

# Engineering, Go Figure

## 2023 FALL NEWSLETTER

ACEC/MN

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Need assistance with your membership? Contact Kelly Smeltzer at [kelly@acecmn.org](mailto:kelly@acecmn.org)

### INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

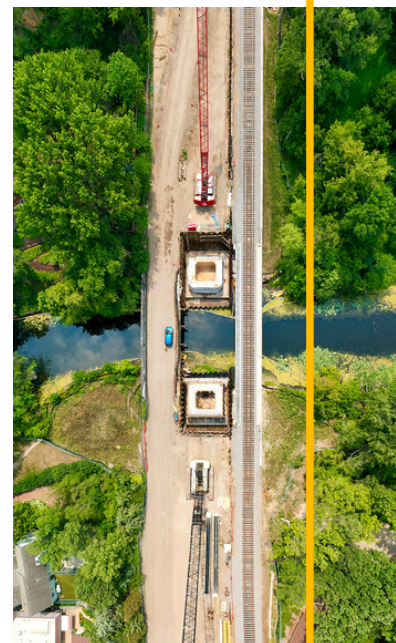
- From the Board President
- DC Fly-In
- MN Legislative Update
- Spotlight: Emerging Professionals
- Get Involved - Fundraiser
- Scholarship Softball Tournament
- ACEC/MN Events & Education
- Our Board

IMO Consulting Group:  
Autumn at Lake of the Isles (above)  
Kenilworth Channel Crossing, SWLRT (below)

### Photographer -

### Brandon Vasquez:

IMO is working on a section of the light rail that goes over the Kenilworth Channel, which connects Cedar Lake to Lake of the Isles. I was shooting the light rail project, and it was a perfect fall day with very little wind. Upon shooting the light rail area, I took the photo "Autumn at Lake of the Isles"



## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

It is my privilege to serve as your current ACEC/MN president. As a small business owner, I can attest that ACEC seeks to advance goals we all share while providing educational and networking opportunities that support connection and collaboration. We are an industry of colleagues and friends – working together to create the infrastructure that moves Minnesota forward. For me, ACEC has been a venue for building and maintaining these long-standing connections as well as for welcoming new faces.

ACEC has been a resource for my small firm in navigating changes to local and federal regulations. It has been a source of inspiration – whether at the MN Transportation Conference, a Women in Engineering Series event, or Leadership seminar. ACEC has been a strong connector and advocate in supporting regular and transparent communication with our agency clients and elected officials. These are just a few of the benefits that come to mind when I think of what an ACEC membership has meant for me. I can also share that the biggest benefits of ACEC are not included with the dues – the real value of ACEC can only be realized from showing up and participating.

If you have been an active member – thank you for helping to sustain ACEC and keeping our industry strong. If you are new or are looking for a chance to re-engage, I invite you to join us for an event or a committee meeting at the new office and meeting space in St. Paul. There is a lot in the works to make this a transformational year for ACEC/MN – and many ways you and your firm are welcome to be a part of this. We have opportunities for you and your firm to support the efforts of the EEFA Workforce Development Committee, to have your voice heard on advancing the QBS initiative, to connect with other Emerging Professionals, and to inspire and be inspired at the many events and initiatives scheduled for this year.

Be well and be kind,

Katie Toghradjian  
President, ACEC/MN





# WASHINGTON DC FLY-IN

ACEC MN held its annual Washington DC “Fly In” in late September to educate Minnesota’s congressional delegation and advocate for ACEC/MN’s federal priorities.

The 2023 Fly In was a tremendous success - ACEC/MN participants were able to meet with nearly every member of Minnesota’s congressional delegation:

- Senator Amy Klobuchar
- Senator Tina Smith
- Representative Angie Craig
- Representative Tom Emmer
- Representative Brad Finstad
- Representative Michelle Fischbach
- Representative Betty McCollum
- Representative Dean Phillips
- Representative Pete Stauber



ACEC Minnesota’s two key federal legislative priorities are addressing the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) exemption and repealing the Research and Development (R&D) amortization requirement.

ACEC MN’s contingent met with each member of the delegation to request support for legislation eliminating MN’s FAR exemption (statutory exemption from the Uniform Contracting Auditing requirements for engineering and design services under the Federal Highway Program). Representative Stauber is taking the lead on this initiative supported by the Minnesota delegation to move this legislation forward.

Fly In participants also addressed a tax policy change that took effect in January 2022 which is forcing engineering firms (and others) to amortize Research and Development (R&D) costs over five years versus deducting the expenses in the year they occurred. Bipartisan legislation has been introduced which will restore the yearly deductibility of R&D expenses.

