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## Knowledge Sharing for Engineers

*Written by Dan Schriks, P.E., S.E.*

**M**y name is Dan Schriks. I have been a practicing structural engineer for 12 years working at Stantec in our Chicago Office. Last year through Stantec's tuition reimbursement program, I completed my coursework in Designing for Organizational Effectiveness through the MS in Learning and Organizational Change (MSLOC) Program at Northwestern University. It's certainly different from structural engineering, but the courses have already opened my eyes to ways to make work a more engaging experience for everyone. These are my guiding principles from taking the class.

**Explore how a structural engineer expanded his professional perspective through a course in Organizational Effectiveness, and learn how he's applying these principles to make work more engaging and collaborative.**



**Knowledge can't be separated from people; embrace organizational knowledge over automation**

What is knowledge? Traditionally, knowledge is either viewed as **explicit**, easily written down (i.e.,  $2+2 = 4$ ), or **tacit**, challenging to articulate in simple language (i.e., the best ways to manage a difficult client). In a traditional view, explicit is viewed as superior to tacit, with the goal of converting all tacit knowledge into a database of explicit knowledge that employees can easily replicate. However, even as our rise in computing power has given us the ability to store more explicit knowledge, research has shown that just having a database is inadequate. Think of a time when you asked a young engineer (Continued on page 5)

## President's Notes

Matt Huffman, P.E.



As I am nearly 20 years into my career as a civil engineer, I find that many of us are all similar in the fact that we prefer to quietly go about our work planning, designing, and building infrastructure for the greater good of the public. However, I have more recently learned, that as the civil engineers, we need to step outside our comfort zone and be the vocal champions of infrastructure. This past month, ASCE Illinois Section leadership and members participated in the National Fly-In to Washington D.C. and participated in a lobby day as part of the Transportation for Illinois Coalition down in Springfield.

Our 10 representatives from Illinois, were a part of a group of over 250 civil engineers from 47 states that participated in the three-day Legislative Fly-In in Washington D.C. We were fortunate to have ASCE President, Marsia Geldert-Murphey, ASCE Technical Region Director, Karren Kabbes, and



Chair of the Committee on America's Infrastructure, Darren Olson, a part of our Illinois Delegation.

It was an interesting time to be in Washington as congress was not supposed to be in session, however, both chambers were there to pass legislation averting a government shutdown on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Some of us were visiting with staffers as our elected officials came off the floor of the House as they passed a stop-gap bill, which included funding for one of the programs we were there advocating for, the Federal Aviation Reauthorization Act. Unfortunately, this was a case-in-point, about avoiding these short-term authorizations, which can delay project implementation.

Our four main legislative items we were advocating for, were:

- **Workforce Development** - ASCE estimates that the IJA created an additional 82,000 engineering jobs, however there are not currently enough engineers to fill this need. ASCE has partnered with the National Governors Association to develop [Strategies to Address Engineering Workforce Challenges](#), a best practices guide for meeting this generational infrastructure moment.
- **Resilient Infrastructure** - While IJA provided additional funding to improve infrastructure, Congress must make resilience a priority, and include adequate funding for hazard mitigation programs, support for improved climate data, and incorporate resilience measures in federally funded projects.
- **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)** - We advocated

# ASCE Illinois Section News

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Section - Region 3

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for continuing the biennial schedule of the WRDA and passing this before the end of 2024.  
(Continued on page 12)

# The Unsung Heroes: Geotechnical Engineers and Their Vital Role

Written by Thierno Kane, PhD, P.E.

When we think of engineering marvels, we often envision soaring skyscrapers, intricate bridges, and sleek highways. But beneath the surface lies a group of professionals who quietly shape our world, ensuring stability, safety, and resilience. Enter the geotechnical engineers—the guardians.

## What is a Geotechnical Engineer?

A geotechnical engineer is like a soil detective. They delve into the Earth, investigating the properties of soil, rock, and other materials lurking beneath our feet. Their mission? To support the safe and efficient design, construction, and maintenance of infrastructure projects. Their duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. **Site Investigation:** Geotechnical engineers are the Sherlock Holmes of construction sites. Armed with knowledge, hard hats, lab coats, and various gadgets, they dig deep, collecting soil and rock samples. By carefully studying the collected samples, they begin to piece together the secrets of the ground: its permeability, compressibility, and shear strength.
2. **Geotechnical Analysis and Design:** Now, armed with an

understanding of the characteristics of ground, our engineers begin predicting the behavior of the subsurface under various loading conditions. They calculate bearing capacity, settlement, and slope stability. Think of them as Earth's architects, designing foundations, retaining walls, and stabilization measures. Their goal? To ensure structures stand tall and remain stable.

3. **Foundation Design:** Ever wondered how a skyscraper stays upright? Thank a geotechnical engineer! They assess subsurface conditions, load requirements, and seismic risks. Then, they select the appropriate foundation type—shallow (like footings) or deep (think piles), to support the structure. It's a balancing act between soil, concrete and/or steel.

