

An aerial photograph of a park featuring a long, winding wooden boardwalk that curves through a lush green landscape. To the left of the boardwalk is a calm pond. In the background, a white building with a gabled roof is nestled among dense trees. The boardwalk is populated with people, including families with strollers and individuals walking. The entire scene is framed by a thin yellow border.

ACEC Minnesota

Engineering, Go Figure

2025 SPRING NEWSLETTER

April 2025



INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- Member Project: MBJ Treetop Trail at the MN Zoo
- Vendor Showcase & Annual Meeting
- Upcoming Forums & Programs
- ACEC/MN In The News: Jon Curry Interview in Finance & Commerce
- Day at the Capitol Recap
- EEA Gala Highlights
- MN Transportation Conference & Expo Highlights
- Member Spotlight: TKDA, CLA & Aktion
- EEFA: Fall Scholarship Recipients
- EEFA Scholarship Golf Tournament

The Engineering and Public Works Roadshow LIVE
from the Minnesota Zoo Treetop Trail



Check out the livestream at this link
at 11AM Central on May 1st!

Cover, Pages 2 & 3 Photographs
Member: Meyer Borgman Johnson (MBJ)
Project: Treetop Trail at the Minnesota Zoo
Photographer: Corey Gaffer Photography



Member: Meyer Borgman Johnson

Project: Treetop Trail at the Minnesota Zoo

Description:

Treetop Trail at the Minnesota Zoo, the world's longest elevated pedestrian loop, amplifies the zoo experience by transforming a decommissioned monorail track into a 1.25-mile accessible walkway. Rising up to 32 feet above ground, the trail offers visitors extraordinary perspectives of animals and nature, providing an immersive experience while promoting sustainability through adaptive reuse.

Meyer Borgman Johnson (MBJ) served as the Structural Engineer of Record, along with design partner Buro Happold, navigating complex structural challenges including structural integrity, site constraints, thermal expansion, and environmental impact. Through advanced structural modeling and innovative design, key solutions included thermal force management, modular steel construction, and a focus on sustainability and accessibility. The project's complexity was heightened by simultaneous challenges, including extreme winter conditions during construction, live load and vibration demands, and wind forces requiring new bracing solutions. Successful completion was achieved through close collaboration with the zoo, contractors, and design teams, ensuring minimal disruption to operations and natural habitats.

The Treetop Trail at the Minnesota Zoo transformed an underutilized monorail system into a dynamic visitor experience, meeting the zoo's goals while staying within budget. This innovative project highlights how engineering solutions can blend sustainability, accessibility, and economic value to create lasting public assets.

2025 VENDOR SHOWCASE & ANNUAL MEETING

ACEC
Minnesota

acecmn.org

Thursday, May 15 • 3:30 pm

The Grand 1858 at Minneapolis Event Centers
212 2nd St SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414

SCHEDULE:

- 3:30 pm** Doors Open for Vendor Showcase
- 5:30 pm - 6 pm** Annual Award Presentation
- 6 pm - 6:30 pm** Annual Member Meeting
- 6:30 pm** Networking and Social Hour

Attendees:

- \$45 - Member
- \$65 - Non-Member
- \$25 - Young Professional/
Student

Exhibitors (Tabletop):

Includes 2 attendees

- \$500 - Firm & Affiliate Member
- \$750 - Non-Member

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Upcoming Virtual Programs & Forums



ACEC/MN: Engineering Ethics and Wellness: It's All About You

May 6, 2025, 8am - 10am

[Click for more information and to register](#)

Join Kristine Kubes, Kubes Law Firm to learn how mental health and wellness relate to ethical practice and how stress impacts ethical decision making. We will also learn about the new MN Law on lobbying, review MN Code of Ethics/Professional conduct, and how to empower your practice doing the right thing!

ACEC/MN HR Forum - Work Life Balance and Employee Expectations

May 7, 2025, 9am - 10am

[Click for more information and to register](#)

Come join us for an exciting conversation on the "Great Detachment" and the opportunity for "Great Reengagement"! With insights from our CBIZ Benefit partners and our special guest, David Stillman, from @GenGuru, we'll dive into the latest trends and generational challenges.

ACEC/MN Risk Management Forum: Climate Change and the Standard of Care for Design Professionals

June 3, 2025, 9am - 10am

[Click for more information and to register](#)

As the frequency of climate events rise, how will the standard of care evolve for design professionals, what steps can they take to address climate risks in their projects, and how can they demonstrate compliance in the event of a claim? Join construction lawyer and insurance broker Karen Erger, Lockton for a discussion on these challenges and actionable ideas for your firm.

