



VIEW*&*VISIONS

Bowles Rice

BOWLESRICE.COM

SUMMER 2022

Investments in Infrastructure

The theme for this edition of *Views & Visions* is “Investments in Infrastructure.” I believe that once you read the articles contained in this edition, you will agree the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), passed in November of 2021, may be one of the most important pieces of legislation passed by Congress in many years. The IIJA has the potential to become the catalyst for tremendous change in our region and country. Clearly the IIJA will produce much needed improvements to our roads, bridges, airports, broadband capabilities and other infrastructure projects, but perhaps more importantly the IIJA will lead to more high paying, good jobs for many workers across the nation.

Our country is still feeling the effects of COVID-19 and the impact it continues to have on our economy and job market. Many people lost their jobs during the pandemic, and a lot of those individuals are struggling to adapt to our changing world as we learn how to live with the disease. Studies show that jobs provide people with much more than just a paycheck. A good job is critical to the emotional well-being and psychological health of an individual. People gain self-esteem and confidence when working and the IIJA is projected to create tens of thousands of jobs. Guest author Steve White’s article focuses on the job creation aspect of the IIJA and what we need to do now in order to be ready for the influx of new jobs into our region.

As many of the articles point out, there are countless projects that have been planned for years, but they have been delayed because of the lack of adequate funding. As Senator Bob Casey and Mike Clowser allude to, there are a tremendous number of roads and bridges in West Virginia and Pennsylvania in dire need of repair. Pennsylvania is projected to receive \$16.28 billion and West Virginia is projected to receive \$3.76 billion for these types of projects. The direct and indirect impact from completion

of many of these projects will be life-changing to our region. As Mr. Clowser points out, every dollar spent on infrastructure in our society turns over five more times. Again, the impact from the IIJA will be tremendous.

I have practiced in the West Virginia construction industry for over 30 years and have never seen more optimism throughout the industry than over the last five years. It started with the West Virginia Roads to Prosperity initiative, which was enacted in 2017 and financed in 2018. That initiative provided over \$2.8 billion for West Virginia highway and bridge projects, and we have already enjoyed the benefits of many of the projects which have been completed under this program. Now, the IIJA is expanding the funding to many more exciting projects, including airport renovations, broadband, nuclear energy, water and wastewater systems, and shovel-ready sites for economic development. We have good reason to be excited!

I want to personally thank all the authors for taking time out of their busy schedules to share their thoughts and insights with us. Investing in infrastructure is critical for our future, both economically and emotionally. When I was in college, one of my professors often referred to this quote during his lectures, “A rising tide doesn’t raise people who don’t have a boat. We have to build the boat for them. We have to give them the basic infrastructure to rise with the tide.” I think about this often and believe it is critical that we give people a chance to succeed by providing a strong foundation from which they can create more. Finally, Will Rogers once said, “Show me a healthy community with a healthy economy and I will show you a community that has its green infrastructure in order...” I am really looking forward to seeing where we go from here and what we can accomplish because of these investments in our infrastructure. **W**

From Our Managing Partner



Marc Monteleone
Bowles Rice LLP

Marc Monteleone is the Managing Partner of Bowles Rice. Elected in January of 2022, his responsibilities include leadership, management, and administration of the firm. His legal practice includes federal and state taxation, mergers and acquisitions, oil and gas law, construction law, commercial law, and real estate development. Monteleone, who authored West Virginia’s design-build legislation, was appointed Chair of the West Virginia Design-Build Review Board – a position he held for nearly 20 years – by former Governor Cecil Underwood. He is also a Past President of the Independent Oil & Gas Association of West Virginia and currently serves as the Tax Committee Chair for the Gas & Oil Association of West Virginia.