent of U.S. construction contractors they surveyed last month said their company had experienced layoffs during the COVID crisis.

"Owners are not only halting many current construction projects but are canceling a growing number of projects that have not yet started," said Ken Simonson, the association's chief economist. "Inevitably, that has caused a growing number of contractors to furlough or terminate jobsite workers."

In Michigan the coming weeks will determine if jobs will be available for tradespeople who want to return to work (and likely, some won't). For one, material suppliers, assuming they are able, will have to gear up production of hardware like structural steel and masonry products.

And, while shortages of PPE have been alleviated somewhat among medical personnel, acquiring it can still be a challenge in the construction industry. The same survey by the AGC found that 39 percent of contractor-respondents said they had encountered project delays or disruptions due to shortages of personal protective equipment such as masks for jobsite workers, while 23 percent reported shortages of construction materials, equipment or parts.

And importantly, owners are skittish: the AGC survey found that 53 percent of contractors reported that they had been directed to cancel current projects or ones scheduled to start within

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WHAT WILL BE THE largest building on the grounds of the former Silverdome, a five-story 3.5 million square-foot warehouse/fulfillment center, goes up on the new Amazon-Pontiac site.

Photo credit: Marty Mulcahy

Trades delivering new Amazon campus at Silverdome site

PONTIAC — The former Silverdome stadium site is being replaced with an Amazon distribution center.

A buzz of activity is now going on at the site of the Detroit Lions' demolished stadium, and it will create a \$250 million project that will be used by the online retailing behemoth as a warehouse, distribution and fulfillment campus.

The 127-acre site, which hosted the Silverdome and a sea parking around it, will be Amazon's first location in the nation to have both a fulfillment center and distribution station.

Seefried Industrial Properties plans a roughly 3.5 million-square-foot, five-story warehouse/fulfillment center, and a single-story, 200,000-square-foot distribution station. Work began

earlier this year. The delivery system is expected to be operational later this year and the fulfillment center complete by the third quarter of 2021.

"The former Silverdome site is an ideal location and Pontiac is poised with a ready workforce," said Pontiac Mayor Dierdre Waterman said in a statement. "Landing Amazon

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Ventilator arsenal? We can build that

By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

YPSILANTI — Before you can have an "Arsenal of Democracy," or these days, an "Arsenal of Health," you have to build the arsenal.

That was the task taken on at the Ford Motor Co. Rawsonville Components Plant by Giffen, Conti Mechanical and its union trades workforce. The team answered the call by the collaborative effort of Ford Motor Co. and GTE Health Care to quickly build a clean space at the plant that would allow for the now-ongoing production of some

100,000 ventilators by this summer. The nation's shortage of ventilators has been made painfully evident during the COVID-19 crisis, as health care providers have had to beg, borrow and buy ventilators from around the world to meet the respiratory needs of critically ill patients.

"The Ford and GE Healthcare teams, working creatively and tirelessly, have found a way to produce this vitally needed ventilator quickly and in meaningful numbers," said Jim Hackett, Ford's president and CEO. "By producing this ventilator in Michigan, in strong

partnership with the UAW, we can help health care workers save lives, and that's our No. 1 priority."

A Ford banner at the Rawsonville plant declared the project as "Building the Arsenal of Health." While the need for respirators across the nation has dropped, perhaps only temporarily, from the height of demand

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INSTALLING A COPPER air line at the Ford-Rawsonville plant is John Olmstead of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters 190. He's employed by Conti.



MASKS, ESPECIALLY in the era of COVID-19, come in all shapes, styles and materials. Some are better than others at stopping the coronavirus.

Behind the mask: what cover is best to stop the coronavirus?

By Nick Fox
Laborers Health and Safety Fund of North America

One of the biggest areas of uncertainty during this ongoing pandemic has been over what seems like a relatively simple question: "What should I wear on my face to protect myself from getting COVID-19?"

Answering that question requires understanding some key concepts about how the novel coronavirus (SARs-CoV-2) spreads and how various masks

protect (and fall short) against those transmission methods.

Understanding particles, droplets and aerosols. We know the coronavirus is spread through respiratory droplets expelled by an infected person, such as during a cough or sneeze. Depending on the person and force of their breath, these droplets could be large enough to see (e.g., spittle during a hacking cough) or so tiny that they hang in the air and are invisible to the naked eye (e.g., during regular

breathing).

Safety and health professionals have a term for these tiny particles that get suspended in the air — aerosols. The consensus is that coronavirus particles can become aerosolized, which is critical to understanding how the virus spreads. That's because gravity forces larger particles to the ground fairly quickly, but smaller, aerosolized particles can linger in the air for much longer. Being suspended in the air makes it much

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Viewpoints



How 'bout a worker bailout

With the coronavirus pandemic wreaking havoc on the global economy, here's how massive corporations are shafting the rest of us in order to secure billions of dollars of taxpayer-funded bailouts.

The airline industry demanded a massive bailout of nearly \$60 billion in taxpayer dollars, and ended up securing \$50 billion—half in loans, half in direct grants that don't need to be paid back.

Airlines don't deserve a cent. The five biggest U.S. airlines spent 96 percent of their free cash flow over the last decade buying back shares of their own stock to boost executive bonuses and please wealthy investors. United was so determined to get its windfall of taxpayer money that it threatened to fire workers if it didn't get its way. Before the Senate bill passed, CEO Oscar Munoz wrote that "if Congress doesn't act on sufficient government support by the end of March, our company will begin to...reduce our payroll...."

