ASCE Illinois Section

# News

Vol. 67, No.1
Spring 2026

INSIDE:



# An Opinion on Technology and Structural Engineering Practice Today

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

This article is an opinion piece based on my personal experience in structural engineering practice and recent exposure to emerging tools in analysis, automation, and artificial intelligence. The views expressed here are my own and are intended to spark discussion rather than prescribe a single "right" way forward.

Over the past decade, structural engineering has experienced a steady but profound shift in how we analyze, document, and communicate our work. What feels different today is not just the pace of change, but the convergence of multiple technologies at once: increasingly capable finite element tools, accessible programming languages, and AI systems that are beginning to reshape how engineers collaborate and learn. These tools are not replacing engineering judgment—but they are changing where judgment is applied and what skills will matter most in the next generation of engineers.

What follows is my perspective on three intersecting trends I see playing out across practice today: the expanding role of finite element modeling, the rise of AI-assisted "vibe coding" and Python-based workflows, and the growing importance of collaboration and change management as technical skill gaps compress.

**Finite Element Tools: From Exception to Expectation**

Finite element analysis (FEA) has long been part of structural engineering, but historically it occupied a narrower role. Complex finite element models were often reserved for specialty checks, research-driven problems, or structures that clearly fell outside the bounds of simplified hand methods. For many day-to-day designs, engineers relied on reduced models, closed-form equations, and conservative assumptions that allowed work to progress efficiently and defensibly.

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## President's Notes

**Monica Crinion, P.E.**

With so many excellent civil engineering and infrastructure focused organizations in the Chicagoland area – have you ever stopped to reflect "Why ASCE?". I acknowledge that if you are reading this newsletter, I don't have to sell you on the benefits of ASCE, but what sets our group apart from the other professional organizations? Many members started as students looking for friends and community as they pursed their undergraduate degree. But what keeps us engaged now and so committed to this ASCE organization in a market saturated with great professional organizations? I'll highlight three examples of how I think our ASCE Illinois Section excels and hope this encourages you to reflect on what draws you to our group and how we can encourage new and more seasoned professionals to engage with ASCE.

### Technical Experts

The Chicagoland area is major hub for civil engineering and often ranked among the top cities for our profession thanks to a variety of large, diverse infrastructure programs. Interesting, challenging projects draw top notch technical experts to our region to work and shape our communities. And our local ASCE IL Section Institutes and committees capitalize on this wealth of knowledge by hosting dinner meetings featuring local projects, luncheons with agency leaders, and trainings such as Chicagoland Water Resource Permitting or NHI Bridge Inspection courses. Earlier this year, I attended a Coasts, Oceans, Ports, and Rivers Institute (COPRI) committee meeting where they featured a presentation on NAVFAC P-381 Navy Dry Dock. Several Chicago area engineers worked on this project to build two new, partitioned submarine docks in Kittery, ME. Even as a transportation engineer with a background in bridges and roadways, I found the presentation educational and highly engaging. I encourage all our members to follow our Illinois Section Calendar and sign up to attend a presentation outside your usual area of expertise.

### Leadership Development

One of my favorite aspects of ASCE is our commitment to developing future leaders. My career path has undoubtedly been shaped by the leadership opportunities I was afforded through volunteering with the ASCE Illinois Section. This past January, the 2026 ASCE Regions 3, 6, & 7 Multi-Region Leadership Conference was held here in Chicago. For those of you who have not had a chance to attend, the conference provides a venue for up-and-coming leaders to gain knowledge of the Society and their Region, interact with students, younger members, section, branch, and institute leaders, all while gaining personal leadership skills and learning the importance of networking.

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ASCE Illinois Section
# News

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# Chicago's Relationship with Modern Geotechnical Engineering: The Influence of Karl Terzaghi and Ralph B. Peck

*Written by Mark Abtahi, PE*

The history of foundation engineering in Chicago between the Great Fire of 1871 and the mid-twentieth century represents one of the most concentrated periods of innovation in civil engineering. Rapid population growth and the emergence of tall buildings coincided with the presence of weak, compressible clay deposits beneath the Loop area. Engineers were compelled to develop new foundation systems and monitoring techniques to maintain structural safety. Ralph B. Peck later observed that within a few decades, Chicago became a full-scale laboratory for soil mechanics, where theoretical understanding grew directly from field experience.

### Early Foundation Practice and Chicago Subsoil

The subsoil beneath central Chicago consists primarily of fill, silty sediments, and thick layers of soft blue clay overlying stiffer clay and limestone bedrock. This stratigraphy caused widespread settlement problems for early masonry buildings. Initial foundation systems relied on stone footings and grillage beams placed on shallow clay crusts. As buildings increased in height, differential settlement and structural distress became unavoidable. Peck documented how engineers experimented with isolated piers, timber grillages, and eventually caisson foundations to transfer loads to deeper, stiffer strata. These developments reflected a gradual shift from rule-of-thumb construction to rational engineering design based on load distribution and soil behavior.

