

A single deal can affect dozens of trades



The number of jobs created by just one new industrial project is in the dozens.

Today's column takes on a personal note coming from several perspectives.

First, on my industrial deals, I've worked with general contractors and their subcontractors for over four decades.

Secondly, my neighbor Rudy — my biggest fan and occasional column critic — made a great living working for Arciero Bros. Their specialty was concrete work for massive tilt-ups, multifamily buildings and office towers. Rudy managed projects for them until his retirement.

And finally, my wife and I are on the home stretch of completing a remodel of our house, a much-needed freshening of a 40-year-old structure. Freshening is a bit like saying "some moisture recently" to describe the deluge of rain we've received this month in California.

We took the exterior down to the studs and replaced aging siding, drafty windows and cracking doors. We added square footage and remodeled interior finishes. The end result is amazing, but oh, what a journey! Rudy suggested I write a column about the contractors — the trades — that brought the completion forward.

Jobs such as ours — tiny in comparison to the construction of a project of new logistics buildings — employ so many people. Allow me to elaborate.

Let's take one of the new developments in the Inland Empire as an example. First, a landowner must be willing to sell. Then a developer must be willing to buy. Their dance is choreographed by folks in my profession, aka commercial real estate brokers. Generally, both seller and buyer have representation.

Once the points of the transaction are hammered out, an attorney or two enters the fray to ensure the writings match the letter of intent and any verbal agreements.

A fully signed contract now transfers to an escrow company for execution. The title is involved to issue a preliminary report of things such as loans, liens and easements affecting the ground.

So far, I've counted four professions in addition to a buyer and seller who have touched this deal, and we're just getting started.

Architects, soil engineers, civil and structural engineers, environmental people, city personnel in planning, building, police, fire and council members all have a part in the opening acts. Six more professions along with city employees also are involved, and the property hasn't even changed hands yet!

Someone must be willing to finance said project during its acquisition, construction and hold period if leased. Loan brokers, banks, insurance companies and lenders complete the encumbrances. Another profession gets a taste.

Once escrow closes, entitlements are completed and a building permit is issued. Now the fun begins and our project can go vertical.

A general contractor is engaged to build and he deploys legions of subcontractors including concrete, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, structural steel erectors, crane drivers, pavement, glass, roofers, heating ventilating and air conditioning, framers, drywall, landscapers, flooring and many more.

The number of jobs created by just one new industrial project is in the dozens. And that's just one example.

Imagine the number of families supported by new construction. Thousands! And I've not mentioned the trades needed for day-to-day repairs and installations.

By the way, these are good jobs that provide options for those employed such as saving for retirement, purchasing homes, sending their kids to great schools and sponsoring awesome vacations. Many are unaware of the career opportunities available in the trades.

It seems some believe college and management positions are the way. I've got nothing against that path as it rings a familiar tone for me.

But you'll know I'm right next time you need a plumber on Sunday or that faulty breaker trips. The helpless feeling of "whatever it costs — just restore my electricity" will resound.

We once were a society that built stuff and lauded those who swung the hammers. I for one would enjoy a return to those days.

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