Airlines could have renegotiated their debts with their lenders outside court, or file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. They've reorganized under bankruptcy many times before. Either way, they'd keep flying.

The hotel industry says it needs \$150 billion. The industry says as many as 4 million workers could lose their jobs in the coming weeks if they don't receive a bailout. Everyone from general managers to housekeepers will be affected. But don't worry—the layoffs won't reach the corporate level. Hotel chains don't need a bailout. For years, they've been making record profits while underpaying their workers. Marriott, the largest hotel chain in the world, repurchased \$2.3 billion of its own stock last year, while raking in nearly \$4 billion in profits.

Thankfully, President Trump's hotels and businesses, as well as any of his family members' businesses, are barred from receiving anything from the \$500 billion corporate bailout money. But the bill is full of loopholes that Trump can exploit to benefit himself and his hotels.

Cruise ships also want to be bailed out, and Trump called them a "prime candidate" to receive a government handout. But they don't deserve it either. The three cruise ship corporations controlling 75 percent of the entire global market are incorporated outside of the United States to avoid paying taxes.

They're floating tax shelters, paying an average U.S. tax rate of just 0.8 percent. Democrats secured key provisions stipulating that companies are only eligible for bailout money if they are incorporated in the United States and have a majority of U.S. employees, so the cruise ship industry likely won't see a dime of relief funding. However, Trump has made it clear he still wants to help them.

The justification I've heard about why all these corporations need to be bailed out is they'll keep workers on their payrolls. But why should we believe big corporations will protect their workers right now? The \$500 billion slush fund included in the Senate's emergency relief package doesn't require corporations to keep paying their workers and has dismally weak restrictions on stock buybacks and executive pay.

Even if the bill did provide worker protections, what's going to happen to these corporations' subcontractors and gig workers? What about worker benefits, pensions and health care? How much of this bailout is going to end up in the pockets of executives and big investors?

The record of Big Business isn't comforting. Amazon, one of the richest corporations in the world, which paid almost no taxes last year, is only offering unpaid time off for workers who are sick and just two weeks paid leave for workers who test positive for the virus. Meanwhile, it demands its employees put in mandatory overtime.

Oh, and these corporations made sure they and other companies with more than 500 employees were exempt from the requirement in the first House coronavirus bill that employers provide paid sick leave.

And now, two months into statewide shelter-in-place orders and social-distancing restrictions, Wall Streeters and corporate America's chief executives are calling for supposedly "low-risk" groups to be sent back to work to restart the economy.

They're so concerned about protecting their bottom line that they're willing to let people die to preserve their stock portfolios, all while they continue working from the safety and security of their own homes. It's the most repugnant class warfare you can imagine.

Here's the bottom line: no mega-corporation deserves a cent of bailout money. For decades these companies and their billionaire executives have been dodging taxes, getting tax cuts, shafting workers, and bending the rules to enrich themselves. There's no reason to trust them to do the right thing with billions of dollars in taxpayer money.

Every penny we have needs to go to average Americans who desperately need income support and health care, and to hospitals that need life-saving equipment. It's outrageous that the Senate bill gave corporations nearly four times as much money as hospitals on the front lines. Corporate welfare is bad enough in normal times. Now, in a national emergency, it's morally repugnant. We must stop bailing out corporations. It's time we bail out people.

Robert Reich

Professor of Public Policy, University of California-Berkeley

Ventilator arsenal? We can build that

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only a few weeks ago, the shortage prompted the Trump Administration to invoke the Defense Production Act to require a single company, GM, to build the ventilators, even though they were already busy doing so in the design and supply chain process.

Ford and other companies also pitched in with resources to build the ventilators, a pledge echoing the conversion of car-making resources by the state's automakers into manufacturing sites for vehicles, planes, parts and weapons during World War II. Michigan earned its nickname the Arsenal of Democracy, during the war. The plant where Ford is assembling the ventilators is down the road from the site where it once built B-24s bombers.

A portion of the Rawsonville plant was devoted to ventilator production. Giffen managed the Rawsonville project, and they hired Conti to perform the mechanical work, using building trades electricians and pipe trades workers working with UAW skilled trades to do



PART OF THE GROUP of building trades union workers, Ford, and UAW personnel who managed to convert a portion of the Ford Rawsonville plant in Ypsilanti to ventilator production in just eight days. We have partial identifications on the group, including (l-r) Tony Ratcliff, Phil Lewis, Frank Bennett, John Olmstead (all Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local 190 members; foreman Jim Ziegler of Plumbers 98; UAW fitters Greg and Nick, Ford Supt. Matt Niemi, and two project certifiers.

the necessary work.

"It was very hectic at first, but it ended up going very well," said Conti day foreman Jim Ziegler, who worked with fellow Plumbers Local 98 night shift

foreman Bernie Summers to see the project through to completion. "It was a joint effort with the UAW, and we were told at the beginning that this was part of a war effort, and we were told to do everything we had to do to make this work. It really was a joint venture, and everybody came together to make it work. I was really impressed with the crew we worked with, I worked with eight (Plumbers and Pipe Fitters) Local 190 guys on days and Bernie worked with six on nights. We had great hands to work with, I couldn't have picked a better crew."

Converting a portion of the plant to making the ventilators was akin to hospital-grade construction, Ziegler said, with enhanced cleanliness guidelines in place. The project included the installation of a bulk oxygen system, compressors, accumulators, and dryers. Oxygen main pipes and 132 "air drops" at work stations allowed for the clean assembly and testing of the ventilators as they were being manufactured.

