

"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority."

– Kenneth Blanchard

From the Executive Director

Thomas W. Smith III
ENV SP, CAE, F.ASCE



Dear ASCE Member,

Fans of pro football and NASCAR see highlight events early each year – the Super Bowl and the Daytona 500. For me, our annual **Multi-Region Leadership Conferences** feel like that. I enjoy talking with first-time and longtime officers who give so generously of their time to lead our Sections, Branches, Younger Member Groups, and Student Chapters, and who come to the MRLC to learn to be more effective. The MRLCs have evolved to play a critical role in our student transition and younger member retention strategy, as today one third of our Section and Branch leaders are Younger Members.

Leaders of local ASCE groups in Regions 8 and 9 took part in the first of the 2017 MRLCs, held in Los Angeles. President Norma Jean Mattei and I provided some context for the workshops by highlighting ASCE's priorities and the special events of 2017 that will enhance them, including a brand-new edition of our acclaimed *Report Card for America's Infrastructure*, publication of the first

revision of ASCE 7 since 2006 (now also in an enhanced online format), and the premiere of our inspiring giant-screen film *Dream Big: Engineering Our World*.

The Los Angeles Younger Member Forum staged a red carpet-style event at the California Science Center welcoming MRLC attendees to a screening of a working digital version of the nearly final film. This downscale version was followed by a full-sized IMAX trailer, which had many gasping as it filled the theater's immense screen. Academy Award-nominated Director

Inside this edition

- Multi-Region Leadership Conferences attendees inspired by *Dream Big*
- Two official nominees for 2018 President-elect on ballot in May
- Board gives first-read approval to amendment realigning Regions
- Key Solutions approved for 2017 *Report Card*, set for March 9 release

Section Informant

- New, exclusive online member community – ASCE Collaborate – debuts
- Organize a *Dream Big* screening event for your ASCE group
- Ask Counselor Tara: Avoiding “private benefit” restriction on charitable giving

Dates to know

February

3-4 Regions 3, 6 and 7 Multi-Region Leadership Conference

17 *Dream Big: Engineering Our World* IMAX film premiere

19-25 Engineers Week 2017

March

9 2017 *Report Card for America's Infrastructure* released

14-15 Legislative Fly-In, Washington, DC

16 OPAL Gala

Greg MacGillivray then stepped forward to an ovation and answered questions.

MRLC workshops enhance the programs and activities of Sections and Branches as leaders share experiences and insights, while incoming officers are exposed to the tools needed to be effective leaders. In the process, young professionals and seasoned leaders get to know one another. The second MRLC for Regions 1, 2, 4, and 5 was held Jan. 21-22 in Newark, NJ, and the third MRLC for Regions 3, 6, and 7 is coming up Feb. 3-4 in Minneapolis, each with *Dream Big* screenings. A special screening of the film for ASCE Board members is planned in conjunction with the OPAL Gala in March.

Among the features of the MRLCs in recent years is a town hall-style forum allowing attendees to get to know the **newly designated official nominees for President-elect**. For 2018, the nominees are Kancheepuram N. Gunalan (“Guna”), Ph.D., P.E., D.GE, F.ASCE, of Utah, a former Region 8 Director (2009-12), and Robin A. Kemper, P.E., LEED AP, F.SEI, F.ASCE, of New Jersey, a former Region 1 Director (2004-07).

You can [learn more about Gunalan and Kemper](#) through the biographical outlines and vision statements each submitted. Remember, the Society election is now conducted via online ballot during the month of May, with members in good standing as of April 1 eligible to vote.

The Board of Direction approved the President-elect nominees during its first meeting of 2017, where it also approved an **ASCE Constitutional amendment** that will appear on the ballot. Members will be asked to increase the size of the Board by one to allow the third Technical Region Director a voting seat.

With a release date of Thursday, March 9, and amid a new U.S. administration that has expressed the intention to invest in infrastructure, the **new ASCE Report Card and its Key Solutions** recommendations will help shape the coming discussions. During its meeting, the Board approved the Key Solutions, which encourage bold leadership, thoughtful planning, and a strategic, sustained investment in infrastructure to restore aging systems and build needed new ones.

The Board accepted a first reading of **amendments to the Society bylaws** that will welcome Canada and Mexico into Regions 1, 3, 6 and 8, and move Puerto Rico to Region 5, as recommended by the Task Committee on Geographic Boundaries. A second reading and vote on the amendments, plus votes on corresponding amendments to the Rules of Policy and Procedure, will take place at the Board’s March meeting. Refining Region 10 to members beyond North America will add focus to our global strategy.