**Stone footings and grillage beams were replaced by caisson foundations as building heights increased.**

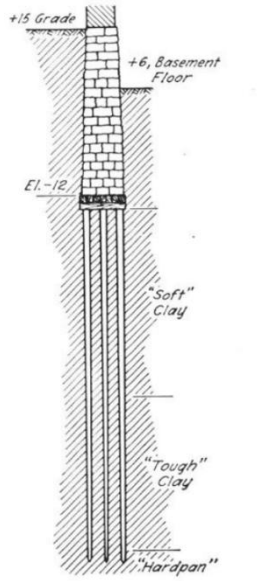


Fig. 29. Bearing-wall Foundation for Public Library

Figure 1: Early Application of Pile Foundation in Chicago (Peak, 1948)

### Terzaghi and the Chicago Subway

In 1939, construction began on Chicago's first subway tunnels through soft clay beneath densely developed urban corridors. The risks of ground movement and building damage were substantial. Terzaghi joined the project as a consultant and required the establishment of a soil mechanics laboratory and a systematic program of field observations. One of his most important contributions was the development of squeeze tests, which measured clay movement toward tunnel faces and correlated these movements with surface settlement. These tests demonstrated that settlement was directly related to the volume of soil lost during excavation and could be controlled through modified construction techniques. Over time, settlement was reduced by nearly two-thirds, validating the application of soil mechanics to tunneling practice.

Squeeze tests measure clay movement toward tunnel faces and correlated these movements with surface settlement.

### Ralph B. Peck and the Observational Method

Working closely with Terzaghi, Peck combined the lessons of the subway project into what later became known as the observational method. This approach

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# Industrial Waste

*Written by Jerome F. McGovern*

Most civil design engineers are familiar with designing a sanitary sewer system for a development based upon the population it will serve. But what if the development contains an industrial facility such as a food processing plant or metal finishing operation? The wastewater generated by those activities will be very different than domestic sewage. It could have a very high biological oxygen demand (BOD5), high total suspended solids (TSS), the pH could be very acidic or very alkaline. The waste stream may have a high content of fats oil and grease (FOG), it could contain heavy metals such as lead, chromium, mercury or cadmium. Such wastewater cannot be discharged directly into a body of water or indirectly into a municipal sewer system without causing harm to public health or compromising the operation of the municipal sewer system and the Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW).

**Need to protect the health of the general public.**

Effluent guidelines for industrial waste are set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). They can be found here. The guidelines are broken down by the type of industrial or commercial process that is involved such as dairy products, electro-plating, grain mills or petroleum refining. Some industrial facilities, such as paper and pulp processing, will actually have their own treatment plant that discharges effluent to a stream or other body of water. Such a direct discharge to a body of water will require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The NPDES permit will describe the specific limitations based upon the type of facility and activity generating the discharge in order to protect the receiving waters.

Industrial facility Photo credit – J. McGovern

An indirect discharge to a municipal sewer system may require a pretreatment program to modify the waste profile so that it complies with the local limits acceptable to the operator of the POTW. Pretreatment standards are implemented through the National Pretreatment Program. The Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR Part 403) gives pretreatment regulations for existing and new sources of pollution. More information can be found here.

Pretreatment is necessary so that the discharged industrial waste does not have a negative impact

**Need to protect municipal collection system and treatment plant operation.**

on the collection system or interfere with the biological processes of the treatment plant. Some constituents of industrial waste can pass through the POTW unaffected by the treatment process and then discharge to a waterway and impair the quality of the water. Some examples necessitating pretreatment: the discharge of cyanide (used in metal plating) into a wastewater treatment plan can kill the bacteria in the aeration tanks and cause a plant upset. In such an instance sludge from another treatment plant must be brought in to reseed the aeration tanks and restart the biological

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# JULIE Law

*Written by Steve Rienkes*

Only in Illinois… Two important changes to the JULIE Law are now in effect and directly impact how excavators plan and perform work in Illinois.

**Positive Response Is Now Mandatory:**

Member utility companies are required to post codes to JULIE's Positive Response System that indicate how they responded to every locate request using JULIE's Positive Response System, and excavators must check the status of their ticket before digging. The Positive Response Display shows whether facilities are marked, cleared, or require additional coordination—helping excavators confirm it is legal to proceed and avoid delays, damages, or penalties.

**Service Laterals Must Be Locatable:**

When a service lateral is newly installed or completely replaced, it must be made locatable (for example, by installing tracer wire or another approved method). This requirement improves safety, reduces future excavation risks, and ensures more accurate locating for everyone working near underground facilities.

These changes reinforce a shared responsibility between utilities and excavators and are designed to improve safety, communication, and efficiency statewide. Make checking Positive Response part of your standard pre-dig process and plan for locatable service laterals on applicable projects.

**Author Bio:** Steve Rienkes is a registered Professional Engineer, certified Project Management Professional. Qualified and/or experienced in Civil Engineering projects, but also mentors/coaches younger/enthusiastic Civil Engineers.
Experience includes the preparation of preliminary engineering studies and final construction documents, and construction supervision for transportation, highway and railway projects. Background includes overall project management including scope of work, budget, schedule, quality assurance/control, supplements, invoices, staff assignments, report preparation, public presentations, and reporting to clients. Typical projects include large highway interchanges and freeways for the Illinois Department of Transportation and for the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority. Also includes projects for the Chicago Department of Transportation and local municipalities.