## Beyond Construction: Geological Hazards

Geotechnical engineers don't stop at blueprints. They're also Earth's protectors from natural disasters. When landslides threaten, they spring into action, performing geotechnical analyses to minimize land sliding and implement stabilization measures. Even earthquakes don't rattle them—they design

structures to withstand the ground's tremors.

## Collaborators Extraordinaire

These engineers don't work alone. They team up with architects, structural wizards, and construction crews. Together, they weave geotechnical considerations into the fabric of every project. It's a symphony of science and creativity.

## The Bottom Line

Next time you admire a sturdy bridge spanning a gorge or a skyscraper piercing the clouds, remember the unsung heroes, the magicians who conjure stability from the depths—the geotechnical engineers. Their spell book? Soil and rock mechanics, and behavior, and a dash of practical magic.

**Author Bio: Thierno Kane, PhD, PE** is a Geotechnical Engineer at Geosyntec Consultants, where he works on a variety of geo-environmental and geo-structural projects involving geotechnical investigation and characterization, value engineering, design of foundation and earth retention systems, evaluation and design ground improvement methods for soft soils, settlement slope monitoring and instrumentation. He currently serves as the Chicago ASCE Geo-Institute Co-chair.

# Low Head Dams

Written by Jerome F. McGovern, P.E.

Low head dams are submerged structures 5 to 15 feet high built to completely span a waterway such that water continuously flows over the crest bank to bank. They were constructed for the purpose of creating

## April is Low Head Dam Public Safety Awareness month.

an impoundment of water for milling grain, irrigation of agricultural fields or municipal water supply. Found throughout the United States, those concentrated in the northeast were used for providing waterpower to grain mills while in

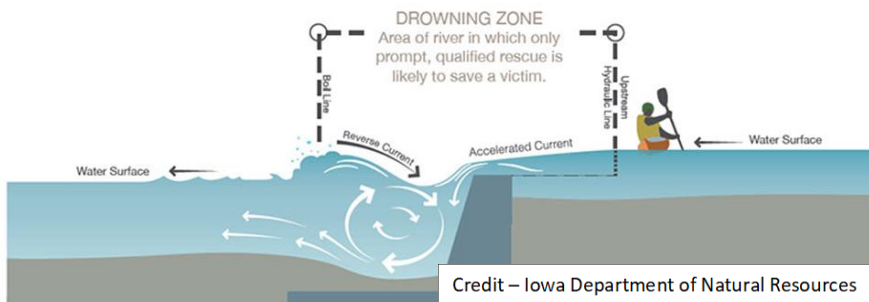
United States. Because the failure of a low head dam will not endanger people and structures downstream, they are not as heavily regulated as larger dams. ASCE, starting in 2022, has declared the month of April as “Low Head Dam Public Safety Awareness” month and has developed a video and presentation materials to inform the general public and first responders of the potential dangers of low head dams. It can be found here: <https://www.asce.org/communities/institutes-and-technical-groups/environmental-and-water-resources-institute/national-inventory-of-low-head-dams>

head dams can create a dangerous situation that could trap people and small watercraft in a reverse current and possibly lead to drowning. Small watercraft such as canoes, kayaks and rafts may not be aware of the presence of the low head

## Potential drowning hazard to swimmers, fishermen and boaters.

dam because the upstream water is calm and they are unaware of the drop in elevation until it is too late to portage around the dam. Some low-head dams have been referred to as “drowning machines”.

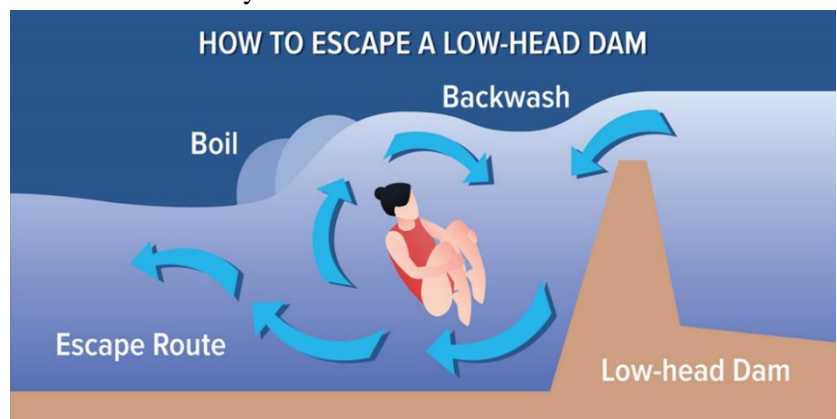
Despite efforts to provide warnings and signage alerting boaters and others to the potential danger at the low head dam, tragedies still occur. It has been estimated that over 1,000 people have died at low head dams. Victims have included boaters, fishermen, dam owners and dam maintenance staff. There have been several cases where first responders who were assisting people stuck in the reverse current



the west they were primarily used for irrigation. Many of the original purposes for the construction of the low head dam no longer exist but the dams remain in place.

Water resource engineers have started a movement to increase awareness of low head dams and make the hazards of such dams more visible to the public. Working with the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) they are attempting to compile an inventory of all such dams in the

At certain flow levels many low



(Continued on page 5)



## Low Head Dams

(Continued from page 4)

have drowned.

