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2021 Women in Construction: Margaret Cachel, Chief Estimator and Director of Cannabis, Vantage Builders

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Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you? I've learned from many mentors, managers and coworkers throughout my career. Some have taught me the right way to do

things and others... let's say I've learned from their mistakes! What's helped empower me is knowing that there are always people who are willing to help and answer questions. It's also helped knowing that if you work hard you will be able to succeed. Passion for your job, putting in the sweat equity, not being afraid of hard work... these things will help you succeed in this or any business.

What are you most looking forward to post-pandemic? There are a lot of things I'm looking forward to, probably too many to name! From a work perspective, I am definitely looking forward to being able to return safely to the office and to meeting with Vantage Builders team members and clients in-person again. It's something we took for granted, for good reason. While video conferencing certainly helped us keep moving forward, it really doesn't replace meeting in person. I'm looking forward to having that social dynamic back.

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? My most notable project in the past 12 months has been a state-of-the-art cannabis complex that includes cultivation, processing and a dispensary. We began the \$25 million project in May and it is still ongoing. I am not at liberty to discuss many project details, but at more than 100,000 s/f it will be one of the largest cannabis-related projects Vantage Builders has completed to date. And that is saying a lot because Vantage has completed more than 25 cannabis projects. What's made this project particularly gratifying for me is that I have been working on it for almost a year and Vantage Builders was awarded it over numerous well qualified competitors. We are proud to be a member of this project team as this will be a project that everybody in the industry will hear and talk about.

How have you adapted and changed in the last 12 months? Throughout my career, I have always embraced change. It's vital to be able to do so in order to survive and thrive in the construction industry. Well, 2020 certainly put the ability to change to the test! Looking back, working remotely was a huge challenge at first. But by utilizing the available technology, the Vantage team was able to adjust and keep projects moving forward. It was critical for being able to interact with the internal team, clients and subcontractors. It'll be interesting to see how much of the technology we continue to utilize post-pandemic.

What steps have you taken to ensure the continued success of your firm? Vantage Builders has established itself as one of the leaders in the cannabis construction market. We now have more than 25 cannabis cultivation facility and dispensary projects either completed or in process, totaling more than 500,000 square feet of space. In 2020, I was promoted to Director of Cannabis to help direct the firm's activities in this critical market. Cannabis has become one of the largest areas of growth for the firm.

Why should women consider a career in construction? Construction offers a tremendous amount of opportunity to women, especially if you are willing to work hard. During my career I have seen that it really helps to have a passion for your job. We spend a lot of time at work, and if you don't enjoy it or if you don't have a passion for it, you should pursue something else, for your own growth. Passion is the key.