

# The Voice

FEBRUARY 2012

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AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING  
COMPANIES OF TENNESSEE

THE VOICE OF TENNESSEE'S ENGINEERING COMPANIES

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## TDOT Commissioner: Transportation funding should be at the forefront of national and state discussion

by Commissioner John Schroer  
Tennessee Department of Transportation

**A**s I write this article, I am sitting in my office at TDOT, exactly one year to the date since I assumed leadership of this agency. A lot has happened in the past 12 months, but as I begin my second year as TDOT Commissioner, I know there is much more work ahead for me and the 21 other Commissioners chosen by Governor



**John Schroer**

Haslam to help lead Tennessee.

Last month, Governor Haslam unveiled his 2012 legislative package, which seeks to move our state forward by supporting the Governor's goal to make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs through economic development efforts, meaningful education reform, a more efficient and effective state government, and improved public safety. These are ambitious goals that could lead to sweeping changes throughout Tennessee.

### Aggressive goals

My goals for TDOT are equally aggressive.

We have implemented some significant changes to streamline the Department's organizational chart. I promoted Chief Engineer Paul Degges to Deputy Commissioner, and have also recruited new staff members to help me move this agency forward. Joe Galbato has been named Deputy Commissioner and is our new CFO of Finance and Administration. Assistant Commissioner Toks Omishakin has taken over TDOT's Environment and Planning Division, and Lyndsay Botts is serving as my Chief of Staff. Together, we are determined to make TDOT the best DOT in the nation.

To communicate these goals with employees at this acronym-loving agency, I kicked off 2012 by introducing P.I.E.R.C.E. It stands for Professionalism, Innovation, Efficient, Responsible, Communication, & Expedient. PIERCE embodies everything TDOT should represent and this will be a continuing initiative for years to come.

### Financial impossibility

Despite these changes, there is one constant at TDOT—how this department is funded mainly by Federal and State gas

taxes. The Federal gas tax is \$.184 per gallon and the State gas tax is \$.214 per gallon, rates that have remained the same since 1993

*(continued on page 2)*

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*The State gas tax is \$.214 per gallon ... a rate that has remained the same since 1989.*

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## Don't Procrastinate: Commit to be there on March 5 & 6

by Mike Pohlman, PE  
President, ACEC of Tennessee

Now, we are already into the second month of the 2012. How are we doing with the concept of eliminating procrastination from our workplaces? Right now you have an opportunity to decide whether or not you will participate in next month's *Legislative Reception, Engineers' Day on the Hill* and the *Engineering Excellence Awards Banquet*. The events will be held over a two day period, March 5 and 6, at locations in and around Nashville.



Mike Pohlman

This is the perfect opportunity to play a part in promoting the true value of professional engineering to our legislative body as well as partake in the fellowship with your peers and applaud one another's accomplishments at the Banquet. It's a time to not only be proud of your own firm's

accomplishments and performance, but also take pride in our profession and what we do as a whole to make our communities better. Don't spend any time procrastinating; go ahead, commit and make your plans to attend these March 5th and 6th special events.

Now that you are fired up about showing up, please come enjoy yourself, meet your legislators, discuss the pressing political issues which you will be briefed on, and get to know your peers. You never know when an opportunity will arise to team with a friendly competitor to secure significant work that will benefit each participating firm as well as the community. Let ACEC of Tennessee assist you with your personal growth as well as your company's business and financial growth.

I look forward to seeing you all next month in Nashville.

### Qualifications

### Based Selection

An emphasis on qualifications as the prime selection criteria can substantially reduce the overall time to complete a project.

## Transportation funding

(continued from page 1)

and 1989 respectively. Because this is a static (price per gallon) tax, our funding is based mainly upon two factors: how many miles motorists are driving, and the fuel efficiency of our vehicles. Recent trends have shown people are driving less and getting better gas mileage. While

*Europe is spending 5% of its GDP on transportation and China is spending 9% while the United States is spending only 2.4%.*

environmentally positive, the current course will make it financially impossible to maintain and improve our transportation system throughout the United States.

I believe that it is time that the future of transportation funding be at the forefront of both national and state discussions. With the Federal Highway Trust Fund predicted to be insolvent by 2013, we cannot continue to rely on declining gas tax revenues to fund such a critical aspect of

our nation's infrastructure, one that is vital to a healthy economy.

Europe is spending 5% of its GDP on transportation and China is spending 9% while the United States is spending only 2.4%. As a nation and as a state we must acknowledge that the current method of funding transportation is archaic. Only then will we be able to develop a method that is sustainable and will allow us to continue to lead the world in transportation.