**Reference:**


https://www.illinois1call.com/positive-response-2025/
https://www.illinois1call.com/contractor-service-laterals/

# Mentorship that builds leaders

*Written by Jash Joshi*

Mentorship has always been fundamental to the civil engineering and construction management professions. As industries built on public trust, collaboration, and long-term impact, they rely not only on technical education but also on the transfer of professional judgment, leadership, and practical experience. The ASCE Illinois Section Mentorship Program was designed to support this transfer by intentionally connecting students and recent graduates with experienced professionals.

**The ASCE Illinois Section Mentorship Program bridges academic learning and professional practice through structured, experience-based engagement.**

Running from November through April, the program pairs ASCE student members or eligible recent graduates with professional ASCE members based on shared interests, career goals, and location. The structure encourages regular engagement through meetings, jobsite or office visits, technical events, conferences, and volunteer activities. Rather than focusing on immediate job placement, the program emphasizes long-term professional growth, networking, and exposure to real-world practice.

Pedro Dulanto, Ph.D. Candidate at IIT and Mentee with Mr. Jonathan Schumacher, P.E., Bureau Chief of Construction for Illinois Department of Transportation in District 1, attending IAACE - Agency Processes & Best Practices Workshop.

For students, mentorship provides critical insight that complements academic coursework. Classroom learning builds technical foundations, but mentorship offers perspective on navigating career paths, understanding public versus private-sector roles, developing leadership skills, and managing professional challenges. One participant in the 2025 IS-ASCE Mentorship Program described the experience as "very positive and rewarding," noting that their mentor was "highly supportive, approachable, and engaged." Early conversations covered graduate studies, construction management experience, research activities, and career planning, with the mentor offering "thoughtful guidance on both academic and professional pathways."

**By connecting students with experienced professionals, ASCE mentorship supports long-term career development, leadership growth, and industry-wide collaboration.**

The program also creates valuable networking opportunities. Attending ASCE and industry events together allows students to interact confidently with agency leaders and industry professionals. The same mentee shared that participating in an ASCE workshop alongside their mentor helped them "gain insight into leadership, mentorship, and organizational best practices within public agencies," while also expanding their professional network through mentor introductions.

Mentors benefit as well. Serving as a mentor strengthens leadership and communication skills, fosters engagement with emerging professionals, and provides fresh perspectives on evolving industry challenges. One participating mentor noted, "Mentors gain insight into emerging talent, evolving academic trends, and technological advancements in the field, reinforcing the value of mentorship as a two-way exchange."

**Mentorship benefits both students and mentors by fostering knowledge transfer, expanding professional networks, and reinforcing ASCE's commitment to service and ethical leadership.**

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# IS-ASCE Annual Membership Committee Update

*Written by Grant Lindsay*

As I navigate through my first year serving as Membership Chair of the Illinois Section, I am optimistic about increasing membership retention and engagement. The Section is beginning 2026 with 2,960 active members, which is a decrease of approximately 5% from this time last year. Our Section consists of 2,034 Members (69%), 797 Student Members (27%), 123 Fellows (4%), and 6 Distinguished Members. The Illinois Section also has 554 Life Members (19%) who have made a lifetime commitment to ASCE and the profession by maintaining membership throughout the length of their professional career. In 2025, 31 members achieved this status and were honored during the annual Awards Dinner at the DoubleTree Chicago Magnificent Mile in October. Recently, ASCE has simplified membership grades by consolidating affiliate, associate, and member into one member designation. You can read more about this change in this article. If you want to see how you can qualify for various levels of membership grades as your career advances, click here.

The 2026 Membership Committee consists of Membership Chair Grant Lindsay (GFT), Director/Past Membership Chair Hugh Regan (HNTB Corporation), Secretary/Past Membership Chair Tom Borges (Bloom Companies, LLC), Directors Jimmy Canning (Strand Associates, Inc.) and Alex Potter-Weight (Menard USA), and Executive Secretary Sara Starzyk. To sustain the strength of our local ASCE section, the committee will meet throughout the year to coordinate membership initiatives such as growth and retention. Continuous engagement with our members is vital to retain core members while avoiding high turnover rates.

The membership committee is hoping to increase involvement and retention of student members through our support of their endeavors, including the student symposium and chapter career/professional events. The Section will provide financial support to the UIC, Northwestern, and IIT student chapters as they prepare to compete in Minneapolis/St. Paul between April 16th and April 19th. More details and information on the 2026 Symposium can be found on the event's website. On the other side of our membership scope, the committee will investigate ways to increase engagement with our Life Member base to utilize their invaluable experience, insight, and enthusiasm in this profession.

**Colleagues that you refer for an ASCE membership will receive discounted initial membership dues.**

Additionally, if you refer your friends and colleagues to ASCE for membership via the Member Referral Program, they're able to receive a discount on their initial membership dues. The committee plans to launch an Institute Referral competition this year and refresh the Section Spotlight page. More information about these initiatives will be shared in the upcoming months.