A recent meeting of our **India Advisory Group** affirmed how well our strategy is working there. Our continuing education programs offered through our partner Reliance continue to see growing attendance. The group is also at work on two conferences to be held for the first time later this year – one for Indian civil engineering students, the other on sustainability, resilience, and smart cities to be held in Delhi.

Formed last year, the **Task Committee on Claims Reduction and Management** brings coordination and focus to what had been disparate activities around the Society. This high-level committee has begun work to elevate the standing of the issue, enhance ASCE's professional liability insurance and educational programs, and provide guidance and advocacy on related legal and legislative matters. At its meeting last month, the committee explored liability scenarios in case studies presented by a claims litigation attorney and risk management professionals.

We'll be sharing the roads with connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV) sooner than many of us may realize. ASCE has been anticipating such a future for some time with our advocacy for similar technologies, such as guided autonomous vehicles. In the past year we have ramped up our support for the implementation of CAV technology, including adoption of [Policy Statement 548](#). The Transportation & Development Institute created the **Connected & Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) Impacts Committee**, which met for the first time during the Transportation Research Board's annual conference in Washington, DC. Experts at the frontier of CAV research, design, development, and deployment, including representatives from the states, academia, private, and nonprofit sectors, came to the kickoff event.

Our 2010 President Blaine Leonard, [quoted recently](#) in *The Wall Street Journal* as an expert source on connected and autonomous vehicles through his work at the Utah Department of Transportation, provided opening comments at the TRB conference highlighting ASCE as best positioned to spread the word on CAV development. A technical discussion that included representatives of the Federal Highway Administration, California's Department of Transportation and the Southwest Research Institute explored the current state of CAV technology and governmental policies. I was unable to attend, but as I look forward to the committee's work as it tracks and aids the progress of CAV, I shared my [best wishes via a video greeting](#).

After significant testing and early use by some members of EWRI and AEI, we've officially launched **ASCE Collaborate**, a new online idea-sharing community exclusively for Society members. The forum will foster exchange of knowledge, help incubate ideas, encourage networking, provide a resource library, and allow uploading of related images, videos, and documents for sharing. Congratulations to our Member Communities team for their work launching Collaborate, notably Online Community Manager Veronique Nguyen. I encourage you to [explore ASCE Collaborate](#) and get involved in the conversation, either asking questions to gain insights or sharing your expertise in response to others.

Already, ASCE Collaborate has alerted me to a fascinating report just released that examined how professional societies, including ASCE, have grappled with the topic of climate change. Distinguished Member Richard Wright shared a [link to the report](#) by The Kresge Foundation, an organization that explores and supports the needs of U.S. cities. Kresge found that of the 41 professional societies it studied, ASCE ranked in the top tier for engaging and educating our members on climate adaptation issues, citing our emphasis on sustainability and resilience.

Thanks to the many among our ASCE staff who took part in the third year of **our mentoring program**. We had 33 mentor-mentee pairings – 27 new pairs and six that continued into a second year. I'm in admiration of the commitment to share knowledge to help both mentees and mentors grow, while at the same time providing participants insights into another area of ASCE. At a year-end luncheon, I expressed my gratitude to all who took part, notably the staff of the Mentoring Committee who have made the program a success as it enters its fourth year.

At ASCE, we find it gratifying to be part of, and provide support to, a profession of smart and dedicated people who appreciate what civil engineering has given them and what it achieves for society. Among them is **ASCE Fellow Robert P. Wadell**, P.E., who achieved career success 45 years ago as the founder of Wadell Engineering Corporation, a San Francisco airport consulting firm. His active ASCE membership began as a student at the University of California, Berkeley. With his wife Angela, Wadell recently made an extraordinary gift to the ASCE Foundation placing him in **1852 Society** status, and at the same time endowed a graduate civil engineering studies fellowship at Berkeley. Foundation Executive Vice

President Christine Williams and I each expressed our gratitude to the Wadells for an act of generosity reflecting their deep commitment to the profession and to ASCE.

You may have noted something in the last paragraph regarding Christine's title. I'm delighted to say she has agreed to return to lead the Foundation on a permanent basis, so we have dropped the "Interim" from her title. Christine served us extraordinarily well as executive vice president over nearly eight years, prior to what turned out to be only a temporary retirement (although she continued her work related to the Foundation's help with *Dream Big*.)

Congratulations to ...

... **ASCE's 2017 New Faces of Civil Engineering** – [10 young professionals](#) and [10 students](#) worth getting to know and remember for early achievements that portend notable careers. I was honored to be a judge and was incredibly impressed by all of the candidates.

