SPRING 2026

CRITICAL PATH

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
GREATER AUSTIN CONTRACTORS & ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

2026 Central Texas Infrastructure Design + Construction Symposium

Bringing Area Professionals Together to Connect and Collaborate



The past year has ushered in trends in technology with the potential to disrupt an entire industry. Disruption can be a catalyst for improvements needed and efficiencies. Staying abreast of trends can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be done in isolation. The ACEA Symposium brings insights to complex projects, gathers area professionals to discuss the latest developments and seek solutions with peers.

WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

The opening session will address the explosive population growth many area cities are experiencing and finding that this growth creates development pressure, and infrastructure demands. Managing this level of expansion requires thoughtful leadership, strategic planning, and a strong commitment to preserving the character and quality of life that residents value.

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ROADS LEAD TO **WHAT'S IMPORTANT.**

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Critical Path is published quarterly:
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2026 Central Texas Infrastructure Design + Construction Symposium

Bringing Area Professionals Together to Connect and Collaborate

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The opening session will focus on how cities like Liberty Hill are navigating this period of rapid transformation using non-traditional leadership strategies in the municipal sector. One key focus of this session will be preparing the next generation of municipal leaders to manage communities experiencing rapid growth. How do cities scale their operations, while simultaneously develop leadership pipelines, create adaptive organizational structures, and equip emerging professionals with the tools needed to navigate increasingly complex challenges.

Through mentorship, education, and hands-on experience, cities are cultivating the next wave of municipal leaders who will guide communities through periods of significant change. Learn how fast-growing cities are balancing growth pressures with community well-being while preparing both their organizations and their people for the future.

RECORDED SESSIONS

Ten sessions will be recorded and will be available on-demand after the event and accessible until December 1, 2026. Attendees with full registration can choose from other breakout sessions and watch the recordings of sessions missed for additional PDH credits.

CONFERENCE APP

The conference app provides easy access to session descriptions, speaker bios, and exhibitor information. Exhibitors are available throughout the event with plenty of time between sessions to visit during the networking breaks.

CONFERENCE CENTER RENOVATION

Never mind the construction zone upstairs, there are still several worthwhile activities taking place upstairs. Take a few minutes for a rejuvenating chair massage and grab a refreshing beverage at the Hydration Station.

PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS

Are you still using a headshot from 10 years ago? Use this opportunity to get your professional headshot and receive it on your phone instantly. A professional photographer will be upstairs in the Mezzanine area.

SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026		
7:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Registration & Light Breakfast	Zlotnik Ballroom Pre-Function Area
8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Plenary – Opening Session	Zlotnik Ballroom
9:00 – 10:00 a.m	Concurrent Breakout 1	Ballroom, Salon 1, 2, 5 & 6
10:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Break – Visit the Exhibitors	Zlotnik Ballroom Pre-Function Area
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Concurrent Breakout 2	Ballroom, Salon 1, 2, 5 & 6
11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Break – Visit the Exhibitors	Zlotnik Ballroom Pre-Function Area
12:15 – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch with Keynote	Zlotnik Ballroom
1:15 – 1:45 p.m.	Break – Visit the Exhibitors	Zlotnik Ballroom Pre-Function Area
1:45 – 2:45 p.m.	Concurrent Breakout 3	Ballroom, Salon 1, 2, 5 & 6
2:45 – 3:15 p.m.	Break – Visit the Exhibitors	Zlotnik Ballroom Pre-Function Area
3:15 – 4:15 p.m.	Concurrent Breakout 4	Ballroom, Salon 1, 2, 5 & 6
4:15 – 5:15 p.m.	Margarita Social	Zlotnik Ballroom Pre-Function Area

PLENARY – OPENING SESSION – *Recorded*

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

DEVELOPING A SUCCESSION OF LEADERSHIP



Discover how cities like Liberty Hill are navigating rapid transformation using nontraditional leadership strategies. Through mentorship, education, and hands-on experience, learn how to prepare the next generation of municipal leaders. Explore how to scale operations, create adaptive organizational structures, and use tools needed to navigate increasingly complex challenges.

