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## **Constructing new possibilities: Celebrating women who build - by Aimee Hernandez**

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In the past 20 years, efforts to increase diversity have driven the design and construction industry's potentials to new heights. The integration of individuals of different ages, backgrounds, talents and genders has changed the way we conduct business. This is one of the reasons the members of the Construction Institute of the University of Hartford created The Woman Who Build Summit. The event is a celebration of diversity in the design and construction industry, which at one point was one of the least gender-diverse industries. The current boom of women pursuing education and careers in these construction-based fields has produced financially favorable results, according to studies conducted on the subject. This message of positive possibilities can provide inspiration for future generations and continuation of these pursuits can promote a rise in demand for constructional development.

Malcolm Forbes once said that diversity is the "Art of thinking independently together." To expand upon that, diversity is individuals of different backgrounds independently thinking in order to work towards a common goal. Collaboration in the industry from both men and women is key when it comes to economic success. Pooling together strong thinkers, doers and creators is the perfect combination for a better tomorrow. The Woman Who Build Summit is designed not only to empower women but to empower the workplace as a whole. It is a place to reflect, inspire and educate oneself on how far the construction industry has come and where the future might take it. It is also a location for your voice to be heard in a group of open-minded individuals who are seeking to improve workplaces across the United States. It is an opportunity to develop the leadership of tomorrow. Last year's program was attended by more than 230 industry professionals and won the 2018 Connecticut Entrepreneur Awards Community Favorite Event.

This year's event will be held on February 21st, at Goodwin College in East Hartford. The Women Who Build Summit has become Southern New England's powerhouse diversity event for education, inspiration, collaboration and networking in the industry.

The keynote speaker will be Denise Berger, chief of operations for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. In a career spanning over 30 years, Berger has become an industry leader. She is currently in charge of overseeing the engineering department of one of the largest port authorities in the United States. Berger will be discussing not only her insights into the construction industry but also her personal climb to success.

Other panelists participating in this event come from all sectors of the industry and have achieved successful careers in design, construction and wellness-focused corporations like: Gilbane Building Co., On the Goga LLC, KC Architects, Interscape Commercial Environments, Interstate Electrical Services and many more. Together they will discuss topics such as "Candid Conversations with the C-Suite," "Tough Talks and How to have Them," and "Integrating Life and Work in the AEC World." Three afternoon breakout sessions will focus on specific career building skills. Learn more and register at [construction.org](http://construction.org).

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