A significant role of Conti's was to help procure materials for the project, and the trades installed two compressors, two accumulators, and two dryers and an extensive amount of copper piping to keep the oxygen flowing. Work by the trades on the eight-day project wrapped up April 17.

Conti electrical Supt. Walt Phillips (IBEW Local 58) said he and a crew of hometown IBEW Local 252 electricians were

tasked with installing fire alarm wiring during their five days on the project. He said eight electricians plus a foreman worked 12-hour shifts.

"No issues, it was a good job for us, even though it came to us as a last-minute project," Phillips said. "Everybody did their best."

Production of the GE/Airon Model A-E ventilator manufactured at Rawsonville began April 20. Ford said the simplified ventilator design—licensed by GE Healthcare from Florida-based Airon Corp.—is responsive to the needs of most COVID-19 patients, and operates on air pressure without the need for electricity.

Adrian Price, Ford's director of global core engineering for vehicle manufacturing who is running the project, told CBS News that Ford is used to building big automotive products. "Scaling to produce something like a small ventilator requires different sourcing and components and different capability," he said during the start-up process. "There's quite a bit that goes into taking a design that is currently being produced at two-a-day and scaling that to make over 7,000 a week."

"Have you learned the lessons only of those who admired you, and were tender with you, and stood aside for you? Have you not learned great lessons from those who braced themselves against you, and disputed passage with you?"

—Walt Whitman (1819 - 1892)

(Not) all in this together

By Jim Hightower

In this horrible time of economic collapse, it is truly touching to see so many corporate chieftains reaching out in solidarity with the hard-hit working class.

We know they're doing this because they keep telling us they are. Practically every brand-name giant has been spending millions of dollars on PR campaigns in recent weeks asserting that they're standing with us, declaring over and over: "We're all in this together."

Except, of course, they're really not standing anywhere near us. While we're waiting in endless lines at food banks and unemployment offices, the elites are still getting fat paychecks and platinum-level health care.

The severity and gross disparity of our country's present economic collapse is not simply caused by a sudden viral outbreak, but by a decades-long plutocratic policy of intentionally maximizing profits for the rich and

minimizing everyone else's well-being. As the eminent economist Joseph Stiglitz rightly put it, "We built an economy with no shock absorbers."

Jobs, once the measure of a family's economic security, have steadily been shriveled to low-wage unreliable work, untethered to a fair share (or any share) of the new wealth that workers create. In a relentless push for exorbitant, short-term profits, today's executives have abandoned any pretense that a corporation is a community of interdependent interests striving to advance the common good.

Instead, while the honchos are richly covered, they're washing their hands of any responsibility for the health, retirement, and other essential needs of their workforce. "Rely on food stamps, Obamacare, and other publicly-funded programs," they say, even as their lobbyists and for-sale lawmakers slash the public safety nets so rich shareholders and speculators can take evermore profit.

These forces of American greed have shoved millions of working families to the economic precipice—and all it takes is a virus to push them over.

(via www.otherwords.org)



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BUILDING MICHIGAN!

The Willow Run plant

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

By Marty Mulcahy



WORKERS AT THE L-SHAPED Willow Run plant in Ypsilanti were building a B-24 bomber every 63 minutes during the latter stages of World War II. Ford Motor Co. built 6,972 B-24s in 776 days and produced kits for 1,893 more that could be crated and assembled by other manufacturers. Photo credits: The Henry Ford

For the guy who invented the automotive assembly line, built the largest industrial complex in the world, paid his workforce an unheard-of \$5 per hour and invented a production, sales and service empire that did more to put America on wheels than anyone, what may have been Henry Ford's greatest triumph had nothing to do with any of those things.

We draw your attention to the Willow Run Assembly Plant, which was located east of the city of Ypsilanti and north of the I-94 freeway – a stretch of road that was originally constructed to service the plant. Henry Ford – reluctantly, and urged by his son Edsel – agreed in January 1941 to the audacious plan to erect a massive assembly plant that would eventually employ 42,000 people who built 8,685 B-24 Liberator bombers, which helped win the war in the European and Pacific theatres during World War II.

Douglas Brinkley, a professor of history at Rice University and author of *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company and a Century of Progress*, said “other U.S. wartime plants were significant, but what happened at Willow Run was deemed a miracle. The idea that an auto manufacturer could stop making cars and start making planes at the rate they were making them became a perfect symbol of American industrial might. Willow Run became a name to inspire America's fighting men and women.”

In January 1941, Edsel and Ford Motor Co. manufacturing boss Charles Sorensen were invited to Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego, with the federal government hoping that Ford could expand its involvement in aircraft production, specifically in the newly designed B-24.

“Sorensen in particular was impressed by the methods Consolidated was using to produce its B-24 Liberator bomber,” says *Willow Run's Glory Days* by Don Scherman and Grack Shackman. “There were no blueprints or accurate measuring tools. Major components were custom fit, so each plane was different from the next. Final assembly took place outside in the California sun. In his memoirs Sorensen observed sourly, ‘What I saw reminded me of the way we built cars at Ford 35 years earlier.’”

Overnight, Sorensen sketched out plans for the needed plant. Edsel went home to Dearborn and convinced Henry to build it on land he already owned.

