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USA
TODAY

NO. 1 IN THE USA . . . FIRST IN DAILY READERS

Contractors insulted

In the USA TODAY Cover Story "Space-walkers can't afford a slip," John Pike, director of space policy for the Federation of American Scientists, says: "If you're going to build a skyscraper, a bridge or a tunnel here on the ground, you know you are signing somebody's death warrant."

As a safety professional for the past 15 years who just happens to specialize in bridge construction, I believe Pike's comments were way out of line. He owes the construction industry an apology.

There's no doubt that construction can be dangerous. But to say "we" are signing somebody's death warrant every time we build a building, highway, bridge or tunnel is ludicrous, to say the least.

Companies such as mine spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to provide a safe work environment for their employees and the public. These costs include salaries for individuals such as me, training programs, safety equipment and consultant fees.

Organizations such as the Associated General Contractors of America, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, the American Society of Safety Engineers, the National Safety Council and countless others devote their time, efforts and resources to help protect construction workers.

Construction is a dynamic, ever-changing industry. Our employees are our most valuable asset, and we do our best to protect them as well as the public.

I'm sure Pike does the same by slowing down to the posted speed limit in construction zones.

Mark G. Beisecker
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