In the last 15 years there has been a move by regulatory authorities such as Illinois Department of Natural Resources and local Forest Preserve Districts to eliminate low head dams and to date 24 have been removed and several more are proposed. In addition to removing a possible safety hazard, the elimination of the dams improves water

quality of the stream and aquatic habitat.

Yet not everyone agrees with the removal of such dams. An example is Graue Mill on Salt Creek in Oak Brook, Illinois. It is one of only two operating grist mills in the State of Illinois (a grist mill is the equipment used to grind grain into flour). Located in DuPage County Forest Preserve District's

(DCFPD) Fullersburg Woods, the low head dam appeared to power a grinding mill as part of a historical display and museum. It turns out the milling wheel was not turned

**Agencies have pursued a policy since 2010 of removing low head dams whenever possible.**

by waterpower but by a small electric motor. Recent discussions about removing the low head dam adjacent to the mill were not well received by the general public. By providing community outreach and informational meetings, the DCFPD was able to convince the community that the removal of the low head dam was advantageous to improving the aquatic habitat of Salt Creek and would not impact the Graue Mill Historic site. The low head dam was removed in 2022.

**Author Bio: Jerome F. McGovern, P.E.** is a retired civil engineer who is active in the EWRI Section.



## Knowledge Sharing for Engineers

(Continued from page 1)

to design an element and only provided them with a design manual and an example set of plans. They may get 70% of the way to a solution but will often fail to understand the nuances that go into critical design decisions that make our projects successful.

What is missing in the example above is the understanding that **knowledge is embedded in our experiences and interactions with one another.** Tools such as **enterprise social networks (ESN)** are a way to increase the number of experiences across a company. An ESN is a web-based platform that

allows users to communicate with each other in private, in groups, or with everyone in the organization. Users can present information about themselves and access others' profile information and contributions. ESNs can either be a single platform such as Microsoft (Continued on page 6)

# Knowledge Sharing for Engineers

(Continued from page 5)

Yammer or built through several tools companies already have in service. However designed, ESNs should be considered in terms of what **affordances** they provide users: *visibility, persistence, edibility, and association.*

*Why is this important?* Recent development in AI demonstrates its ability to automate certain knowledge tasks. What is most easily automated are tasks that can be isolated and performed without much input from other team members, for example, bridge deck design. Employees are often suspicious of developing AI solutions due to concerns that as more tasks are automated, organizations will begin to reduce staff. *Companies that invest in knowledge sharing signal how they value their employees and demonstrate that automation is a tool, not a means to replace workers.*

## Measure Knowledge Sharing Success in terms of ROI ROE – Return on Expectations

Return on Investment is a standard measure for the success of a new program or product. It's useful because it's easy to measure (How much did we spend vs. how much did we make?). ROI as a measure of success for knowledge sharing becomes more complex. Using the same measure to determine how many new sales can be attributed to implementing a new social network at work is methodologically impossible and counterproductive to business strategy. Knowledge sharing needs to be viewed as a **contributor to business results.** Success should be measured more

in terms of changes in behavior. Measures can be quantitative "how many connections started on our ESN between junior staff and senior leadership" or qualitative "survey responses that attributed the formation of the ESN to the realization of new business opportunities." When success in knowledge sharing is viewed this way, expectations are more satisfying and realistic to achieve.

## Model the behavior you would like to see

With the rise of social media in organizations, a common misconception is that millennials and gen

**Delve into the importance of embracing organizational knowledge, the potential of enterprise social networks, and why measuring knowledge sharing shouldn't just be about ROI but also ROE – Return on Expectations.**

z will be the platform's early adopters. **However, like most people, millennials have difficulty seeing how "social" tools can be used for "work."** They look to leadership to model behavior on these sites. Leaders need to define the purpose of the social tools, such as **improving collaboration, enhancing knowledge sharing, creating a connected global company, and preventing duplication of work.** Then once the purpose is spelled out, they need to model behavior. For example, suppose the platform's goal is to improve collaboration. In that

case, leaders should consider posting something non-work related to demonstrate that it's okay to post about things outside of work. This posting can help create unknown connections between employees and increase psychological safety.

## Allow space for people to respond and learn in different ways

A common trap when creating elaborate enterprise social networks is the belief they are ineffective if most employees don't start posting immediately. **90% of knowledge gained on social media are from people who do not create content on the platform.** Understanding this helps to set realistic goals for measuring the success of new knowledge-sharing techniques, but it also demonstrates the need to consider the users and what we can do to promote more posting on these sites. Email

**Discover how modeling desired behavior, allowing space for different learning methods, and fostering knowledge sharing can empower future leaders and boost organizational commitment.**

often makes us fall into the trap of asking people to type their ideas or thoughts, but that can often be more time-consuming. Would people be more willing to share if they could post a recording of their thoughts to a team page? What if there was a way to let more junior staff listen to the conversations of  
(Continued on page 9)

# Public Right-of-Way – Private Uses Caution Ahead!

Written by Joel Koenig, P.E.