- Thomas Hunter

OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

THOMAS HUNTER

Liberty Hill City Manager

DEVELOPING A SUCCESSION OF LEADERSHIP



Appointed in 2025, Thomas Hunter serves as the city manager for the City of Liberty Hill. Hunter previously served as assistant city manager for the City of Pflugerville where he oversaw multiple departments and initiatives supporting one of the fastest-growing cities in Central Texas. Throughout his career, he has held leadership roles spanning development, engineering services, economic development, public works, utilities and power systems, emergency management, and emergency medical services. His 20 years of diverse municipal experience and leadership have supported communities navigating rapid growth and infrastructure expansion.

SYMPOSIUM SESSION SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026

Times and sessions are subject to change.



CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS I

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

HOW MUDS BENEFIT CITIES

MUDs finance and deliver water, wastewater, drainage, and roads to reduce city budgets, accelerate development timelines, and support housing affordability. This panel will discuss MUD infrastructure funding and affordability, growth management, and how to provide responsive solutions during rapid development.

- **Ken Heroy**, Jones-Heroy & Associates
- **John Bartram**, Armbrust & Brown, PLLC
- **John Barganski**, Masterson Advisors LLC
- **Amy Lynn Payne**, Blake Magee Company
- **Nick Woolery**, Assistant City Manager, City of Georgetown

LONGHORN DAM MULTIMODAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Longhorn Dam Multimodal Improvement Project showcases how Austin is transforming a critical trail crossing with the new Wishbone Bridge—an ADA accessible, three leg structure that improves safety, connectivity, and user experience along the Ann and Roy Butler Trail. This session will highlight how the project team evaluated multiple alternatives, integrated community input, addressed complex construction and phasing constraints, and ultimately delivered a comfortable, vehicle separated trail connection linking Longhorn Shores, Holly Shores, and the regional trail network.

- **Lee Frieberg**, HDR Engineering Inc. Bridges Business Class Lead

COMPREHENSIVE WATER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

- *Recorded*

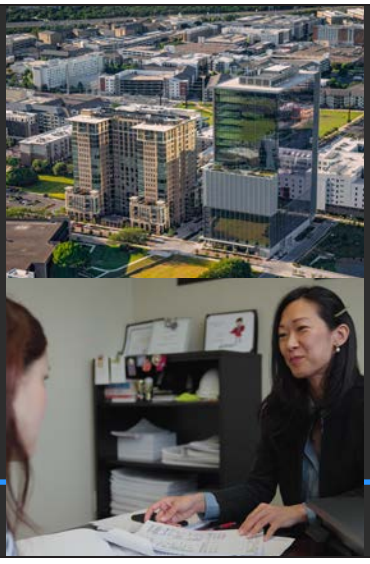
Learn how the MUD in Katy, Texas implemented a multi-faceted approach to address water scarcity and sustainability through innovative water management solutions.

- **Larry Mueller**, Principal at BGE, Inc.

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BRUSHY CREEK REGIONAL UTILITY AUTHORITY (BCRUA) UPDATE - *Recorded*

Tapping Lake Travis – Project Update on the BCRUA Phase 2 Raw Water Delivery System

Phase 2 of the Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority (BCRUA) Raw Water Intake project incorporates two lake taps with multi-level intake screens that connect to a gravity Raw Water Intake Tunnel to transport water to a new Raw Water Pump Station with a capacity of 145-Million Gallons per Day (MGD). The Raw Water Transmission Tunnel and Pipeline will transport the pumped water to the existing Cedar Park, Leander, and BCRUA water treatment plants. Join Engineers Aaron Archer (Walker Partners) and Sam Roberts (BCRUA) as they discuss the complexities, design, and coordination necessary to make this project a success and provide updates on the progress.

- **Aaron Archer, PE**, Senior Vice President, Walker Partners
- **Sam Roberts, PE**, General Manager, Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority (BCRUA)

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

GROUNDWATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Panelists will discuss how to manage groundwater that is discovered before and during infrastructure construction. Explore multiple case studies with a focus on pre-design decisions, infrastructure construction and performance issues, and mitigation design strategies.

- **Mike Fisher PE**, Pape-Dawson
- **Matty Weston**, MLA Geotechnical
- **Kyle Stobaugh**, DNT Construction
- **Frank Del Castillio**, Ashton Woods

Symposium schedule continued on page 8

12:15 – 1:15 p.m.