According to The Henry Ford, “working with architect Albert Kahn, Ford officials envisioned a massive factory with bombers built on a moving line, just like Ford's automobiles. The main building would be more than a mile long with dual, parallel assembly lines. The chosen site was farmland owned by Henry Ford on the eastern edge of Michigan's Washtenaw County, near a creek called Willow Run. Next door, Willow Run airport was also constructed.

“Plant construction started in March 1941. The main building went up in sections, with workers using plywood partitions to seal off finished portions from those still under construction. Five main contractors hurried the project along, and parts of the plant began production in September 1941. Ultimately, more than seven million square feet of floor space were completed for B-24 production at Willow Run.”

The Henry Ford said



B-24s, SHOWN in production at Willow Run, cruised at 290 mph and carried a 5,000-pound bomb load for 1,700 miles, giving it a longer range, greater speed, and a bigger payload than its B-17 cousin.

Sorensen and his team “carefully planned the new facility to the last detail. Working with a scale model, they shifted equipment and work stations for maximum efficiency. The main building's ‘L’ shape prevented its crossing into neighboring Wayne County. It also required the installation of two turntables to turn airplane fuselages 90 degrees near the end of the assembly line.”

Why not go into Wayne County? “Henry Ford had demanded that Willow Run be built L-shaped so that it stayed within the confines of a Republican county (Washtenaw) that voted against Roosevelt in three straight elections,” writes Albert Baime in *The Arsenal of Democracy, FDR, Detroit and an Epic Quest to Arm America*.

The assembly plant would be the largest in the world at the time, including a system with 136 conveyors that would deliver parts where they needed to go in the building that had to be designed for a complex, four-engine bomber for a company whose only experience was building cars. Construction started on the plant in April 1941 and was finished in September 1942.

The next month, the first B-24 bombers built by Ford – with a mostly female workforce of “Rosie the Riveters” – were rolled off the assembly line and were flown to their destination from the runway.

According to *Assembly Magazine*, “More B-24s were built than any other combat aircraft in U.S. history. Several other plants churned out the airplane, including facilities in Fort Worth, Texas, and San Diego. However, even under optimum conditions, those plants could only build one bomber a day.”



THE WILLOW RUN plant under construction in 1941. Completed with about seven million square feet, some production began at the plant in September 1941.

COVID evasion measures to be a constant presence on jobsites

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governor's guidelines. And if they are working, they should be supplied with proper personal protection equipment, a safe working environment and a collaborative employer-employee

‘My biggest fear... that our workforce will get lackadaisical about PPE’

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great deal of time planning, developing and putting these protocols into place for the safety and health of everyone involved.

“My biggest fear is that there will be a breakdown in discipline on maintaining those protocols. That our workforce will get lackadaisical about PPE, about social distancing, that masks won't be worn, or there won't be proper hand washing.

“Another fear is the potential angst by craftworkers, and the distraction it may cause on the job site. We tell our workers that their ultimate customer is their family, and we know that workers are worried about them and their family is worried that their loved one is going to bring the virus home. So that's why it's going to be so important to be following the protocols that are in place to keep everyone safe.

Haller said while he couldn't speak for other companies, but for Walbridge, the company already had guidelines in place for shutting down its active construction projects, which happened all over the state on March 24. But the construction industry involves a web of interested parties to see a project to completion, and he said it may take some time for the industry to shake off any rust that formed during the seven weeks of down time. “I worry about our supply chain, our material suppliers, our subcontractors – have they restarted, have they built momentum, do they have available the manpower, materials and equipment that we need?”

While Walbridge is based in Detroit, it runs construction projects around the nation and in Canada, Mexico and South America. Haller said about 60 percent of Walbridge projects have continued during the COVID crisis. “So on a lot of projects, we never stopped,” Haller said. “We have a number of projects out of state, and so we already have familiarity with these PPE standards, protocols and requirements in a COVID world.

“Here in Michigan, I believe that eventually these new protocols are going to be like riding a bike. We have a talented, trained, agile workforce, and they're going to embrace these new safety measures. Six months from now I think you're going to see a safer workforce that has adapted to a post-COVID world. And of course I pray that by then we won't be

Whitmer eases jobless \$ prerequisite

LANSING – Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on May 6 signed an Executive Order that will allow people to get their unemployment benefits more quickly during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The order will allow the state to review only a worker's most recent job separation, which is the cause of the current unemployment, to determine their benefit entitlement. In turn, the benefit process will be expedited.

“Michiganders everywhere have lost work because of COVID-19, and we must ensure they receive the benefits they're entitled to as quickly and efficiently as

possible,” Whitmer said.

The Executive Order also extends prior Executive Order 2020-57, which:

- Expands the state's workshare program, offering more tools to employers to reduce layoffs and restart their business.
- Extends unemployment benefits to workers:

- Who have an unanticipated family care responsibility.
- Who are sick, quarantined, or immunocompromised and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave or are laid off.
- Extends unemployment benefits to workers who voluntarily left a job after accepting

working relationship.

“We are grateful for the governor's commitment to protecting working people and their families from the spread of COVID-19,” said Devlin at the news conference. “Our dedicated building trades men and women are ready to get back to work, and we're glad the governor has taken steps today to help ensure their safety. We can and will do this safely and with partnership with our contractors, our construction managers, our owners.

“We will rise to meet the challenge that COVID-19 brings to the jobsites,” Devlin continued. “Make no mistake, we will protect the hard-working men and women of the construction trades, and have them return to work safely, so they can return home safely each night. Michigan construction companies, unionized or not, throughout the state, will be committed to meeting the new PPE standards. This is an important element to keeping the curve flat and getting safely back to work.”

