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**Thru the lens: Governor Andrew Cuomo presented with New York Building Congress inaugural Innovation Award**



**Manhattan, NY** The New York Building Congress presented New York State governor Andrew Cuomo with its inaugural Innovation Award and released a new report called “Building Innovation,” during its Annual Membership Meeting and Luncheon Forum held on January 11 at the Mandarin Hotel.

Bill Mulrow, secretary to governor Cuomo, accepted the award on his behalf and offered an overview of the governor’s recently unveiled major infrastructure initiatives.

In all, the governor has proposed more than \$100 billion in new projects, highlighted by a new LaGuardia Airport, the redevelopment of Penn Station; expansion of the Javits Center; four new Metro-North stops in the Bronx; and the addition of a third track for a key portion of the Long Island Rail Road.

“In releasing our Building Innovation report today, the New York Building Congress is calling for changes in the way government does business and proposing steps to create efficiency and reduce costs,” Building Congress president Richard Anderson said. “We are pleased to say that Governor Cuomo is already showing the way with the new Tappan Zee Bridge project and its highly effective use of design-build; a new LaGuardia Airport, which is being built with one of the nation’s largest public-private partnerships; his far-reaching capital

programs for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the New York State Department of Transportation; a new Gateway Tunnel Project in cooperation with Amtrak and the State of New Jersey; and the proposal to transform Penn Station and Moynihan Station into a world class transportation hub.”

He said, “His efforts mean jobs for design and construction throughout New York. But more importantly, the Governor and his administration are underwriting the future economy of New York. Many public officials have crossed our path in the Building Congress’ 95-year history, and we are confident that none of them achieved a five-year record to match Andrew Cuomo.”

“The governor thinks it’s time to reignite the ambition, the creativity, and the capacity of New York,” Mulrow said, adding that the administration’s mission is to “Think big; act strong; and build for tomorrow, today. We are going to use public-private partnerships. We are going to do design-build contracting. The community will be involved as it’s never been before.”

The presentation of the inaugural New York Building Innovation Award was designed to coincide with the release of the Building Innovation report, which highlights the initial work and recommendations by the Task Force on Innovation and Best Practices. The task force was created and spearheaded by Thornton-Tomasetti chairman and CEO Thomas Scarangelo, who made innovation in construction the centerpiece of his two-year term as Building Congress chairman.

“With New York City in the midst of another building boom, we believed that now is the perfect – and most important – time to devote our attention to building smarter, faster, more safely, and more economically,” Mr. Scarangelo said. “This report, which provides an overview of the Task Force’s efforts, shines a light on just some of the opportunities for productive change that can raise the bar while also setting benchmarks that are feasible and attainable. It is an initial step toward elevating innovation and best practices in the New York City building community.”

The report highlighted the work of three Task Force committees. To follow are brief summaries of the committees’ work and Task Force recommendations.

The goal of the Task Force Committee on Government Procurement and Procedures was to create proposals for realistic, achievable reforms that would improve the public sector’s procurement and capital planning processes so that projects can be delivered faster and more cost effectively.

Drawing from best practices in the public and private sectors as well as experience in using alternative project delivery methods, the Task Force recommends:

- The city should expand its innovative Capital Project Scope Development program, which has supported more accurate scope development and cost estimating on select capital projects.
- The city should assign oversight responsibility and authority to the agency managing a project once the budget and contingency have been set, creating a more streamlined approach to project management. Too often, public sector management of capital projects is divided among more than one government agency, slowing approval processes, compromising accountability, and delaying project completion.
- The city and state should take the necessary steps to modernize their procurement laws and practices to allow greater use of alternative methods of project delivery.

The Task Force Committee on Building Technology and Project Delivery was tasked with finding ways to increase efficiency in every stage of the construction process so that projects can be delivered faster, more safely, and at a lower cost. The committee found that Lean strategies, a modern approach to construction aimed

at eliminating waste through continuous improvements to design and processes, can make substantial improvements in the delivery and quality of projects.

The Task Force offers the following recommendations to help Lean gain a stronger foothold in the industry:

- Industry associations should offer more information about Lean, including by sponsoring research to demonstrate the need for greater efficiencies and by actively promoting Lean's core tenet of continual improvement.
- Lean practitioners should encourage their industry partners to learn more about and adopt Lean principles and practices.
- Public and private owners should demand the use of Lean practices in the delivery of their projects.

The objective of the Task Force Site Management Committee was to develop ways to advance improved construction site management practices around the City. The committee took a closer look at the construction sheds, which currently line 200 miles of New York City streets. With the New York Building Foundation, a design competition was launched to develop new innovative and more aesthetically-pleasing shed concepts that could meet New York City Department of Buildings requirements. Four winners were selected, and the Task Force recommends:

- The Building Congress, working with other industry organizations, should continue and expand its efforts to promote the use of the new shed designs.
- Government should use the new shed designs and find ways to encourage private-sector use.
- Owners and contractors should implement the new shed designs on upcoming projects, and their experiences should be promoted and shared with industry colleagues.

The Building Innovation report and full committee reports, as well as additional information about the work of the Task Force on Innovation and Best Practices, can be found at [www.buildingcongress.com](http://www.buildingcongress.com).