LUNCHEON KEYNOTE SPEAKER



MICHELLE ELLIS

Division Chief, Texas State Hazard Mitigation Officer
Texas Division of Emergency Management

EVOLVING CHALLENGES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN TEXAS



Explore how the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) manages core responsibilities such as coordinating statewide emergency response, supporting local jurisdictions during disasters, managing resource deployment, and directing statewide preparedness programs.

Examine success stories on how hazard mitigation strengthens stable economic communities, supports long-term recovery, and contributes to creating resilience across Texas. Learn how mitigation fits within the legal framework, planning, and funding. Plus, discover how local, state, and federal partners work together to reduce risk and build a more resilient Texas.

Michelle Ellis serves as the division chief of hazard mitigation at Texas Division of Emergency Management and provides strategic leadership in the administration of more than $1.7 billion in federal grant funding. As division chief, she guides statewide efforts to reduce disaster risk, strengthen infrastructure resilience, and ensure effective allocation of resources to support hazard mitigation initiatives.

Ellis holds both a Bachelor and Master of Business Administration from Western Governors University. She has earned recognition as a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM). She is currently advancing her expertise by pursuing an Executive Master of Public Service and Administration at Texas A&M University's Bush School of Government and Public Service, further equipping her to lead complex emergency management programs at the state and national level.

Prior to her current position, Ellis served as section chief for recovery and mitigation in Region 4 (Southeast Texas), where she coordinated disaster recovery operations and worked closely with local jurisdictions to implement hazard mitigation strategies. She is passionate about building resilient communities and committed to advancing innovation and empowering local leaders to prepare for and respond to disasters. Her leadership reflects a balance of operational experience, academic achievement, and a vision for strengthening Texas's capacity to withstand future challenges.

SYMPOSIUM SESSION SCHEDULE CONTINUED

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026

Times and sessions are subject to change.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

WE NEED WATER: CENTRAL TEXAS WATER PLANNING AND CCN SOLUTIONS

This session explores the urgent need for sustainable water planning in Central Texas amid rapid growth and increasing demand. It examines how regional planning efforts intersect with regulatory tools like Certificates of Convenience and Necessity (CCNs) to shape water service delivery. Attendees will gain insight into the legal and policy frameworks governing water supply and infrastructure planning. The presentation highlights challenges faced by municipalities like Georgetown in balancing development with long-term water security. Practical strategies and potential solutions will be discussed to help communities navigate water scarcity and ensure reliable service for the future.

- **Caroline Stewart**, Strategic Project Manager, City of Georgetown

ETHICS JEOPARDY - *Recorded*

Earn 1 ethics credit at the least boring Engineering Ethics hour of your life! Andrew Hunt's new Jeopardy game will include lively and entertaining group discussions, plus new questions and really bad Dad Jokes!

- **Andrew Hunt, PE**, Project Control of Texas

CITY UPDATES: DRIPPING SPRINGS AND BASTROP

Hear from a panel of professionals discuss the growth in their respective cities including current and future capital improvement project, trends, development and challenges created by rapid growth.

- **Tory Carpenter, AICP, CNU-A**, Planning Director, City of Dripping Springs
- **Sylvia Carrillo**, City Manager, City of Bastop

OAK HILL PARKWAY: FROM VISION TO REALITY - *Recorded*

The Oak Hill Parkway Project has been more than 30+ years in the making.



The project consists of the design and construction of approximately 6 miles of improvements along US 290 from Circle Drive to Loop 1 (MoPac) and approximately 1 mile of improvements along SH 71 West from US 290 to Silvermine Drive, including the full reconstruction of the US 290/SH 71 interchange. This session will provide a final update of this long awaited and transformative project in Austin, TX.

- **Christiana Astarita, PE**, Texas Department of Transportation, Transportation Engineer / Project Manager

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS 3

1:45 – 2:45 p.m.

THE ARBUCKLE RESERVOIR STORY: TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS AND SUCCESS!