The governor's order reopening construction is only the first step toward re-establishing normalcy in the industry. Just like

in the greater population, COVID flare-ups could happen as we move forward. That is why the proper use of PPE temperature testing and screening is important for worksite entry and re-entry. There will be increased concern in confined environments where social distancing poses more challenges, like at the Fermi II Nuclear Power Plant near Monroe, which saw a virus-case spike last month and continues to have issues based on the unique challenges of that facility.

“With an eye towards Michigan's economic recovery, leadership representing the full spectrum of the construction industry have been working diligently and cooperatively to outline processes and practices that will allow us to safely get back to work,” said Ryan Maibach, president & CEO of Michigan's largest general contractor, Barton Malow, and member of the Michigan Economic Recovery Council. “The construction industry is entrenched in a culture of safety, and as we return to work, we are developing and implementing new best practices that further emphasize the well-being of our workers and Michigan's citizens.”

Whitmer and her team have relied on information from the Michigan Economic Recovery Council (MERC) on how to safely re-engage the economy as the state slows the spread of COVID-19. The group has made several recommendations on how the economy can be opened safely and effectively. According to Barton Malow CEO Ryan Maibach, he and Walbridge CEO Mike Haller canvassed the state's construction industry during April in an effort “to develop practices that would work for the entire spectrum of our industry.” He said they communicated with industry groups, including organized labor, representing more than 20,000 different construction entities and 225,000 industry workers.

The Associated General Contractors – Michigan Chapter said the work of the recovery council is “one of the primary reasons construction is returning to work.”

The council declared that its first goal is to put Michigan on a path to full economic recovery as safely and quickly as feasible. Their second goal is to ensure the recovery is staged carefully and in a way that safeguards the health of the state's residents and the health of the state's workforce.

“As we return to work,” Maibach said, “we all need to embrace the responsibility we have to adopt these best practices, ensuring the safety of ourselves and those around us. With these measures in place on our projects, we are prepared to get Michigan's construction industry safely back to work.”

The Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association, whose contractors employ union road workers, said Whitmer's announcement to reopen the construction industry “is great news for MITA members not working on ‘essential infrastructure projects,’ which have continued throughout the pandemic.

“Several member firms have reached out to MITA to express their desire to get back to work in order to continue to keep their employees working and to support Michigan's economy. This move should open up most construction projects that have been put on hold, including private commercial, residential and other local projects, but communication with owners/primes/subcontractors/suppliers will be vital.”

“No, not yet,” the man replies. “As the eagle carried the squirrel away, it flew toward the green. As it passed over a clump of trees near the green, the squirrel dropped my ball.”

“Did you swear THEN?” asks the now impatient priest.

“No, because as the ball fell it struck a tree, bounced through some bushes, careened off a big rock, and rolled onto the green and stopped within six inches of the hole.”

The priest sighs, “You missed the putt, didn't you?”

It may be a while until normal returns to state construction

(Continued from Page 1)

30 days.

Despite the inevitable hiccups in restarting construction, Whitmer said it can be done safely. “As part of our MI Safe Start Plan,” she said May 1, “we are bringing business and labor leaders together to ensure that while we lift some restrictions on the previous Stay Home, Stay Safe order, we are also protecting workers and their families from the spread of this virus. I want to be clear: we must all continue to stay home and stay safe as much as possible. If we all keep doing our part, we can reduce the risk of a second wave and re-engage our economy safely and responsibly.”

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A man goes to the confessional and begins “Forgive me Father, for I have sinned.”

“What is your sin, my son?” the priest asks.

“Well,” the man starts, “I used some horrible language this week and I feel absolutely terrible.”

“When did you use this horrible language?” asks the priest.

“I was golfing and hit an incredible drive that looked like it was going to go over 250 yards, but it struck a tree branch next to the fairway and fell straight down

Just joking

to the ground after going only about 100 yards.”

“Is that when you swore?”

“Well, no, Father,” says the man. “After that, a squirrel ran out of the bushes and grabbed my ball in his mouth and began to run away.”

“Is THAT when you swore?” asks the priest.

“Uh, no,” says the man. “You see, as the squirrel was running, an eagle came down out of the sky, grabbed the squirrel in his talons and began to fly away!”

“Is THAT when you





A 200,000 SQUARE-FOOT Amazon distribution center is also being erected at the former Silverdome site in Pontiac.

Trades delivering new Amazon campus at Silverdome site

(Continued from Page 1) will bolster Pontiac's continued economic success and further our pipeline of pairing industry with talent." The project could employ as many as 1,500. Clayco is managing the project. Much of the work over

the past several weeks has involved steel erection, which is being handled by Ideal Steel with its Iron Workers Local 25 workforce. Construction on the project has proceeded during the COVID-19 crisis because it received a carve-out from state

rules as a "distribution center." Located north of M-59 and west of I-75, the 80,000-seat Silverdome had been abandoned since 2001, and was demolished in 2017. Opened in 1975, it was also the home of the Detroit Pistons from 1978-88.

Behind the mask: what cover is best to stop the coronavirus?

(Continued from Page 1) more likely for a virus to be breathed in, versus being on a surface and needing to be brought to our face by our hands.

The potential for airborne transmission – getting the virus from simply being in a room with an infected person for an extended period of time – is what's driving the recommendations over masks and other facial coverings. So will any of these masks actually protect you from the virus?

