

ACEC Tennessee

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES OF TENNESSEE

FIFTY YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

TRANSFORMING A STREET: CUMBERLAND AVENUE



By: Anne Wallace, Deputy Director, Office of Redevelopment
City of Knoxville

Nearly ten years in the making, the City of Knoxville, University of Tennessee, Knoxville Utilities Board, Tennessee Department of

Transportation, and area merchants and residents collaborated to transform Cumberland Avenue, the commercial corridor adjacent to the University of Tennessee and connecting the Fort Sanders neighborhood to downtown.

“To create a more inviting, vibrant and safe Cumberland Avenue that enhances the connections to the University of Tennessee and area employers and improves the residential and retail character of the district while providing for all modes of transportation”

was the mantra for one of the most intense roadway construction projects the City of Knoxville has undertaken. In 2006, under then Mayor Bill Haslam, the City of Knoxville, University of Tennessee, and numerous other stakeholders examined ways to revitalize Cumberland Ave. Knoxville, like many towns, wanted to revitalize an important commercial corridor after decades of disinvestment.

Construction for the Cumberland Avenue Corridor Project began in June of 2015 and was finally completed last year. Commonly referred to as “The Strip,” the project has transformed Cumberland Avenue into a more aesthetically pleasing, economically successful, vibrant and safe street. The street’s new design is more pedestrian-friendly, with wider sidewalks and

a new utility infrastructure. By narrowing the traffic lanes from four to three, a new raised median was installed to direct left turn movements to side streets and provide shelter for pedestrians crossing the street. Additionally, pedestrian amenities were added throughout the corridor including new benches, bus shelters with ADA access, kiosks with maps for wayfinding, new trash and recycling cans, and new stamped asphalt crosswalks that highlight the shortened crossing distance for pedestrians and draw driver attention to the crossing locations because of the color and design.

The project removed unsightly overhead utility lines and placed them on new utility poles in the alleys north and south of Cumberland Avenue. The gas, water and sewer lines were all replaced with new lines in order to accommodate the next 50 years of development and improve the condition of utilities. Silva Cells were also installed under the new wider sidewalks to capture more rain water and to allow for larger tree growth and development. The inclusion of trees throughout this corridor are also helping with storm water runoff through natural absorption. Permeable pavers were installed adjacent to the planter areas allowing more storm water to penetrate the street trees.



Cumberland Avenue AFTER

This \$25 million-dollar public investment has helped leverage nearly \$200 million in private investment along the corridor in new retail storefronts, groceries, entertainment venues, overnight lodging, restaurants, and student apartments.

ACEC TENNESSEE PARTNERS

These companies provide TN engineering firms with products and services and support the activities of ACEC Tennessee through participation in the Partners Program. Additional information about these Partner Program participants is available at www.acectn.org

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YANMAR AMERICA

**JUNE
30**

EEA Initial Project
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**SEPTEMBER
17 - 18**

2018 TN Engineers'
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Assistant Director of Membership and Communication

Kiersten Thompson

ACEC LANDS A HUGE WIN WITH TAX REFORM *(continued from page 4)*

- Passthrough owners with incomes over those thresholds can claim the deduction subject to a limitation of of W-2 wages, or 25% of W-2 wages plus a measure of capital investment (similar to rules for the former Section 199 deduction).
- C corporations and passthrough firms can continue to deduct business state and local taxes if they are levied at the entity level.
- Section 199 domestic production activities deduction was eliminated

- Corporate alternative minimum tax (AMT) was repealed.
- Individual AMT is retained with increases in the exemption amount and phaseout threshold.
- The cash method of accounting was preserved; no changes to ESOPs.
- Individual deductibility of state and local taxes is limited to the first \$10,000 of property, income, or sales taxes.

ACEC Tennessee will roll out educational sessions on the new tax law in coming months. In the meantime, we encourage you to speak with your CPA to make sure you are positioned to take advantage of the new provisions. If you would like guidance from a CPA firm with specific expertise in A/E, reach out to Mindy Toole with ACEC Partner T. Wayne Owens & Associates, PC. She can be reached at mtoole@twocpa.com or 678.261.8566.

ANNOUNCING TENNESSEE ENGINEERS' CONFERENCE 2018

The 2018 Tennessee Engineers' Conference will be September 17 - 18, 2018 at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs, Franklin, TN.

The conference will include six educational tracks - Civil & Environmental; Electrical Mechanical & Industrial; Engineering Management; Geotechnical; Structural; and Transportation. The conference is a combined meeting with ACEC Tennessee, American Society of Civil Engineers, Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers, and the TN Structural Engineers Association. Do not miss the opportunity to network within your industry, make valuable connections, and earn up to 12 professional development hours!