Building Texas' newest reservoir was anything but simple. LCRA faced unexpected challenges ranging from a hurricane to a pandemic to a seepage issue as it turned a green field site into a 40,000-acre-foot reservoir. This presentation will examine the much-needed project and how LCRA used dedication, teamwork and creative thinking to bring the reservoir near the Texas Gulf Coast online.

- **Monica Masters, PE, PMP** , Senior Vice President, Water Resources, Lower Colorado River Authority

AUSTIN STREET IMPACT FEE – THE NITTY GRITTY DETAILS

Austin's Street Impact Fee program took effect in December 2020 and collections began June 2022. How much has been collected? What infrastructure projects have been funded? What land uses are paying the most? Which types of developments are receiving reductions and credits?



Are SIF rates about to change? These questions and more will be answered as we take a deep dive into the SIF program.

- **Curtis P. Beatty, PE**, Managing Engineer, Transportation Development Services | Austin Transportation and Public Works

HOW CITY OF AUSTIN USES AI IN RESIDENTIAL ZONING REVIEW - *Recorded*

COA engaged Archistar, an AI-based compliance tool, to enhance its Residential Zoning Review workflow and improve efficiency. Learn how the AI tool integrated into the existing regulatory framework and permitting process. Outline the procurement strategy, data calibration and rule-mapping process, phased implementation approach, and beta testing methodology used prior to deployment. The tool serves as a supplemental compliance check, enhances judgment, and provides a reliable double-check for zoning staff.

- **Tyler Johnson**, COA Plans Examiner
- **Leah Hilton**, COA Zoning Plans Examiner Supervisor
- **Danielle Mandeville**, Archistar

ETHICS JEOPARDY

Earn 1 ethics credit at the least boring Engineering Ethics hour of your life! Andrew Hunt's new Jeopardy game will include lively and entertaining group discussions, plus new questions and really bad Dad Jokes!

- **Andrew Hunt, PE**, Project Control of Texas

ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE: YES, THINGS CHANGED AGAIN (AGAIN) - *Recorded*

Receive updates on Central Texas environmental regulations, requirements, and lessons learned. Learn about Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS), endangered species, local environmental requirements, and avenues for permitting and compliance.

- **Kevin Ramberg**, aci environmental

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS 4
3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

TXDOT GEOTECHNICAL MANUAL UPDATES

Updates to the Geotechnical Manual: Geotechnical Investigation/Subsurface Characterization; Foundation Design for Bridges – LRFD; Retaining wall design – LRFD

- **Worku Mergia, PE**, Geotechnical Branch Manager, Texas Department of Transportation, Bridge Division

Symposium schedule continued on page 10

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SYMPOSIUM SESSION SCHEDULE CONTINUED

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026

Times and sessions are subject to change.



CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS 4

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

UNDERSTANDING AUSTIN'S HOME AMENDMENTS: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR INSIGHTS

Panelists will discuss Austin's Home Options for Mobility and Equity (HOME), how the HOME code amendments improved review process efficiency and timelines, overall market impacts, and the Missing Middle.

- **Lyndi Garwood**, City of Austin Principal Planner
- **Cody Carr**, Carr Residential Partner

AUSTIN WATER'S ON-SITE WATER REUSE INITIATIVE - *Recorded*

The presentation will cover how new large commercial and multifamily projects are complying with the City's 2024 ordinance requiring water reuse to meet a project's non-potable water demands, including making provisions for cross-connection control and estimating construction costs.

- **Katherine Jashinski, PE**, Supervising Engineer, Water Reuse Programs, Austin Water, Permitting and Development Center

UNCONVENTIONAL ATX: REIMAGINING THE AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER OF THE FUTURE

Join Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) for an update on the Journey With AUS expansion program—a multi-year, multi- billion-dollar investment transforming the airport to meet Central Texas' rapid growth. Airport leadership will share the latest on active construction, upcoming procurement opportunities, project phasing, and anticipated timelines

- **Lyn Estabrook**, Deputy Chief of Planning and Development, Austin-Bergstrom International Airport
- **Katy Zamesnik**, Interim Director, Austin Convention Center

NEW WATER POLICY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEXAS WATER INFRASTRUCTURE - *Recorded*

Current policy discussions, and the impact of new legislation from the 88th regular session of the Texas Legislature. What it means for the market and the future of Texas water.

