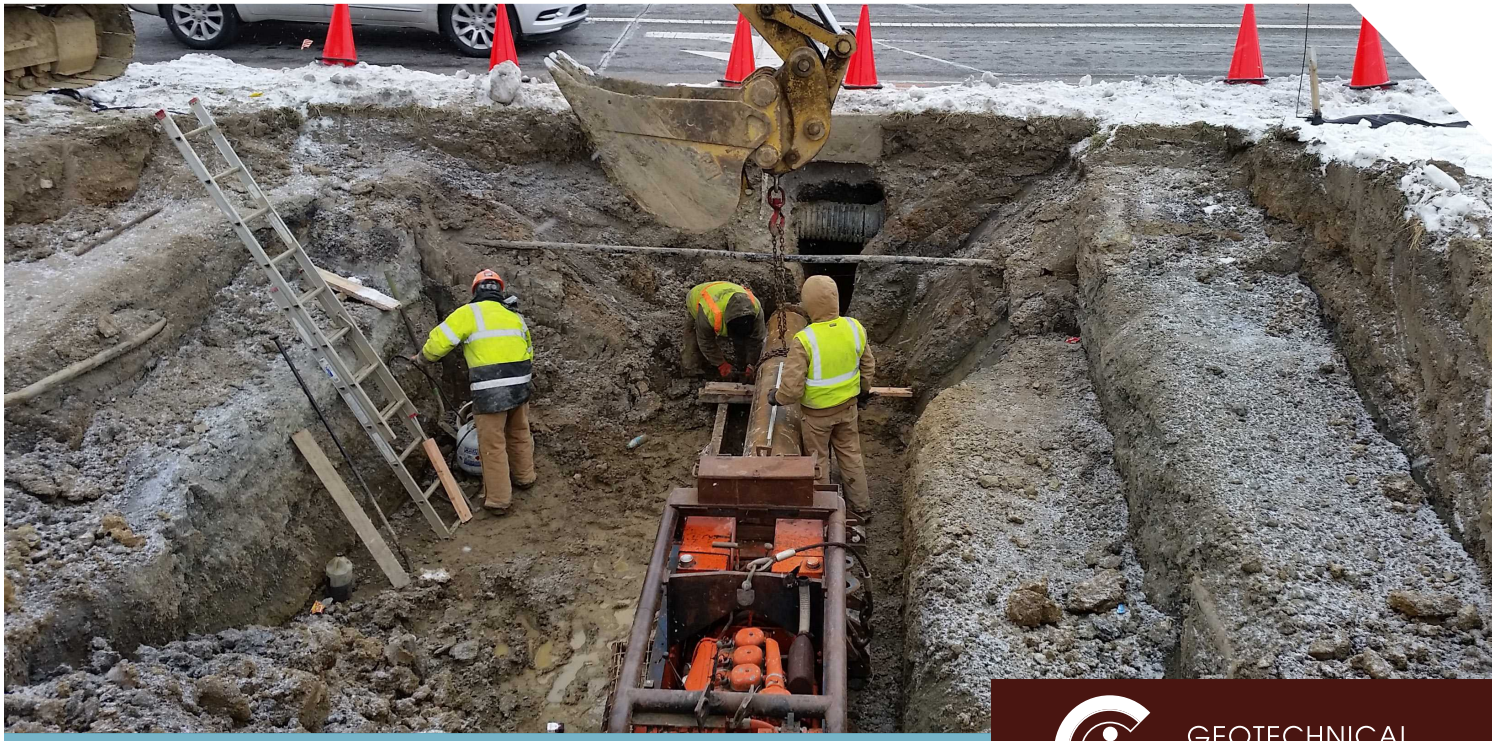

NEWSLETTER

GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANTS INC.

Four Q4 Updates for Developers, Owners and Contractors

November 2025

The end of the year is a busy and festive time, so we'll keep this brief. Here are four quick year-end updates and reminders from GCI's environmental, BEC, geotechnical, and field services departments.

GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING

1 Remedial measures may be needed for overly dry soils.

August 2025 was the driest August recorded for Ohio since 1895. Despite the recent rain showers, three-quarters of Ohio is experiencing abnormally dry to extreme drought conditions.

Dry soils without adequate moisture are difficult to compact to the density required for site and building foundation construction.