**Additional information on committee initiatives such as an Institute Referral competition will be shared in the upcoming months.**

Please remember to update your ASCE account with your latest employment and contact information by logging into your online ASCE account and navigating to the Manage My Account page. The dues for the Illinois Section are $40 when renewing your 2026 membership. These dues account for a substantial portion of our Section income and help fund phenomenal programs and events such as the Illinois Infrastructure Report Card, Annual Awards Dinner, Legislative Lobby Days in Springfield and Washington DC, and various

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# An Opinion on Technology and Structural Engineering Practice Today An Opinion on Technology and Structural Engineering Practice Today

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That balance is changing. As competition in the finite element software space has increased, tools have become faster to build, more stable to run, and more accessible to a broader range of engineers. Packages such as MIDAS, CSI Bridge, and LUSAS now allow engineers to develop full three-dimensional models with a level of effort that, even ten years ago, would have been difficult to justify on many projects.

In my own work, this has been especially evident in underground structures and buried systems. Situations involving irregular openings, varying cover depths, staged construction, or complex boundary conditions often push simplified assumptions to their limits. In the past, engineers might have relied on envelope assumptions or conservative load paths to approximate behavior. Today, it is frequently quicker—and ultimately clearer—to build a finite element model that directly captures the geometry, stiffness variation, and load transfer mechanisms at play.

**Finite element analysis is becoming the default, not the exception, as modern tools make it faster and more practical to model complex geometries, load paths, and construction conditions.**

At the same time, increased reliance on finite element tools raises an important caution: faster modeling does not reduce the need for engineering judgment. In many ways, it increases it. As models become more detailed, engineers must remain disciplined about mesh refinement checks, convergence studies, and verification of global equilibrium. Checking deflected shapes, reviewing reaction forces, and ensuring that boundary conditions reflect physical reality remain essential steps—not optional ones.

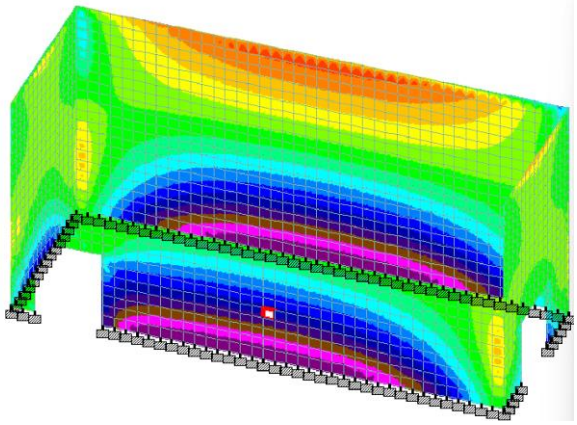

Figure 1: Finite Element Analysis (FEA) simulation.

The danger is not that engineers will use finite element tools too much, but that they will trust them too quickly. Finite element software excels at producing numbers; it does not inherently know which numbers matter. The responsibility still lies with the engineer to ensure that results are stable, repeatable, and consistent with expected behavior.

**AI, Vibe Coding, and the Shift from Excel to Python**

Parallel to advances in analysis software is a quieter but equally impactful change in how engineers manipulate data. For decades, Microsoft Excel has been the backbone of post-processing: extracting results, applying code checks, summarizing forces, and assembling calculation packages. Many engineers have developed extraordinary fluency in formulas, lookup tables, and macros to make this work manageable.

What I am increasingly seeing is a transition toward Python-based workflows, often enabled by AI tools such as ChatGPT or Copilot. The idea of "vibe coding"—talking through a task in natural language and iteratively refining a script—has lowered the barrier to entry for programming in a way that traditional coding education never did.

Rather than manually stitching together VLOOKUPs, XLOOKUPs, and CONCAT functions, engineers can now describe the

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# An Opinion on Technology and Structural Engineering Practice Today An Opinion on Technology and Structural Engineering Practice Today

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operation they want performed: importing analysis results, filtering load cases, computing envelopes, or formatting outputs for reporting. AI-assisted coding then becomes a collaborative process between the engineer and the tool, where intent matters more than syntax.

This shift has meaningful implications for how younger engineers learn. Instead of viewing programming as a separate, specialized skill, they are encountering it as a natural extension of problem-solving. Python becomes a way to express engineering logic—similar to a hand calculation, but scalable and repeatable. Finite element outputs from tools like MIDAS, CSI Bridge, or LUSAS can be restructured, summarized, and visualized in ways that are more transparent and adaptable than many traditional spreadsheets.

Importantly, this is not about abandoning Excel entirely. Excel remains an effective communication medium, especially for reviewers and clients. What is changing is where the heavy lifting occurs. Increasingly, Python handles data manipulation, while spreadsheets present results in a clear, familiar format.

**AI as a Collaboration Tool, Not a Replacement Engineer**

The most misunderstood role of AI in engineering today is the idea that it exists to produce final answers. In my experience, its real value lies elsewhere: as a catalyst for collaboration, visualization, and shared understanding.