Public rights-of-ways are frequently the corridor of choice for the installation of new utilities or transportation facilities. In evaluating the viability of these corridors, the right-of-way

**Public rights-of-way are occupied by both public and private entities**

limits, along with the location of pavements and utilities, are routinely considered. What may not be accounted for is how the public right-of-way is being used by entities and individuals. A close review of the existing conditions, permit records and other historical data may find that over time, private individuals, and privately owned business have begun to use the public right-of-way.

Owners and planners may also discover private uses that were never authorized. Removing these non-authorized, privately-owned, or perceived to be privately-owned, elements can pose challenges to the project both in costs and project delays. It is important in the planning stage to not only survey and locate these elements but to account for their removal, be it permanent or temporary. Unanticipated objections to the project may also arise from the perceived taking of private property. It may be necessary for the client or project team to inform and educate the

owner of the concern and why the element may be removed.

## Legal Uses of the ROW

Legal uses of right-of-way can occur through various mechanisms. One is a permit where the intended owner of a facility seeks the approval of the controlling entity to secure permission to install the facility. Utility crossings, signage and special landscaping improvements are examples of these types of permitted uses.

legislative rules that will allow certain uses or even allow encroachments upon the right-of-way. Examples of encroachments that may be authorized by these entitlements include subdivision signage, balconies, and awnings.

Outdoor dining has expanded rapidly since the pandemic and in many locales, this has become a significant opportunity for proprietors to expand their capacity by using sidewalks and parking lots for al fresco dining. Municipalities



*Restaurants and diners have discovered the outdoors including this Fulton market eatery.*

Building codes and subdivision ordinances are local jurisdiction

have even granted special use (Continued from page 8)



# Public Right-of-Way – Private Uses Caution Ahead!

(Continued from page 7)

permits to allow restaurants to erect barriers and place tables directly on the street.

Transit plays a critical role in many municipalities and sometimes these transportation providers are private entities, such as Greyhound or Trailways, that need to use the public right-of-way. The increase of bike use for commuting has also resulted in privately-owned bike sharing programs that rely on public space.

As part of project planning, the engineer and project sponsor need to recognize that these permitted uses may have a “senior” right and any construction project will need to either avoid or protect these elements from disturbance. If avoiding the facility is not possible, then approval or

## Identifying both legal users and non-authorized users is critical to project implementation

coordination with the facility owner must occur. Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary to either compensate the facility owner for loss of use of their facility or provide a temporary arrangement during the construction, with subsequent restoration of the facility to its original location and condition.

### Maybe Not So Legal

If there is any doubt that the public can at times take “ownership” of the public right-of-way, one only

needs to visit a Chicago neighborhood in the winter. After a large winter storm, it is not uncommon for a resident to call “dibs” on an on-street parking space, especially if they have already put in the hard work of clearing the space of snow. When leaving for the day, they will place a chair or other marker in the empty space to reserve it for their use upon returning home. Although this practice is not protected in any legal sense, it is often honored by neighbors in unwritten street law.



*So common is this practice of “dibs” it is lampooned. Courtesy of Bailey Davis, <https://riot-fest.org/2021/01/21/the-history-of-dibs/>*

Less confrontational, but of equal concern, are property owners who claim a right to the parkway in front of their residence. Many homeowners take pride in their property, and this often includes maintaining or even improving the street-side landscaping. If a public agency comes along and does roadwork or utility installation that affects the parkway, and does not fully restore the elaborate landscaping, they may face some harsh criticism and unhappy constituents.

Non-legal or unauthorized uses can be challenging to identify at times. A right-of-way or easement corridor that has been left unattended for a period of time, or is not fenced, can easily be encroached upon. Utility corridors and alleyways are rarely monitored and over the years private garages, sheds or fences may be built that extend over to public property.

It's not uncommon these days to see roadside memorials erected by loved ones after some type of tragic event. These memorials can grow quite significant in size, and they may become embraced by the community. Removal of these memorials can be a very sensitive matter and it may be prudent to

## Addressing the need to remove or relocate privately owned elements may require a community outreach program

reach out to the community before the memorial is removed to discuss how elements may be preserved. Street art, most commonly images and words painted onto pavement or buildings, is another type of unauthorized use. Where some might consider it graffiti or vandalism, others see it as creative expression. Street art can be mysterious in its origin and can potentially show up anywhere. Its form can take many shapes including manhole covers painted with various messages or a large display placed onto the right-of-way. These non-authorized uses of the right-of-way can be an ex- (Continued on page 9)



# Public Right-of-Way – Private Uses Caution Ahead!

(Continued from page 8)

pression of a community’s spirit and unceremoniously removing them may result in backlash and create a public relations crisis for the project owner.

Communities sometimes choose to use the public roadway to display their community spirit with painted expressions placed directly onto roadways. Some of these are authorized, while others may be reflections of protest movements. Should a project necessitate that such a display be disturbed, the planners should be sensitive to the emotional impact it could have on



*Rainbow crosswalk in “Chicago’s Proudest Neighborhood”*

residents. An outreach program is suggested so a mutually agreeable outcome can be developed.