## MEMBER NEWS

- Joe Carpenter, PE, former Assistant Commissioner of Environment & Planning at the Tennessee Department of Transportation, has joined Littlejohn Engineering Associates, Inc. as Director of Transportation in the firm's Nashville office.
- CDM and Wilbur Smith Associates will now be known by the new brand, CDM Smith. CDM acquired Wilbur Smith in February 2011.
- Chris Triplett, PE, PMP, has been promoted to Manager of the Memphis office of Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon, Inc. following the announcement that current office manager Charlie Goforth will retire in April 2012.
- Nashville-based engineering firm Smith Seckman Reid has opened a new office just outside Washington, D.C. in Columbia, MD.

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## Engineering award winners will be announced March 6

Attendees from across state expected at awards gala

Several hundred Tennessee engineers, public officials and business leaders are expected to attend the *Engineering Excellence Awards* gala on Tuesday evening, March 6, in Franklin where the winners of the prestigious honors will be announced.



Rudy Kalis

Engineering firms in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville are competing for the top honor, the *Grand Iris Award*, presented for the project judged best in the overall competition. A *Grand Award* will be

presented in various entry categories at the discretion of the independent panel of judges.

Rudy Kalis, sports director at WSMV-TV/Channel 4 in Nashville, will be the featured speaker. A sports reporter and anchor at the station since August 1974, Kalis is very familiar with winning recognition for excellence: he has won four Local Emmys and 12 Associated Press awards for Outstanding Sportscast in Tennessee.

“On March 6, we will celebrate the engineering profession by spotlighting the contributions engineers make to communities and businesses, and honoring the accomplishments of ACEC of Tennessee member firms,” said program chair Greg Brubaker, PE, K.S. Ware & Associates, Nashville.

Brad Winkler, PE, program co-chair, TranSystems, Inc., Nashville, expressed appreciation to EEA sponsors. As of January 26, sponsors are: Titanium Sponsor – Atkins North America; Platinum Sponsors – Crow Friedman Group and Garney Construction Company; Silver Sponsors – AECOM; Jacobs Technology; K.S. Ware & Associates, LLC; Lelleyett & Rogers Company; Parsons Brinckerhoff; Smith Seckman Reid, Inc.; Tennessee Road Builders Association; TranSystems Corporation; Bronze Sponsors – ARCADIS; Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon, Inc.; Brown and Caldwell; Environmental Technical Sales, Inc.; Neel-Schaffer; S&ME, Inc.; Vaughn & Melton, Inc.

The *Engineering Excellence Awards* gala will begin with a reception at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m., and the award announcements and presentations at 8:00 p.m. Tickets must be purchased by March 2. To purchase tickets, please contact Judy Logue at 615-242-2486 or [jlogue@tnec.org](mailto:jlogue@tnec.org).

## 2012 EEA Entrants

### East Tennessee:

**AECOM:** I-40 @ SR66 Diverging Diamond Interchange, Sevierville, TN, for TDOT Project Planning Division

**ARCADIS:** Rock Stabilization at Ocoee No. 2 Flume, Ocoee, TN, for Tennessee Valley Authority

**EnSafe Inc.:** Century-Old Brownfield Site Remediation, Chattanooga, TN, for BrightBridge, Inc.

**Gresham Smith and Partners:** KUB Lower Third Creek Wastewater Storage Facility, Knoxville, TN, for Knoxville Utilities Board

**Jacobs Engineering Group:** Beaver Creek WW Treatment Facility Expansion, Powell, TN, for Hallsdale-Powell Utility District

**J. R. Wauford & Company Consulting Engineers, Inc.:** Maryville Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, Maryville, TN, for City of Maryville

**Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers, Inc.:** First Creek Channel Improvements, Knoxville, TN, for City of Knoxville

**CDM Smith:** John J. Duncan Jr. Knoxville Station Transit Center, Knoxville, TN, for City of Knoxville, manager Knoxville/Knox County Public Building Authority

### Middle Tennessee:

**AECOM:** TDOT Local Government Guidelines Update, Nashville, TN, for TDOT

**Brown and Caldwell:** Dry Creek WWTP Flood Recovery, Nashville, TN, for Metropolitan Nashville Water Services

**Florence & Hutcheson, Inc.:** SR 7 Reconstruction (CNJ318), Santa Fe, Maury Co., TN, for TDOT

**Gresham Smith and Partners:** K. R. Harrington Flood Recovery Effort, Nashville, TN, for Metropolitan Nashville Water Services