Recent discussions and presentations on AI in engineering—such as those summarized in a presentation I gave at ASCE national conference last October—highlight a striking trend: when AI tools are introduced, the technical performance gap between top and bottom performers within a group narrows significantly. Tasks that once required deep familiarity with software interfaces or niche workflows become more accessible to a broader range of engineers.

What does not narrow, however, is the gap in handling complex, ambiguous problems. Non-routine tasks—those involving competing constraints, incomplete information, or judgment under uncertainty—continue to rely heavily on human experience and interaction. AI can synthesize information and surface patterns, but it struggles to determine which tradeoffs matter most in a given context.

**The real challenge is change management, not technology — helping teams adopt new tools thoughtfully while maintaining simplicity, clarity, and sound engineering fundamentals.**

This has an important implication for the future of engineering leadership. As technical execution becomes more evenly distributed, differentiation increasingly comes from collaboration: asking the right questions, framing problems clearly, and integrating perspectives across disciplines. The engineer who can facilitate discussion, interpret nuance, and

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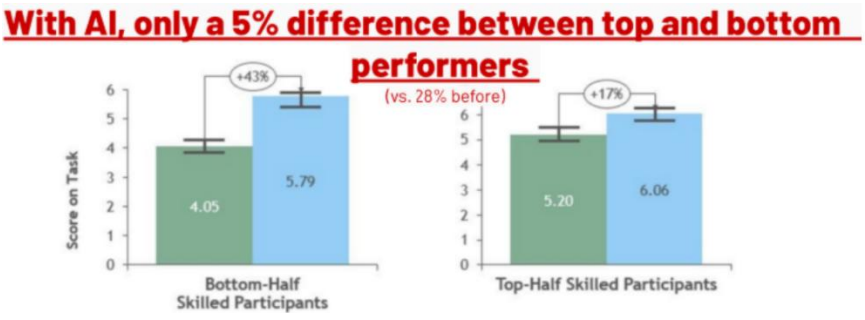


Figure 2: Difference between Top-Half and Bottom-Half of Participants.

# Mentorship that builds leaders

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As the profession of civil engineering continues to move ahead, mentorship is recognized as one of the most effective means of supporting high-level professional excellence, leadership, and ethics. By means of the ASCE Illinois Section Mentorship Program, the profession can not only provide for the success of its students but also continue to emphasize its values of service and partnership.

**Author Bio:** Jash Joshi is a Project Manager with Pacific Construction. He also serves as the IS-ASCE Mentorship Program Committee Member, IS-ASCE Construction Institute Outreach Director, and IS-ASCE Young Members Group Director of 2026.

# An Opinion on Technology and Structural Engineering Practice Today An Opinion on Technology and Structural Engineering Practice Today

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and guide teams through uncertainty becomes more valuable—not less.

From a change management perspective, this suggests that technology adoption should focus less on efficiency alone and more on how tools shape behavior. AI systems are most effective when they create space for discussion, reflection, and learning, rather than replacing those processes. In that sense, AI reinforces a lesson many of us have learned repeatedly: engineering is as much a social practice as a technical one.

**Closing Thoughts**

Structural engineering is not being transformed by a single tool or methodology. It is evolving through the interaction of better analysis software, more accessible programming, and AI systems that reshape how knowledge is shared. Finite element models are becoming easier to build and more common, but they demand continued rigor in verification and judgment. Python and AI-assisted coding are changing how engineers process data, shifting effort from manual manipulation to logical expression. And AI, perhaps counterintuitively, is elevating the importance of collaboration, communication, and leadership in a profession long defined by technical excellence.

**AI is changing how engineers work, not replacing engineering judgment — accelerating modeling, iteration, and collaboration while increasing the need for critical thinking and experience.**

In my view, the engineers who thrive in this environment will not be those who cling to or reject technology outright, but those who understand where it adds value—and where human judgment remains irreplaceable.

**Author Bio:** Dan Schriks, PE, SE, is a structural engineer and group manager at Mead and Hunt based in Chicago, with over 15 years of experience in bridge and transportation structures, and a professional focus on how emerging technologies like AI and advanced analysis tools are reshaping engineering practice.

**Reference:**

Dell'Acqua et. al (2023)
Bock, L. (2025, June 27). The impact of AI on the future of work [LinkedIn presentation slides]. LinkedIn. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from LinkedIn website

# Chicago's Relationship with Modern Geotechnical Engineering: The Influence of Karl Terzaghi and Ralph B. Peck

(Continued from page 3)

approach emphasized prediction of behavior, continuous measurement during construction, and modification of design in response to observed performance. Peck argued that soil mechanics must be rooted in field evidence rather than purely theoretical assumptions. Chicago's subway project became one of the earliest and most influential demonstrations of this philosophy in practice.