Unhoused populations are a growing concern across the U.S., with homeless encampments being erected in many communities. This complex economic and social welfare issue might affect a project if the work zone is expected to traverse through the encampment. Removal of the encampment and those residing there may require the coordination of social welfare agencies, not-for profits, law enforcement and public works.

## Summary and Conclusions

Whether legal or not, when private use of the right-of-way occurs, project owners and their engineers must be prepared to address the impact these elements have upon the work being conducted. The first step is to carefully examine the proposed project corridor for suspected encroachments or non-

authorized uses, while also identifying the legal uses. This information should be compiled into their project evaluations, along with estimated costs for avoiding, removing and/or replacing the affected element. The associated social and community relations aspects may also have a significant impact on the feasibility of the project, along with its schedule and costs. By engaging social service agencies, conducting community outreach, and developing communication programs, when appropriate, the planner can hopefully address these concerns and avoid pitfalls that could negatively impact the delivery of the project.

**Author Bio:** Joel Koenig is a senior project manager with CMT Engineers and is serving as the 2023-2024 UESI Chair. He can be reached at 630.907.7025 or via email at [jkoenig@cmtengr.com](mailto:jkoenig@cmtengr.com)

# Knowledge Sharing for Engineers

(Continued from page 6)

senior staff discussing design decisions? **If you're hopping on a Teams chat to screen-share a solution with another colleague, consider asking if you can record the conversation. The recording can be posted to an internal shared site that younger staff can use as a learning tool in perpetuity.**



**Knowledge sharing is a great way to start to empower future leaders of the company**

Organizational commitment is the sense that your work directly benefits yourself, your team, and the organization. It can often be hardest to grow in most junior staff, who find it challenging to see how their work affects the company's bottom line. **When knowledge sharing is viewed by leadership as being valuable, employees have a more accessible way to demonstrate how their work is**  
(Continued on page 12)

# IS-ASCE Annual Membership Committee Update

Written by Tom Borges, P.E.

Thanks to consistently strong leadership within our Section and the sustained perseverance of our local committees and technical institutes, the Illinois Section membership is as strong as ever as we approach the halfway point of the decade. The Section begins 2024 with 3,048 active members – a nearly 5% increase from this time last year, and a more than 12% increase from pre-pandemic levels. The current makeup of our Section consists of 1,390 Members (46%), 640 Associate Members (21%), 773 Student Members (25%), 132 Affiliate Members (4%), 107 Fellows (4%)

**The 2024 Membership Committee will focus on improving engagement with and leveraging the experience of our nearly 550 Life Members**

and 6 Distinguished Members. The Illinois Section also has 535 Life Members (18%) who have made a lifetime commitment to ASCE and the profession by maintaining membership over the length of their professional career; 21 members achieved this status in 2023 and were honored during the annual Awards Dinner at the Swissotel in early October. Click [here](#) to see how you can qualify for various levels of membership grades as you advance your career.

The 2024 Membership Committee consists of Membership Chair Tom Borges (Bloom Companies, LLC), Directors Muhammad Ali (EXP) and Joe Wilk (Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.) and YMG Chair Hugh Regan (HNTB). The committee will be meeting throughout the year to coordinate ongoing and upcoming membership-related initiatives to ensure the continued success of our historically strong local Section of ASCE. These initiatives typically fall into one of two categories: (1) Member Retention and (2) Membership Growth. To be able to maintain a strong base of core members and avoid high turnover rates, consistent engagement with our members is extremely critical. In 2024, one of our focal points will be to improve engagement with our invaluable Life Members. While our Section has long included recognition of new Life Members as part of the annual Awards Dinner program, we would like to explore new ways to increase their involvement with various activities and programs throughout the year while also leveraging their enthusiasm and experience in the profession, ultimately bringing more “Life” to this significant portion of our membership which accounts for nearly 20% of our total membership. Throughout 2024, the Membership Committee will be reviewing best practices from other Sections with established Life Member networks as

well as reaching out directly to our own Section’s Life Members to see what they would like to get out of their membership at this stage of their career.

**The Illinois Section ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the world for membership referrals in 2023; with your help we can climb to the very top of the rankings in 2024!**

In 2023, we made a big push to encourage our membership to participate in the annual *Member-Get-A-Member* referral program – details on this program, including how you can participate in 2024, can be found [here](#). This program also acts as a friendly competition between the more than 90 Sections of ASCE across the globe to see which Section can recruit the most members. Our members ultimately made 34 referrals throughout the year, nearly three times as many referrals as we made in 2022. The referrals resulted in 8 new members, which equated to a 0.32% growth of our membership, good enough for 15<sup>th</sup> place in the overall rankings – or the top 20% of all sections worldwide! Our total referrals ranked 4<sup>th</sup> overall in the country – only behind Texas (81 referrals), Maryland (63) and NY Metro (40) – and 7<sup>th</sup> in the entire world. I (Continued on page 11)

# IS-ASCE Annual Membership Committee Update

(Continued from page 10)

would like to thank everyone that participated in the 2023 referral program, and **I challenge all members to send out at least one referral** to a friend or colleague in 2024!

