

They Say Hindsight is 20/20

To say 2020 was memorable would be an understatement. As we reflect on the past year, we at BPS remain focused on our accomplishments, the valuable lessons in resiliency it has taught us, and the many people for whom we continue to be thankful.

This past year, of utmost importance was the health and safety of all BPS employees, subcontractors, owners, and partners both in office and at job sites. We assessed our procedures and implemented new and improved protocols—many we will continue with well into the future. We were already well-versed in terms of PPE on our job sites, but 2020 taught us there is always room for improvement.

More frequent hand washing, increased hand sanitizing stations, more porta potties at job sites to allow for more spacing, social distancing, and mask requirements are now the new normal. Vigilance to these safety protocols and approaches by all resulted in minimal absenteeism and disruptions.

Material delays were another obstacle we aggressively tackled. The impact of individuals around the world staying home wiped out much of the lumber supply—especially pressure treated lumber. Materials were bought up, surpluses were wiped out, and prices skyrocketed. Our team's ability to stay on top of and ahead of project schedules helped to minimize disruptions from material delays.

Deliveries of items manufactured in facilities were also impacted. Many manufactures were not able to keep up with demand because of staff shortages or new spacing restrictions. By putting more temporary measures in place, BPS was able to coordinate schedules around these obstacles. If a window delivery was delayed, the project could still move forward by shifting

focus to the interior in the meantime. By re-evaluating, revamping, and improving on our pre-existing approaches, we minimized the risk of delays and cost increases for our clients.

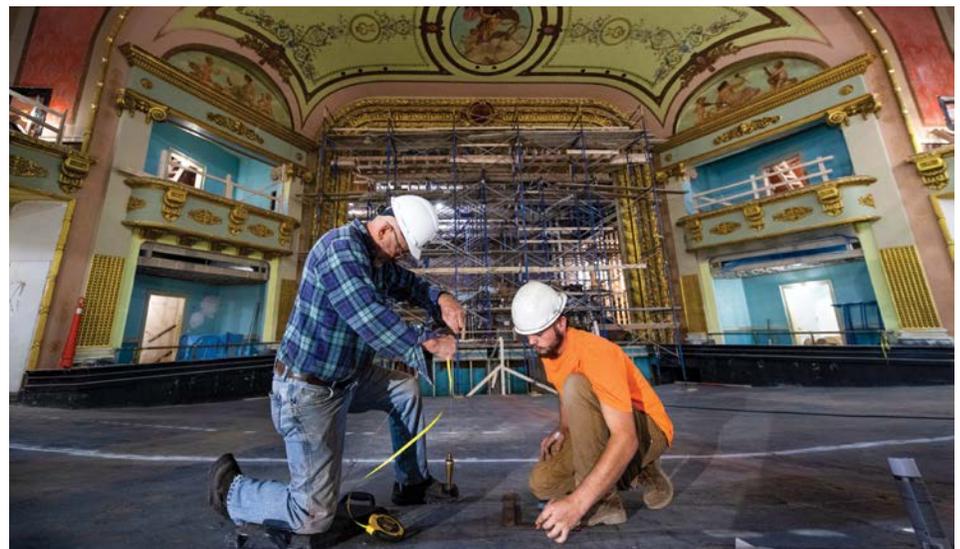
We pushed through the initial adjustments 2020 presented and have adapted. We are happy to report that most of last year's projects did not shut down. In fact, we successfully completed many projects on time and on budget including the Belknap Mill third floor renovation, the Sunrise Towers housing unit project, the Discover Portsmouth Center bathroom renovation, a Wiggan Hall addition and renovation, several stand-alone houses within the Weirs Beach Village housing development, the Chester Library renovation, upgrades to a residential home in Ashland, volunteer work at the Nashua Police Athletic League, various jobs for Aroma Joe's, security upgrades at the Marston School in Hampton, an outdoor kitchen installation at a residential home in Freedom, a new entrance at the New Hampton Elementary School, and restroom renovations at Hudson Goodwill.

As those projects concluded, we shifted

to several ongoing projects including the Colonial Theater restoration (pictured below), the Auburn Village School, and the Weirs Beach Village housing development. We began several new projects as well, including renovations and additions to three schools for Hopkinton School District, the new Belmont Police Department, the new North Hampton Library, the new Mittersill Performance Center in Franconia, a roof replacement and exterior improvements at Gilford Well, and renovations at the Sanbornton Fire Department.

We are excited to start several new projects in 2021 which include a mixed-use building at One Elm Street in Lakeport, renovations to the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, a new building at Seacoast Mazda, and a new housing development at the Village Street Apartments, a CATCH housing project in Penacook.

We are optimistic about 2021. We are fortunate to be involved in multiple business sectors that are doing well. We are so thankful to our team, subcontractors, our families, friends, partners, and clients. We wish you all a healthy and prosperous 2021!



Renovations continue at the Colonial Theater in downtown Laconia.