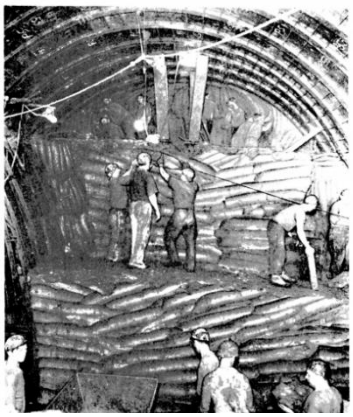

Figure 2: Hand-Mining Chicago Avenue Station on State St with Ribs and Liner Plates (Peak, 1975)

## Chicago's Global Influence on Geotechnical Engineering

The integration of laboratory testing, field measurement, and theory during the Chicago subway project transformed engineering practice worldwide. Concepts developed in Chicago were soon applied to projects across North America and beyond. The city's earlier foundation experiments provided the empirical background, while Terzaghi provided the theoretical foundation and Peck translated those principles into practical engineering methods, forming the basis of modern geotechnical engineering.

**Chicago subway project changed engineering practices worldwide.**

## Conclusions

Chicago's geotechnical legacy arose from necessity. Weak soils and rapid urbanization forced engineers to innovate continuously. Early foundation failures drove experimentation; and subway construction demanded a flexible design that adapted to observed conditions. The collaboration between Karl Terzaghi and Ralph B. Peck transformed these challenges into lasting principles of soil mechanics and the observational method. Their work in Chicago demonstrated that successful geotechnical engineering requires integration of theory, laboratory testing, and real-time field observation.

**Author Bio:** Mark Abtahi, PE is a Geotechnical Engineer with Black & Veatch and is serving as the Chair Illinois Geo-Institute Chapter.

**Reference:**

Peck, R. B. (1975). Karl Terzaghi and the Chicago Subway. Engineering Issues: Journal of Professional Activities, ASCE.

Peck, R. B. (1948). History of Building Foundations in Chicago. Engineering Experiment Station Bulletin No. 373, University of Illinois.

Peck, R. B. (1969). Advantages and Limitations of the Observational Method in Applied Soil Mechanics. Ninth Rankine Lecture.

# Industrial Waste

(Continued from page 4)

process. The absence or under sizing of grease interceptors in places of food processing can cause fats, oil and grease to be discharged at a high temperature into the municipal collection system where it will cool off and congeal downstream and cause a blockage in the sewer. An additional goal of pretreatment is to improve the quality of municipal sludge produced by the POTW. As an example, removal of heavy metals during pretreatment of industrial waste improves the opportunities to recycle and reclaim municipal sludge produced during the treatment process, potentially lowering the cost of disposal of such waste material.

In order to ensure compliance with pretreatment standards, the local wastewater agency will

**Federal effluent guidelines and requirements for pretreatment of industrial waste.**

conduct sampling at the facility generating industrial waste. Random grab samples may be taken from a sampling port or sink during an unscheduled visit to the facility. Some agencies will require a dedicated sampling manhole be installed on the discharge sewer carrying the industrial waste to the municipal sewer. This manhole is located on the public right-of-way so that it can be accessed at any time without entry to the facility. This sewer will only contain the industrial waste while a separate sanitary sewer is provided for the domestic sewage generated by the facility. The agency then can set up a continuous sampling machine to collect samples over a wider time frame and then analyze the samples collected to determine if the facility is in compliance with the local limits and the approved permit. Failure to be in compliance will result in administrative action and possible fines against the owner until compliance is achieved.

This is a brief synopsis of industrial waste and a water resources professional experienced in the application of pretreatment programs should be consulted if your project involves industrial waste.

**Author Bio:** Jerome F. McGovern is a retired civil engineer who is active in the EWRI of Illinois Section of ASCE.

# IS-ASCE Annual Membership Committee Update

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community service and student outreach activities. Please note that the ASCE membership renewal grace period lasts through March 31st if you have not renewed your membership already. You have access to 5 free article downloads from the ASCE Library, 10 free online PDH classes annually, and several other benefits that can be found at Membership | ASCE by having an active membership with ASCE.

Please contact Grant Lindsay, the Illinois Section Membership Committee Chair, with any membership-related questions at glindsay@gftinc.com.

**The ASCE membership renewal grace period lasts through March 31st if you have not renewed your membership.**

**Author Bios**: Grant Lindsay is an Associate Designer, Highway at GFT in Schaumburg, IL.

# President's Notes

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Beyond what was presented at the conference, many of our IL Section younger members got firsthand experience at leadership by planning all the social events associated with the event. Kudos to our local younger members for stepping up to this challenge and creating an event to remember!

**Civic Engagement**

Civil engineers are not just technical specialists designing and delivering infrastructure projects. We are also key advocates for funding and legislature changes that improve safety and modernize transportation, energy and water systems for the communities we live in.

This past March, I was lucky enough to join the ASCE Illinois Section leadership and members from around the country at the National Fly-In to Washington D.C. Our section was well represented by Matt Kirby and Pat Lach who serve as members on the society's Committee on America's Infrastructure, past Committee Chair Darren Olson, and IS Government Relations Chair, Brian Castro. The two-day event included briefings on current infrastructure legislation, training on how to communicate our "ask" to the politicians, followed by one-on-one meetings with legislators or their staffers. After the meetings in DC, we had another opportunity to advocate for legislative support of infrastructure at the Transportation for Illinois Coalition Lobby Day in Springfield, IL. In both instances, it was inspiring to see my peers champion for the safety and longevity of infrastructure through political participation.