- **Perry L. Fowler**, Executive Director, Texas Water Infrastructure Network

SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE

CHAIR
Tim Weston, PE, MLA Geotechnical

Elizabeth Boswell, City of Austin
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Eric Gonzales, Capital Precast
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Kamal Neupane, P.E., CFM, Langan Engineering
Marcus Rutte, PE, Jones-Heroy & Associates
Matthew Scrivener, Austin Land Innovations

10 RECORDED SESSIONS

Recorded sessions include the Opening Session and the Keynote Session, plus the sessions below.

- Comprehensive Water Management Solutions
- Ethics Jeopardy
- Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority (BCRUA) Update
- Oak Hill Parkway: From Vision to Reality
- How City of Austin Uses AI in Residential Zoning Review
- Environmental Update: Yes, Things Changed Again (Again)
- Austin Water's On-Site Water Reuse Initiatives
- New Water Policy and Implications for Texas Water Infrastructure




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ACEA membership provides a platform to make an impact. We give you the opportunity to connect with key policy-makers, stakeholders and leaders in infrastructure construction.
Discover how to make more effective connections and informed decisions. We're here to help you grow your business and develop a stronger community. Join now and make your voice heard!

SYMPOSIUM HAPPENINGS

NETWORKING BINGO
Pick up a Bingo Card and play along filling in the squares. Turn in the card at the registration desk for a chance to win a gift card – winning entries will be announced at the end of the luncheon.

NETWORKING BREAKS
Our networking breaks make sure that you have plenty of time to meet and mingle between sessions.

CHARGING STATIONS
Relax, take a moment to recharge between sessions and take advantage of the charging stations located on the Mezzanine.

HEADSHOTS
Everyone needs a professional headshot. Sign up to have your photo taken and texted to you on the spot. Headshots will be upstairs in the Mezzanine area.

EXHIBIT HALL
The Exhibit Hall located in the Zlotnik Ballroom Pre-function Area offers opportunities to visit with industry suppliers and recruiters. Enjoy the refreshments available in the Exhibit Hall.

RELAXATION STATION
Stop by for a quick refresh with a chair massage. Schedule a few minutes out of the busy day and give your aching muscles a break. Sponsored by MLA Geotechnical, this is a Symposium favorite.

MARGARITA SOCIAL
Stop by before you head out for the day to enjoy some snacks, margaritas or a mocktail. The Social Hour is one last opportunity to make connections, meet new people, and unwind from a busy day of learning. \ CP











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KEYNOTE

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NOTEBOOK

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CITY OF BEE CAVE

Unified Development Code Fee Schedule Review

The City is initiating a review of the Fee Schedule of the Unified Development Code (UDC). The February 3 meeting walked through the current Fee Schedule and highlighted areas that may need updates to better reflect current application processes, and compare Bee Cave's fees with similar jurisdictions in the region.

CITY OF AUSTIN

Watershed Protection Department - Proposed Steep Slopes Protection

The City of Austin Watershed Protection Department invited ACEA Regulatory Committee members to discuss proposed updates to steep slope protections in urban watersheds. These changes aim to improve safety and sustainability while balancing Austin's growth.

In response to City Council Resolution No. 20220609-061, City staff plans to introduce a proposed code amendment aimed at improving slope stability protections in Austin. Current regulations limit development on natural slopes by greater than 15% outside urban watersheds. However, applying these same rules in highly developed areas presents challenges due to extensive human-made modifications.

Rather than expanding existing provisions, staff recommends a targeted, data-driven approach that prioritizes high-risk areas identified through GIS analysis and geologic conditions. This strategy includes requiring specialized mitigation measures—such as global slope stability analysis and professional engineering oversight—to protect public safety and infrastructure while supporting sustainable development.

Changes to Timelines for Rules Postings and Application Updates

Austin Development Services and partner departments are changing how updates are made to administrative rules and applications, to enhance the experience through the development process. All changes will now occur on an annual schedule, rather than throughout the year, with exceptions for transit system projects, emergency changes, City Council actions, or legislative changes. This should create predictability, efficiency, and transparency for some of the more important administrative processes. This schedule will be determined by the Technical Advisory Review Board (TARP), which is also undergoing a recalibration and priority shift.

