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Knoxville Revives Historic Gay Street *1919 Solution to Traffic Problem Requires Re-do*

by *Cindy Melhorn Moore*
Corporate Marketing Manager
Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers, Inc.

In 1900, Knoxville was a regional manufacturing and commerce center with a traffic problem. It stemmed from the city's topography. The slope of the terrain led both vehicular and pedestrian traffic to an intersection with the rail yard at the bottom of a steep hill. The answers for the city engineers in 1919 were simple: raise the grade and build a viaduct to cross the multiple tracks, protecting both commerce and pedestrian traffic.



Cindy M. Moore

After a century, the years had taken their toll on both the streetscape and sub-street utility infrastruc-

ture. In fact, no major changes had been made to the area since 1919.

In 2005-2006, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) rebuilt the viaduct. The city of Knoxville selected Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers (V&M) to provide design and construction plans for improvements to both the 100 and 200 blocks of Gay Street.

The design called for the narrowing of the street and widening of the sidewalks, new street lighting, tree plantings and street furniture to make for a more pedestrian-friendly environment and improved aesthetic feel. Simply put, the task was to escort Downtown into the next century, without forgetting the charm of its past.

Several Engineering Challenges

The 100 and 200 blocks are home to hundreds of residents and dozens of businesses,

(continued on page 2)



The 100 and 200 blocks of downtown Knoxville's South Gay Street were the epicenter of almost 19 months of work that reconstructed the charm of 1919 Americana. However, most people will never know the buried story of the street's origins.

Maintain the Momentum of March

by Steve Bostic
President, ACEC of Tennessee

Consider this a pep talk. It's time to "keep on keeping on." There are still runs on base, yards to gain, and points to score. Folks, we must keep communicating with our elected officials.



Steve Bostic

I was proud and impressed in March with the way that engineers rallied and worked together to make the Legislative Reception and Engineers' Day on the Hill activities so successful. However, we still have work to do. The Tennessee General Assembly

remains in session. Congress continues to deliberate and make decisions about budgets and programs that will have far-ranging implications for engineering firms and our profession.

We must stay in touch with our elected representatives both in Nashville and in Washington. I assure you that other groups are presenting their case every day. Candy Toler does a great job representing our interests in Nashville, but state representatives and senators really want to hear from their constituents—that's you! Likewise, ACEC does an impressive job on our behalf in Washington; however, there is nothing like a phone call, letter or email from "back home" for getting attention.

It takes individuals working together to win—whether on the ball diamond or in the legislature. We may get weary, but we must maintain the momentum of March.

This pep talk would not be complete until I urge you to attend the ACEC of Tennessee Annual Meeting in August. It's a great place to connect with colleagues. Plus, there are opportunities for professional development and updates from state officials. I'll look for you there.

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Knoxville Revives *(continued from page 1)*

which increased the stakes for completing the project quickly and efficiently, all with minimal disruption. One of the first challenges was the sidewalk column foundations that supported the structural sidewalk built with the 100 block raising in 1919. Once these were uncovered, many shafts were found to have a substantial offset from the columns they were supporting, and the adjacent soils were found to be of poor quality. This caused substantial modifications to the design of the columns and their footing supports.

City staff and engineers were shocked with the discovery of how bad some offsets were. In some instances, they wondered what had kept the sidewalk in place for so long. However, the design team and city staff came together and developed a cost-effective solution that was able to reuse the existing foundations and kept the project moving forward.

When completed, the 100 and 200 blocks were unveiled with not only new sidewalks, lighting, trees and furnishings, but all new underground utilities and structural supports.

"If you hadn't been to the area for a few months and you missed the construction process, you probably wouldn't recognize it," said Stephen J. King, director of Engineering and Public Works for the city of Knoxville. "This is an addition that has been eagerly awaited for many years. It not only brings together the 100

and 200 blocks with the previous improvements to Gay Street completed in the late eighties, but it also corrects the structural sidewalk issues that we have been struggling with for many years. It also fits in well with what Knoxville has been trying to accomplish with its revitalization in the downtown area. This area has come a long way."

From its beginnings as a wholesale center to its transformation into a densely populated city block, the 100 and 200 blocks of South Gay Street now are prepared to take on the next 100 years of city life.



The 100 and 200 blocks of South Gay Street now are prepared to take on the next 100 years of city life.

Destination D.C.

ACEC of Tennessee was well represented by five members and Executive Director Candy Toler at the ACEC National Convention and Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C., March 29 through April 1. Visits with Tennessee's congressional delegation were among the highlights of the event.

