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## Connecticut Building Congress hosts April program at the Cascade in Hamden

May 14, 2015 - Connecticut

"Intelligent Expansion to Expand Intelligence" was the topic for the Connecticut Building Congress April program, held at the Cascade on April 14. The panel discussion focused on ways in which higher education institutions in Connecticut are expanding their facilities intelligently while still achieving their core mission. Representatives from both private and public institutions were on hand. Cathie Ellithorpe, AIA, The SLAM Collaborative and CBC president-elect, introduced the panelists and asked each for an overview of the capital projects - past, present and future - that allowed the audience to see how A/E/C professionals can assist with educational expansion.

Bill Hawkins, assistant vice president for finance and controller, University of St. Joseph, had a slideshow presentation in his discussion of the school's recent expansion projects. No longer content to be considered the sleepy little liberal arts college in the Hartford area, St Joseph's in recent years has become a university with ambitious expansion plans. "We've been known and referred to as the best-kept secret in higher education in the Hartford area. Well, who wants to be a secret?"

In addition to capital improvements and upgrades on the West Hartford campus, the University opened a world-class pharmacy school in downtown Hartford, on the 3rd floor of the XL center (formerly known as the Hartford Civic Center). "We can attract students from the local region, but we've built a school that can attract students from all over the country," he continued. The expansion allows the University to compete with other schools virtually anywhere, while steadfastly maintaining their smaller school identity.

Keith Epstein, vice president for facilities, real estate & infrastructure planning, CT Board of Regents, Connecticut State Universities and Community Colleges, discussed the importance of expanding the university and community college system into more urban areas. "We're trying to make higher education available to the members of our cities that can't commute to the suburban campuses."

Epstein discussed the different types of capital projects. "Everything from mundane upkeep projects such as signage and roof repairs all the way to multi-million-dollar residence facilities." He also shared that some of the larger projects have been completed through design/build contracts that allow much faster delivery and that they will continue to look for opportunities where there are legitimate benefits. "As custodians of taxpayer dollars, we are looking for ways to achieve economy, and that will include better delivery through the design/build model in addition to other considerations, such as renewable energy."

Next month's CBC program will continue the annual May tradition of a bus tour. Experience the diverse architecture, history and heritage of Waterbury, Conn., the next city CBC visits for a narrated tour followed by a designer and builder panel presentation on a key project. Learn about recent and

future design and construction opportunities right here in the Brass City and what you can do to position your firm to help preserve and/or add to Connecticut's rich history. Taking place at the Waterbury City Hall, the evening includes a stationed buffet dinner and an optional guided bus tour in the comfort of a double-decker glass-roofed bus, led by City Historian Phil Benevento. This event includes their annual special recognition to CBC's past presidents as they celebrate their own rich history!

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