Participants also hosted a congressional reception for Minnesota’s delegation, who were treated to an in-depth R&D amortization discussion with ACEC National’s Katharine Mottley. Members also joined Senator Klobuchar for a coffee and conversation event.



From Left, Tom Poul (Poul Hass), Steve Carlton (Rani Engineering), Jonthan Curry (ACEC/MN), Mark Bishop (Kimley-Horn), Jason Meyer (Stanley Consultants), Brett Morse (TKDA), Chris Leverett (Kimley-Horn), Christine Wiegert (HDR), Rep. Brad Finstad (MN-1), Dave Krueger (SEH), Dan Larson (AET)



# Minnesota Legislative Update



The 2024 session begins February 12, 2024. The session is the second year of the biennium, which means that the focus will be on policy as the state budget was passed during the 2023 legislative session. The 2023 session was historic in the amount of bills passed and the rapid speed at which things progressed. Many bills passed in the flurry of activity in 2023 have issues that need to be resolved and will require 2024 action - some issues were relatively minor, other are much larger like a \$352 million error in the Tax bill.

Prior to the 2024 session, there will be a special election in House District 52B (parts of Eagan and Mendota Heights). District 52B was held by Representative Ruth Richardson, who resigned from her seat earlier this fall to focus on her job as the CEO of Planned Parenthood North Central States. This is a reminder that serving as a legislator is supposed to be part-time job and most members of the legislature have other full-time jobs. The primary election for the 52B House District will be November 16, and the special election will take place December 5. This will be an opportunity for both the DFL and Republican parties to test their messaging prior to the 2024 election cycle. If the Republicans are able to flip this seat it will show momentum for the party, but it will not flip the balance of the DFL-majority House.

One major factor for the 2024 session is the anticipated budget surplus, estimated to potentially rise to \$2.4 billion. The surplus is due to lower-than-projected general fund spending of \$81 million and higher-than-expected revenue projections of \$739 million. Formal state budget forecasts happen twice yearly in November and February and they are used to shape potential tax cuts or state spending in the 2024 legislative session.

It is anticipated that the legislature will pass a bonding bill this coming session. The legislature typically passes a bonding bill in the second year of the biennium. In 2023, the legislature passed the largest bonding bill in Minnesota history during after two years without a bonding bill. At the close of the 2023 session, House leadership announced that they set aside \$1.6 billion for a 2024 bonding bill. House and Senate Capital Investment Committee members are currently touring the state and looking at prospective projects to be considered for the 2024 bonding package.

In addition to tracking bonding bill developments and other business and regulatory issues, ACEC/MN is working on a bill to expand the use of Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) in Minnesota. Current state law allows for the use of QBS, but it is not frequently used. ACEC/MN lobbyists are currently having conversations with the Department of Administration, key legislators, and potential partners to raise awareness of the forthcoming legislation.



# Spotlight: Emerging Professionals

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Minnesota Emerging Professionals are composed of a newer section of the workforce that helps develop future engineering industry leaders through events, outreach and political advocacy.

The EP committee plans professional development activities and events that give an opportunity for emerging professionals to meet and interact with people from all disciplines and stages in their career as well as develop soft skills along the way.

To get involved, register and attend EP events. The events are often free to attend thanks to sponsors from our great engineering community.



# GET INVOLVED

Dear ACEC Minnesota Members,

To further expand our reach and service to our communities, Engineering CEO's of Minnesota (ECEOM) would like to invite ACEC/MN Members to join the ECEOM-firm Fundraiser. The goal is to support food-based non-profits in Minnesota. Since the start of the competition in 2012, we have collectively donated more than \$2.5M to food-based non-profits. Let's all work together this year for the good of our communities and make a positive impact for those in need around the holidays.

To leverage the buying power of food-based non-profits, we're encouraging participants to donate/collect cash rather than non-perishable food items. According to the national charity Feeding America, funds are preferred over food as these organizations have the power to turn a dollar into more meals and the ability to purchase fresh foods to promote healthier communities.

We will also be including charitable volunteering at food-based organizations. Your volunteer hours will be credited towards totals for a value of \$50 for every hour worked.

The competition begins Monday, November 27, and concludes Friday, December 15, with the winning firm announced Monday, December 18. Last year's winner, WSB will prepare this year's communication materials and act as "scorekeeper". The competition includes dollars donated and food-based volunteer hours. When weekly totals are submitted, updates will be automatically provided to foster a sense of friendly competition.