Austin Fire Criteria Manual

Austin Fire is proposing a series of updates to the Fire Protection Criteria Manual over the next year. The first set of changes includes:

- Updating Fire Code and Local Amendment references to the 2024 International Fire Code (IFC) and adopted standards.
- Deleting outdated and obsolete rules.

Please note the adoption of these changes will align with the new annual rules adoption process. To review the Proposed Changes and provide feedback please visit the Fire Criteria Manual Public Input Page.

CITY OF HUTTO

Update to the Unified Development Code

At a March 3rd State of the City address, Mayor Mike Snyder announced plans to update the Unified Development Code. ACEA has reached out to both the Mayor and City Manager to offer assistance by providing feedback on any proposed changes. \ CP

The Regulatory Committee meets on the third Wednesday of the month. If you would like to be notified of upcoming meetings, contact at sara@aceatx.com or 512.893.7067.



ACEA Issues Call for Board Nominations

Meet the Nominees


Dustin Goss


Tim Westson


Frank Castro


Morris Bailey


Faris Abboushi


Lea Crenshaw


Milton Torres


Hamilton McRae


Chris Copeland


Gabriel Nejad


Scott Swiderski

The ACEA Nominations Committee recently met to review the nominations. Elections will be held in May and the results will be announced in June.

WHY SERVE?

Serving on the board is a leadership opportunity to help the association further the impact on regulatory issues. This is a chance to work with, and learn from, industry leaders. Serving on the board will elevate your profile within the industry and keep the association moving forward.

WHY NOW?

As Austin grows and opportunities expand within the Austin metro area, it is important that ACEA is poised to assist members navigate the ever-changing regulatory landscape. Today, members serve on panels, provide input at stakeholder meetings, and are sought-after for important task force participation.

HOW DOES THE NOMINATION PROCESS WORK?

You can nominate yourself or someone else who would be an asset to the board. An online nomination form is available on the website. \ CP

NOMINEES TO DATE

CONTRACTOR NOMINEES

Morris Bailey, Liberty Civil Construction

Hamilton McRae, Ranger Excavating

ENGINEER NOMINEES

Faris Abboushi, HR Green

Chris Copeland, Copeland Engineering

Dustin Goss, Pape-Dawson

Gabriel Nejad, aci consulting

Scott Swiderski, Gray Civil

Milton Torres, PSI

ASSOCIATE NOMINEE

Frank Castro, The Nitsche Group

Lea Crenshaw, Texas Gas Service

Greenrise Technologies

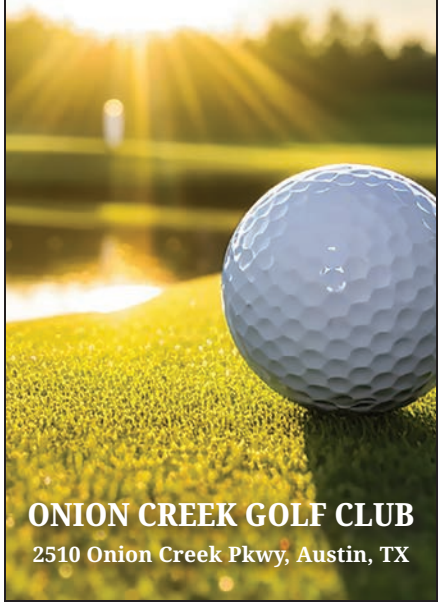
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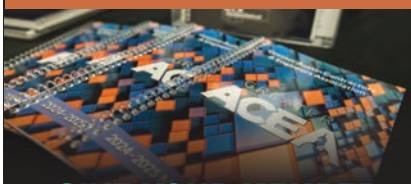
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Construction Expo 2026

Career Exploration Day for Area Students

The industry has embraced workforce development as a major goal. Many organizations are now hosting career days, and participating in programs to introduce high school students to the construction industry.

ACEA started down this road in 2018 and has developed the Construction Expo into one of the area's most impactful programs. The Community Involvement Committee has been the driving force behind this program and has once again partnered with the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department to host the students. The event is considered a field trip, and the schools provide transportation. The interest from the students is so high that we've had to cap the number of attendees to 300 students. \ CP

Thank you to the participating companies and sponsors!