A long-term goal of the committee that falls into both the growth and retention initiative categories is to establish a network of local membership champions. This would involve identifying one ASCE member at each company or agency who would act as the main point of contact within their respective workplace and help communicate various efforts of the Illinois Section; they would also ensure that their colleagues are up-to-date on membership benefits and volunteer opportunities. This is an effort that will take some time to establish but we hope to make some good progress towards laying the

foundations of this exciting program throughout 2024.

Please remember to keep your ASCE account up-to-date with your latest employment and contact information by logging into

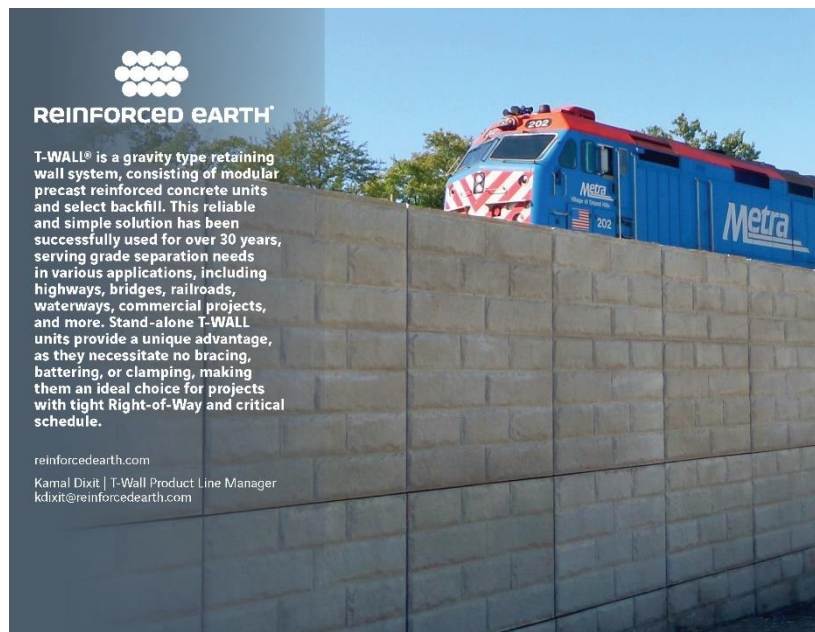
**If you have not already renewed your membership, please note that the ASCE membership renewal grace period lasts through March 31<sup>st</sup>**

your [online ASCE account](#) and navigating to the *Manage My Account* page. It is also very important to remember to pay the Illinois Section dues (\$30) when renewing your 2024 membership, as these dues account for a majority of our Section income which we rely on to fund outstanding

programs and events such as the Illinois Infrastructure Report Card, Annual Awards Dinner, Legislative Lobby Days in Springfield and Washington DC, and various community service and student outreach activities. If you have not already renewed your membership, please note that the ASCE membership renewal grace period lasts through March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Please contact Tom Borges, the Illinois Section Membership Committee Chair, with any membership-related questions at [tborges@bloomcos.com](mailto:tborges@bloomcos.com).

**Author Bio: Tom Borges, P.E.** is the Illinois Transportation Design Manager and Chicago Office Branch Manager at Bloom Companies, [tborges@bloomcos.com](mailto:tborges@bloomcos.com).



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## President's Notes

(Continued from page 2)

- **Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization** – One of our main “asks” is to avoid short-term authorizations, which lead to costly delays in investment decisions, and pass a multi-year reauthorization to prevent uncertainty with future projects.

Overall, nearly all the Illinois legislators we met supported infrastructure and were very receptive to our four main legislative items.

On the State side of our lobbying efforts, ASCE Illinois Section participated in the Transportation for Illinois Coalition (TFIC) lobby day on March 5<sup>th</sup>. TFIC unites stakeholders from business, labor, and local governments to educate policy makers and the public about the need for adequate investment in Illinois transportation infrastructure. TFIC is the recognized authority on and unifying voice for transportation needs in Illinois and was instrumental in development the 2019 Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan legislation. The ASCE Illinois Section has been a part of this coalition for nearly 15 years.

A group of 9 ASCE members from the Illinois Section Board,

Government Affairs Committee, Transportation & Development Institute, Environmental & Water Resources Institute, Structural Engineering Institute, and Younger Member Group attend the daylong event. Overall, about 60 people participated in the TFIC Lobby Day, from a cross section of different organizations. We presented our [2022 Illinois Infrastructure Report Card](#) (GPA C-), which was also included in advocacy materials provided to legislators. On behalf of ASCE, I was a part of a small group that met with Speaker of the House, Chris Welch, to discuss some of our concerns with the recently proposed budget pertaining the \$175M diversion from road, bridge, and transit investments, which is one of the main legislative items that our coalition discussed with all legislators that day.

Our main State focus items with our legislators were:

- Consistent Capital Investment with voicing concern over the proposed \$175M diversion from road, bridge and transit investment in the current proposed budget.
- Concern over the lack of funding increases in transit operations, as new revenue is needed to address

the RTA's projected \$730M operation shortfall starting in 2026. Downstate transit is also facing near-term financial challenges in meeting service demands.

