

"One man's 'magic' is another man's engineering."

– Robert A. Heinlein

From the Executive Director

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



Dear ASCE Member,

Infrastructure Week has become a major annual event each May due to its ability to unite a wide variety of constituencies behind an appeal to invest in our roads, bridges, ports, rail, drinking water and wastewater systems. ASCE has been a leader among the 250 partner organizations endorsing the week, and we were on its eight-member steering committee. Many of the more than 100 events held around the country leveraged our new [2017 Infrastructure Report Card](#) to help press the need for action.

A “Time to Build America” **kickoff event** at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington included Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and ASCE 2017 President Norma Jean Mattei among the headliners. Chao hinted at the \$200 billion

infrastructure proposal that President Trump has since rolled out, which is heavy on public-private partnership financing of projects. You can watch [Norma Jean’s remarks](#). I was pleased to see local ASCE groups use the week to urge investment, among them the Michigan Section’s [Michigan Infrastructure Conference](#) and Region 9’s [California Legislative Day](#).

Prior to the kickoff, a **dinner of the steering committee** attracted major figures including Chao; President Trump’s chief infrastructure policy adviser D.J. Gribbin; U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Tom Donohoe; and the CEOs of CH2M, HNTB, AECOM, Siemens and more. Joining me was Norma Jean Mattei and Managing Director of Government Relations Brian Pallasch.

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28-29 Board of Direction meeting

September

1 Submissions due for Outstanding Section and Branch Web Awards

15-16 Leader Orientation

17-18 Presidents and Governors Forum

Other infrastructure investment advocates are drawing on our *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* to encourage action. The **Environmental and Energy Study Institute** and the **National Association of State Energy Officials** staged an event at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington to make the [business case for investing](#) in resilient, sustainable infrastructure. Because our Report Card and Failure to Act reports formed the backbone of EESI's argument, I was invited to take part and delivered a presentation ([you can watch](#)) that cast the investment need in the Report Card's context.

A popular former Connecticut NPR talk show host who has branched out into podcasts sought me out for a discussion on the Report Card. Larry Rifkin's **America Trends podcast** with me is [available here](#).

Congratulations to the [winners of our second Innovation Contest](#), a key component of our **ASCE Grand Challenge** initiative to reduce infrastructure life cycle costs. The three major prize-winners share the potential to go from concept to reality in just a few years, featuring ideas including radio sensors to assess underground utilities, harvesting energy from hot pavement, and augmenting groundwater with recycled wastewater. We celebrated the engineers and their nine great ideas at events at ASCE headquarters this month. Special thanks go to Jerry Buckwalter, Northrup Grumman's Director of Strategy, who created and led this important initiative, working closely with other ASCE Industry Leaders Council volunteers and staff.

Our **Industry Leaders Council** also has been the driving force behind the Grand Challenge, and as I noted last month, held the first of two deep-dive roundtable discussions on how to leverage it to drive industry change. The roundtable of ILC members and other leaders during ASCE's Structures Congress explored how the Grand Challenge can move the industry to performance-based standards.

Last month, the second working group roundtable met to consider ways the Grand Challenge could benefit from life-cycle cost analysis approaches and processes, and encourage their broader adoption. The gathering was hosted at **Mott MacDonald** headquarters in New Jersey, with thanks to the firm's President and CEO Nick DeNichilo, P.E., F. ASCE, an ILC member, and its Vice President of Business Development Pat Natale, P.E., CAE, NAC, Dist.M.ASCE, ASCE's former Executive Director. Highlights of both roundtables are being compiled with an eye toward worthy follow-up activities.

We're seeing the success of the contest and our work on the Grand Challenge attract attention. The San Diego-based engineering firm **Kleinfelder** reached out with an interest in sponsoring the contest. I had a good discussion with Dan Harpstead, P.E., M.ASCE, senior technical and quality vice president for Kleinfelder out of its Philadelphia office, on a number of ways they could engage with us.

The **American Concrete Paving Association** naturally considers its product resilient and sustainable, and also contacted us with an interest in supporting our Grand Challenge. Following a productive conversation with President and CEO Jerry Voigt, P.E., M.ASCE, and Executive Vice President Leif Wathne, P.E., M.ASCE, we added Wathne to our ILC life-cycle roundtable participants.

We are fortunate to have an active, engaged membership, so much so that there are more volunteers with project ideas than we can possibly fund. Working with the **Program and Finance Committee**, we have shifted budget priorities to put more focus and resources into core activities, and implemented several organizational changes that include elimination of

some staff positions.

To ensure the Society's continued success with a focus on member value, we've implemented numerous cost-cutting measures, including reduced travel for staff and volunteers and lowering administrative expenses. The latest changes will reinforce our strengths and optimize the Society's efficiency and effectiveness.