On Capitol Hill: Five members of ACEC of Tennessee's delegation pause for a photo on the Capitol's steps before meetings with members of Congress. Left to right are Brad Thompson, Wilbur Smith Associates, Franklin; David Harrell, Vaughn & Melton, Knoxville; Bill Johnson, ARCADIS, Chattanooga; Everett Cowan, A/E Guidance, Franklin; and Jim Morinec, AECOM, Brentwood.



◀ *Congressman John Duncan, Knoxville, (third from left) gave Jim Morinec, David Harrell and Brad Thompson a short tour of the Capitol. That's a statue of American humorist Will Rogers in the background.*

Garland Rose, PE, F.ASCE, chairman emeritus of Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, and a representative of the American Society of Civil Engineers (left), joined Jim Morinec and Candy Toler to meet with Congressman Jim Cooper, Nashville.



Election of Officers for 2011-2012

The ACEC of Tennessee Nominating Committee, chaired by Lillard Teasley, PE, Teasley Services Group, has submitted the 2011 – 2012 slate of officers presented below; election ballots were sent to member firm representatives in April. **Ballots must be returned postmarked no later than May 15, 2011.**

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Steve Bostic, PE
Lamar Dunn & Associates, Inc.,
Knoxville

As President-Elect in 2010-2011, **Mike Pohlman, PE, Pickering Firm, Inc., Memphis**, will automatically become President in 2011-2012. New officers will assume their positions on July 1. They will be formally sworn into office during the Annual Meeting, August 24 - 26.

CALENDAR

MAY
11-12

ACEC of TN Planning
Retreat

Pickering Firm, Inc.,
Memphis

AUGUST
24 - 26

ACEC of TN/TSPE
Joint Annual Meeting

Franklin Marriott Cool
Springs, Franklin

OCTOBER
19 - 22

ACEC Fall Conference
Caesar's Palace,
Las Vegas

Member News

• **PBS&J** assumed the name of its new parent company, **ATKINS**, effective April 1. The firm's Tennessee office is in Nashville.

• **David L. Davidson, PE**, has joined the Nashville office of **Fisher & Arnold, Inc.**

• **Lamar Dunn, PE, Lamar Dunn & Associates, Inc.** Knoxville, has been named to the Civil and Environmental Engineering Advisory Board of Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville.

Tennessee Engineering Center
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Nashville, TN 37203

Return Service Requested

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Tennessee's Transportation Needs

- TDOT's Long Range Plan (2005) identified a \$2 billion gap between identified needs and anticipated revenues over 10 years
- Since 1990, vehicle miles traveled increased 72%, lane miles only 4%, and construction costs 50%
- The state population increased 30% from 1990 to 2010
- Current state gas tax was set in 1989 and the motor fuel tax was set in 1990
- A reliable, safe, and efficient transportation system is vital to a healthy economy

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In D.C. and Closer to Home

by Candy Toler
Executive Director, ACEC of Tennessee

There is much to report on the legislative front as ACEC promotes engineers and engineering at all levels of government.

Five members and I attended the ACEC Convention and Legislative Summit, March 29-April 1. (See photos on page 3 of this newsletter.) We saw Washington at its finest, with the cherry blossoms at their peak! We even teamed up with some ASCE folks from Nashville to make visits to our federal legislators and their staffs. The issues addressed may sound



Candy Toler

familiar. We:

- promoted support for infrastructure as an investment that has long-term benefits;
- encouraged adoption of a 6-year surface transportation program;
- recommended repealing the 3% withholding mandate on payments from governments at all levels (it was designed to insure tax compliance) and the 1099 mandate (which was signed by the President last month); and

- encouraged lawmakers to contract engineering work to the private sector.

A special note of thanks to Jerry Stump (Wilbur Smith Associates, Franklin), who served as the Chairman of our national organization for the last year. He made us proud! Congratulations to Everett Cowan (now with newly-formed A/E Guidance, LLC), who became the national Chairman of the ACEC Committee of Fellows, which administers the national scholarship program and more.

Things have also been busy at the State Capitol. The Tennessee General Assembly is going strong and members hope to adjourn later this month. As I write this article, they are reviewing departmental budgets and grilling commissioners about programs. While tax receipts appear to be improving, the budget this year will not be pretty, when all is said and done.

There are many issues on the state level we have concerns about, including continuation of the State Board of Engineers and Architects, efforts to limit outsourcing to the private sector, Qualifications-Based Selection, and motor vehicle accidents in construction zones, to name a few. If you would like more information about these bills, send me an email (ctoler@tnecc.org).