Speaking Our Language

Dogs understand words at the level of a 14-month-old child, a recent study has found. According to the *Science Focus* website, scientists in Budapest studied brain activity in dogs using electroencephalography, playing recordings of words the dogs knew, along with similar-sounding words and nonsense words that sounded completely different.

The brain readings showed that the dogs could distinguish between words they knew and the nonsense words, but their brains didn't differentiate between familiar words and similar-sounding words—"sit" and "sut," for example. Dogs, like very young humans, don't pay attention to all the sounds of a word. In children, this short attention span disappears as they learn to process different words and expand their vocabulary, at 14–20 months of age. Dogs, however, never progress beyond this point, and learn only about 165 words during their lifetimes.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Follow These Not-So-Secret Secrets For Success

A successful career takes hard work, but the secrets aren't very mysterious. You can reach your goals with focus and determination—and this advice from *The Seattle Times*:

- **Pick one positive quality to emphasize.** Assess your strengths and decide which one suits you best. Choose tasks and assignments that let you show off that aspect of yourself. People will associate you with your strongest ability and call on you when they need it.
- **Always have a Plan B.** Not all of your plans will succeed. Although you've got to make your best effort, don't assume everything will go right. Anticipate obstacles and have a fallback option. This will help you stay one step ahead of potential setbacks.
- **Be reliable.** Always finish what you commit to, without excuses. People want to depend on you, and when they know you're going to follow through, they'll call on you more often.
- **Act ethically.** When you're asked to do something unethical or dishonest, decline politely but firmly. Most people will back off in the face of a clear "no." If not, you may be in the wrong job or working with the wrong people.
- **Treat everyone with respect.** From the janitor to the CEO, show everyone the same degree of respect you expect for yourself. You never know whose assistance you'll need, and being nice to people is a good investment in your future.
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** If something is unclear, ask for clarification. You'll get in more trouble for making mistakes due to misunderstanding an instruction than by asking questions up front.

"Don't let anyone rob you of your imagination, your creativity, or your curiosity. It's your place in the world; it's your life. Go on and do all you can with it, and make it the life you want to live."

—Mae Jemison

Keep Older Loved Ones Engaged During Difficult Times

We worry about our children during the pandemic, but that doesn't mean we should forget our older loved ones. Many are isolated and lonely, which can lead to depression and other health problems. Here's what *NPR* says to keep their spirits up:

- **Stay in touch.** Call them as often as possible. Talk about what you're doing, what makes you happy or sad, and what they're up to. Ask for their advice. This lets people know you're thinking about them.
- **Have a virtual dinner.** Schedule a shared meal via Zoom or another app. Cooking and eating together, even in different houses, can create a feeling of togetherness. Try watching TV shows together, too.
- **Connect to their interests.** Find out what they like to do and share it. If an older loved one likes books but has eyesight troubles that make reading difficult, offer to read a book to him or her, or set up a deal for audiobooks they can listen to.
- **Ask for help.** Just because people are older doesn't mean they're helpless. Often they have useful skills. Ask for recipes of family favorites. Encourage them to sew masks for the family.
- **Go for a walk or drive.** If they're able to go out, take a weekly walk together, or go out for a drive—with proper precautions like masks and social distancing, of course.

Decrease Financial Stress For The New Year

As we begin the new year and the COVID-19 pandemic continues, most of us are worried about money. It's a stressful time, but you can take steps to ensure your financial survival. The *CNB Select* website has this advice:

- **Make minimum payments.** You don't have to pay off debts in whole while your situation is uncertain. Low-priority debts like credit card and student loan bills won't have an immediate impact on you or your family if not paid off right away. Just remember to make the minimum payment to stay current and keep your credit rating healthy.
- **Find new forms of comfort.** Get out of the habit of buying things to make yourself feel better. Find new routines that help you feel in control of your life—making the bed each morning, dressing as if you're going to work even if you're working from home, exercising, doing artwork, or chatting with friends via Zoom. You'll reduce stress while also cutting your outgoing expenses.
- **Enhance your financial savvy.** Use the pandemic as an opportunity to manage your money better. Take a look at what you're spending and find expenses you can eliminate, like that latté from Starbucks every morning or all those cable channels. Once you have a better handle on your spending, you'll make better decisions and be able to save money for your emergency fund.

"You have to be odd to be number one."