The **Offshore Technology Conference**, co-hosted by ASCE and 11 other societies, is the world's largest annual gathering of oil and gas industry professionals, and with more than 64,700 descending on Houston from 100 countries, this year was no different. The OTC 2017 featured nearly 350 technical papers, 44 technical sessions, and 2,470 companies exhibiting from 43 countries.



Bruce Bennett for COPRI

Norma Jean Mattei and I took part in the annual [ASCE OTC Hall of Fame Awards Gala](#), organized by our Coasts, Oceans, Ports, and Rivers Institute. The awards honor papers from past OTCs of such seminal achievement they have become part of the core of current practice. Above, we presented one of this year's five awards to co-authors Brad Campbell, James D. (Don) Murff, and James N. Brekke for a 1989 paper on calibrating a jackup leg foundation model using full-scale measurements.

George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, close to our headquarters, was the recent beneficiary of an endowed civil engineering professorship, and the talented instructor and researcher who was appointed is eager to collaborate with ASCE. **Elise Miller-Hooks**, Ph.D., the Bill & Eleanor Hazel Chair in Infrastructure Engineering, and I enjoyed a good discussion on potential ways to collaborate.

I'm really appreciating the audiovisual technology upgrades recently made to our headquarters' **Bechtel Conference Center** by our IT department. For a meeting of the Task Committee on Governance Structure, Region 10 Director Brett Phillips joined us via teleconference from Australia, and he was able to take part as if he were here, without hiccups. Hold your events here and you can expand the universe of who can attend with the center's new cutting-edge communications.

Congratulations to ...

... **Americo Lozano, our dedicated building maintenance technician**, on taking the oath as a U.S. citizen. In 1995, he decided to leave his homeland of northeastern Peru to seek a better life in the United States, and liking what he found, brought the rest of his family six years later. Americo is among the hardest working people yet friendliest faces we see each day, and has kept our headquarters and grounds looking fantastic since 2004. We congratulated him with a reception in his honor.

As I close, I have recently returned from accompanying Norma Jean Mattei on her presidential mission to Hong Kong and Taiwan. I look forward to telling you what we achieved next month.

Until next time,



Section Informant

Fresh, free ASCE advertising resources now available for Section/Branch media

New graphics and related text and links for current ASCE activities, suitable for use on your website and in social media, newsletters, and other digital media, are now available for [your group to download](#). Materials on the virtual community ASCE Collaborate, the Historic Landmarks vacation photos online gallery, and the upcoming ASCE 2017 Convention have been added to a folder that already includes resources on the giant-screen engineering movie *Dream Big* and the *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*. [See what's available](#) for your group's free use.

Share photos and video of local activities on ASCE Collaborate

June's a great month for local outreach activities. What's on the agenda for your Section, Branch or Younger Member Group? ASCE Collaborate, the member-exclusive virtual community, has launched its first Local Member Engagement Month. Post pictures and/or video of a local event and the best will win prizes. Learn more about how to enter at [ASCE Collaborate](#).

Effective contract negotiations will save your group pain

Do any of these questions apply to your Section or Branch?

- Have you had an unsatisfactory contract for an event?
- Do you have someone in your Section or Branch comfortable with negotiating contracts?
- Do you have a contract approval process?
- Do you need to improve your Section or Branch contract process?

For the Sections and Branches [Best Practices Guide](#) (PDF download), the San Diego Section shared guidance on contract issues around events, catering, seminars, golf tournaments, and any other events your Section or Branch might plan or take part in. Learn to effectively negotiate terms and items for an event, how to manage documentation, and the sections you should review before signing. You'll find the tips on [Page 199](#).

Mattei's 5 must-sees in New Orleans while at the ASCE Convention

The Society's flagship conference, the ASCE 2017 Convention, is coming to New Orleans, home town of 2017 President Norma Jean Mattei, in October. So who better to tell you the five things you as a civil engineer shouldn't miss? [See her five suggestions](#) and [register for your spot](#) at the convention today.

Ethics advice worth heeding by new and experienced engineers

Although it's essential to engineering, ethics isn't always easy to nail down. Steve Starrett, Ph.D., P.E., D.WRE, F.ASCE, F.EWRI, dean of engineering at Texas' LeTourneau University, provided some clarity for the latest edition of ASCE Interchange. The author of a new book from ASCE on engineering ethics shared real-world examples of dilemmas his students and colleagues have faced and how they responded. [The video interview](#) runs under 7 minutes and with a follow-up discussion would make a great meeting activity. Starrett's book is [available for purchase](#).

Ask Counselor Tara

How do I ensure that our group retains the rights to work done for us?

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

Question: If your Section or Branch hires a photographer to cover an event, a graphic artist to design a logo, or an author to write book text, you need to understand the laws regarding copyright ownership and transfers. How do I ensure that our group retains the rights to work done for us? [Read Tara's response](#).

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Board Updates for All Leaders.