In memoriam

Our ASCE staff community is in mourning for **the passing of Andrea Baker**, known as the welcoming, upbeat face of the Transportation & Development Institute, having served T&DI since its 2002 inception. She had a special place in the hearts of many on staff, and many members of T&DI also have expressed condolences, noting her exceptional service. As T&DI Director Muhammed Amer said, "She treated every member like family, and made their requests her utmost priority. Her absence from the Institute will be truly missed."

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom".

Section Informant

Urge members to jump into the exclusive new forum ASCE Collaborate

ASCE Collaborate, a new online forum exclusively for Society members, is now live and starting to percolate with member comments, questions, and networking. ASCE Collaborate allows members to connect with other members, participate in discussions with subject matter experts; access a library of resources; and post images, videos and documents to share with others.

ASCE Collaborate's success hinges on member participation. Please encourage the members of your local group to explore the forum and its benefits. Logging in is easy – members just input their ASCE username and password at asce.org or directly at collaborate.asce.org. For questions about the ASCE Collaborate experience, contact ASCE Online Community Manager Veronique Nguyen at vnguyen@asce.org.

Plan a group outing to see ASCE's *Dream Big* on a giant screen!

The film that will transform how the world sees engineering will begin screening around the country and in select theaters in Mexico and Canada beginning in mid-February. It's not too late to start planning your group's outing to see the film. View the [theater list](#) for the IMAX

venue closest to you. For questions as well as access to volunteer resources, trailers and the latest news, visit [ASCE's Dream Big page](#). Explore more ideas at the official movie page, dreambigfilm.com.

If it appears no IMAX theaters in your area will be showing the film, ASCE has arranged to allow Student Chapters an exclusive opportunity to host a one-time campus screening of *Dream Big* while the film is still in theatrical release. Email *Dream Big* volunteer coordinator Gwen Hearn at gwen@discovere.org.

Last call for Innovation Contest submissions – deadline March 1

The ASCE Innovation Contest offers an avenue for the best ideas, projects, and theories that could transform our nation's infrastructure and build a better future. Explore the 2017 contest topics for inspiration, and get entry instructions and qualifications at the [Innovation Contest](#) page on the ASCE Grand Challenge website. Write innovationcontest@asce.org with any questions, or [submit a simple form](#) to get updates.

Members can still join ASCE's Guided Online Courses

ASCE's Guided Online Courses provide a state-of-the-art learning experience that expands participants' skills via highly interactive, instructor-led programs. Classes for 2017 just started Jan. 23, and since each weekly module can be worked on anytime, participants can [catch up quickly](#). Courses use a wide variety of multimedia, including video lectures, interactive exercises, and case studies, as well as offer classmates the ability to reinforce what they've learned via weekly discussion board topics.

The five courses offered for 2017 are Drinking Water Treatment Technology, Earthquake Engineering for Structures, Quantity Take-Off: Structures, Seismic Evaluation and Retrofit of Existing Buildings, and The Foundation for Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Infrastructure Asset Management. Peek at [how the courses work](#) and register or forward it to potentially interested peers.

Your experiences can enhance an ASCE meeting

Are you good at sharing anecdotes about your work with fellow engineers, or think you could be? You could spice up a future Section, Branch, Younger Member Group, Student Chapter, or Institute meeting. Make yourself available by signing up to be part of ASCE's [Online Speakers Bureau database](#). Provide details on your technical and/or professional areas of expertise and your availability. Fellow members want to hear about your experiences!

Have you and your members seen the new print ASCE News?

ASCE News has returned in print! The second issue was mailed with January's *Civil Engineering* magazine. Catch up on major Society activities, what members are doing at the local level, and where to find details online, all in a lively, quick read. If you don't receive the magazine or want a preview, view it online. [See January's ASCE News](#).

ASCE News' Local News section highlights activities of your Section, Branch, Younger Member Group or Student Chapter. Want to get your news in? [Use this simple form](#). Successful events and activities of any scope are welcome, from school outreach events, networking fund-raisers and infrastructure site tours to a Toys for Tots drive. Content can be copied from what you've already posted to social media, created for a newsletter or offered on your website. For questions, contact ASCE News editor [John Marston](#).

Ask Counselor Tara: How can we avoid running afoul of the 'private benefit' limit on charitable activities?

Each month ASCE's General Counsel Tara Hoke responds to legal questions posed by Sections and Branches. [Send Tara an email](#) with your question.

Ask
Counselor
Tara



Question: One of the most important restrictions on the activities of a public charity is that the charity's activities must not be "organized or operated for the benefit of private interests." What does an ASCE group need to do to avoid running afoul of this restriction? [Read Tara's response.](#)

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