- To mitigate overly dry soils, water is added to increase the moisture content to between -3% and +3% of the Standard Proctor optimum moisture content for the soil.
- Once water is added, the soils should be disked up and mixed well to balance the moisture content throughout the soil.
- Then the soil is compacted to the required density for the project.

Each new lift of dry soils would require the same action. Industry standards recommend 8” to 10” loose soil lifts be placed, and then compactive effort is applied to densify each lift to project specification requirements prior to placing additional soil lifts.

GCI’s field technicians and geotechnical engineers will work with site contractors to determine appropriate processes for sites affected by drought conditions.

For more info, contact:

Ryan Folsom, P.E. – rfolsom@gci2000.com | **Curtis Miller, P.E.** – cmiller@gci2000.com

BUILDING ENVELOPE CONSULTING

2 Firestop reminder: Every building trade is responsible for installing firestop associated with their work.

Fire Prevention Month is recognized in October, but astute building owners, construction managers, and trade contractors never lose focus on firestop implementation.

- Fire-rated wall and floor systems are defeated if joints and penetrations by pipes, cables, ducts, busways, cable trays, and miscellaneous structural elements allow fire and combustible gasses to make “end runs” around rated systems and assemblies.

- Building codes require third-party tested and listed systems to be installed to restore the rating of each assembly whenever fire-rated construction is compromised by such openings.

An occupancy permit will not be issued without a completed and approved Final Report for Special Inspections that includes firestop inspections. If any Special Inspections were not performed during construction, building officials will require that components be exposed for inspection, even if that means completed work must be demolished to allow access.

To learn more:

Contact GCI’s team to learn about third-party firestopping inspection requirements and services.
Jack A. Chapin, Jr., AIA, NCARB, BEC2, IFC Premier Certificate – jchapin@gci2000.com
Matt Justus - mjustus@gci2000.com
Bob Hiles - bhiles@gci2000.com

3 Grant applications due in December and January for DOD remediation programs.

Brownfield Remediation Program

The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) will begin accepting grant applications on November 12 for the $88 million Brownfield Remediation Grants that will be available in FY 26. Applications must be submitted by December 5.

Grants from the Brownfield Remediation Program help clean up industrial, commercial, and institutional brownfield sites that are abandoned, idled, or underutilized due to a known or potential release of hazardous substances or petroleum, and prepare them for redevelopment.

As required by House Bill 96, $1 million is reserved for applicants in each of Ohio's 88 counties and will be awarded via a merit-based process.

Through 10 rounds, the Brownfield Remediation Program has provided nearly $717 million to support 681 projects in 86 counties.

Welcome Home Ohio Program

Ohio DOD announced details on the latest round of Welcome Home Ohio, a program that helps expand affordable housing opportunities across the state.

Grant funds are allocated to purchase qualifying residential properties at foreclosure sales and to rehabilitate or construct homes.

Applications will be accepted beginning December 8, 2025, and will close on January 16, 2026.

Since its inception, Welcome Home Ohio has awarded nearly $60 million to support the creation of 481 homes in 26 counties.

For more info, contact:

Kevin J. Fulk, EP – kfulk@gci2000.com

FIELD SERVICES

4 Utility installation documentation services are expanding throughout Ohio.

Specialized utility installation monitoring services that originated with GCI's Youngstown office nearly a decade ago, are available throughout the company's service area.

GCI's field representatives are independent of design engineers, and typically function as an owner's rep observing a variety of water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and fire suppression line construction projects.

GCI's services include:

- Observation of new and replacement water and sewer lines, manholes, storm inlets, and valve or meter pits for privately-owned and municipal utility systems.
- Pressure testing for leak detection.
- Chlorination testing of water lines.
- Observation of construction work near existing pressurized lines.
- Inventory confirmation and quality check when pipelines and components are delivered to construction sites.
- Safety protocol observation for fulfillment of jobsite safety plan, PPE, and traffic safety.
- Notifications to impacted utility customers.
- Restoration observation of sidewalk, driveway, and roadway patching.
- Soil density and compaction testing and concrete testing.
- Observations for boring and directional drilling.

To learn more about utility inspection services, contact:

Tim Petrilla – tpetrilla@gci2000.com | Bob Hiles - bhiles@gci2000.com

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