Monica Crinion, IS-ASCE President, Matt Kirby and Pat Lach, society's Committee on America's Infrastructure, past Committee Chair Darren Olson, and IS Government Relations Chair, Brian Castro.

Technical, Leadership and Civic involvement are just three of the ways that Illinois Section members benefit from ASCE. I encourage each member to reflect on how ASCE has shaped their career trajectory and use this as reason to invite a colleague to an ASCE event and continue to build the stellar reputation of the Illinois Section.

By Monica Crinion, P.E.

ASCE Illinois Section President, 2025-2026

**EWRI and YMG: Chicago White Sox and the Atlanta Braves**

Join us for a fun event! We will be in Section 526, Rows 10, 11 and 12. There will also be a $5 Tuesday game promotion for food and beverages.

The tickets are in electronic form and you will need the MLB app to display the ticket on your phone. Don't have the MLB app? You can download it for free. You need to have the app activated and linked to your email before we can send you the tickets.

The deadline for purchasing tickets is Friday June 5, 2026.

Contact Jerry McGovern at mailto:jeromemcgovern@att.net for tickets or more information. Zelle payment can be made to Jerry's email.

**Date:** Tuesday, June 9
**Time**: 6:40pm
**Place:** Rate Field in Chicago
**Price**: $20 per ticket

**IS-ASCE T&DI May Luncheon with IDOT's José Rios, P.E**

In January of 2021, Mr. José Rios was appointed the Region One Engineer for the Illinois Department of Transportation, Region One in Schaumburg. José has served in several positions within the Department in Region One. These positions included In-house Design Engineer, Land Acquisition Condemnation Engineer, Land Acquisition Bureau Chief, Program Development Engineer, and Operations Engineer.

Register by 4PM on Tuesday, June 16th, 2026.

**Date:** Thursday, June 18
**Time**: 11:30am-1:15pm
**Place:** Maggiano's Little Italy in Schaumburg
(1901 Woodfield Rd, Schaumburg)
**Price**: $35-75

More Information and Register Here

**Bridge Inspection Training NHI Course Hosted by IS-ASCE SEI**

The SEI Illinois Chapter is hosting NHI's Safety Inspection of In-Service Bridges for Professional Engineers course. Registration is open to everyone who is able to meet the prerequisites of the course and will be limited to a maximum of 30 registrants.

The major goals of this course are to improve the skills of practicing bridge inspections of in-service bridges while covering the topics: fundamentals of bridges inspection; bridge materials; documenting bridges inspection data; inspection and evaluation of decks, superstructures, bearings, substructures, culverts, and waterways; advanced inspection methods and bridge inspection reporting.

Register by emailing amy.wei@jacobs.com by Monday, June 15th. No refunds will be accommodated after June 19th.

**Date:** Monday, June 22-26
**Time**: 8am-5pm
**Place:** Benesch (35 W Wacker Dr, Chicago, IL)
**Price**: $1475

More Information and Register Here

**2026 IS-ASCE Annual Awards Dinner**

Nominations for the IS-ASCE has begun! Please have all submissions for awards due by June 26, 2026.
And Save-the-Date for our Annual Awards Dinner!

**Date:** Thursday, October 1
**Time:** 5pm-10pm
**Place:** Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Chicago – Magnificent Mile

Nomination forms for 2026 Awards

# Illinois Section News & Secretary Report

**Spring 2026**

To inform Illinois Section members of the discussions at monthly board meetings, the Section Secretary contributes this article to the newsletter covering the months of December 2025 through February 2026. The Illinois Section typically offers both in-person and virtual attendance options for board meetings. Access to historical meeting minutes and governance documents, including the Constitution and Bylaws, can be found on ASCE Collaborate at https://collaborate.asce.org/home and on the Illinois Section website at https://isasce.org/about/governance-and-guiding-documents. Any questions or comments on Section activities are welcome by contacting Secretary Thomas Borges at tborges@bloomcos.com.

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

▲ A Treasurer's Report was presented and approved at the December 2025 and January 2026 board meetings. The November 2025, December 2025 and January 2026 board meeting minutes were approved.

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

▲ ***2026 Budget –*** The final FY26 Illinois Section budget was presented and approved at the December 2025 board meeting.

▲ ***Holiday Party –*** The 2025 Illinois Section Holiday Party was held at Haymarket Brewery on December 3rd, with 85 people in attendance. Toys and money collected from raffle ticket purchases were donated to A Greater Good Foundation.

▲***Future City Competition*** – The Chicago Regional Future City Competition was held on January 17th at F.H. Paschen. The annual educational program and competition challenges middle school students to research, design, and create a city that exists 100 years in the future. This year's theme challenged students to design a city based on "farm to table" principles. The Illinois Section and technical groups/institutes sponsored and helped judge a long list of special awards for the competition and several members were involved with the planning, coordination, and execution of this very successful event.