**Gresham Smith and Partners:** REOstone Levee Reconstruction, Nashville, TN, for Rogers Group

**K.S. Ware & Associates, LLC:** Davidson Street Sewer Collapse, Sinkhole Stabilization, Nashville, TN, for Nashville/Davidson County Metro Water Services

**K. S. Ware & Associates, LLC/Hart Freeland Roberts, Inc.:** Richland Creek Embankment Failure Investigation, Nashville, TN, for Nashville/Davidson County Metro Water Services

**RPM Transportation Consultants:** Cool Springs Area ITS Expansion Project, Franklin, TN, for City of Franklin

**TTL, Inc.:** U2 Concert Stage at Vanderbilt Stadium, Nashville, TN, for Vanderbilt University

### West Tennessee:

**Askew Hargraves Harcourt & Associates, Inc.:** Memphis Skate Park, Memphis, TN, for City of Memphis

### Out of State:

**Atkins North America, Inc.:** Repair Runway 05-23-Fairchild Air Force Base, Spokane, WA, for Fairchild Air Force Base, Civil Engineering

**Brown and Caldwell:** Wastewater Process Design, NREL Ethanol Model, Golden, CO, for National Renewable Energy Laboratory

## CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY 2

ACEC Transportation Partnering Committee

10:00 a.m.,

TDOT Office

Information:

[robert.mcivor@parsons.com](mailto:robert.mcivor@parsons.com)

### FEBRUARY 19-25

Engineers' Week

### MARCH 5

Legislative Reception  
Sheraton Nashville

Downtown

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

### MARCH 6

Engineers' Day on the Hill  
State Capitol, Nashville

9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

*Engineering Excellence Awards* Banquet

Franklin Marriott

Cool Springs

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

### APRIL 15-18

ACEC Conference and  
Legislative Summit

This event in

Washington, D.C. is

another occasion for

engineers to promote

their profession with

Tennessee's U.S.

Senators and

Representatives.

More information is

available at

[www.acec.org](http://www.acec.org)

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Return Service Requested

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### Welcome, New Partner Program Member

AE Guidance, LLC  
2323 21st Avenue South  
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615-370-3863  
www.aeguidance.com

**Contact:**  
Everett Cowan, PE, FACEC  
Chief Executive Officer  
ehcowan@aeguidance.com

AE Guidance, LLC is a management consultant to the Architectural and Engineering industry. The firm's team of experts is experienced in all phases of AE firm management. Services include operational analysis, succession planning, ownership transition, firm valuations, strategic planning, executive coaching, project management training and marketing process development

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Upcoming events will spotlight engineers

by Candy Toler  
Executive Director, ACEC of Tennessee

**A**cross the country, engineers will celebrate Engineers' Week, February 19-25, in many ways, including banquets, math competitions, and presentations on engineering careers in schools. Then in Tennessee, we will move into the events I call *March Madness* . . . ACEC's *Legislative Reception*, *Engineers' Day on the Hill*, and the *Engineering Excellence Awards Gala*.



Candy Toler

I am amazed by the varied topics of legislation filed in the General Assembly so far this year -- about 2,000 bills! In addition to the new bills, bills left over from 2011 may be considered, including establishing a practice act for interior designers, environmental/water issues, and energy conservation. In short, there are many bills and issues up for consideration that could affect public health and safety, and the engineering profession.

ACEC needs your participation at the *Legislative Reception* on March 5 (coordinated by the

Nashville Chapter) and *Engineers' Day on the Hill* on March 6. The Legislative Reception at the Sheraton begins with a 6 p.m. issues briefing. Next morning, Engineers' Day begins at 9 a.m. in the Tennessee Municipal League banquet room (223 6th Avenue North) with an issues briefing; the day ends with lunch. To register, use the registration form on [www.acectn.org](http://www.acectn.org), (*What's New?* tab) or send an email to me ([ctoler@tnec.org](mailto:ctoler@tnec.org)) to let me know that you plan to participate, the names of your State Senator and Representative, and whether you will have lunch with us.

Both events offer you the opportunity to meet with Tennessee decision makers, promote the value that engineers bring to Tennessee communities, and address the issues. More than 80 engineers attended the events in 2011; let's top that number in 2012.

Of course, we also hope you attend the crown jewel of our March events, the *Engineering Excellence Awards* gala on March 6!

Join your colleagues for these three *March Madness* events on March 5 and 6 that put engineers in the spotlight. Please make your reservations today ([ctoler@tnec.org](mailto:ctoler@tnec.org)).