ACEC/MN Forecasting Seminar (2025)

June 25, 2025, 1pm - 3:30pm

[Click for more information and to register](#)

Mark your calendars for the annual Forecasting event - this year ACEC/MN is hosting several state, federal and metro agencies to present on their projected plans for the next 3-5 years. This is your opportunity to hear project and budget forecasts from key staff!

*Above programs are virtual
Forums are always free to Members*



ACEC/MN In the News

In March, Jonathan Curry, ACEC/MN CEO, sat down with Finance & Commerce reporter Brian Johnson on the [Beyond the Skyline podcast](#).

Highlights are below, and you can [click here to listen to the conversation](#) or [here to read the full interview](#).



Brian: Tell us a little more about ACEC/MN, your mission and top priorities.

ACEC focuses on advocacy, education and connection and one of our top issues over the last couple of years has been workforce. There's been great investment from the state of Minnesota and from the federal government in terms of infrastructure dollars, but the question is, "How quickly and efficiently can we spend those and do we have the workforce to deliver on those projects?"

In Minnesota, we've seen a big need for engineers. Our members probably have well over 1,000 open positions across the state of Minnesota. One of the things that ACEC Minnesota did two years ago was establish the Engineering Education Foundation of America (EEFA).

EEFA has three main priorities: we've got a STEM education group, so that's K-12; we've got a post-secondary education group, so that's outreach to not only four-year schools, but also the two-year schools and the training programs; and then we've got an initiative that's focused around retaining talent in the industry. It's one of the things that we're trying to do to as an industry group to combat some of the workforce issues and get more folks to be interested in the engineering profession.

Brian: What else are you working on?

One of the biggest events that we do in the education space is our Minnesota Transportation Conference and Expo, which is coming up March 19-21. It will be about 1,500 both public and private sector engineers at the RiverCentre here in St Paul; 80 sessions, about 75 exhibitors. It's really going to be a great time to talk about the built environment and transportation infrastructure, in particular here in the state of Minnesota.

I think what's going to be critical this year in Washington, D.C., is, "Are they going to do another five-year funding bill for transportation?" In Minnesota, we'd like to see those matching dollars come back. That creates certainty in the marketplace. And when there's certainty in the marketplace, that gives folks confidence that they can bid on projects, that those projects are going to be realized, and that allows folks like engineers who are on the front-end side of design to be confident that we can bid on those projects, we can up our capacity, hire new people to work on them.

In St. Paul, we'll be advocating for some more infrastructure funding, potentially a bonding bill, if that's going to happen. I'm just happy to hear they're all back to work. We've got great legislators on both sides of the aisle in Minnesota, and ACEC really prides itself on being able to work with lawmakers to educate them on what's best for the state of Minnesota when it comes to engineering projects. Last year we were strong advocates for the use of more qualifications-based selections when it comes to procuring projects for engineers. We'll be talking about that again this year, as well.

“The projects that our members work on across the state really have impacts on communities. They have impacts on the future of Minnesota. I want folks to see ACEC Minnesota as a resource in that regard.”

Day at the Capitol Recap

On March 6th, ACEC/MN members gathered at the State Capitol to advocate for the Engineering Industry and connect with state legislators.

Major issues at the Capitol this year include passing a two year budget, permitting reform, changes to Paid Leave legislation passed last year, and a potential Bonding Bill.

Thank you to our legislative speakers:

- Rep. Erin Koegel
- Rep. Brad Tabke
- Rep. Chris Swedzinski
- Sen. Grant Hauschild
- Sen. Nick Frentz
- Sen. Ann Johnson Stewart
- Sen. Sandra Pappas



Top: Sen. Johnson Stewart and Sen. Pappas discuss the Bonding bill.

Lower Left: Eric Heiberg from Heley, Duncan, Melander updates members on legislation to clarify lobbyist registrations to the Campaign Finance Board

Lower Right: Sen. Nick Frentz recaps the 2025 session so far and lays out caucus priorities.