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Pape-Dawson
Ranger Excavating
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ROSCH
Tree Mann Solutions



BELOW: High school students recieve hands-on experience at ACEA's 2024 Construction Expo.







Chili Cook-Off In Its Fourth Year

Fierce Competitors Go for the Gold

The ACEA Chili Cook-off marked its fourth year of providing members with a fun networking event. The Membership Committee once again hosted this event that luckily enjoyed good weather albeit a bit windy.

The event was held at the MLA Geotechnical parking lot. This family-friendly event included games and fun for the whole family. The blind judging was handled by Ted Woolsey, HOBAS Pipe; Elston Johnson, Elston Johnson & Associates; Nick Mitri, Liquor Depot; Robert Martinez, HNTB. \ CP

THANK YOU, SPONSORS!

Advanced Drainage Systems (ADS)
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TEAMS

Bleyl Engineering (Austin Chili Eating Aficionados)
Jones-Heroy & Associates (MUDders Making Chili)
MLA Geotechnical (Cumin Get It!)
Nitsche Group (Red Hot Chili Peppers)
Scout Construction (Pour Decisions)
TDI Engineering (Barbara's Farmhouse Chili)

WINNERS

1st Place:
Jones-Heroy & Associates
2nd Place:
Nitsche Group
3rd Place:
MLA Geotechnical
People's Choice:
MLA Geotechnical
Best Activities:
Jones-Heroy & Associates
Best Booth Decorations:
MLA Geotechnical



1



2


3


4


5

1. Jones-Heroy Team was awarded 1st Place and Best Activities. **2.** The Nitsche Group took second place. **3.** MLA Geotechnical took home Best Booth Decorations, 3rd Place, and People's Choice Awards. **4.** Frank Castro shows off his cooking techniques. **5.** The general public and other competitors had the chance to sample each other's chili.

6. The TDI Team was caught chillin' while the chili's cooking! **7.** The prize for best activities was this fabulous chili hat! **8.** The Jones-Heroy team kept everyone entertained with face painting and other games.







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ACEA Membership Luncheon Recaps

Monthly Topics are Relevant and Earn PDH Credits

If you're looking for an easy and enjoyable way to earn PDH credits, the ACEA Membership Luncheons are the way to go. Each month, industry leaders provide updates on timely and current issues of interest. This is an opportunity to meet new members and guests over a delicious lunch. Luncheon sponsors introduce themselves and their company, product, or service, and are featured at each luncheon. Here's a brief recap of what you might have missed at the last few luncheons.

JANUARY 2026

We began the year with a Market Update provided by Keith Hughes, VP Sales for Zonda's Builder Group. His presentation highlighted rate and buyer trends in Texas yet, the state dominates the most active market rankings with four Texas markets in the top 10. The job forecast is strong with companies continuing to choose Texas as their headquarters. Williamson and Caldwell Counties saw the highest project count growth in the area. Some of the takeaways: Improvement districts are key to making developments pencil; developers and builders who innovate on product will win in the future. The Membership Committee welcomed new members: Freccia Group, GTS Technology, LID Technology, and Survey Works. The door prize was provided by sponsor KTCivil and Campbell Key, Southwest Engineers, was the lucky winner.

FEBRUARY 2026

Newly appointed Austin Development Services Director Keith Mars was the guest speaker at the February luncheon. He shared the key focus areas for the department: become leaner and nimbler while enhancing services; streamline processes; reduce regulatory procedural complexity; expand use of technology and create a culture of partnership. He touted several accomplish-













JANUARY
1. Steve Ihnen with Keith Hughes, Zonda. **2.** Ellen Beaman, Survey Works welcomed as a new member by Steve Ihnen. **3.** GTS Technology Solutions new members with Steve Ihnen. **4.** LID Technologies received a welcome bag from Steve Ihnen. **5.** Freccia Group introduced as new members by Steve Ihnen. **6.** Campbell Key, Southwest Engineers won the door prize presented by Steve Ihnen.