- Reporting on the status of RE-BUILD Illinois, in which approximately 50% of funds have been expended.
- Workforce shortages to deliver transportation infrastructure.

Thank you to all those involved in assisting and organizing these events, including our Illinois Advocacy Captains, Pat Lach and Matt Kirby, and our Illinois Section Government Relations Chair, Brian Castro, as well as those that participated in these visits to help be the champions of our Illinois infrastructure.

The Illinois Section will continue to look for ways to further engage our members to advocate for our local, regional, and national infrastructure. If you have thoughts and ideas, please reach out!

By Matt Huffman, P.E.

ASCE Illinois Section President  
2023-2024

## Knowledge Sharing for Engineers

(Continued from page 9)

**contributing to the overall success of the company.** ESNs not only allow employees to connect with people from different locations or across departments, but

contributions also leave a permanent trace an employee can look back on, as well as a sense of how much others adopted a solution through likes and reposting.

**Author Bio: Dan Schricks, P.E. & S.E.**  
Structural Group Manager at  
Stantec.

## Spring 2024

To inform Illinois Section members of the discussions at monthly Board meetings, the Section Secretary contributes this article to the newsletter covering December 2023, January 2024, February 2024, and March 2024. The Illinois Section Board Meetings offer in-person and virtual attendance options. Access to historical IS Board Meeting Minutes, Constitution, and Bylaws can be found on ASCE Collaborate at <https://collaborate.asce.org/home>. Any questions or comments on the Board activities are welcome by contacting Secretary Monica Crinion at [monica.crinion@aecom.com](mailto:monica.crinion@aecom.com).

### ■ *Treasurer's Report & Meeting Minutes*

▲ A treasurer's report was presented and approved at the December 2023, January 2024, February 2024, and March 2024 meetings. The November 2023, December 2023, and January 2024 Board Meeting minutes were approved.

### ■ *Highlights from Illinois Section Activities and Institute/Group Reports.*

▲ *WGL Student Symposium* – The IIT, UIC, and Northwestern ASCE Student Chapters are hosting the Western Great Lakes (WGL) Student Symposium in Chicago, April 4-6, 2024. Over 450 student attendees from 17 ASCE student chapters are anticipated to attend the symposium which features 11 different competitions including concrete canoe, steel bridge, surveying, GeoWall,

quiz bowl, technical paper and concrete cornhole events. The three host student chapters are still fundraising and local engineering firms are encouraged to sponsor the event by visiting the WGL website at <https://studentsymposium.asce.org/western-great-lakes/sponsors/>.

▲ *Multi-Region Leadership Conference* – The MRLC for ASCE Regions 3, 6 & 7 was held in Kansas City, MO on January 12-13, 2024. The conference connected Section, Branch, Younger Member and Student Member leaders to discuss challenges and successes experienced at the local ASCE chapter level. Director Joe Wilk, Secretary Monica Crinion, YMG Chair Hugh Regan, and YMG Vice Chair Ryan Cummings attended on behalf of the Illinois Section.

▲ *Future Cities Competition* – The Chicago area Future City Competition was held on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The theme was Electrify Your Future – student teams were tasked with designing a 100% electrically powered city. The Illinois Section and technical group institutes sponsored 10 different awards for the competition and 12 members participated as judges for the event.

▲ *2024 Legislative Fly-In* – The legislative fly-in was held February 28<sup>th</sup> thru March 1<sup>st</sup> in Washington D.C. Over 250 ASCE members attended including 10 members on behalf of the Illinois Section. ASCE members met with over 258 Congressional offices.

Key initiatives promoted by ASCE included prioritization of resilient infrastructure, workforce development, FAA reauthorization, and the Water Resources Development Act.

▲ *IL Section ASCE Scholarships & Spring Dinner* – The Illinois Section and Technical Institutes are offering scholarship opportunities to undergraduate and graduate ASCE students from UIC, IIT and Northwestern. The application deadline is March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 with information available at <https://www.isasce.org/scholarships/>. Winners will be recognized at the Student Scholarship awards and recognition dinner on Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at Maggiano's Little Italy downtown Chicago location.

▲ *Construction Institute (CI)* – The CI held their Board meetings on December 5<sup>th</sup>, January 9<sup>th</sup>, February 13<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup>. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, CI and Illinois Asian American Civil Engineers (IAACE) held a joint event for a tour of the 1000M Chicago project site. For more information or if interested in joining this institute, please contact CI Chair Daniel Lowery at [dlowery@transystems.com](mailto:dlowery@transystems.com).

▲ *Environmental & Water Resources Institute (EWRI)* – The EWRI held their Board meetings on January 9<sup>th</sup>, February 13<sup>th</sup>, and March 5<sup>th</sup>. On December 12<sup>th</sup>, twenty attendees toured the Jardine Water Purification Plant with the Chicago Department of Water (Continued on page 14)

# Secretary Report

(Continued from page 13)

Management. Please contact EWRI Chair Jimmy Canning with any questions or for information about EWRI activities at [jimmy.canning@strand.com](mailto:jimmy.canning@strand.com).