Sponsorships and exhibitor opportunities are now available. To register online visit www.acectn.org/Get Involved/TN Engineers' Conference 2018.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Powers Hill Design, LLC
80 Monroe Ave., Suite 420
Memphis, TN. 38103
(901) 543 - 8000

Contacts: Nisha Powers, PE, President and
Steve Hill, PE, COO/Principal-in-Charge

Thomas & Hutton Engineering Company
615 Main St., Suite 124
Nashville, TN. 37206
(615) 349 - 4967
Contact: Travis Todd, PE

DISCIPLINES: Site development, transportation, utilities, hydrology/hydraulics, environmental documentation, public/stakeholder engagement, CEI *Certified Small Business; Disadvantaged Business Enterprise; Minority Business Enterprise; Women's Business Enterprise*

DISCIPLINES: Civil engineering, land planning, surveying, consulting, economic development, landscape architecture, GIS, transportation and water.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ACEC ANNUAL CONVENTION & LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT



By: Charlie Smith, PE
President of ACEC Tennessee

Twelve of our ACEC Tennessee friends and colleagues met last month in Washington D.C. with roughly 1,079 other ACEC members from across the nation. ACEC is all about the business of engineering; their national meetings are one of the best places for executives, senior managers, and up-and-comers to walk away with developing meaningful connections and informative information. Following are some of the highlights of the convention.

There were more than 40 educational sessions covering a wide range of topics including technology and software, impact of new tax laws, ownership structure, business development, M&A trends, effective growth strategy, decision making, and many others.

The opening general and lunch sessions are always hallmarks of the convention. This year the speakers included: Brandye Hendrickson from the Federal Highway Administration providing perspective on infrastructure in the US and some encouraging discussion about intentional & collaborative streamlining of the federal project review processes; a panel of state DOT executives sharing perspectives on what works and what doesn't for P3 efforts; a bipartisan panel of current congressmen providing their take on the politics of infrastructure; and a CEO panel discussing the US energy markets and

challenges. The highlight for me was a fascinating discussion between Steve Schmidt (Republican Political Strategist) and Tucker Carlson (Fox News Commentator and Host). It was a unique experience to hear the two share their informed insights without having to battle each other for time before the next commercial break.

The convention is also the venue for the national Engineering Excellence Awards. Comedian and TV personality Kevin Neelan once again emceed the black-tie affair. As usual it was a great event, with the party and dancing going strong for hours after the awards.

During Tuesday and Wednesday of the convention, many of the state delegations took the opportunity to visit their representatives and senators on Capitol Hill. Members of ACEC TN met with all but two of our legislators and reviewed issues of critical importance to member firms. The key issues included increased investment for the nation's infrastructure (all infrastructure), with special emphasis on airports and aviation, water infrastructure, regulatory reform, and accelerated permitting. The ACEC staff always prepares delegates well for discussions with legislators making it easy to participate.

I mentioned there were twelve ACEC TN members who attended the convention. Do you know what's special about those delegates that attended? Nothing in particular – all great folks, but registration is open to any ACEC member. Don't miss out; join us in Vegas this fall and DC next April!

CONGRATULATIONS NEW PEs!

Jeff Bampfield, PE
Arcadis

William Littlejohn, PE
Cannon & Cannon, Inc.

Xavier Pedeux, PE
AECOM

Ben Coles, PE
Gresham, Smith and Partners

Scott McAmis, PE
Barge Design Solutions, Inc.

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Gloria Neal, PE
Barge Design Solutions, Inc.

Miles Watkins, PE
Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions

John Greer, PE
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Kyle Ogden, PE
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JUNE
2018

INSIDE

- **Announcing Tennessee Engineering Conference 2018**
- **Congratulations New PEs**
- **Highlights from the ACEC Annual Convention & Legislative Summit**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ACEC LANDS A HUGE WIN WITH TAX REFORM



By: Kasey Anderson, CAE
Executive Director of ACEC Tennessee
kanderson@tnec.org

Passed at the end of 2017, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (HR 1) represents the first major overhaul of the federal tax code in over 30 years. ACEC's primary objective through the consideration of HR 1 was to achieve balanced tax reforms that would help both C corporations and passthrough firms (S corporations, partnerships and LLCs) to be more competitive in the marketplace at home and abroad. Other objectives included protecting the ability of engineering firms to use cash accounting, as well as protecting existing retirement and employee ownership mechanisms, such as ESOPs.

The law lowers the corporate tax rate from 35 to 21 percent, and creates a new 20 percent tax deduction for passthrough firms. The most significant challenge ACEC faced at the start of the tax reform process was the exclusion of engineering passthrough firms (together with other service-related industries, such as doctors and lawyers) from the proposed tax benefits in the House and Senate versions of HR 1.

In response to a major lobbying effort by ACEC—which included nearly 6,000 contacts by Council members to lawmakers—the final version of the legislation allows engineering firms to fully utilize the new 20 percent deduction in the same manner as other non-service passthrough industries.

ACEC will continue to engage with Congress, the Department of Treasury, and the Internal Revenue Service as regulatory guidance is developed to implement HR 1.

KEY ELEMENTS IN HR 1

- Corporate tax rate drops from 35 to 21 percent (including personal services corporations).
- New 20 percent passthrough tax deduction on domestic qualified business income:
 - Passthrough owners with incomes below \$315,000 (married filing jointly)/\$157,500 (individual) can claim the 20 percent deduction without limitations.
 - Owners with income between \$315,000 and \$415,000 for married couples, and between \$157,500 and \$207,500 for individuals, can claim a partial deduction (additional details will be provided in guidance from Treasury expected in late 2018).

continued on page 2