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Regional Freight Planning in Middle Tennessee

by *Michael Skipper, AICP*
Executive Director Nashville Area MPO

Located at the junction of three major interstate highways and within a day's drive of half of the U.S. population, Nashville occupies a strategic spot within North America.



Michael Skipper

This locational advantage has made the region a transportation hub for many industries and has produced enormous economic benefits to communities and companies throughout the area. Middle Tennessee's commerce is supported by an expansive multi-modal freight transportation network comprised of highways, a major CSX classification yard, air cargo facilities in Smyrna and Nashville, and barge facilities along the Cumberland River with access to the Gulf of Mexico—all readily available to move goods throughout the nation and internationally.

While the financial benefit of those assets is unquestioned, the region's position as a crossroads also brings a set of challenges that could threaten other aspects of quality of life—traffic congestion and air, water and noise pollution, to name a few. Recognizing those potential conflicts,

the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has made freight and goods movement a significant priority of its regional planning work program.

Serving as a partnership among local governments and the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), the MPO is committed to finding the proper balance between the needs of the freight industry, local commerce and the Nashville region's overall goals for mobility, livability, sustainability, and prosperity.

The MPO's freight planning efforts are largely channeled through a series of studies that were first launched a decade ago and continue to this day. Collectively, the studies have helped integrate freight-related goals into the regional transportation plan and into the comprehensive plans of local communities across the seven counties of the MPO planning area.

The earliest efforts from the studies focused on the creation of a regional freight advisory committee charged with communicating the complexities of freight movement and creating

a common understanding of the role that the freight and logistics industry plays in the success of Middle Tennessee's economy. The committee connects public sector planners and policy-makers with key business

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Some Assembly Required

by Chuck Saunders, PE
 ACEC of Tennessee President

The term Civil engineer was coined in the 18th Century as a distinction of the civilian engineer as opposed to military engineers. Though we all do not practice the "civil" discipline per se, we are all



Chuck Saunders

bound by the one common cause to protect the health, welfare and safety of the public. Engineers are the stewards of civilizations' infrastructure and Qualification-Based Selection remains one of the defining elements to assure qualified professionals are performing on the projects that affect the quality of life for millions of our fellow Tennesseans.

These are exciting, challenging and unpredictable times for our profession. ACEC, TSPE and ASCE cohosted over 500 attendees, representing numerous disciplines and market sectors, at the Tennessee Engineers' Conference in Murfreesboro. I'm especially encouraged that some 75 students attended the conference, demonstrating optimism for interest in our profession. The comradery of the assembly was very refreshing. Representatives from all societies shared in the preparation and participation in meaningful ways and the PAC Auction far exceeded its goal.

There were several highlights of note. Attendance apexed last year's event by 25%. Another major highlight of the conference was that Tim Corbin, coach of the College World Series Champion Vanderbilt Commodores, spoke at the Tennessee Engineering Foundation luncheon that was attended by nearly 150. The education tracks were fantastic this year.

ACEC of Tennessee is experiencing a lot of change during my tenure as President. After 15 years of loyal service to ACEC, and TSPE, our Executive Director, Candy Toler is retiring. Candy has served as a dear friend to the societies, a lobbyist, and a true advocate for the engineering profession. Candy will be missed by all, and most certainly by me. We wish our Grand Iris all the best. A joint search committee is seeking her successor who can understudy with her in early 2015.

Soon we will have the opportunity to vote for the highly publicized 2014 mid-term elections, possibly one of the most critical in decades. Typically I keep these articles pretty light, but this year the issues before our elected officials are very serious; those issues are about focus on a purpose, and quality of daily life. That focus of this electorate must be on sensible infrastructure funding. As the caregivers to these aging resources, it is incumbent upon ACEC to give a voice to the voiceless.

Our community leaders need to hear from our organization and the issues facing our state need your voice. That voice ultimately translates to true long-term initiatives to fund infrastructure.

Regional Freight Planning in Middle Tennessee *(continued from page 1)*

partners who represented major carriers, shippers, and users of long-haul freight. The committee developed a regional freight profile which has provided important information about the freight networks and commodity flows across the various modes of transportation.

Since the early convening of the freight advisory committee, the MPO has continued to work with its partners to build analytical tools that forecast future heavy-truck volumes and potential bottlenecks on regional transportation corridors. Additionally, the MPO has focused resources to define a public planning process that effectively considers freight movement in the evaluation of all proposed roadway improvements vying for federal funding through the MPO or TDOT.

Today, the MPO is focused on Middle Tennessee's future and how to accommodate more than a million new people by 2040, when the metro area's population is expected to surpass the three million mark. As part of this latest effort, the MPO is working with consultants and key stakeholders to establish a comprehensive vision for a regional freight network to better direct limited transportation dollars to the most fruitful projects. That vision will include a designated truck route system and supporting policies that better manage the flow of goods through and within the region. Finally, the study will provide guidance on how best to minimize the local community impacts of freight movement through set of strategies that better align economic development initiatives, land use decisions, urban design standards, roadway designs,

and building codes with freight and local delivery needs.

Once the study is completed, the MPO will create print and web-based communication tools to help promote awareness of freight movements, associated benefits and challenges, proposed strategies, and proposed improvements across the region. For more information on the Nashville Area MPO's freight planning activities, visit freight.nashvillempo.org.

About the Nashville Area MPO:

The Nashville Area MPO is the lead transportation policy, planning, and programming agency for Middle Tennessee and serves more than 1.5 million people throughout Davidson, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson counties. Acting as a regional partnership among the local elected leadership, transit agencies, Tennessee Department of Transportation, and federal agencies, the MPO represents a forum for the business community and citizens across the seven-county area to help decide how federal and state funds will be used to improve roads, bridges, public transit, and walking and bicycling conditions.