Comparing N95s, surgical masks and cloth masks. First, let's be clear that there's no comparison between a correctly worn respirator, such as an N95, and other types of masks and facial coverings. Respirators are designed – and scientifically proven – to filter extremely small particles from the air. N95s and more protective options like elastomeric or half-face respirators are so effective because they form a tight seal to the wearer's face, which forces all the inhaled air to pass through the filter.

Unfortunately, this is also why N95s are in such short supply. Knowing that it's not realistic for everyone to wear an N95 respirator, let's take a look at the potential benefits and limitations of other options in more detail.

Surgical Mask. Effective for: The primary purpose of these masks is to protect other people from the wearer's respiratory droplets. These masks also give some barrier protection against larger respiratory droplets from other people.

Limitations: Because there's no facial seal, surgical masks don't reliably filter enough smaller airborne particles to count as respiratory protection. One study found surgical masks can filter about 60 percent of

smaller, inhaled particles. (By comparison, an N95 would filter 95 percent of these particles.)

Paper mask. Effective for: These masks are intended to filter larger nuisance dusts from the air, such as pollen or sawdust, which are much larger than virus particles. Like surgical masks, they provide some barrier protection for the wearer and those in close contact with the wearer.

Limitations: Though made of filtering material, they are not designed to filter inhaled particles as small as viruses and don't form a face seal.

Homemade Cloth/Fabric Mask. Effective for: Homemade masks provide some barrier protection from large respiratory droplets expelled by other people. Perhaps most importantly, they reduce the spread of respiratory droplets emitted by the wearer. In one study, coughing through a cotton mask significantly reduced the amount of SARS-CoV-2 particles transferred to a test surface.

Limitations: As above, these masks don't form a tight seal to the face and don't reliably filter small inhaled particles. Attempts to measure the effectiveness of cloth masks to filter small particles show a wide range of results: cotton T-shirt (seven percent), shop towel (19 percent), coffee filter (49 percent). Material type and thickness (e.g., cotton, denim, canvas), fit to face (e.g., flexible nose bridge) and use of an internal filter (e.g., coffee filter) are just some of the variables that affect filtering efficiency.

Summarizing available mask benefits and limitations. The overall evidence shows that surgical masks, paper masks, cloth masks and other facial cov-

erings all provide the wearer with some protection against SARS-CoV-2. Those benefits include a protective barrier for virus particles to land on instead of our mouth and nose, and a level of particle filtration (even though nothing comes close to an N95 respirator). In short, wearing a mask offers some protection against the virus, but there's a big gap between some protection and effective protection.

While these alternative mask options are far from perfect, we should keep in mind that the biggest benefit of wearing them is likely for the people around you. We know small virus particles can hang in the air, and we know people can spread the virus without ever having symptoms. Any steps we can take to contain our coughs, sneezes and regular breaths behind a mask can help limit how far the virus travels. That alone is reason enough to put on a mask.

While homemade masks are far from a perfect level of protection, the reality is that slowing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 requires us to take advantage of every opportunity we have. We should also remember two other important points. First, no mask is a silver bullet. Even an N95 won't protect you if you touch your face with contaminated hands right after taking it off. That's why masks have to be used in combination with physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough etiquette and other precautions.

Second, the reason we're wearing homemade masks is so we can hopefully leave N95s and other more protective respirators for the healthcare workers and frontline workers who desperately need them.



Elevator Constructors Local 36

Elevator Constructors 36 DETROIT—ALL MEMBERS ARE INFORMED that our next regular Membership Meeting is tentatively planned for Monday, June 22, 2020 providing all Stay at Home restrictions are lifted!

The May meeting would be Monday, May 25, 2020. This is Memorial Day and we do not have time to reschedule or the comply with the possibility of social distancing still being in effect. The meeting has been cancelled. Any changes in this schedule or venue will be included in future Building Tradesmen articles.

All members are reminded that we are working under the MOU-NEBA final 3-23-20. This temporary agreement has been extended until June 30th, 2020. Any questions pertaining to this agreement should be directed to the Hall. If you are asked to go into another Local's jurisdiction by your company, make sure you notify the Hall and the Local where you are heading into. Their work situation will be different than ours. This is your responsibility as a member of the IUEC.

Attention All Apprentices. your classes are now online at the NEIEP website, all homework and unit exams must be done by May 29th, 2020. To maintain enrollment and get credit for this semester is your responsibility. Remember, your progression in the program and your raises are based upon you passing your classes. Failure also results in repeating the class and an appearance in front of the Local JAC.

Monthly OJT Forms are still required of ALL APPRENTICES! You can drop these forms at the hall. This is a requirement of the Department of Labor. Do not put your apprenticeship in jeopardy by failing to fulfill this responsibility. This will also result in your appearance before the Local JAC Committee.

Brothers and Sisters, due to recent conditions, ALL are requested to follow guidelines put out by the CDC, buildings and your companies. Common sense and personal health practices should always be followed. The International is also offering special benefits in response to our current situation. Go to their website at iuec.org where more information is available. While at the iuec.org website register on the my-link members portal. Click on log in and on the next screen, the third box down is where you can register for the members my-link portal.

The Local picnic was scheduled for Saturday, July 25, 2020. Currently the Picnic Committee and the Local Officers agree that for the safety and health of all members, retirees and families we canceled our picnic for July 2020.

We also have new phones and answering system. All calls will still be answered. No numbers have changed. We are also requesting your email address. If you are not receiving emails,

please confirm your address. During our recent situation we have received updates daily and we want this information at your disposal as soon as possible.