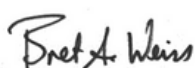
To get the ball rolling, we'll need some information from participating firms. Please fill out this form and include:

- Name of Firm
- Contact information for the person coordinating the drive so we can include them on further communications.
- The number of full-time employees in Minnesota.
  - We average dollars per employee to level set the competition.

We will send communication out the week before the drive. Post competition, WSB will facilitate media communication to share the positive impact participating organizations have made in supporting our communities.

Thanks for your participation in this year's fundraiser. Please reach out to Trevett Cullers ([TCullers@wsbeng.com](mailto:TCullers@wsbeng.com)) or myself if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Bret Weiss, PE  
President/CEO  
WSB



**ACEC/MN  
FUNDRAISER**



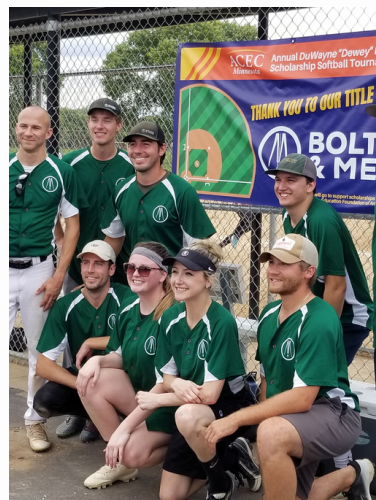




## 2023 Scholarship Softball Tournament

Sponsored by Bolton & Menk, the 41st Annual DuWayne “Dewey” Kasma Scholarship Softball Tournament was held on Saturday, September 23rd at Andrews Park in Champlin. Sixteen Teams competed, with BKBM taking the top spot of the day. The event raised over \$9,000 for scholarships.

Teams were divided into brackets for playoffs, and our congratulations also go to our other bracket winners: B Bracket, SRF Consulting Group; C Bracket, Bolton & Menk; D Bracket, SEH. A big thanks to Nick Graze from Alliant Engineering for all his efforts to make the tournament a success.





# ACEC/MN Events and Education

It's been wonderful to see so many of our members and friends at our new office in the Wells Fargo Place building in downtown St. Paul. We've hosted several events in our new Training Center, including two Leadership Breakfast events, our Open House, the Fall Emerging Leaders Training Series and the MnDOT & ACEC Partnership meeting just this week.



We're looking ahead to the end of 2023 and an exciting 2024 - take a look at the list below and get your calendar ready to save the date(s)! And we'll be sure to have some new events added to the calendar as we move into 2024, so keep your eyes on our [calendar page](#) and make sure you're on our email list to get the latest announcements and updates.

## **December 12th, 2023**

Women In Engineering: Stop Trying to Fix the Women - We've Got to Fix the System

Presented by Roberta Rincon, SWE

## **January 30th, 2024**

Leadership Breakfast: Visas & Immigration

Presented by Nilan Johnson Lewis Law Firm

## **February 23rd, 2024**

Engineering Excellence Awards Gala  
At A'BULAE in Downtown St. Paul

## **March 5th, 2024**

ACEC/MN Day at the Capitol

## **March-April 2024**

Spring Emerging Leaders Training Series

## **April 2023**

Engineering Ethics

Presented by Kristine Kubes,  
Kubes Law Office

## **May 9, 2024**

ACEC/MN Annual Meeting  
Como Zoo & Conservatory

## **May 29-31, 2024**

MN Transportation Conference & Expo  
RiverCentre

## **June 10, 2024**

ACEC/MN & EEFA Scholarship Golf  
Tournament

Oak Marsh Golf Course

## **June 2024**

County Forecasting Seminar



# ACEC Minnesota

## 2023-24 Board of Directors



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Isthmus Engineering, Inc



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**Young Engineer:**  
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HNTB Corporation



**Board Alternate:**  
John Crawford  
KIJ

# MTCE & E

MAY 29-31

2024

## MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE & EXPO

Join us in 2024 for  
Minnesota's premier transportation conference  
Wednesday, May 29th - Friday May 31st

We want you to join us as a speaker!  
Submit your presentation at [mtcexpo.com](https://mtcexpo.com)

## ACEC Minnesota 2024 ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mark your calendar for Friday, February 23rd!  
Tickets and Sponsorships currently available,  
[click here for our event page!](#)

Make a big splash and sponsor the Band or Bar:  
[check out our special sponsorships here!](#)

2023 EEA  
Grand Conceptor &  
People's Choice winner:  
The Dayton's Project  
by  
Meyer Borgman  
Johnson



Join us at  
 A'BULAE  
In Downtown St. Paul  
for an amazing  
EEA Gala!



Highlights from  
2023 EEA  
Musical Guest  
Arch Allies