▲***Regions 3, 6 & 7 Workshop for Section, Branch and Institute Leaders (WSBIL)*** – The 2026 WSBIL (formerly the *Multi-Region Leadership Conference*, or MRLC) took place here in Chicago between January 29th and January 31st. Our local YMG chapter was responsible for the planning of the popular Central Region Younger Member Conference (CRYMC) portion of the multi-day event, which included a construction tour, panels, awards banquet and various dinners and networking opportunities. The conference connects Section, Branch, Younger Member and Student Member leaders from three ASCE Regions spanning the United States, Canada and Mexico to discuss challenges and successes experienced at the local ASCE chapter level. A large number of local ASCE members attended on behalf of the Illinois Section.

▲ ***2026 Legislative Fly-In*** – The 2026 legislative fly-in is scheduled for March 18th through March 20th in Washington, D.C. The Society will designate attendees from a pool of ASCE members who applied before November 14th. Several members applied to attend on behalf of the Illinois Section.

▲***2026 Student Scholarships & Spring Dinner –*** The Illinois Section and Technical Institutes are offering scholarship opportunities to undergraduate and graduate ASCE students from IIT, Northwestern and UIC. The application deadline is March 27th, 2026. Winners will be announced on April 4th and subsequently recognized at the President-Elect / Student Scholarship Dinner on Wednesday, April 22nd at Maggiano's Little Italy in downtown Chicago. Visit the following webpage for information: https://www.isasce.org/scholarships

▲ ***Construction Institute (CI)*** – CI held their board meetings on December 2nd, January 6th and February 3rd. The institute hosted a happy hour with IDOT on November 13th at Pinstripes in Northbrook. Please contact CI Chair Edgar Alvarado at ealvarado@ciorba.com for any questions or information related to CI activities.

▲ ***Structural Engineering Institute (SEI)*** – SEI held their monthly meetings on December 17th and January 29th. Please contact SEI Chair Dan Schriks at Dan.Schriks@meadhunt.com for any questions or information related to SEI activities.
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▲ ***Environmental & Water Resources Institute (EWRI)*** – EWRI held their board meetings on December 9th, January 13th and February 10th. In early February, the institute held their annual scholarship fundraiser via their "Super Squares for Scholarships" tournament which helped fund their student scholarships. Please contact EWRI Chair Andrew Barbeau at mailto:abarbeau@fehrgraham.com for any questions or information related to EWRI activities.

▲ ***Geo-Institute (GI)*** – GI held their leadership meetings on November 20th, January 12th and January 27th. On November 20th, the institute hosted a dinner event at Pazzo's in Chicago featuring a presentation by Carlos Santamarina on the topic of "Geotechnical Engineering in the Information Age: From Properties to Analysis & Design". On January 20th, the institute hosted a joint dinner event with AEG at Pazzo's in Chicago featuring a presentation by Chris Stohr on the topic of "Retrospective of the Earthline Hazardous-Waste Landfill Failure, a Case Study of Legacy Landfills and Dumps and Improving Field Inspections to Reduce Groundwater Contamination". Please contact GI Chair Mark Abtahi at abtahim@bv.com for any questions or information related to GI activities.

▲ ***Transportation & Development Institute (T&DI)*** – T&DI held their board meetings on December 3rd, January 13th and February 10th. On January 29th, the institute hosted a luncheon event at Maggiano's in Chicago featuring CDWM Commissioner Randy Conner. Please contact T&DI Chair Harsh Patel at hpatel@rmchin.com for any questions or information related to T&DI activities.

▲ ***Utility Engineering and Surveying Institute (UESI)*** – UESI held their board meetings on November 17th, January 22nd and February 16th, along with joint planning meetings with EWRI on January 16th and February 12th to coordinate their upcoming Water System Resiliency workshop in early March. Please contact UESI Chair Steven Jandick at sjandick@v3co.com for any questions or information related to UESI activities.

▲ ***Younger Member Group (YMG)*** – YMG held their board meetings on December 10th and January 14th. The group was extra busy this winter planning and coordinating both the IS Holiday Party in early December and CRYMC here in Chicago in late January. On December 10th, the group hosted an MWRD presentation at CBBEL's Rosemont office. Please contact YMG Chair Jeremy Metz at jmetz@cmtengr.com for any questions or information related to YMG activities.

▲ ***Coasts, Oceans, Ports and Rivers Institute (COPRI) Committee*** – The COPRI committee held committee meetings on December 2nd, January 13th and February 3rd. The January 13th meeting featured a presentation on the NAVFAC P-381 Navy Dry Dock Project. Please contact COPRI Co-Chairs Mark Wagstaff (mark.wagstaff@smithgroup.com) and Siena Van Horne (siena.vanhorne@stantec.com) if you are interested in becoming involved with this committee.

The Illinois Section Board Meetings are typically held the first Monday of the month, except for holidays. The next board meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2026 and will be in-person at Bloom Companies (150 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60606). 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 Monica Crinion at monica.crinion@aecom.com.

By Thomas Borges, P.E.
ASCE Illinois Section Secretary 2024-2026
tborges@bloomcos.com