All refund checks have been processed and mailed out. With the delivery of mail being slowed at this time please have patience!

All members are reminded that your company is responsible to deliver material to the jobsite. Use of personal vehicles for delivery of material is for only emergency situations. There are no emergencies in modernization or construction.

All construction, modernization and cab work is TEAMWORK. This is according to our agreement and follows your company's safety policy. A licensed journey person must also be onsite while any work is performed. If you are asked or told

differently call the hall immediately. Also, all jobs are to be reported to the HALL, this does include all unloads, crane picks and cab modernizations. This is our work and SHALL be performed by ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS!

On behalf of the Local, we wish to express our condolences to the families of Joe Lavake on his passing May 10th, 2020 and Honorary retired Brother Fred Pachla April 28th 2020. We also lost Brother Taylor Lewis Local 63, an on-the-job fatality April 27th 2020.

Get well wishes are extended to all our Brothers and Sisters who are on our sick list. Keep safe and healthy. Be a Brother to a Brother, regardless of what Local they might belong too. We are all in this and will get through this, together!

"Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion... or you shall learn nothing."
—Thomas H. Huxley (1825 - 1895)"

"The path to our destination is not always a straight one. We go down the wrong road, we get lost, we turn back. Maybe it doesn't matter which road we embark on. Maybe what matters is that we embark."
—Barbara Hall

"The best way to teach your kids about taxes is by eating 30% of their ice cream."
—Bill Murray (1950 -)

"When Solomon said there was a time and a place for everything he had not encountered the problem of parking his automobile."
—Bob Edwards

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Intended Use and Purpose
Provides a protective barrier against large droplets, splashes or sprays of bodily fluids. Protects others from the wearer's respiratory emissions.

Face Seal Fit
Loose-fitting

Fit-Testing Requirement
No

Filtration
Does NOT provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is NOT considered respiratory protection.

Paper Mask

Intended Use and Purpose
Can be worn for comfort against non-toxic nuisance dusts during activities like mowing, sweeping and dusting. These masks are NOT respirators and do NOT offer protection against hazardous dusts, gases or vapors.

Face Seal Fit
Loose-fitting and many only have one strap.

Fit-Testing Requirement
No

Filtration
These masks are NOT NIOSH-approved disposable filtering facepieces. Does NOT provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is NOT considered respiratory protection.

N95 Mask

Intended Use and Purpose
Reduces wearer's exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets (only non-oil aerosols).

Face Seal Fit
Tight-fitting

Fit-Testing Requirement
Yes

Filtration
Filters out at least 95% of airborne particles, including large and small particles. Provides the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is considered respiratory protection.

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By Ryan Soulard
Wildlife biologist
Michigan DNR

"Well boys, it's gonna be a biscuits and gravy mornin'!"

That was the phrase I first heard on a duck hunt at Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area near Columbia, Missouri in 2006, from a hunter in my party nicknamed "Wild Bill."

That morning was one of the finest days afield I've ever had. We quickly reached our bag limit of 24 ducks – a rare accomplishment in the waterfowl world, especially since we did it before the sun had crested over the bluffs along the Missouri River.

Wearing his "Boonie" hat, Wild Bill let out a war cry when the last duck fell. "Well boys, it's gonna be a biscuits and gravy mornin'!"

"A what, Wild Bill?"

He explained to us that, in his 40 years of hunting ducks, there haven't been many times that he can get a limit of ducks, slog out of the field and be back home before his wife is out the door for work so that she can make him a plate of her biscuits and gravy.

That saying is something that has stuck with me ever since.

There haven't been but a couple of outdoor instances where I could let out the Wild Bill war cry to declare a biscuits and gravy morning. One of those times was in springtime 2019.

For years, I have reveled in taking some time to spring turkey hunt. It is one of my favorite times of the year, when you literally get to watch the world come alive before your eyes.

If you go out more than one day in a row, it is incredible to hear the different birds singing in the mornings, watch vegetation sprout that you swore wasn't there yesterday and, if you are really lucky, stumble upon a morel mushroom or two.

However, one thing I never had the best luck at was bagging a turkey on my adventures. There have been lots of close calls, more early mornings than I can count, screw-ups on my part, times I should've been more patient and more incredible outdoor moments

Outdoors

Talking turkey hunting



A GROUP OF WILD TURKEYS on a roadside in Mackinac County.

MDNR photo

than I deserve.

I believe the last year I had gotten a turkey was 2009, but I have been out every year since.

I had talked to a few folks and told them how much I would like to go hunting with someone who really knows his stuff. The name Brandon Nutt from Ravenna came up a few times.

After getting in touch with him via the Internet far before the season opening, it was determined we would head out on some private land that he has and give it a shot on opening day.

In the two weeks leading up to the hunt, Brandon sent me updates frequently.

Pictures of toms, videos of birds gobbling in the dark on the roost, you name it. It was clear that he was very serious about turkey hunting and he was putting in some serious effort to help me end my dry spell, hopefully.

As he put it, "I can almost guarantee you we'll have a shot at a mature tom. Now whether or not you hit it is another matter altogether, but that's on you."

The night before the opener was a very sleepless one. I kept waking up before my alarm, about every 30 minutes, to make sure I didn't oversleep.

I got up and hit the road about 3:45 a.m. to make the drive over

to Ravenna to meet Brandon. I had some good tunes going on the radio, some beef jerky, some strong coffee and a whole lot of optimism.