—Dr. Seuss

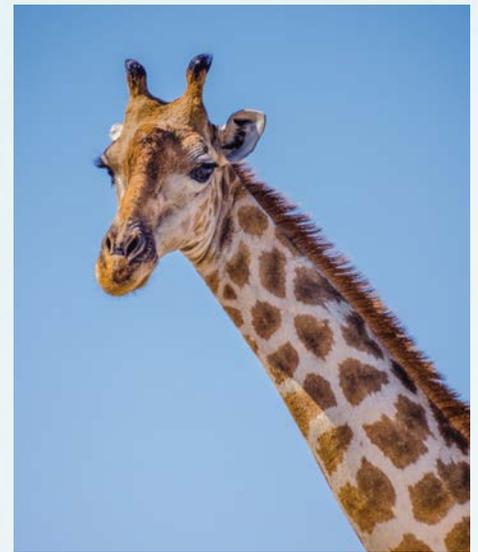
Bringing Top Talent To The Table

Hiring the right people is essential to your organization's long-term success. You have to be picky. Here are the people to look for, according to *Forbes*:

- **Fierce negotiators.** Candidates who know what they're worth and are capable of making a case for themselves usually turn out to be powerful performers. Don't shy away from them. You want confident employees on your team.
- **Self-aware individuals.** Good employees know how they come across to other people and where they fit into the workplace and culture. Look for evidence of attention to others, empathy, and a willingness to encourage people.
- **Courageous people.** You want people who are comfortable taking risks, who choose courage over comfort. Ask about challenges they've confronted, obstacles they've overcome, and problems they've solved, as well as failures they've had to deal with. This should give you a good idea of their desire not to always play it safe.
- **People who add to your culture.** Go beyond looking for a "good fit." Seek out candidates who bring something different and new to the table. They may come from different backgrounds or have unconventional experience, but the best people will contribute to your organization in new and exciting ways.
- **Curiosity seekers.** Your organization needs creativity and innovation, so target candidates who ask lots of questions about your organization and industry and who don't blindly accept the status quo. The best questions include, "Why are we doing this?" and "Why don't we try that?"

"Some failure in life is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all—in which case, you fail by default."

—J.K. Rowling



Brain Teasers

Q: According to Greek mythology, who was the first woman on Earth?

A: *Pandora*

Q: Which singer's real name is Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta?

A: *Lady Gaga*

Q: Where were the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights stored during World War II?

A: *Fort Knox*

Q: Which two U.S. states don't observe Daylight Savings Time?

A: *Arizona and Hawaii*

Q: Which mammal has no vocal cords?

A: *The giraffe*

Q: What was the first toy to be advertised on television?

A: *Mr. Potato Head*

Q: Which of William Shakespeare's plays is the longest?

A: *Hamlet*

Q: Before the Beatles were formed, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison were originally members of which group?

A: *The Quarrymen*

Q: What country won the very first FIFA World Cup in 1930?

A: *Uruguay*

Q: Which two countries share the longest international border?

A: *The United States and Canada*

Q: How many hearts does an octopus have?

A: *Three*

—Thought Catalog

Mysterious Rock Found At Colonial Theater

Photos courtesy of The Laconia Daily Sun



Ranging from automobile parts to miscellaneous household items and more, we could probably write a book about some of the interesting and unusual items we have found at job sites over the past 51 years. Recently, we were contacted by *The Laconia Daily Sun* inquiring about a mysterious rock that was discovered near the Colonial Theater job site.

The stone measures three-and-a-half feet long, two feet tall, and four feet wide and was unearthed last May under a Laconia sidewalk by BPS crew members. Discovering a stone of that size certainly is not an unusual find, but BPS Project Superintendent Tim Burke immediately knew this was no ordinary stone. The boulder shows a collection of markings etched into its side: JR, EA, IOH, DJB and 8/25/1863, 10/2/1863. The combination of letters and numbers appear to either be initials or some type of acronym and two dates from the year 1863. No other rocks with similar markings were found around the dig area.

So what do the markings mean? One theory suggests that it was a grave marker, but it's not consistent with typical grave markers of that time period—and luckily, no actual graves were discovered.

There was a home located on the site in the 1800s that was demolished

continued below



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Mysterious Rock... *continued from above*

during the original construction of the theater in the early 1900s. Known as the Russell House, it was occupied by the Russell family who had two sons who passed away. Perhaps it's a marker memorializing the sons? Yet another theory suggests it was simply a corner stone used as part of the foundation of the Russell House and the initials are those of the inhabitants of the home.

Another theory suggests it was placed there by workers when the canal was being trenched. However, The Laconia Historical Society & Museum dismissed that theory as the canal was completed sometime around 1830, 33 years prior to the dates on the rock. How and why the rock got there nearly 160 years ago we still do not know. Our curiosity has been piqued and we are hoping with continued research and some investigating, someday we will have the answers to this mystery.

The stone will be preserved and displayed at the Colonial Theater when its doors reopen in early 2021. The BPS crew will place the stone in a location within the theater that is visible to the public for all to see and help to solve the mystery of the Canal Street Stone. Stay tuned for more stories as you just never know what we will find hiding underground or within the walls of our projects.

Building your building is just one part of your construction project.

It pays to start early, to make sure you've got the right plan at the right cost, that will sail through every approval process and be completed on time.

Here's How We Can Help:

- Feasibility and Evaluations
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- Conceptual Evaluation
- Estimating
- Green Technology
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