FEBRUARY
7. Keith Mars, Austin Development Services with Steve Ihnen. **8.** Steve Ihnen with new member Anna Brooks, Scout Construction, and Membership Chair Frank Castro, The Nitsche Group. **9.** Keith Mars was the guest speaker at the February Luncheon. **10.** Steve Ihnen welcomes new member Rock Ridge Transport along with Frank Castro, The Nitsche Group. **11.** Campbell Key continues his winning streak winning the door prize presented by Steve Ihnen and provided by Tree Mann Solutions.

ments including the best turnaround times on record for site plan reviews down from 99 days in 2023 to just 28 days in 2025. The overall reaction from attendees was one of encouragement and collaboration. The Membership Committee welcomed new members Scout Construction and Rock Ridge Transport. Campbell Key was the door prize winner for the second month in a row. Tree Mann Solutions was the sponsor and provided the door prize.

The Membership Luncheons are typically held on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Members and prospective members are welcome. Sponsorship includes two luncheon tickets, verbal recognition at the luncheon, and inclusion in all electronic promotions, and the Critical Path newsletter. Contact ACEA for upcoming sponsorship opportunities. \ CP

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CP \ ACEA EVENTS

MAY 14

MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON

TIME: 11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Ben White, Taylor Economic Development

TOPIC: Watch Taylor Grow!

Sponsorship Available.

Norris Conference Center

2525 Anderson Lane (Northcross Mall)

JUN 11

MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON

TIME: 11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Steve Ihnen, ACEA Board President

TOPIC: State of ACEA

Sponsorship Available.

Norris Conference Center

2525 Anderson Lane (Northcross Mall)

JUL 20

SUMMER CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

TIME: 9:30 Registration

Sponsorships Available.

Onion Creek Golf Club

2510 Onion Creek Parkway, Austin, TX

ACEA

ACEA MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

THE PLACE TO BE



SEE YOU THERE!

Norris Conference Center

Northcross Mall

2525 W. Anderson Lane

Austin, TX 78757



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NEW MEMBERS

JOINED SINCE JANUARY 2026

Clifford Power Systems, Inc.
George Butler Associates
IFIG, LLC
Mahoney Engineering
RMtn Investments LLC
Rock Ridge Transport LLC
Rocky Hill Equipment Rentals
Scout Construction, LLC
Secretariat Advisors, LLC
Taylor Morrison
Titan Environmental

ACQUISITIONS

CONSOR ACQUIRES CAVNUE

Consor, an infrastructure engineering and consulting firm, acquired Cavnue (Washington, D.C.), a firm specializing in smart road technologies. The acquisition enhances Consor's capabilities in connected and intelligent transportation systems.

PAPE-DAWSON ENGINEERS ACQUIRES PRISM ENGINEERING

Pape-Dawson Engineers, a civil engineering, environmental, and surveying firm, acquired Prism Engineering (Louisville, KY), a civil engineering firm. The acquisition expands Pape-Dawson's presence in Kentucky.

COLLIERS ENGINEERING & DESIGN ACQUIRES RAMOS CONSULTING SERVICES

Colliers Engineering & Design, acquired Ramos Consulting Services (Downey, CA), a firm providing program management, construction management, and engineering services for major public transit projects. The acquisition expands Colliers' transit infrastructure capabilities.

ATWELL ACQUIRES SEI ENGINEERING

Atwell, a full-service consulting, engineering, and construction services firm, expanded in the Southeast with the acquisition of SEI Engineering, Inc.

SAM COMPANIES ACQUIRES DOUCET SURVEY

SAM Companies a provider of professional Geospatial and Inspection solutions, has acquired Doucet Survey ("Doucet"), a New England-based professional land surveying and geomatics services firm that delivers geospatial solutions to clients in the utilities, transportation, development, construction, and government sectors.

PROJECTS

NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Langan Engineering has been selected to work on a new performing arts center for East View High School in Georgetown. Congrats!

NAME CHANGE

CHAPMAN NEGRETE PLLC

The Chapman Firm will operate under a new name: Chapman Negrete PLLC. This change reflects an important milestone for the firm and formally recognizes Jerry Negrete as a named partner. Negrete has played a critical role in the firm's growth and success, and this recognition reflects both her professional achievements and her ongoing commitment to the firm's future. \ CP

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