To say I was nervous and excited would be a great understatement. I arrived to meet Brandon about 5:15, and we immediately headed off to his hunting spot.

We slipped on in, in the dark, no headlamps, just guiding our way along field edges, using the moonlight to mark our way.

Brandon would stop every now and then to point out some tree lines in the dark where he had seen the turkeys before or where they may have roosted, or where a tom had fallen to a hunter's gun in the past.

"Now when we get to that final fence row, we really have to go into stealth mode," he warned.

I am not exactly the stealthiest person. I tend to kind of lumber along when outdoors and have been known, a time or two, to take a spill in the water, mud, et cetera. I was holding my breath as I took each step, hoping a stick wouldn't crack or I wouldn't flip over.

Surprisingly, I was successful.

It was about 5:45 when we got settled in. Brandon let me know where he had seen the birds the previous night. Turkeys roost in

trees at night and stay almost motionless and quiet until dawn starts to break.

Generally, the songbirds start singing first, then just when you think there are no turkeys in your area, you hear a tom thunder off, waking you up more than any cup of coffee will.

Typically, this will start a good while before daylight, sometimes an hour or better. Turkeys will sit in the trees and start gobbling and talking to each other, figuring out what their game plan of the day is going to be, I guess.

Another thing that turkeys are known for, both while in the trees and on the ground, is "shock gobbling." An owl hoots, turkeys gobble. A crow caws, they gobble. You get the picture. Often, one gobble produces a domino effect where once one gobbles, they all go.

It seems the closer to daylight it gets, the crazier they get.

Legal shooting hours for Muskegon County began on this day at 6:21 a.m., but on most mornings you can expect turkeys won't leave the roost and fly down until 20-30 minutes after that time.

That day's trigger was a cow mooing. It was far away, but every time it mooed, they gobbled. It was very apparent that we had

at least six turkeys very close, with two even closer – less than 60 yards away.

As the cows kept mooing, the turkeys kept gobbling. About 6:10, Brandon decided to do some calling, and that really got them fired up. Just as a hint of daylight came over us, we were able to pick out a tom sitting in a tree, gobbling his brains out, and pointing right toward us and the decoys that we'd placed out.

This seemed to go on for an eternity, which really was about 20 minutes. By 6:30, my heart was dreamed of my chest. I thought, "Is one of those turkeys really going to fly down and come over to us?"

Just about then, the first tom pitched down out of the tree, followed by a second and a third.

"OK, Ryan, keep it together," I told myself. I could feel my heart beating in my ears. My vision was swirling. I felt light-headed. "Take some deep breaths," I thought.

The toms all kind of meandered around looking, gobbling and probably wondering why the decoys hadn't moved. The birds were out of range and seemed to be very intrigued by the live hens that had flown out of the roost and were headed in the opposite direction.

This is pretty much textbook for how a few of my hunts have gone. Just when you think you have those birds fooled, they throw you a curve ball and go the other way.

Brandon got more and more aggressive with his calling, and the birds started slowly our way. They then got a little faster, a little more still, before I thought to myself, "They are in range."

"Just pick one out, let them get far enough apart so you don't hit more than one," Brandon said. I acknowledged him and began trying to slow my breathing. I was holding the gun, trembling like a leaf on a tree, dry mouth, heart racing. I was a total mess. "OK, I am getting the one on the left," I said.

I clicked the safety off, raised the gun, slowly put the barrel at the base of the tom's head, where you want to hit them, and pulled the trigger. Bang! I saw a bird running like the Roadrunner, unscathed. I was in total disbelief – somehow, I missed this turkey at very close range!

I regained my composure, took aim at one of the other toms

that was making his way out of there, and BANG, down he went.

The other two were making their way out of the spread and out of the field.

I completely forgot about Brandon and that he brought his gun just in case. Then I heard KA-BOOM. His big, 10-gauge shotgun sounded like a cannon going off – and down went his bird.

I couldn't believe what just had happened. I not only ended my dry spell, but I just witnessed two toms being harvested.

This was something I always dreamed of. What's better than being able to enjoy a hunting success moment, but to do it with someone else and share in mutual admiration, excitement and respect for the animal and for the outdoors.

I was rewarded with a beautiful, heavy tom with a 9.5-inch beard and just over 1-inch spurs.

Brandon has shot a lot of birds. I'm not sure how many, but it's a bunch. From the excited look he had, you'd swear it was his first. My knees were knocking together. I was shaking. I was high-fiving him. I let out a holler. Brandon ran out to the birds, and I said to myself, "I can't believe it, a biscuits and gravy morning!"

I asked Brandon what time it was. He said 6:41 a.m. This was the kind of turkey hunt I always dreamed of. Done on the first day, done before the sun was up, with a beautiful tom turkey in hand.

Truly one of those moments in time I am never going to forget.

It is a joy to spend a day in the outdoors with someone who shares a mutual admiration for the pursuit and the harvest like I do – someone who is a consummate sportsman and truly gets what being outdoors is all about.

I'll admit, a couple of times, I have been close to saying I was going to take the year off from turkey hunting and that I was slowly losing my drive for it.

I am very fortunate to have met Brandon, who helped reinvigorate that fire in me for those early morning adventures chasing wily tom turkeys.

I can only hope that when folks go with me duck hunting, fishing or on any number of other outdoor adventures, I can get them inspired as well. It's never really about the harvest, but it sure is a nice bonus to an incredible experience outdoors.

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