Sen. Grant Hauschild shares details on legislation to streamline permitting with members

ACEC Minnesota

2025 ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

On Friday, February 21st, over 220 members, clients and special guests gathered to celebrate the biggest night of the year for engineering as the winners of the 2025 Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA) were presented. 14 firms entered 19 amazing projects that upgrade and enhance communities and businesses in all corners of the state and beyond! Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Gala and a special thank you to our event sponsors. [Relive the magic with our event pictures here.](#)

The following page highlights our **Grand Conceptor Award** and **People's Choice Award** Winner - one exciting addition to this year's EEA program a new award for the highest scoring project that used Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS), the **Excellence in QBS Award!** If you're looking to marvel at some amazing projects, [see this link to browse all the 2025 project panels](#) and the full list of winners [can be found here.](#)

We hope to see you all again next year for the 2026 EEA Gala!



2025 Grand Conceptor, People's Choice & Excellence in QBS Award
Winner: I-35W Underground Stormwater Storage Facility



The Minnesota Department of Transportation needed to solve an intractable problem—a repeatedly flooded interstate involving stormwater geysers and disruption to traffic and commerce. They turned to Barr and a multi-partner team to design and construct an underground stormwater storage facility, the first of its kind in Minnesota.



Positioned along the busy artery of I-35W in Minneapolis, six connected, 80-foot-deep chambers can store 4.5 million gallons of stormwater runoff. The stormwater storage facility was constructed using a diaphragm wall with a hydromill—another first in Minnesota—to accommodate the tight construction space and high groundwater table. With a 100-year design life, the project is already providing local flooding resiliency, minimizing commerce impacts, and improving roadway safety for the 163,000 vehicles traveling this corridor each day.



MTCE &

MARCH 19-21

2025

MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE & EXPO

This year's Conference was held March 19th-21st at St. Paul RiverCentre, and MnDOT Commissioner Nancy Daubenberger gave the opening remarks.

Over 2.5 days, the 1,500+ registrants had an opportunity to visit 75 exhibitors and choose from 80 presentations, covering topics from current and past projects, climate change, safety, emerging technologies, policy and more.

10,448 PDHs were awarded to attendees!

Save the date for next year's conference:
March 18th-20th, 2026 at the RiverCentre.







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Reach key contacts in the Engineering Industry and beyond with an ad in the ACEC/MN Newsletter & Annual Report!

Opportunities are available for the 2025-26 newsletter calendar.

Publications include

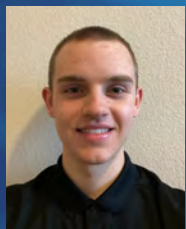
- Summer 2025 (July)
- Fall 2025 (October)
- Winter 2026 (January)
- EEA Recap & Highlights (March)
- Spring 2026 (April)
- Annual Report & other special newsletter issues as announced

Full Page Ad	\$750 per issue \$3600 for year
Half Page Ad	\$500 per issue \$2,400 for year
Quarter Page Ad	\$350 per issue \$1,680 for year

Contact kelly@acecmn.org with any questions or to sign on.

[Past Newsletters](#)

Congratulations to EEFA's Fall 2024 Scholarship Recipients! \$26,500 in scholarships awarded to 9 amazing future engineers



Oxley Scholarship:
Austin Konrath,
Civil Engineering, University
of Minnesota Duluth



Terry Swor Scholarship:
Jovian McCarthy,
Civil Engineering, Minnesota State
University Mankato



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Civil Engineering,
South Dakota State University



Alliant Golf Scholarship:
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Civil Engineering,
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Noah Herron, Environmental
Engineering, University of
Wisconsin - Madison



General Scholarship:
Daniel Georgioff,
Civil Engineering, University of
Minnesota Twin Cities



General Scholarship:
Katarina Dries,
Nuclear Engineering, University
of Wisconsin - Madison

Our Fall Recipients submitted great thank you videos - [check those out here!](#)
[And the EEFA Scholarship page has](#) videos from the Spring 2024 recipients too.

2025
SCHOLARSHIP
GOLF TOURNAMENT



Roar onto the course at **Jurassic PAR on Thursday, June 12th!** Back again for 2025, the **Engineering Education Foundation of America** is hosting another amazing Golf Tournament to raise funds for scholarships and workforce development.

Sponsor Registration is open - don't miss your chance to be on the course for all the fun while you support a great cause. And with a discount on foursomes for sponsors, you can't afford not to sign up! [Click here for our sponsor registration page.](#)

Open golfer registration is May 5th
So register as a sponsor before then to make sure you get a spot before they sell out!

Questions? Email taylor@acecmn.org



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