The MPO leads in the development of the metropolitan area's long-range transportation plan and short-term capital investment program, and contributes to ongoing conversations about economic development, land use, the environment, and public health. To learn more, visit NashvilleMPO.org.

TEF Luncheon and Annual Meeting



▲ **Tim Corbin**, Vanderbilt University Baseball Coach (Center) delivered the keynote address at the Tennessee Engineering Foundation Luncheon. Pictured with Coach Corbin are **Steve Lane, PE, Smith Seckman Reid, Inc. (L)**, and **Claire Barnett, PE, EnSafe Inc.** and President of the TEF.



▲ **Kathy Ware, PE, K. S. Ware & Associates, LLC**, received a citation for her accomplishments as 2014 Transportation Committee Chair from **David Harrell, PE, 2013-2014 President**.



▲ **Donna J. Corlew, CPSM, FSMPS, C*Connect**, received a citation for her service as Chair of the 2014 Engineering Excellence Awards Program from **David Harrell, PE**.

Gathering for an "official" photo at the TN Engineers' Conference were (Front Row, L to R) **David Harrell, PE, Past President; Chuck Saunders, PE, President; John Kenny, PE, President Elect;** (back row, L to R) **Joe Ledford, PE, First Vice President; Steve Field, PE, ACEC National Director; Mike Stomer, PG, East TN Chapter President; and Amy Spann, PE, Second Vice President.**▶



Entries Due November 7 for 2015 Engineering Excellence Awards

The work of your engineering firm deserves recognition, applause, and time in the spotlight! The 24th Annual Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA) competition offers Tennessee engineering firms this opportunity. Friday, November 7, is the deadline to submit entries and take the first step towards receiving statewide and regional attention for projects that demonstrate a high degree of achievement, value and ingenuity.

"Thirteen awards will be given: one Grand Award for each of the 12 entry categories and one Grand Iris Award, the 'best of competition' from any of the 12 categories," said Kyle Peters, PE, EEA program chair, K. S. Ware & Associates, Nashville.

The award winners will be announced at a Gala celebration on March 3, 2015, at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs, noted Brian Hall, PE, EEA co-chair, AECOM, Nashville.

Don't miss this opportunity; enter by November 7th. Visit www.acectn.org/CallEntry.htm for details. Questions? Contact Judy Logue at 615-242-2486 or e-mail jlogue@tnec.org.

Welcome, New Partner

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Thanks, PAC Auction Contributors

Thank you to all the individuals who contributed to the Auction for the Tennessee Professional Engineers Political Action Committee. The Auction is held every year in conjunction with the annual conference.

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CALENDAR

OCTOBER
22-25

ACEC Fall Conference

Waikoloa, HI

NOVEMBER

7

2015 Engineering Excellence Awards Entry Deadline

NOVEMBER

27&28

ACEC of TN/TSPE Offices Closed Thanksgiving Holiday

MEMBER NEWS

J. R. Wauford & Company has added Scott Carroll, PE, as Office Manager in Maryville, TN.

Tennessee Engineering Center
800 Fort Negley Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37203

Return Service Requested

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Jacobs Associates
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Nashville, TN 37215
206-588-8125

Key contact:
Joseph Schrank, PE, Associate
schrank@jacobsfs.com

Jacobs Associates provides design and construction management services for underground projects in the water, wastewater, and transportation sectors, and serve the broader civil construction industry with claims and dispute resolution services. We provide a full array of design services, including tunnel and shaft design, excavation support, rail clearance improvements, foundation design, dewatering, slope stabilization, foundation design, and geotechnical characterization.

Marion Environmental Inc.
115 Parmenas Lane
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Key contact:
Steve Wild, Senior Environmental Engineer
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MEI designs, installs, and maintains systems for remediation of contaminated soils, subsurface water, groundwater and sediments. The company also designs, develops and conducts subsurface groundwater and/or soil investigations and performs human health and environmental risk assessments.

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F R O M T H E E X E C U T I V E D I R E C T O R

Focus on Education

by *Candy Toler, Executive Director
ACEC of Tennessee*

The Tennessee Engineers' Conference was a huge success, with a record number of attendees and wide variety of education sessions and presenters

Coach Tim Corbin spoke to an enthusiastic crowd at the Tennessee Engineering Foundation luncheon about his teaching/coaching style and the road the Vanderbilt baseball coaches and team traveled to make it to the top. It was an inspiring message.



Candy Toler

The TEF's mission is to support activities that encourage students to pursue careers in engineering and the trustees authorized spending for four scholarships for 2015 and support for MATHCOUNTS. The TEF scholarships, which will be awarded next spring, will be given to students enrolled in engineering programs in Tennessee colleges.

The need for engineers in our ever-changing world continues to grow and ACEC and

ACEC of Tennessee join the TEF in encouraging college students to continue their engineering studies. If you know engineering students entering their junior, senior, or fifth year or graduate school in the fall of 2015, please encourage them to visit our website for information about eligibility and deadlines (<http://acectn.com/engineering-excellence-awards/scholarships/>) Winners will be announced in March 2015.

We are pleased to report that involvement on ACEC of TN committees continues to grow and participation at events is at an all-time high. Let's sustain the momentum by encouraging more entries in the 2015 Engineering Excellence Awards program. The details are available by clicking on <http://acectn.com/engineering-excellence-awards/> on our website. The deadline is November 7.

Conference attendance at the national level is at an all-time high also—that may have something to do with it being on the big island in Hawaii! It's not too late to register by going to ACEC's website.