

Worries
Experts predict project finance crunch

Bone Dry
Atlanta area has no long-term water solutions

Merger
Sheet metal union joins with transport workers

► Labor

Carpenters' International Union Yanks Control of New York Local

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners says it placed an errant local in New York City under emergency suspension on Nov. 26. A union spokesman says the action was taken against Local 157 in Manhattan. Officials of the local acted "inconsistently" with standards expected of union employees, the spokesman says. An independent investigator now is probing allegations of no-show jobs for Local 157 members. One business representative was fired, a second resigned, and a third was suspended. Carpenters' union General President Douglas J. McCarron appointed Frank Spencer, eastern district vice president, to temporarily oversee the local. Also, two owners of Tri-Built Construction Inc., a non-union drywall firm in the New York metro area, on Nov. 21 pleaded guilty in U.S. district court in Manhattan to charges of defrauding the union by paying union workers off the books and bribing shop stewards to aid the fraud. ■

► Companies

Flush With Private-Equity Funds, Brand Continues Buying Spree

Brand Energy and Infrastructure Services, a Kennesaw, Ga.-based scaffolding, coatings and industrial services contractor, has ramped up its acquisition pace. On Nov. 15, it announced it had acquired Industrial Specialists LLC, Angleton, Texas, and Protherm Services Group LLC, Houston. Both provide diversified craft services to oil refiners, chemical manufacturers and large engineering and construction firms in the Gulf Coast region. Protherm ranks 119th among ENR's Top 600 Specialty Contractors and is second-ranked among painting contractors and 14th among asbestos and lead-abatement contractors. Brand has been on a buying spree since being acquired by First Reserve, a Greenwich, Conn., private-equity firm from J.P. Morgan Partners in February. Brand has

since acquired industrial services contractors Tesco of Houma Inc., Houma, La.; Associated Insulation Services, Willingboro, N.J.; and Doug Chalmers Construction, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. Brand also released unaudited financial information on pro forma consolidated revenue, including those of its recent acquisitions, totaling about \$1.4 billion for its fiscal year ending Sept. 30. Net profit totals \$220.8 million. ■

► New Orleans

Corps Stands by Flood Report

An incorrect elevation figure found in an appendix of a recently released U.S. Army Corps of Engineers draft report about the methodology used in developing flood-risk maps for New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina raised concerns that some of the maps were incorrect. But Lewis E. Link, the project's lead scientist and a university engineering professor, told ENR that despite an error on a table

in an appendix of the 831-page report, the maps are correct. "We went back and scrubbed all the data, and we are confident we are right," Link says. "People can have confidence in the maps." ■

► Companies

Traffic-Safety Firm Expands

Barrier Systems Inc., a Rio Vista, Calif.-based manufacturer of movable traffic walls and crash cushions, acquired the assets of truck- and trailer-mounted attenuator technology firms Albert W. Unrath Inc. and Traffic Maintenance Attenuators Inc., both of Hatfield, Pa. The units, which deploy from the rear of a truck, come with a universal, bolt-on kit. The "U-MAD" attenuators will broaden BSI's specialty business in traffic-safety equipment and help save lives, says the company. Work-zone deaths "are staggering," says Jeff Shewmaker, BSI's marketing chief, adding that "two construction workers are killed every five days." ■

► Crown Jewel

Tree Anchors New \$20-million Botanical Garden in California

ValleyCrest Landscape Cos., Calabasas, Calif., lifted an 8-ton Loquat tree into the courtyard of the Chinese Gardens at the new Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, in San Marino, Calif. The tree is considered one of the highlights of the \$20-million landscape and site development project, which is building an authentic re-creation of a botanical haven built in China during the Ming Dynasty. ■

