



Dear WCOE KC Member,

It is my great honor to represent you as President of the newly-formed Kansas City Chapter of Women Construction Owners and Executives. Together we represent the founders and pioneers of the first municipal chartered chapter of WCOE in the country, a bold and memorable milestone for women in our community and a blueprint for local WCOE chapters to come.

I thank you for your perseverance leading to this moment, one we've worked hard to reach and fittingly announced to the media March 8th on International Women's Day during the annual celebration of Women in Construction Week.

Today, we are a powerful alliance with more than 30 women members and a Board of Directors representing best-in-class talent dedicated to two ambitious goals – to help members' businesses prosper and lift women in construction to new heights of influence in the construction industry. WCOE views the empowerment of women as more than a 'women's issue'. By investing in women, we invest in a future that unleashes the full potential of all society.

Today, our chapter represents a cross-section of construction companies and construction industry associations led by female owners, principals and executives. I'd like our membership to expand to include more female industry owners and executives from companies of all sizes representing all sectors of our industry including architecture and engineering. Our purpose is to drive expansion of WCOE KC's membership to attract the best and brightest women owners, executives and leaders to the construction industry.

Our WCOE KC board, which I want to welcome and recognize, is composed of Elisabeth DeCoursey, President/Co-Owner of KC Testing & Engineering; Ashley Tumberger, President of Premier Mechanical Products; Julie Farrell, President/Owner of Regents Flooring, and Susan Remington, President/Owner of Pro-Mechanical.

In addition to the talent of our chapter officers, WCOE KC has earned the prestige of having two members serve on WCOE's National Board. Sheila Ohrenberg, President of Sorella Group Specialty Contractor, is WCOE's National President; and Dianna Richardson, President of Richardson Hauling, is the Central Region Director.

WCOE KC will focus on accelerating professional growth for our members, increasing the number of leadership opportunities to those who seek them, enforcement of programs designed to promote small businesses including ones owned by women and minorities, and drive workforce development that encourages careers in skilled trades and construction while it engenders equality for all men, women and under-represented groups in our industry.

The core of the eco-development cycle and basis of America's (and Kansas City's) growth rests with the craft professionals who build our hospitals, schools, streets, and bridges, pour concrete foundations and bring us indoor plumbing. The perception of craft professionals has become one of low or middle skill workers when, in reality the world as we know it would not exist without their expertise.

Consider the unrelenting need for these workers. The construction industry is booming and experts expect growth to continue. Professionals predict one of the largest increases in real output from all industries will come from construction -- almost \$1.2 trillion by 2020. Upcoming efforts to modernize the United States' crumbling infrastructure will drive much of the output. As the U.S. population grows, residential housing needs will grow.

With more consumer spending and governmental investments, commercial construction also is expected to increase.

Last year, construction employment increased in 273 out of 358 U.S. cities demonstrating high demand, but unfortunately labor shortages prevented additional gains.

With construction expected to increase, the importance of building a deeper bench of skilled construction workers is a key objective of WCOE KC. This means strengthening career awareness and education opportunities for future construction workers, and collaborating with industry, education and government to find workforce development solutions.

WCOE KC will continue to work with government officials seeking their support for our initiatives. WCOE KC has already made significant inroads with key local and national government leaders during its formation. We've explained our mission and earned their endorsement, support and encouragement.

WCOE KC members met with Senator Josh Hawley who told us, "Working on the Senate Small Business Committee and directly with Linda McMahon, SBA Administrator, I know how important it is to develop and support women leaders in construction as we continue the vital mission of developing our country's workforce."

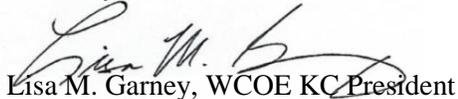
Congressman Sam Graves (MO-06) echoed Hawley's sentiments, "As the former Chair of the House Small Business Committee and current Ranking Member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I see firsthand the importance of WCOE KC and its mission to raise the bar of equal opportunity and awareness of women in construction."

Congresswoman Sharice Davids added, "Empowered women empower women. We must continue to support and build each other up. WCOE KC has my full support as we all encourage women leaders."

I am thrilled by our [chapter's early momentum](#) and the support given by leaders who can accelerate our mission. Still, we have just left the starting gate. There is much to accomplish in the months and years ahead, and I look forward to working with all of you.

I look forward to our future as much as I appreciate what we have achieved to get here --- from crafting a charter to launching our chapter. The years ahead run deep with growth opportunities for all of us. We hope WCOE KC will exceed your expectations, stimulate conversations and enhance your business. This is a lifelong journey and we look forward to helping other women on this exciting ride.

Sincerely,


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