▲ **Geo-Institute (GI)** – The GI held their Board meetings on January 11<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>. The dinner meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup> featured speakers Ozgun Numanoglu and Tugce Baser presenting their reconnaissance and observation from the 2023 Turkiye Earthquakes. Please contact GI Chair Jason Buenker with any questions or for information about GI activities at [Jason.Buenker@shanwil.com](mailto:Jason.Buenker@shanwil.com).

▲ **Structural Engineering Institute (SEI)** – The SEI held their Board meetings on December 13<sup>th</sup>, January 16<sup>th</sup> and February 15<sup>th</sup>. The chapter institute held a luncheon featuring the NICTD West Lake Corridor Project on January 30<sup>th</sup> and a dinner meeting presentation on the CTA Blue Line Reconstruction Project on February 21<sup>st</sup>. Please contact SEI Chair Justin Mickens with any questions or for information about SEI activities at [Justin.Mickens@parsons.com](mailto:Justin.Mickens@parsons.com).

▲ **Transportation & Development Institute (T&DI)** – The T&DI held their Board meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup>, January 9<sup>th</sup>, February 13<sup>th</sup> and March 12<sup>th</sup>. Lunches were held on January 25<sup>th</sup> featuring Manar Nashif, Illinois Tollway Chief Engineering Officer, and on February 15<sup>th</sup> featuring Jose Rios, IDOT Region 1 Engineer. Please contact T&DI Chair Sylvan Popovici with any questions or for more information at [SPopovici@benesch.com](mailto:SPopovici@benesch.com).

▲ **Utility Engineering and Surveying Institute (UESI)** – The UESI held their Board meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, February 12<sup>th</sup> and March 12<sup>th</sup>. UESI and EWRI hosted a joint dinner presentation on February 21<sup>st</sup> on the topic of *Bringing Lake Michigan Water to Joliet* featuring the Grand Prairie Water Commission's \$1.5B water main distribution project. For more information or if interested in joining this institute, please contact UESI Chair Joel Koenig at [jkoenig@cmtengr.com](mailto:jkoenig@cmtengr.com).

▲ **Younger Member Group (YMG)** – The YMG held their Board meetings on December 6<sup>th</sup>, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, February 7<sup>th</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup>. The YMG led planning efforts for another successful ASCE IL Section Holiday party at Haymarket Pub & Brewery on December 19<sup>th</sup>. On February 24<sup>th</sup>, seven (7) YMG members volunteered at the Chicago Architecture Center Engineering Week E-Fest. For more information about YMG activities or if interested in joining this group, please contact YMG Chair Hugh Regan at [hregan@hntb.com](mailto:hregan@hntb.com).

The Illinois Section Board Meetings are held the first Monday of the month, except for holidays. The next board meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2024 and will be in-person at Michael Baker International (200 W. Adams Street). For any guests or Board Members that cannot attend in-person, a virtual option will be provided via MS Teams. If you are interested in attending these meetings, please contact President Matt Huffman at [mhuffman@cbbel.com](mailto:mhuffman@cbbel.com).

By Monica Crinion, PE  
ASCE Illinois Section Secretary  
2022-2024  
[monica.crinion@aecom.com](mailto:monica.crinion@aecom.com)



## Illinois Section

## Activities

### 2024 ASCE Western Great Lakes Student Symposium - Sponsorships Needed

**Date:** Tuesday-Thursday, April 4-6

The ASCE student chapters of Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Illinois-Chicago, and Northwestern University have partnered together to host the 2024 annual ASCE Western Great Lakes (WGL) Student Symposium! These local ASCE student chapters need help in making this event happen. They have currently raised over half of their \$75,000 fundraising goal and are looking for additional sponsors. This is a wonderful opportunity to support the future of civil engineering and put your company in the spotlight! Unique benefits, such as tables at the symposium career fair, are being offered to prospective sponsors! Below you will find additional information about the symposium, along with a link to the WGL 2024 Sponsorship Portfolio. We highly encourage sponsoring this event!

**Sponsorship Portfolio:** [Click here](#)

Additional information about the symposium may be found on the symposium website. Please reach out to [wglc2024@gmail.com](mailto:wglc2024@gmail.com) with any questions.

### IL Section ASCE Construction Institute April Event - IDOT Construction & Materials Update

**Place:** Virtual

**Time:** 10:30am - 11:30am

**Cost:** \$10

#### **Presenters:**

Bureau Chief of Construction,  
Jon Schumacher  
Bureau Chief of Materials,  
Steve Jones

[Click here to Register](#). Registration ends April 6, 2024

### IL Section ASCE President-Elect & Student Scholarship Dinner (SAVE THE DATE)

**Place:** Maggiano Banquets (111 W Grand Ave, Chicago, IL 60654)

**Date:** April 18, 2024

### IL Section ASCE Geo-Institute Bi-Annual Lecture series (SAVE THE DATE)

**Date:** May 3, 2024

### IL Section ASCE GI Lecture Series – Lessons in Underground Construction

**Date:** May 3, 2024

[Event Flyer](#)

### EWRI World Congress 2024

**Place:** Milwaukee, WI

**Date:** May 19-22, 2024

[Save The Date Flyer](#)



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